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EARTH TALK

From the Editors of E/The Environmental Magazine

How is the Great Barrier Reef off Australia faring? - Mary S. East Williston

The Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's most biodiverse marine ecosystems, is facing its most severe crisis. Stretching over 2,300 kilometers and home to thousands of marine species, the reef provides not only ecological richness but also over \$6 billion annually to Australia's economy. However, in recent years, climate-driven stressors have pushed it to the brink. "It just kept warming...The heating was intense," says marine biologist Maria Byrne of the University of Sydney, describing the 2024 heatwave. That event was one of the most catastrophic coral bleaching episodes ever. In 2024, Byrne and her team tracked 400 coral colonies. They found that 80 percent were bleached and 53 percent had died.

This heatwave led to the sixth mass bleaching for the reef since 1998. However, this was the first time severe bleaching had occurred consecutively, from 2023 to 2024, making it difficult for the ecosystem to recover. Aerial and in-water surveys confirmed widespread bleaching across the northern regions of the reef during the 2024-2025 summer. While some areas reported low to medium bleaching (One to 30 percent), the Far Northern region faced limited access, leaving conditions unclear.

The main factor behind this is rising sea temperatures, with ocean surfaces recorded at 1.2 degrees Celsius above average in February 2024. These higher temperatures caused corals to expel the symbiotic algae that give them color and nutrients, which leads to bleaching and, eventually, death. Flooding, freshwater runoff and outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish due to have worsened the bleaching.


This is not just an isolated event. The 2024-2025 season is part of a global bleaching crisis, with reefs in 54 countries impacted. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has officially declared this the fourth global bleaching event, the consequences of which are devastating. Beyond biodiversity loss, the collapse threatens the stability of Australia's tourism and fishing industries.

Government strategies included investments in water quality programs and coral restoration projects. However, conservationists warn these measures are not enough. "The next term of government could be the last opportunity to give the reef a fighting chance," says Richard Leck, the head of oceans at WWF Australia. Experts are calling for urgent climate action, like stronger climate policies, supporting reef conservation organizations, reducing carbon emissions, and raising awareness about coral bleaching. We need to start taking meaningful action against climate change and pollution.

GOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION?
Send it to: EarthTalk, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881;
submit it at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/thisweek/, or e-mail: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Picture It!

Guess This Familiar Place in Nassau County



**WIN! Bag of Bagels
& Cream Cheese
Hand Rolled Bagels
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February 4th Answer:
US Merchant Marine Academy Museum

Winner:
Christy Hinko of New Hyde Park

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1 winner chosen per week from correct entries. Answers must be received by following Tues at 12 pm.
 Winner will be called & announced with their name & photo on our Facebook & Instagram pages.

BIRTHDAY CLUB



WIN!

**Bag of Bagels
& Cream Cheese**
**Hand Rolled Bagels
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This Week's Winning Birthday
MAY 4TH

Winner for Birthdate August 26:
Gloria Pennacchio of Mineola

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winner from a previous week. Winner will be called &
announced with their name & photo on our Facebook &
Instagram pages. Answer must be received by following Tuesday at 12pm.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Cocoa-Kissed Red Velvet Pancakes



1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar
3 tbsp Nestlé Toll House Baking Cocoa
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1 large egg
1 cup reduced-fat buttermilk or low-fat milk
2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp natural red food coloring
heart-shaped pancake cutters or cookie cutters (optional)
butter, for garnish (optional)
powdered sugar, for garnish (optional)
maple syrup, for garnish (optional)
fresh red berries, for garnish (optional)

In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir well.

In separate large bowl, whisk together egg, buttermilk, unsalted butter, vanilla extract and food coloring. Add to flour mixture; stir to combine. Allow mixture to sit 5 minutes.

Heat nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat. Brush with oil or butter. Add about 1/4 cup batter to skillet. Cook about 2 minutes, or until bubbles start to form on top. Flip and cook 1-2 minutes, or until bottom is lightly browned. Serve immediately with butter, powdered sugar, syrup and berries, if desired.

Find more recipes you'll love to share this Valentine's Day at Culinary.net

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Local Events & Happenings

SWEETHEART NECKLACES KIDS AGES 2+

2/11, 2/12, or 2/13, 2:30-4pm. Long Island Children's Museum. Drop in activity, make a necklace for Valentine's Day. Takes about 10 minutes. Free with museum admission. For more info: www.licm.org 11 Davis Ave., Garden City

MONTHLY MEDITATION

2/12, 6-7pm. at Sands Point. Led by Hildur Palsdottir. Held in the beautiful Mansion or Garden weather permitting. Register online. Planting Fields. \$17 per class, non members, \$25. 12 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

LITTLE LEARNERS ART LAB KIDS AGE 2-5

2/12, 11:30-12. Long Island Children's Museum. Each week in this engaging workshop, participants are introduced to hands-on materials, artmaking, and inspiration from artists and techniques. \$4 with museum admission. For more info: www.licm.org 11 Davis Ave., Garden City

LITTLE LEARNERS- CAMILLIAS AGE 2-5

2/13, 10-11am. At Planting Fields. Camellias bring a splash of color to the cold days of winter! Enjoy a floral story, create a blossom craft, and take a quick trip to the Camellia Greenhouse! 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay. \$15 per child. Includes 1 parent. For more details & reserve: www.plantingfields.org

SEAL WALKS AT JONES BEACH

2/13, 2/14, 2/21, 2/22. 2:30-4pm. In winter we welcome back our winter seal population. Learn about these incredible marine mammals and their migration while going for a walk to spot Harbor and Grey Seals feeding in the bay. A guided 1.5 mile round trip walk. \$4 p.p. Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center, 150 Bay Pkwy, Wantagh. RSVP required: www.jonesbeachenc.org

DATE NIGHT VALENTINE SHOW AT VANDERBILT

2/13 8pm & 2/14, 2 or 8pm. This live presentation celebrates Valentine's Day and all of its lovers in outer space. With its Valentine/love emphasis, this show will explore how civilizations told stories about the constellations that included tales of heroism and love, and how they are depicted in the night sky. Tickets start at \$8 for kids up to \$22 for adults. 180 Little Neck Rd., Centerport, 631-854-5579. Register online: www.vanderbiltmuseum.org

FAMILY ACTIVITIES CRADLE OF AVIATION

2/14 12-4pm. Step into the role of a traveler and explore how AI facial recognition is used in modern aviation. Families and kids will "check in" a stuffed animal passenger using AI software, receive a printed boarding pass, and take it home as a keepsake. Along the way, learn how emerging technology is shaping today's airport experience. www.cradleofaviation.org 516-572-4066. Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Garden City.



FAMILY ARTMAKING AT THE MANES CENTER

2/14, 2/21, 2/28, Converse, collaborate and create together, drop in between 12 and 3pm. Suitable for children aged 2-14 and their adult companions. Everyone may participate in art making and each adult attending must purchase a spot. This is not a drop-off event. Each week is a different theme. Children under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Adults \$20, kids \$10. Register online: www.nassaumuseum.org One Museum Drive, Roslyn.

DISPICABLE ME MOVIE CRADLE OF AVIATION

2/13. 5:30-8:30pm. Family movie night! Includes make and take activity, explore galleries, meet and greet the Minions. Buy tickets online: www.cradleofaviation.org 516-572-4066. Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Garden City.

NUNO FELTING AT THE MANES CENTER

2/13, 10am-2pm. Create a colorful Valentine's inspired flowers using the ancient technique of Nuno Felting technique in this hands-on workshop. Adults and teens 16+. All levels welcome. \$60. All materials included. Register online: www.nassaumuseum.org One Museum Drive, Roslyn.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

2/13-2/16. You can participate by counting birds in your back yard, local park or wherever you spot a bird. Visit this link to learn more about this citizen science project and how you can participate in this global survey: birdcount.org No registration required. For more info: 516-922-1029. www.northshorelandalliance.org



CAMILLIA FESTIVAL

2/14 & 2/15, 10am-1pm & 1-4pm each

day. At Planting Fields. Camellias bring a splash of beautiful color to the cold days of winter! Over 200 varieties in full bloom in the main house and green house. Tea tastings, live music, watercolor artists, educators & tours. Adults \$20, kids \$15. 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay. For more details & reserve: www.plantingfields.org

COMPOST SERIES QUEENS COUNTY FARM

2/14. 11:30am-12:30pm. Join the composting series to discover the dirt on turning scraps into soil, explore the whole cycle of decay and regrowth, and unlock the secrets of nature's recycling system. Get ready for hands-on lessons that will change how you see your trash! Free. Please register: www.queensfarm.org 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy, Floral Park.

18TH CENTURY TAVERN NIGHT QUEENS FARM

2/14. 8-11pm. Unplug and unwind as you enjoy a tavern-inspired feast featuring traditional recipes and historic ambiance in the Adriance Farmhouse. Travel back in time with wait staff dressed in 18th-century attire and learn about colonial history. All dishes are freshly prepared in the chef's kitchen and elegantly served by the light of candles. Space is limited and tickets sell out fast. (ages 14 and up. Participants under 21 must be accompanied by an adult). \$95. Please register: www.queensfarm.org 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy, Floral Park.

SAILORS VALENTINE- LICM

2/14, 11am-1pm. Drop in in this time frame. Long Island Children's Museum. Make a special shell mosaic. Ages 3+ Free with museum admission. Purchase tickets: www.licm.org 11 Davis Ave., Garden City

MODEL TRAIN SHOW

2/14 & 2/15, 11am-4pm. Trainville Hobby Depot Coordinator. Bethpage Senior Community Center, 103 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage. Benefits the Nassau County Games for the Physically Challenged. For more info: 516-433-4444.

WINTER HEARTBEAT WALK

2/14, 10-11:30am. At Sands Point. This Valentine's Day, join Hildur Palsdottir for a guided winter walk to explore the quiet but active life of the season. We'll look for animal tracks, signs of winter survival, and the subtle movements that reveal how wildlife stays active. Perfect for all ages. \$15 adults, \$5 kids. 127 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

FAMILY ACTIVITIES CRADLE OF AVIATION

2/14 12-4pm. Step into the role of a traveler and explore how AI facial recognition is used in modern aviation. Families and kids will "check in" a stuffed animal passenger using AI software, receive a printed boarding pass, and take it home as a keepsake. Along the way, learn how emerging technology is shaping today's airport experience. www.cradleofaviation.org 516-572-4066. Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Garden City.

STORYTIME KIDS 0-8 AT JONES BEACH

2/15, 11am-12pm. Kids up to age 8 Drop in for an hour of story-telling. Our educators will make picture books come alive and entertain children. Free. Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center, 150 Bay Pkwy, Wantagh. RSVP required: www.jonesbeachenc.org

HEMPSTEAD HOUSE TOURS

2/15 & 3/1, 12 or 1:30pm. At Sands Point. See the grand rooms inside this massive 50,000 s.f. mansion. The former home of Howard Gould and later the Guggenheims. \$10 p.p. payable at the welcome center. Meant for adults, although children over age 5 are ok. 127 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

BACKYARD BIRDERS

2/16, 10-12pm. Ages 6-12. At Planting

Fields. Participants learn about native winter birds and their adaptations, enjoy a guided outdoor walk led by Centre Island Bird Sanctuary, and contribute to the Great Backyard Bird Count as citizen scientists. 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay. \$25 per child. Drop off program. For more details & reserve: www.plantingfields.org



More Local Events

(516) 997-7909



KIDS NATURE DETECTIVES 2/16, 10am-1:30pm. at Sands Point

Preserve. Winter writing adventure where young authors explore the Preserve like detectives – uncovering nature clues left in the ice, snow, and winter woods – and transform their discoveries into curious, magical tales. A perfect blend of outdoor exploration and creative writing for kids in grades 3-6. \$60 per child, To register please call 516-570-2185 OR email: tracy.strianese@sandspointpreserve.org 12 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Pt. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

ART ON WINTER BREAK NASSAU MUSEUM OF ART 2/17, 18 & 19. 11am-12:30 or 1-2:30pm.

Best for children 2-12 with adult companion or for teens. 3 days of family artmaking. Each day is a different project. Attend one or more as you like. See website for class details and to register. All materials will be provided for attendees. \$10 members, \$20 non-members includes museum admission. Also enjoy the art exhibits, nature trails and outdoor sculptures. Register: www.nassaumuseum.org One Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor.

YOUTH WORKSHOP 2/18, 10-12pm. Ages 8-14. At Planting

Fields. Landscape Design. Students explore landscape architecture through a guided exhibition tour, outdoor observation of the grounds, and a hands-on design challenge inspired by Innocenti-Webel. 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay. \$25 per child. Drop off program. For more details & reserve: www.plantingfields.org

**THE LION KING JR.
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2/19-2/22, 11am or 12pm. Based on the 1994 Disney animated feature film of the same name and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Sunrise Theatre Company, 222 Pettit Ave., Bellmore. All tickets \$16.78. Purchase tickets: 516-218-2782 or www.SunriseTheatreLI.com

INTRODUCTION TO BALLROOM DANCING

2/19, 7-8pm. at Sands Point Preserve. Discover the joy of ballroom dance in a fun, relaxed setting at the lovely Preserve! Come for an introductory class led by Donatas Nacajus of Ballroom Boutique, and take your first steps on the dance floor with confidence and style. \$29 per class, 12 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Pt. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

THE WEDDING SINGER MADISON THEATRE

2/20-2/22, Various times. Based on the mega-hit Adam Sandler movie with all things 80's! See show details on website. Tickets \$40. Madison Theatre at Molloy U. 1000 Hempstead Ave., Rockville Centre. Tickets call 516-323-4444 OR www.madisontheatre.org

FUN WITH FUNGI- QUEENS COUNTY FARM

2/21, 2-3pm. Hour long class will include interesting info about fungi, ability of oyster mushrooms to consume and grow on almost any material attendees will make and take home their own mushroom growing kit. \$10 p.p. Please register: www.queensfarm.org 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy, Floral Park.



CELEBRATE LUNAR NEW YEAR AT VANDERBILT

2/21 10am-12pm. Join in celebrating the Year of the Horse. Make a paper lantern, learn Chinese calligraphy, and create traditional good luck decorations. Tickets \$20 adults and teens 12+, \$15 children up to 11. 180 Little Neck Rd., Centerport, 631-854-5579. Register online: www.vanderbiltmuseum.org

CHICAGO TRIBUTE PLAZA THEATRICAL

2/21, 7:30pm. Tickets are \$40-\$45. Enjoy the sounds of the popular band Chicago played by Make Me Smile band. Purchase online or call 516-599-6870. Elmont Memorial Library Theatre, 700 Hempstead Tpke., Elmont. www.plazatheatrical.com



INK & IMPRESSIONS

2/22, 10am-12pm. At Sands Point. For adults and teens 12+. Instructor Mike Evans invites participants to step into the role of ancient scribes by crafting their own reed pens and natural ink using plant-based materials, all while exploring how ancient writing evolved from the land itself. This workshop blends history, artistry, and reflection—perfect for those who enjoy tactile creativity with a story-rich context. \$40, members \$35. 127 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point. www.SandsPointPreserveConservancy.org

SPROUTS CLASS AT QUEENS COUNTY FARM

2/22. 10am-11:30am Get ready for spring by learning about how gardeners and farmers start the growing season. Learn everything about what seeds are, why plants produce them, and how you can start seeds for your own garden this year. Plant your own tray of greens to grow (and harvest) at home, and also take home a collection of recipes \$21.88 per class. Register online: www.queensfarm.org 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy, Floral Park.

DIPLOMAT TOUR AT PLANTING FIELDS

Now thru 3/29 on Fri/Sat/Sun. Guided tours 11 am or 12pm, self-guided, tour 1or 2pm. In early 2025, Planting Fields served as the backdrop for *The Diplomat's* season three finale (episode eight). Transformed into a 16th-century English manor loosely inspired by Chequers, the Main House served as the perfect stand-in for the Prime Minister's country residence. See how and where the scenes were created. 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay. To reserve: www.plantingfields.org

SCAVENGER HUNT CRADLE OF AVIATION

Now thru 2/22. The Tony Award Winning musical, Mincemeat team up for a WWII style codebreaking scavenger hunt through the galleries. Recruits will search, collect the letters and crack the secret code to claim a reward. Free with museum admission. 516-572-4066. www.cradleofaviation.org Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Garden City.

WEIRD DUCK WALK AT JONES BEACH

2/22, 10am-12pm. Adults & Teens 12+ Up close walk to see the weirdest ducks around. Approx. 2 mile walk on pavement and sand. Binoculars provided. \$4p.p. Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center, 150 Bay Pkwy, Wantagh. RSVP required: www.jonesbeachenc.org

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The Notre Dame and Holy Spirit conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul help residents of zip code 11040 with financial problems and food insecurity. They help residents with furniture & clothing and with past due rent, utilities, and insurance. If you are having financial problems, call 516-584-4060. All calls confidential. St Vincent de Paul is a charity and does not charge any fees.



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