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The Herald News

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Woo! Science



Visitors in November 2001 peruse “missing” flyers posted by family and friends of loved ones who went missing in the Sept. 11 attacks. The flyers were displayed at many places in and around Ground Zero. Many victims were ultimately identified through DNA testing of miniscule particles, a process that continues. MARGARET SMITH/WORCESTER MAGAZINE

The world saw 9/11, but many changes it brought are invisible

Margaret Smith
Worcester Magazine | USA TODAY NETWORK

Woo! Science is a column of science news and newsmakers in Worcester and the region. Got a science news idea? Email Margaret Smith at msmith@wickedlocal.com.
Trigger warning: this column includes discussion of terrorism, psychological trauma, and recovery of human remains.

Of the changes wrought from the ashes, smoke and twisted steel of Ground Zero, some are silent, and invisible. Look, if you will, at the photos of firefighters raising an American flag in quiet pride, or weary and increasingly fatigued recovery workers digging, often by hand, through rubble, as much for clues as for the possibility of survivors.

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The National Institutes of Standard and Technology conducted an experiment to replicate an office fire in the World Trade Center, which the study team said helped validate computer models of the spread rate and intensity of the fires initiated by jet fuel and fed by the office furnishings and other combustibles. PROVIDE BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF TRADE STUDY

From Bay of Fundy to Cape Cod

Lobster’s journey breaks a record

Heather McCarron
Cape Cod Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

A female lobster tagged in Canadian waters off Grand Manan Island recently made a remarkable journey — by lobster standards, in any case — covering more than 250 miles over eight months before entering a trap off Cape Cod.

Heather Koopman, a senior scientist at the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station and dean of the College of Science and Mathematics at Kennebec State University, tagged the roughly 4.1-inch, egg-carrying female on Dec. 2, 2024, southeast of Grand Manan, situated between the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The tagging was part of a long-term research project studying lobster movement and reproduction in the Bay of Fundy.

When a fisherman off Cape Cod caught the lobster 257 days later, on Aug. 16, he spotted the bright yellow tag for lobster #9365 with Koopman’s contact information.

“This was something I had not expected,” Koopman wrote in a post on the research station’s Facebook page. “I had a text from a 774 area code, with a message that someone had caught a lobster with my cell phone number on it. 774? That’s southeastern Massachusetts!”

Koopman credited fisherman Mike O’Brien, of the Marika C, in her Facebook post and thanked him for reporting the catch. She said it is “a new record for a long-distance lobster.”

Lobsters aren’t usually known for such epic journeys.

“Most lobsters stay in the same general area for their entire lives,” according to NOAA Fisheries, “although some move up to 100 miles.”

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Heather Koopman, of the Grand Manan Whale & Seabird Research Station in Canada, tags lobsters with yellow ID tags, relying on fishermen to report the location if they catch one. One of her lobsters recently turned up off Cape Cod — breaking a long-distance travel record. PROVIDED BY GRAND MANAN WHALE & SEABIRD RESEARCH STATION

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