



NJ Invasive Species  
Strike Team

**FoHVOS**  
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

## Invasive Plants.. and worms?!

Our annual species review is underway! OK, so maybe that's not as exciting if you are not an ecology nerd...but it is to us! This year we are going to utilize newly available resources on invasive plants that incorporates climate change and an amazing national review of regulated species. Some great resources to check out include the [Northeast Regional Invasive Species Council and Climate Change Management](#) and this [article](#) that cites research conducted at the [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#).

I also thought everyone would be interested to learn more about the [New Jersey Beneficial Insect Lab](#) ("Alampi Lab"). They've been great partners over the years and provide an amazing service to New Jersey as a national leader on research of biocontrol agents. They are currently studying effectiveness of an agent to control Japanese Knotweed! Residents interested in receiving discounted Mile-a-Minute weevils can [click here](#). The lab also offers small group tours of the lab – you can contact Alexandria Villiard at [Alexandra.Villiard@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Alexandra.Villiard@ag.nj.gov).

This month's Live and Learn was contributed by Robert Somes from the Endangered and Nongame Species Program. Robert is also a member of the Strike Team's Technical Advisory Committee. Robert provides us a report on recent sightings of two new invasive flatworms in New Jersey (key observations were made by citizen scientist Donna Cook). This one will have you saying 'Wait, what?!'

Donna Cook discovered large numbers of these planarians at her home and could use some help! If you'd like to see these new invaders and help reduce her population. Please email Donna, she'd be happy to get your help. They are abundant and unfortunately her dog has a taste for the remains of the partially eaten earthworms that have the neurotoxin in them that the planarian secretes. This is threatening her dog's health. Reach out directly to Donna at [donnacook66@hotmail.com](mailto:donnacook66@hotmail.com).

Please report any observations to the Strike Team!

Mike Van Clef, Ph.D.  
FoHVOS Stewardship Director  
Strike Team Program Director

Lisa Wolff  
Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space  
Executive Director

**Live and Learn**

# Invasive Flatworms!

## Robert Somes



The *Bipalium* genus is made up of a variety of large, predatory, terrestrial planarians or flatworms. Some species have a distinctive head shape leading to them often being referred to as hammerhead worms. These species are native to tropical and subtropical areas of Southeast Asia and likely hitchhiked to North America in soil and plant materials. They are active predators of invertebrates such as snails or slugs and feed particularly on earthworms. With the extensive spread of invasive Asian Earthworms there is a ready food source for these species of flatworms and it is likely that they will continue to spread. They depend on humid soil environments and mostly feed at night. These species are not directly harmful or parasitic to humans or pets but can cause skin irritation when handled and can cause illness in pets if consumed.

### Hammerhead Worm

Recently, New Jersey has been receiving reports and observations of two species of invasive planarian; *Bipalium adventitium*, a hammerhead worm, and *Platydemus manokwari*, a New Guinea Flatworm. Both species are easily identified from photographs and generally there are no similar native species to cause identification confusion.



New Guinea Flatworm – Top

As mentioned before, they are not harmful to humans



New Guinea Flatworm – Bottom

but can pose a hazard to pets should they consume them or if handled. It is recommended to only handle them while wearing gloves. Generally, they are found in damp soil environments such as under leaves, rocks or debris or on the soil surface at night, reducing the chance of contact with pets. However, if you identify these species in your yard, extra care should be paid to

monitor your pet's activities to avoid them consuming them. There are very limited means for controlling planarians other than careful collection and bagging while wearing gloves or direct application of salt, boric acid, vinegar, or citrus oil to the worm.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

## Upcoming Events

Please contact [Mike](#) if you are interested in attending any of the following scheduled events.

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**May 18, 7:00pm-8:00pm**

**Zoom**

**Native Plant Society of New Jersey - Native Plants and the Invasives They Replace**

**June 3, 9:00am-3:00pm**

**Clover Rod and Gun Club, Kingwood Township, NJ**

New Jersey Tree Farm Day - Invasive Species Identification and Control (with field tours)

**June 4, 10:00am-4:00pm**

**Lewis Morris County Park, Morristown, NJ**

BioBlitz Morris Nature Festival - - Invasive Species Identification and Control (with field tours)

**June 23, 6:00pm-7:00pm**

**Zoom**

Duke Farms Master Ecologist Program – Invasive Species and Deer Management

**June 25, 10:00am-12:00pm**

**Duke Farms Visitor Center**

Duke Farms Master Ecologist Program – Invasive Species and Deer Management

**Late Summer 2022**

4th Annual Community Conference, Location TBD

**Fall 2022**

Potluck Social (start foraging and thinking of recipes now!), Location TBD

**Fall 2022**

14th Annual Professional Conference, Duke Farms

**Other great events – contact event sponsors directly.**

**September 13-15, Cold Spring, NY**

Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society – Aquatic Plant Camp

## Volunteer with us!

Looking for a volunteer opportunity?

The NJ Invasive Species Strike Team is the organization for you!

Visit our sign up genius below to share your interests with us.

Contact [mvanclief@fohvos.org](mailto:mvanclief@fohvos.org) for more information.

**I'm Interested!**

## Consider a Membership Donation

**The Strike Team needs your help to fight invasive species throughout New Jersey. By making a membership donation, you directly fund our efforts to keep invasive species at bay and protect our native plants and wildlife. Donate through the link below!**

**Donate**

**Our website**

**Facebook**

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