

Gifts from the Sea

BY JACQUELINE WEAVER
GOULDSBORO — Beth Parks' sea wreaths are as varied and interesting as her curriculum vitae — wildlife biologist, nature writer, aspiring children's book author, photographer.

A Parks wreath may contain any or all of the following items: rope fragments, bird skulls, starfish, feathers, barnacles, sea glass, sea urchins, sand dollars, periwinkles, whelks and whelk

egg cases, skate egg cases, bone fragments, sponges, cockles, limpets, driftwood, rockweed and other brown seaweeds, red seaweeds, Irish moss, kelp holdfasts. The kinds of sea shells are numerous too and include crabs, scallops, slipper, clams, razor clams, lobster and moon shells.

Parks first began making pinecone wreaths back in the mid-1990s for family and friends, who loved them.

Over time the wreaths grew larger and more complicated. The largest of them all, 36 inches in diameter and a weight Parks estimates at 100 pounds, hangs in the entryway to her home in Corea village.

"I was waiting for a builder to come," she said. "It would have been much smaller otherwise."

Parks formerly directed the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Office's 4-H young education program in Penobscot County. Since retiring from that job, she devotes much of her time to traveling.

She recently returned from the Arctic, where she photographed polar bears from a tundra buggy, and was leaving later this month for Rwanda and Uganda, where she planned to photograph mountain gorillas.

She currently has two sea wreaths for sale at Harbor Girl Emporium & Café in Winter Harbor, and, in her limited spare time, will take orders for next year. She can be contacted at bparks@maine.edu.

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Corea artist Beth Parks shows one of her sea wreaths created from beach-combing expeditions on the Maine coast.

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