

Swamp monsters: Strange sightings are routine in the Bridgewater Triangle

By Jean Porrazzo, Enterprise staff writer

Kathleen Garner of West Bridgewater has heard the legends about the Bridgewater Triangle and the creatures that roam the Hockomock Swamp that borders her West Bridgewater home.

"I saw a giant white prehistoric bird," 69-year-old Garner said. "People don't believe me."

It was 20 years ago and Garner and her husband, Donald, were moving into their home on Maple Street, the only home on the dead-end street.

"We were driving on Pleasant Street, and this huge bird put its face in my window," she said. "I screamed, and it took off and we haven't seen it since."

Garner said the bird was at least 6 feet tall with a wing span of at 8 feet or more, and it had teeth.

The area dubbed the "Bridgewater Triangle" extends from Abington south to Freetown, west to Rehoboth and northeast back to Abington. It includes Brockton, Easton, the Bridgewaters, Raynham and Taunton, many of which are part of the Hockomock Swamp area.

The "Bridgewater Triangle" centers around the swamp's 6,000 boggy acres.

"It's a gigantic unknown area," said David Moore, chairman of the Bridgewater Historical Commission and a member of the Bridgewater Historical Society. "The vegetation is so dense, you can't see sunlight."

Fear of the swamp dates back to the 17th century, when Wampanoag raiding parties hid among the black spruce trees during the tribe's war with English settlers.

"King Philip, the Indian chief, is said to have lured people into the swamp and they were never seen again," Moore said.

Grant has heard the sounds of drums coming from the swamp in the summer and has seen a red-eyed wolf or dog-like animal.

Over the years, there have been reports of a glowing orb flying over the swamp — bright lights in the sky over the racetrack in Raynham and in the sky above the intersection of routes 24 and 106.

In 1978, Joseph DeAndrade claimed he was walking in the woods near Broad Street in Bridgewater when he caught a glimpse of a tall, shaggy creature moving behind him. DeAndrade said the ape-man had a foul, earthy smell and a stiff gate "sort of like Frankenstein."

In Oct. 24, 1980, editions of *The Enterprise*, Mark St. Louis of Brockton and his friend, Peter Blumberg, recalled their brush with another swamp-ape.

The friends said they were paddling on Lake Nippenicket when they came across what looked like a smallish, orange orangutan sitting on an island.

And in 1971, a Norton police officer claimed he saw a bird 6 feet tall and 12 feet from wingtip to wingtip, soar over Winter Street in Mansfield.

On a spring day in 1990, Kitty Doherty of Bridgewater was canoeing in the swamp with a friend when she turned around and took a picture.

After the picture was developed, Doherty could see what appeared to be an upright creature following the canoe, she said. When she showed it to others, they agreed.

"I have a picture of 'Big Foot,'" she laughed.

"Big Foot" turned out to be a tree stump and its reflection in the water created the illusion that it was walking

toward the canoe, Doherty said.

Moore and Doherty don't put a lot of stock in the legends surrounding the Bridgewater Triangle or the Hockomock Swamp.

"Your mind can play tricks on you," Moore said

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