

Nahant Marine Science Center to present lecture on debris circle

By Debra Glidden / The Daily Item

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NAHANT - Get in the swim of things next week by attending a special lecture on the great Pacific Plastic Patch.

Capt. Charles Moore, who found what he calls a toxic plastic soup by accident more than a decade ago, is scheduled to speak Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at the Marine Science Center.

According to Moore, the area is approximately 1,000 miles northeast of Hawaii and is so large it defies precise measurement. But researchers believe the area has doubled in size in the last five years and it is believed to be at least twice the size of Texas.

Moore explained a series of currents in the Pacific Ocean create a circular effect that pulls debris from North America, Asia and the Hawaiian Islands into what oceanographers call a gyre - an area comprised of strong currents and few winds that keeps trash swirling in a giant whirlpool where it starts to break down.

According to information from Moore's Algalita Marine Research Foundation, the plastic poses a hazard for many reasons.

Researchers from Algalita said tissue from fish contain some of the same toxic chemicals as found in plastic and there is speculation the chemicals are leaching into fish tissue from the plastic they eat.

Safer Waters in Massachusetts (SWIM) Chairman Polly Bradley said she is looking forward to the lecture.

"The amount of pollution in the oceans is very troubling," she said. "It's scary as anything to see the oceans polluted like this. This is the type of information that has to be kept out there so we can find a way to stem pollution."

Moore, who is visiting a friend at Northeastern University, will give a talk entitled the "Sea of Simmering Synthetic Soup...The plastic concoction that is poisoning our oceans, our planet, ourselves" at the Marine Science Center at East Point on Tuesday at 7 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The regularly scheduled monthly Safer Waters in Massachusetts (SWIM) meeting will be held this Monday at 7 p.m. at the Northeastern University Marine Science Center, 430 Nahant Road. The draft National Ocean Policy, the state Ocean Management Plan and SWIM activities for the year are on the agenda. The meeting is free and open to the public. Anyone who would like additional information about SWIM can call 781-581-0075 or send an email to nahantswim@verizon.net.