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Meet Smeagull the seagull

True story of a Westbrook bird with a taste for the finer things

By Dan Mulvey

WESTBROOK — This seagull is an early riser and a picky eater — preferring delicacies from a gourmet fish monger — who isn't too proud to

accept a hand-out.

"Smeagull the seagull (specifically a herring gull) wakes me up around 6:30 in the morning with a knock-knock-knock on our sliding glass door. I rustle up

some food from the bottom of the freezer as fast as I can, and so starts a typical day in Westbrook by the shore," said Mark Lender, author and naturalist.

"It's been happening for several years now and has become routine, if one can define a close encounter with a seagull 'routine.' "

Lender, whose voice you might have heard on his NPR radio show, "Living on Earth," sometimes slips into verse when he talks about wildlife.

Lender said, "It all started around 2007. Here comes this seagull after some seed I threw out, but he's eating only the sunflower seeds that are still in the pods; the rest of his cronies are less picky and even mistaking small pebbles for food.

"A few days later, here he comes again, choosing only the whole kernels of corn. A few days after that, he knocked on our door and simply wanted more food. To the both of us, it was amazing how

See *Seagull* on A12



Mark Seth Lender / Contributed photo



Valerie Pettis, left, is a graphic designer and the illustrator of "Smeagull the Seagull." Mark Lender is the author.

The real Smeagull with a fish.