

# The New York Times

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## TRENDING

### Discover the Natural Life Near Your Hotel

To help guests better appreciate local wildlife, a number of hotels have naturalists to give guided walks and ecotours, many of them free.

Raleigh Nyenhuis, the head naturalist at Sea Island, Ga., takes guests on several types of walks, including discovering sea turtles at night and bird and marsh walks. "To be a naturalist is to be personable, ready and willing," she said in a phone interview, adding that each year she changes her programs based on demand and on ecological changes. She added a junior naturalist program in March for children 7 to 14 (\$55 a person).

At Mohonk Mountain House in upstate New York, which hired its first naturalist 20 years ago, Michael Riddolfo takes guests on guided nature



SPRING CREEK RANCH

and trail hikes to learn about forest plants and to identify trees; and on bird walks and early morning canoe tours to spot wildlife (tours are free; room rates from \$310 a person).

Mark Bullinger, who has been with Weekapaug Inn in Rhode Island since

2012, says that because the property is on a salt water lagoon, he often takes guests on guided beach walks to show them crabs, fish and types of vegetation through high-powered binoculars. "It's hard for people to slow down, but I want to draw them out and appreci-

ate nature," he said in an email. One-off events like "Supermoon" tours or harvest moon paddles are also offered (motorboat tours are \$40 a person; beach walks are included in room rates).

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Phoebe Stoner, the naturalist program director at Spring Creek Ranch in Jackson, Wyo., takes guests regularly to Grand Teton National Park 14 miles from the property ("Dawn to Dusk" tours are \$135 from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily). Conservation stories and wildlife education are the highlights; there are also nature hikes around the ranch (\$50 for two hours).

Ms. Stoner said that participants love learning about geology and hearing about conservation. "The tours add an extra level of depth to paint that narrative," she said.

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