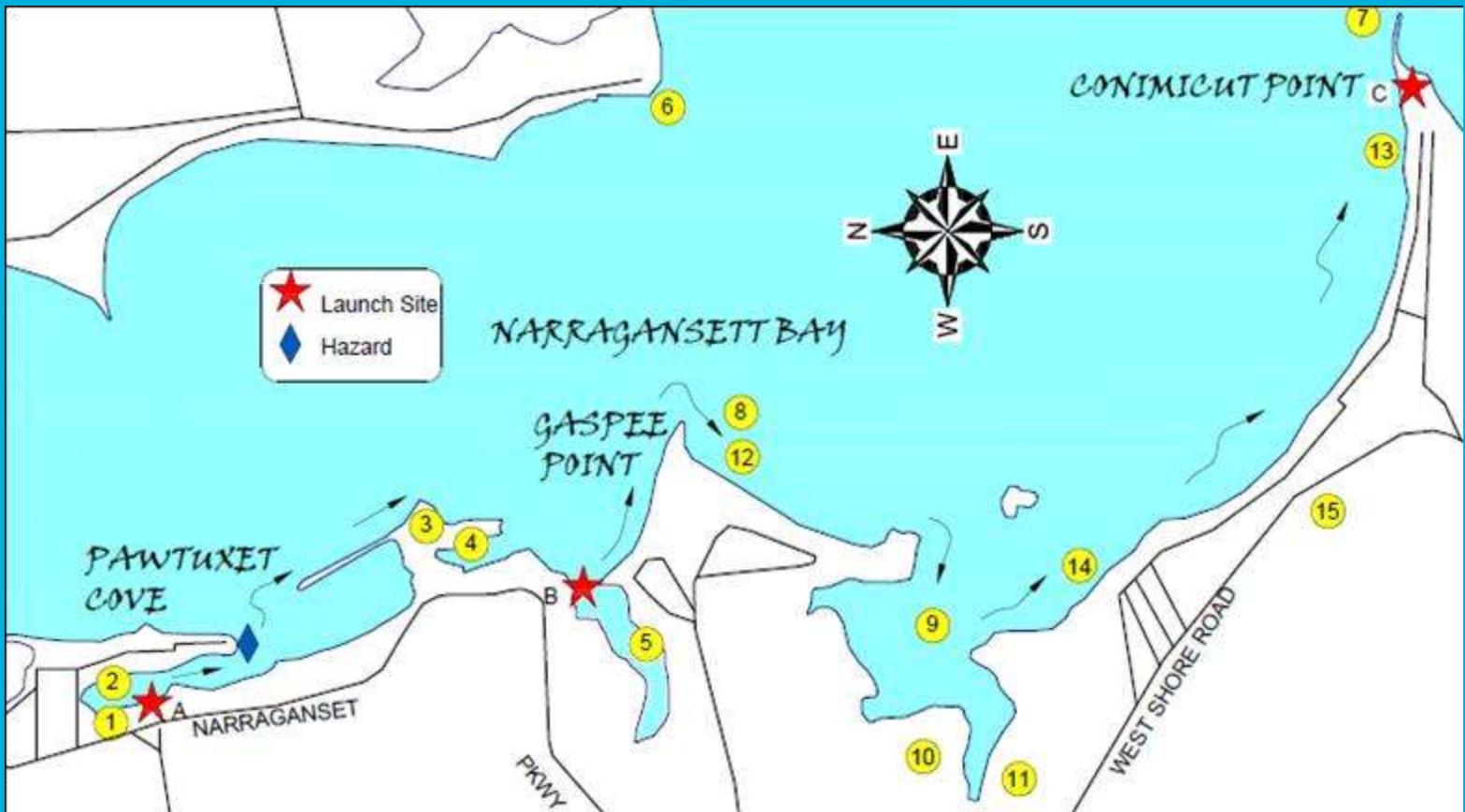


# WARWICK BLUEWAYS TRAILS

## PAWTUXET COVE TO CONIMICUT POINT



Level	Intermediate to Expert
Miles	Approximately 5 miles
Time	3 – 5 hours
Start / End	Start at boat ramp by Aspray Boathouse in Pawtuxet Village (paved) (A), off the Narragansett Parkway; the Pawtuxet Cove section may be omitted by launching from ramp in Passeonquis Cove (B) off General Hawkins Drive which is also off Narragansett Parkway. Takeout is at Conimicut Point (C) at the end of Point Ave. From Route 117 entering Conimicut from the south, take a right on Economy Ave, a left on Symonds Ave, and right on Point Ave.
Description	Calm in the waters of Pawtuxet, Passeonquis, and Occupestatuxet Coves. Providence River can be choppy with white caps, tidal currents, weather dependent, stay close to shore.



SCENERY: Historic Pawtuxet Village, open bay with possible commercial ships passing in the Providence River channel and secluded coves with wildlife.

PAWTUXET COVE offers views of Colonial dwellings and magnificent homes along the shore. At the head of the cove, the Pawtuxet River empties into the bay. Pawtuxet Cove is protected by a breakwater (known as Rock Island), so the challenge to paddling around the cove is not waves, but boat traffic in and out. Be aware of sail and power boats moving through the cove. The lower Pawtuxet River area was settled in 1638 with a purchase from Saconoco, Chief Sachem of the Pawtuxet group of Narragansett Indians (Pawtuxet means little falls). You can paddle up to the falls under the Pawtuxet Bridge (1) to the site where Stephen Arnold and Zachariah Rhodes constructed a wooden dam and grist mill. The dam was replaced; and the river remained dammed at this spot until 2011, when it was removed to allow passage of anadromous fish (and canoes and kayaks) up the river. River herring and American shad have been stocked in the river, and during spring migration, you may see these fish at the foot of the falls moving upstream to spawn. During King Phillip's War, the Indians burned the village in January of 1676. It was rebuilt and was a ship building town, a center for import and export with a



custom house, a mill site and a center for rum running during prohibition (2).

Pawtuxet was a leading Colonial seaport by the time of the American Revolution. The village has many Colonial houses, all within walking distance of the Aspray Boathouse launch ramp. On both sides of the bridge are charming shops and restaurants. Pawtuxet Village hosts the annual Gaspee Days celebration in June, several days of parades, concerts, craft shows, culminating in the re-enactment of the burning of HMS Gaspee, a British revenue ship burned after running aground at Gaspee Point by a group of Providence patriots.

Leaving the cove, you may either paddle down the seaward side of the Rock Island breakwater (3) or land at Salter's Grove and make a very short portage across the neck of land, putting in again inside the breakwater and rock outcroppings which run south along the shore, for a more sheltered paddle. This area is abundant with varied waterfowl (4).

PASSEONKQUIS COVE lies just south of Pawtuxet Cove and is lined with residences. There is a boat launch area with a few parking spaces, reached off Narragansett Parkway via General Hawkins Drive. The ramp is concrete, and the water is quite shallow. The cove (5) offers waterfowl viewing, especially mute swan, bluebills, black duck, widgeons, bufflehead and mergansers, as well as herons along the shoreline in summer. The cove was once part of a magnificent summer estate owned by Nicholas Brown 3<sup>rd</sup>. The son-in-law of Nicholas, General Rush Hawkins, was the famous Zouave commander, winning great distinction during the Civil War; and the boat ramp is named in his honor.

GASPEE PLATEAU AND POINT: South of Passeonkquis, you will be in the Providence River, watching pleasure craft and large ships in the shipping channel. Directly opposite Gaspee in mid-stream lies Bullocks Point Light (6). This stretch of the Providence River offers the opportunity to view 4 lighthouses - Bullocks Point; to the north of this, Pomham Light; and southwards at Conimicut Point, the Conimicut Point lighthouse (7) and on the east shore, the no longer used Nayatt Light. Gaspee Plateau is a high bluff with residences lining its top. A long, sandy beach runs over a mile south from Gaspee Point sandbar. Here, on the night of June 9, 1772, the Newport based revenue schooner, HMS GASPEE, commanded by Lt. William Duddingston, ran aground in pursuit of the packet boat HANNAH. The HANNAH continued to Providence and shortly a party of patriots rowed down the river and burned the GASPEE - the first open act of violence against the British crown and the first bloodshed in the conflict which became the American Revolution (8).

OCCUPASTUXET COVE (9) is a prime area for waterfowl viewing, as well as a scenic gem. The Indian name means the meadows through which the river flows, and the name is true today. The north and west sides of the cove offer the rolling hayfields and the beautiful colonial house at Spring Green Farm (10). The south side is Cole farm, once a private farm and camp ground and now year round residences. The area of Cole's Farm (11) was owned by the Greene family from 1642 to 1818. In 1676,

John Greene, Jr. built a house on the south side of the cove for his son Job; and this became famous -the home of a Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Court, home of a speaker of the House of Deputies, and birthplace of Colonel Christopher Greene, one of the most brilliant heroes of the Revolution and commander of the First Rhode Island Black Regiment. The house became an intellectual, political and social center of R.I. In 1823, the land passed to the Cole family.

Waterfowl viewing along this entire blueways route can be quite extensive, with a number of duck species appearing only during the winter months; and most of the water birds seen only during the summer. Waterfowl include mallards, American black duck, mute swan, Canada goose, brant, American widgeon, gadwall, bufflehead, common goldeneye, hooded merganser, red-breasted merganser, greater scaup, American coot, and rarely: canvasback and green winged teal. Summer water birds include great blue heron, snowy egret, great egret, black crowned night heron, green heron, lesser yellowlegs, greater yellowlegs, willet, and horned grebe.

The Gaspee beach (12) and Conimicut Point (13), especially out of beach season, are great locations to look for shorebirds, including herring gulls, greater black-backed gulls, laughing gulls, common terns, sanderlings, semipalmated sandpipers, double crested cormorants, and the rare black bellied plover, dunlins, ruddy turnstones, and American oystercatchers.

Leaving Occupessatuxet Cove and paddling south along the shore, you will come to the location of Mark Rock (14), an almost buried ledge of rock. Located at the end of Rock Avenue, in the village of Conimicut, the formerly exposed ledge has been found to contain carvings that we call petroglyphs, today. In May, 1920, Mark Rock was a sandstone ledge, broken into several fragments, about 75 feet long and 50 feet wide, almost totally submerged at high tide and exposed at low tide. Today, over 60% of Mark Rock is covered by sand churned up during the major hurricanes of the last 60 years. The petroglyphs are compared to those of the famous Dighton Rock in Mass. They have been attributed to Narragansett Indians or to the Norsemen who sailed up Narragansett Bay centuries before the English arrived.

CONIMICUT (15) was originally a summer resort, complete with a steamship dock just north of Mark Rock to serve the excursion boats coming from Providence to Cole farm and Conimicut. Conimicut Point during Colonial times was a fenced cow pasture. Today, it is lined with residences and has a park at the end - the takeout point for this blueways route. The beaches of Conimicut Point offer shorebird viewings including sandpipers, yellowlegs, oystercatcher, egret and herons. A shoal extends from the point east to the Conimicut lighthouse, built in 1883. Beware rip currents around the lighthouse. Takeout for your canoe or kayak is on the beach on the north side of the point. There is ample parking and picnic tables.

It should be noted that this route is through SC WATERS - UNSAFE FOR THE HARVESTING OF SHELLFISH.

**ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET AND CARRY A WHISTLE OR OTHER SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE, PREFERABLY ATTACHED TO YOUR LIFE JACKET, PADDLERS SHOULD CHECK WATER LEVEL AND TIDES, WEATHER, AND WATERWAY CONDITIONS PRIOR TO EVERY TRIP, REMOVE WHAT YOU BRING, CLEAN UP MORE IF YOU CAN. PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY. REPORT ANY PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTER TO WARWICK HARBORMASTER, 401-738-2019.**

Produced by the Warwick Wildlife and Conservation Commission, 2017.

