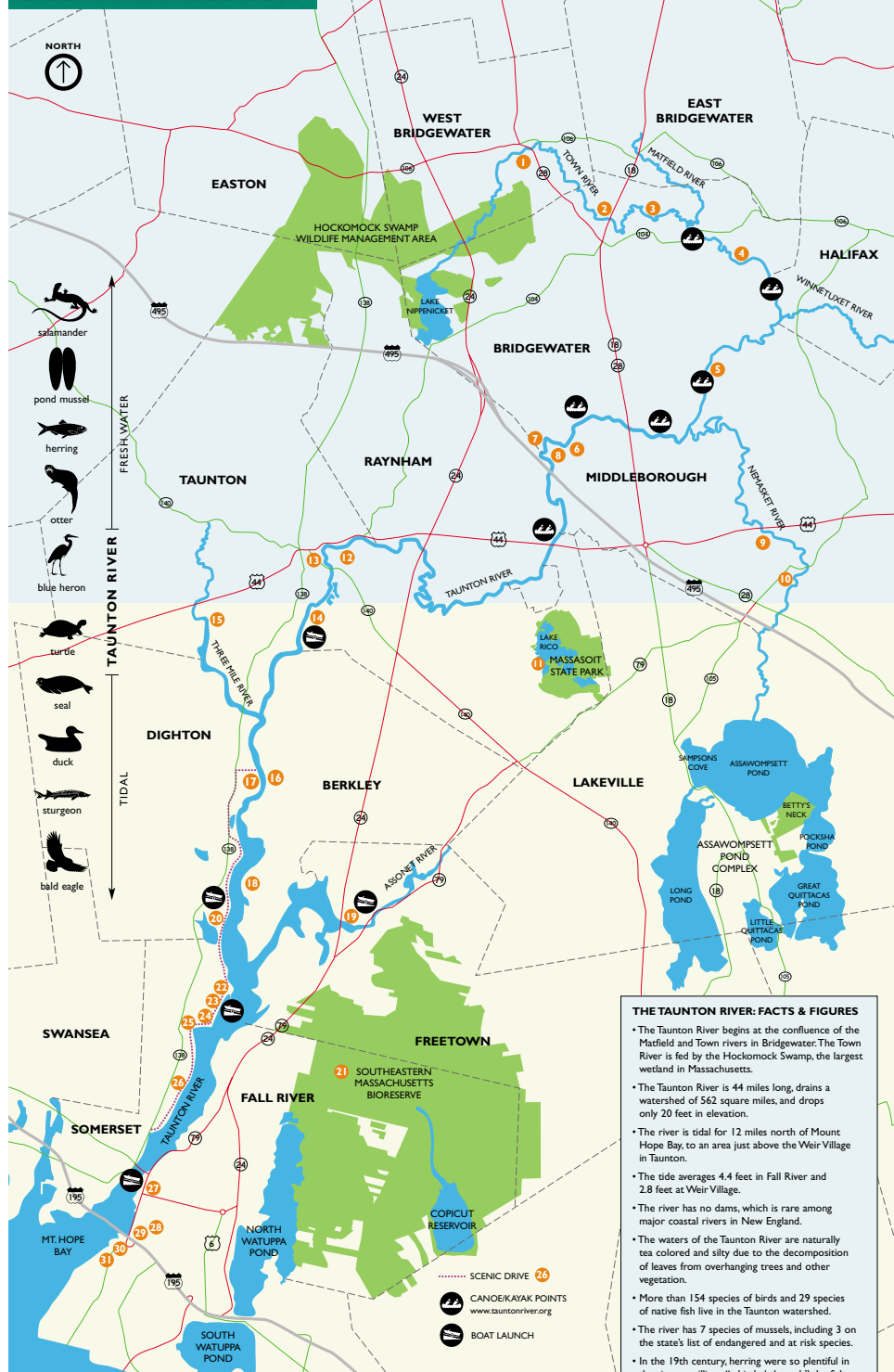




TAUNTON HERITAGE RIVER

Welcome to the Taunton Heritage River. With this map, you can find city and state riverfront parks, discover quiet spots of natural beauty, and trace the history of human activity on the Taunton River. By car, canoe, foot or bike, you can explore interesting sites—all selected by area residents—from the forested headwaters to the broad estuary of the first Massachusetts Heritage River.

For more information contact: Environmental Programs, SRPEDD (508) 824-1367 or Riverways Programs, DFWELE (617) 626-1544. www.tauntonriver.org



THE TAUNTON RIVER: FACTS & FIGURES

- The Taunton River begins at the confluence of the Matfield and Town rivers in Bridgewater. The Town River is fed by the Hockmock Swamp, the largest wetland in Massachusetts.
- The Taunton River is 44 miles long, drains a watershed of 562 square miles, and drops only 20 feet in elevation.
- The river is tidal for 12 miles north of Mount Hope Bay, to an area just above the Weir Village in Taunton.
- The tide averages 4.4 feet in Fall River and 2.8 feet at Weir Village.
- The river has no dams, which is rare among major coastal rivers in New England.
- The waters of the Taunton River are naturally tea colored and silty due to the decomposition of leaves from overhanging trees and other vegetation.
- More than 154 species of birds and 29 species of native fish live in the Taunton watershed.
- The river has 7 species of mussels, including 3 on the state's list of endangered and at risk species.
- In the 19th century, herring were so plentiful in the river – millions “whistled through” the fish weirs – that they were known as “Taunton Turkey.”
- River otters and harbor seals have returned to the river, indicating that both water quality and habitat have improved.
- The lower Taunton River contains the very rare Atlantic sturgeon, which can grow to 14 feet long.

THE TAUNTON HERITAGE RIVER

For its prominent role in the history, culture, recreation, and economy of its thirteen communities, the Taunton River has earned its designation as the first Massachusetts Heritage River. A journey downstream reveals the river's varied character. In the upper reaches are large tracts of undisturbed land and agricultural fields, with abundant native wildlife along the scenic, winding, and slow-paced river. A local coalition is seeking to protect this natural landscape through a federal Wild & Scenic River designation. At Raynham the river's role as workhorse for colonial settlements and backbone to the industrial revolution emerges. Below Berkley the river widens with a dramatic sweep into an estuary. For the rest of the route to the sea, fish and wildlife share the river with commerce and industry.

Today recreational boats follow the historical paths of Native Americans, who traveled by canoe from Plymouth Bay to Mount Hope Bay. In these boats are echoes of the river's early heritage and the legacy of clipper ships, schooners, and barges. During the river's industrial heyday, goods and raw materials traveled back and forth on its waters, transforming the region's economy and linking southeastern Massachusetts to the larger world.

The Taunton River remains a vital part of southeastern Massachusetts. Preserving its resources will ensure that future generations can also enjoy the history, natural beauty, wildlife, and recreation of the Taunton Heritage River.

The Taunton Heritage River Program
A Massachusetts Heritage River
A collaboration between local Taunton River watershed partners, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, DEM, DFWELE, and the Riverways Programs.



Jane Swift, Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Bob Durand, Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs



TAUNTON HERITAGE RIVER