

SOFOnaturalist



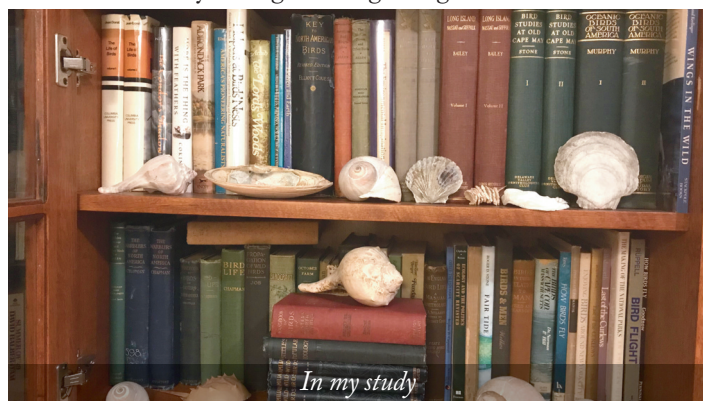
Each quarter SOFO features eco-links, written by a member or friend of the Museum. If you wish to submit an article, please contact us.

eco links

Marvelous Finds from Local Beaches

by John Turner

Like most people I've always like to collect things. Some objects were mainstream- baseball cards and comic books as a kid, for example, but some were decidedly not - as an adult I've had a prolonged passion for old bird books dating from the end of the nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth.



In my study

Looking around my study from where I write this, I realize I have a lot of objects that fit the "non-mainstream" category - deer antlers, assorted shells and other marine objects, mammal skulls, numerous pine cones, and a bird nest or two lying scattered along the leading edge of the shelves that hold the beloved bird books. I also realize these objects, collected from countless outdoor explorations, represent a window to the world of nature that lays accessible on the other side of each of our front doors.

I've especially liked to collect items found along the shore, of which we have a lot. I have a favorite piece of driftwood, its edges rounded and softened from years in the elements. In it sits two species of whelk shells - Knobbed and Channeled Whelk, both species of sea



Knobbed Whelk



Channeled Whelk

snails native to Long Island's marine waters. Knobbed Whelk gets its name from knobs or projections that lay along the coil situated on the top of the shell; the Channeled Whelk's name comes from a coiled channel or suture that runs along the inside edge of the spiral. These two species are closely related, belonging to the same genus; sometimes referred to as conch, they are the source of scungilli, the Italian dish especially popular around the holidays.

If you spend anytime strolling along the shoreline of Long Island Sound or Peconic Bay you've probably seen further evidence of whelk - their tan-colored egg cases washed up in the wrack line.



Knobbed Whelk Egg Cases



Channeled Whelk Egg Cases

Complex objects they are, consisting of upwards of a dozen or more quarter-sized compartments, connected by a thread, reminiscent of a broken Hawaiian lei. If you find an egg case shake it vigorously; if it sounds like a baby's rattle you'll be rewarded by opening up one of the leathery compartments because the objects causing the sound are many perfectly formed, tiny whelks. As I recently found out, you can identify the whelk species by the shape of the egg case compartments; Channeled have a pinched margin like what a chef does to a dumpling while the margins of Knobbed have an edge like a coin. How an adult whelk makes this highly complex structure with several dozen baby whelks in each unit is a complete mystery to me.

On the shelf next to the driftwood is another egg case - this one from a skate and as with whelk egg cases it's often found deposited



Skate Egg Case

in the beach's wrack line. Black, with a shine on its surface, it's rectangular with four parentheses-like projections sticking out from the four corners. Skates, related to sharks, are distinctive shaped fish with "wings" and several species are found in the marine waters around Long Island including Winter, Barndoor, and Little Skates. The cases are sometimes called "mermaids' purses" a wonderfully colorful name, although I've never seen any items a mermaid would carry inside one. If you look closely you can see the broken seam, along one of the shorter edges, where the baby skate emerged.

The distinctive shells of Northern Moon Snails are another common item found by beachcombers and a common item on my shelf - with four prized specimens, including the largest I've ever seen, they are the second-most common item I have. (Various pinecones are the most common but that's for a future column). Moon snails are shellfish predators, possessing a massive foot that's 3x to 4x the size of the shell when it spreads out that it uses to push through sand. If you've ever picked up a clam or mussel shell with a round little hole through it you've just picked up a Moon Snail victim. They use a specialized "tongue" called a radula to rasp their way into the shell of a bivalve. Once through the shell the snail secretes a weak acid that helps dissolve the tissue of the clam or mussel which the snail slurps up.

Continued on next page

Continued from page 1



Northern Moon Snail



Clam shell with a hole from a Moon Snail

Twice while beach combing I've found other evidence of a Moon Snail - a sandy, semi-circular collar made of sand grains held together by glue-like mucus the snail secretes. These are egg masses, an intact one shaped like a nearly closed letter "C" (the two I found were half of that as they are fragile and easily broken). Each collar contains scores of snail eggs which develop and hatch if not predated by smaller snails like oyster drills and periwinkles.



Jingle Shell



Slipper Shell

Rounding out the discussion of my study's marine objects are two other shells: Jingle Shells and Slipper Shells - the first a bivalve, the second a species of snail. Jingle shells, get their name from the jingling sound they make if you shake a few together in your hand and are used to make wind chimes you'll sometimes see hanging from beach houses. They are beautiful and iridescent, coming in several different colors - orange, yellow, white, and grey. Jingle shells are also known as "mermaid's toenails".

Slipper shells are also fascinating animals. All slipper shells start off as male but as they mature they become female. They often stack with the larger females on bottom and the smaller males on top, making the species a "sequential hermaphrodite". Occasionally you'll see a slipper shell attached to a horseshoe crab.

These gifts and others await you on a stroll along Long Island's hundreds of miles of shoreline.

John Turner, a noted author and environmentalist, is a member of the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) Board of Directors.

"John Turner's Exploring the Other Island is an invaluable guide to the natural wonders of Long Island. One of the area's premier naturalists, Turner takes us on a breathtaking tour of the natural wonders that surround us: birds, plants, animals, and more. The first edition was widely hailed, and this new, greatly expanded and revised edition is even more enticing. If you spend any time outdoors, you won't want to be without it." Long Island Nature Organization.

Nature's Gardeners—Ladybugs

by Melanie Meade, SOFO Education & Outreach Coordinator

As a child there was nothing I found more fascinating than watching a ladybug crawling on a leaf in the garden. The bright colors and black-spotted patterns of ladybugs catch the attention of children and adults alike, initiating a love of nature in the young and recalling pleasant moments of childhood for the young at heart.

Ladybugs are not really bugs at all but instead are classified as a type of beetle, giving them their other name—Lady Beetle. Bugs and beetles are both groups (called Orders) of insects. Within the beetle group there are many families of beetles. Members of a Family of organisms are more closely related to each other than members of an Order. The ladybug family is generally known as the Coccinellidae. The Coccinellidae family members are named in part according to the different number of their spots: Seven-Spotted, Nine-Spotted, etc. Adults' bodies are almost round, a few millimeters long, and have wings. Females are generally larger than males. They have mouth parts called mandibles that are used for chewing, but usually not for biting people. Their bright colors, usually reds and oranges, are a warning to other animals. To protect themselves from mammal and bird predators, ladybugs ooze a yellow "blood" from their leg joints. This fluid is called hemolymph; it smells and tastes very bad and contains toxins.



Seven Spotted Ladybug (*Coccinella septempunctata*).
Photographer: Dominik Stodulski

According to myth, the ladybug is a symbol of good luck. The bright colors are thought to bring "the joy of a full life" to the people they visit. For farmers and gardeners, this means a healthy crop or garden since ladybugs contribute to a high level of pest control by eating insects that damage plants. They prey on soft-bodied insects like aphids, spider mites, mealy bugs, leaf hoppers, and scale insects, as well as feeding on pollen and nectar. Some garden observers report that one ladybug can consume as many as 60 aphids in a day. Native ladybugs can be purchased for release on farms or in gardens to control aphids. The life cycle is about four weeks, with each of four growth stages—or instars—plus the adults, feeding on plant-damaging insects and insect eggs.

But there is one beetle in the Coccinellidae family that is no lady—the Asian Ladybug. This insect also eats insect pests that harm garden plants but, since their introduction to North America in the early 1900s as a control for aphids, they have out-competed native ladybugs and become a pest themselves. You can easily tell the difference between Asian ladybugs and common native ones. On the black part of the ladybug, just behind the head, a white M-shaped mark in the middle indicates an Asian ladybug. In native ladybugs, this part is all black.

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South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) Calendar At A Glance Summer 2020

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www.sofa.org email: info@sofo.org.

Find us on Facebook  Twitter  Instagram 



A full description of each program is listed on the SOFO website:
www.sofa.org/calendar

July, & August, September

PLEASE NOTE!

The programs listed in this Calendar of Events will take place either in person or online, depending upon the Covid-19 situation.

For that information, please look at the calendar listings on the SOFO website at: sofo.org/calendar.

Registration:

Online registration is now available through the SOFO Website: www.sofa.org/calendar

For SOFO members: to register for free programs listed on this Calendar of Events—which you receive as a benefit of membership—register online or contact us at: info@sofo.org. (For programs and classes with a fee, please see *below.)

For SOFO non-members: to register for all programs, there is a nominal fee. Please contact us at: info@sofo.org for fee information and registration...and to sign up for membership, it's worth it! Find out about membership levels at sofo.org/membership.

*Registration & Pricing for SOFO Members, Non-members, Schools

Fees for all of the SOFO online programs and classes—marked with an* in the Calendar of Events—will benefit SOFO's environmental programs and initiatives. Detailed information about the programs and classes can be found at: sofo.org/calendar. These programs will be aired only once, at the date and time specified on the SOFO website.

Pricing:

\$15 for an individual, \$20 for two guests, \$25 for a family of up to five people,
\$125 for a school or group of up to 25 people.

To watch our series of free, recent, online programming go to: sofo.org/media/video

Calendar At A Glance

Key: A—Adults T—Teens C—Children F—Family AA—All Ages *—Live Animals * Fee Program
A full description of each program is listed on the SOFO website at www.sofo.org/calendar.
Advance reservations are required for all programs.

July	5	• Full Buck Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA •	9pm
	7	• *Zoom Program: Fish Guy Presents “From Plankton to Whales—Why our local waters are worth protecting”: AA •	7pm
	10	• “The Turtle with Clown Lips”—Diamondback Terrapin Illustrated Talk with John Turner: A/C8+ •	7pm
	11	• Diamondback Terrapin Search by Land: AA •	1pm
	11	• SOFO Cleans the Beach: AA •	6pm
	12	• Diamondback Terrapin Search by Sea (BYO Kayak): A/C10+ •	10am–12pm
	12	• On the Beach—Plovers, Terns, & Other Shorebirds: AA •	1pm
	14	• Zoom Program: Ticks on Parade—Tick Awareness Talk: A/C8+ •	11am
	15	• *Zoom Program: Fish Guy Presents “Long Island’s White Shark Research”: AA •	7pm
	18	• Young Birders Club: Ages 8–18 •	10am
	19	• Who Lives in the Pond?: A/C6+ •	10am
	22	• Zoom Program: SOFO’s Shark Research & Education Program Team - Update: AA •	4pm
	25	• Young Environmentalists Society (YES!): Ages 10–16 •	10am
	26	• Discovering Animal, Vegetable, & Mineral Treasures at the Seashore: C3–7 •	10:30am
	29	• *Zoom Program: Fish Guy Presents “Exploring Long Island’s Underwater World”: AA •	7pm

Please Note: This exhibit has been postponed due to COVID-19 guidelines until April, 2021



Aurora Robson

eARTh: Artists as Activists at the Southampton Arts Center April 18, 2020 through July 5, 2020

Presented in collaboration with the

South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO), Peconic Land Trust, & Oceana

Public Opening Reception: Friday, April 17 • 6–8 pm

Gallery Hours: Thursday–Sunday, 12–6 pm • Admission: \$5 Suggested Donation

From April 18 through July 5, 2020, visit the Southampton Arts Center’s exhibition *eARTh: Artists as Activists*. This timely exhibition will feature artists who use their talents to create works in a variety of mediums that focus on environmental conservation.

Artists include Roisin Bateman, Scott Bluedorn, Erica Cirino, Rossa Cole, Janet Culbertson, Tom Deininger, Alejandro Duran, Jim Gingerich, Mamoun Friedrich Grosvenor, Kara Hoblin, Michael Light, Pam Longobardi, Janine Martel, Steve Miller, Patricia Paladines, Aurora Robson, Cindy Pease Roe, Lauren Ruiz, and Kathryn Szoka.

For more information visit southamptonartscenter.org.



Steve Miller

<i>August</i>	2	• Kayak Tour Along the Riverside of the Peconic River (BYO Kayak): A/C10+ •	9am-12pm
	3	• Full Sturgeon Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA •	8:30pm
	4	• *Zoom Program: Fish Guy Presents "Birding with the Fish Guy— "Long Island's Wading Birds, Waterfowl, & Raptors": AA •	7pm
	8	• Birding with Frank—Shorebirds at Shinnecock: A/C8+ •	10am
	8	• SOFO Cleans the Beach: AA •	6pm
	9	• Observing the Animals of Vineyard Field—Like a Scientist! C8-10 •	6pm
	11	• *ZOOM Program: Fish Guy Photos Presents "Long Island's Tropical Drifters": AA •	7pm
	15	• Log Rolling & Walk at Sagg Swamp Preserve: A/C6+ •	10am
	15	• Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18 •	10am
	22	• Late Summer Insects—Let's See What We Can Find: A/C6+ •	10:30am
	27	• Bayside Beach Exploration at Circle Beach: AA •	1pm
	29	• Young Environmentalist Society (YES!): Ages 10-16 •	10am
	30	• SOFO's Young Environmentalists Society (YES!): Ages 10-16 •	10am
	30	• "BioBlitz"—Surveying the Life of Vineyard Field: AA •	10am-1pm

<i>September</i>	3	• Full Harvest Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA •	7:30pm
	5	• Birding with Frank to Celebrate World Shorebirds Day: A/C8+ •	10am
	6	• Who Lives in a Salt Marsh?: AA •	6pm
	12	• Beach Walk at Maidstone Park Beach: AA •	10:30am
	12	• SOFO Cleans the Beach: AA •	6pm
	17	• What Tree is This?—Tree Identification: A/C7+ •	4pm
	19	• Birding with Frank – Fall Migration: A/C8+ •	9am
	19	• Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18 •	10am
	23	• SOFO's Shark Research & Education Program Update: This Summer On-the-Water: AA •	4pm
	26	• SOFO's Young Birders Club: Ages 8-18 •	10am
	26	• Young Environmentalists Society (YES!): Ages 10-16 •	10am
	26	• Let's See What the Tide Brought In!—Beach Walk: AA •	10:30am

Footnotes on Nature

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Common species on Long Island include the seven-spotted ladybug, identified by the seven black spots across the wing covers on its back. Much less common is the nine-spotted, *Coccinella novemnotata*, the official state insect of New York.



*Nine-Spotted Ladybug (*Coccinella novemnotata*),
photo courtesy of Cornell University*



*This odd-looking "bug" is becoming more common on Long Island and
will grow up to be a Nine-Spotted Ladybug!
Photo Credit: Lost Ladybug Project.*

The nine-spotted were thought to be nearly extinct on Long Island until one was found on Quail Hill Farm in Amagansett in 2011. Scientists from Cornell University came to search at the farm and found a few more nine-spotted ladybugs. Out of that first sighting has come the East End's Lost Ladybug Project. Funded by a National Science Foundation grant, this project has educated our East End community and children and adults nationwide about how to identify these insects and how to help them help us. Each July, participants, especially children, search for the nine-spotted ladybug and other ladybug species



*Children searching for ladybugs at Quail Hill Farm,
credit: Peconic Land Trust.*

at Quail Hill Farm and other locations across the U.S. then send pictures of their findings to Cornell University for identification and to help create location maps.

To take part in the July 2021 Lost Ladybug Search at The Peconic Land Trust's Quail Hill Farm, cosponsored by the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO), keep an eye out for the summer issue of the SOFO Calendar of Events. To purchase ladybug larvae for your garden, go to www.lostladybug.org/ladybug-larvae-sales-1114.php. Donations benefit the Lost Ladybug Project.

the Nature clubhouse

YES! SOFO's *Very Much Needed Young Environmentalists Society* is Flourishing

by Mare Dianora

YES!, The SOFO Young Environmentalists Society is a bright spot in this age of uncertainty.

I am Mare Dianora, the adult leader of YES!, the new group of young environmentalists, aged 10-16, launched by SOFO this past winter and underwritten by a foundation that prefers to remain anonymous. How fortuitous that we all came together at this time to foster the Museum's mission to prepare the next generation to become caring and informed stewards of our planet. I can't imagine a more hopeful note in these very different times.

Let me give you an idea of our genesis.

Early in 2020, we started brainstorming plans for the Young Environmentalists Society at SOFO, the South Fork Natural History Museum. We chose the acronym YES! for its positive message. We knew that we were needed and how fortunate we were to find a benefactor whose donation was right in line with our thinking, helping with our mission to reach out to new populations in our community. I was so excited to brainstorm with the SOFO staff about ways we could achieve our goals—field trips, projects, technology to explore, guest speakers to invite—many, many excellent ideas came up, and I reached out to organizations near and far to enhance our objectives.

Our first meeting was held at SOFO in late February. We discussed why forming the group was important and explored environmental projects we could do together. Though I am the adult leader, the members' input counts as much as mine and SOFO's. During this meeting, we decided that the first issue we would investigate was food waste. To do this, we needed to start with understanding the food chain, and what better way to explore that than becoming farmers—learning firsthand where our food comes from and how it grows. We decided to construct a raised-bed vegetable garden and developed drawings to make it work. We planned to create a tiny farm at the museum. We planted seeds, and we explored what we needed to do to make them grow strong and ready to plant.

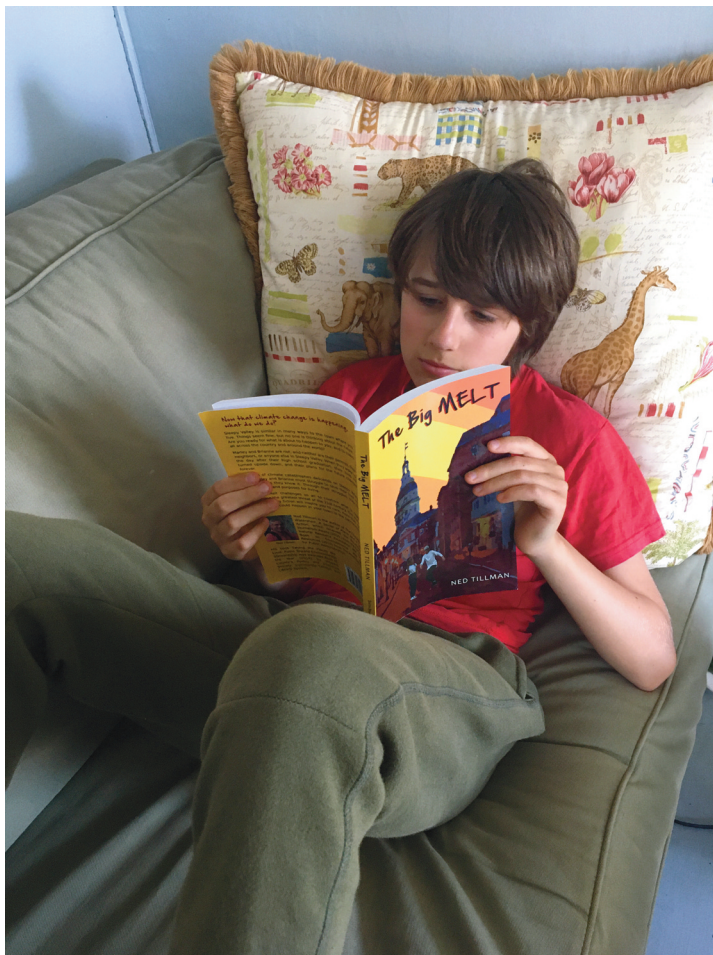
That was when the world changed. We couldn't meet together in person, and much of life for all of us became virtual, which is not something we ever expected or hoped for. Yes, we wanted to incorporate a little technology, but not everything virtual. We really learned what the word virtual meant: "Not physically existing as such but made by software to appear so."

So we put the positive word YES! to work. Our planned visit to a farm became an online program. With help, I visited the farm, videotaped the visit, and shared it online with the group, leaving lots of time for questions and answers.

As the weeks have passed, our group has found a rhythm. We meet virtually, every other week—in the late afternoon, after school time—to keep the conversation alive and strong. Many members attend week after week. My son Finny (age 11) reports, "I enjoy the meetings because we all care about the environment. We are there because we each want to be there. I am glad our meetings can continue even though we cannot meet in person—it is still fun to see everyone with Zoom."

We have continued our projects and I am grateful that this program can move forward, that everyone can still have a voice in our endeavors, and that we can learn from each other. The format has changed, but the message and the importance is now more relevant than ever.

Here is an experience we had on Tuesday evening May 5—our YES! members had the pleasure of talking remotely with a wonderful teacher, Jillian Worssam from Flagstaff, Arizona, who is a regional leader for the NOAA Climate Stewards Program. Our group has been reading *The Big Melt* by Ned Tillman—a climate fiction novel that illustrates big environmental events that happen to a society as it faces a sudden influx of climate changes. The town in the story needs to deal with these changes, and their decisions have life-or-death consequences. Meeting on Zoom, Ms. Worssam led our book discussion. After the group members introduced themselves, we dove into the book and discussed the “Big Changes” portrayed in the story. We spoke about what warning signs there were of the “Big Changes” for the community and if anything could have been done to stop or slow down the process. We learned a new word, “phenology”—the timing of annual biological events—and how we might use this concept to actually see signs of climate change in our own community.



*My son Finny reading *The Big Melt**

This conversation with Ms. Worssam is not over. We will fortunately have another book discussion with her soon so that we can include group members who have not yet finished the book and any new members who want to join in the discussion.



*To send as a thank you to Ms. Worssam YES! members made drawings and constructions relating to *The Big Melt*. This is a drawing showing a flooded street made by Zianya Quiroz Kane*

If you are between the ages of 10 and 16 and would like to join YES! or are interested in learning more about it, please contact info@sofo.org. We are eager to expand the group.

I'll continue to fill you in about the activities and progress of this important group. As you can see, YES! members will be our future leaders—not just for the environment but for the future of our planet.

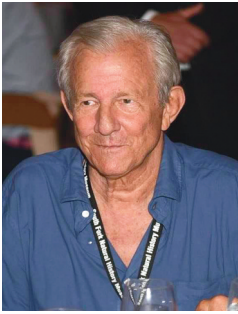
If you are interested in supporting the efforts of YES! in any way, please contact SOFO's Executive Director, Frank Quevedo at fquevedo@sofo.org or SOFO's Director of Development, Diana Aceti at daceti@sofo.org.



Mission: The mission of the South Fork Natural History Museum & Nature Center (SOFO) is to stimulate interest in, advance knowledge of, and foster appreciation for the natural environment, with special emphasis on the unique nature of Long Island's South Fork.

SOFO

news



*Peter Beard is honored
at SOFO's
28th Annual Summer
Gala Benefit*

Rest In Peace

Peter Beard, 1938 – 2020

SOFO is very sad at the loss of our dear friend Peter Beard, an internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer, writer, artist and environmentalist who lived and worked in New York City, Montauk and Kenya.

Peter Beard devoted much of his career to chronicling Africa with his journals, books, and photographs, which have been widely shown and published worldwide. His first exhibition was at the Blum Helman Gallery in New York City in 1975. Landmark museum exhibitions followed at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York City in 1977, and The Centre National de la Photographie (Jeu de Paume) in Paris in 1997. Gallery exhibitions included shows in Berlin, London, Toronto, Madrid, Milan, Tokyo and Vienna. Beard's work is celebrated in private collections throughout the world. SOFO sends our deepest condolences to Peter's family—his wife Nejma Khanum Beard and daughter Zara Beard, as well as his brother Anson.

Peter was an extraordinary artist, an unforgettable person, a legend. He will be greatly missed by us all.

"We are all heartbroken by the confirmation of our beloved Peter's death," the family said in a statement, adding, "He died where he lived: in nature."

Photo credit: Rob Rich/SocietyAllure.com

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