

RUDDY TURNSTONES

SOME
OF
THE NEWS
FROM
HARBOR
ISLAND
NATURALLY

BY
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JUNE
2009

RUDDY TURNSTONE LOOKING FOR LUNCH



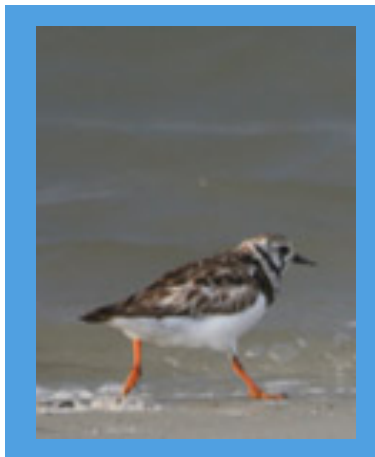
BRIGHT ORANGE LEGS MAKE THIS BIRD EASY TO SPOT

THEY LOVE HORSESHOE CRAB EGGS

These birds (*Arenaria interpres*) small stocky, brightly patterned shorebird, the Ruddy Turnstone can be seen actively pecking, probing, and flipping over debris along the shore.

They eat aquatic invertebrates and insects. Also carrion, garbage, and bird's eggs. One of their favorite foods is horseshoe crab eggs. That is a major reason for them to visit our island.

They breed on rocky arctic coasts and tundra. On migration and in winter, mostly along rocky shores, but also sand beaches and mud-flats such as ours.



Turnstones have an oddly-shaped bill to flip and turn stones, algae,

sticks, and other items to find food underneath. Probes in cracks. Pecks at food on surface of rocks. They will use their bill to dig as much as two inches to find crab eggs.

Males make scrapes that look like nests in the ground in their territory. These male scrapes are made before the female starts to lay eggs, and are part of the courtship. No eggs are laid in the scrapes the male makes.

The young are precocial (ready to leave the nest as soon as they are hatched)

Ruddy Turnstones life-span is about 9 years. Populations are fairly stable. Ruddy Turnstones are on the Least Concerned list.

Sources: The Birder's Handbook by Paul Ehrlich, National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America 4th ed.



All photographs are by John Albert

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