

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
AUDUBON**

Afield



Featuring
**SANCTUARIES
& EDUCATION**

Summer 2022



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

This year I am fully dedicated to the goals of No Mow May. Have you heard of this? It's a movement that encourages people to think differently about their lawns. My lawn is less than half an acre, and it includes a few native maple and cherry trees. In recent years I have planted native flowering shrubs and both annual and perennial native wildflowers. I have stopped mowing a few patches entirely. And in May I am not going to mow my lawn. At all.

By now my neighbors know me well enough to grin and tolerate my natural lawn-scape. My lawn has dandelions, native violets, clovers, multiple grass and sedge and rush species, with garden beds of native meadow wildflowers. Not mowing also reveals which species grow tall, which grow slow, and which spread low. Oh yeah, and I rarely rake. Leaves and sticks and bark are scattered in a natural (read random) pattern around my lawn.

And why do I do this? Pollinators. The insects that emerge each spring (from the leaves and sticks and bark) need food, and dandelions are one of the most important sources of protein and energy for many species of bees, beetles, and other insects. All the other wildflower species provide a diversity of options for insects throughout the spring, and into the summer and fall. As they wander from flower to flower, they are pollinating the plants to ensure the seeds will continue to propagate my mini-meadow. I like insects, but I like birds



too, and this diversity and abundance of pollinating insects are critically important for nesting birds. I like to think I am providing a valuable habitat service to my neighborhood.

In fact, there is abundant research that shows managing your lawn or land like this can support much higher nesting success for birds in a neighborhood and/or natural setting. We are deploying these same strategies in gardens and fields at NH Audubon's centers to help ensure our birds (and bugs) not only persist, but thrive. Take a break from mowing and see what happens in your living space. Over time your neighborhood birds (and bugs) will thank you. Learn more about our pollinator projects in this issue of *Afield*, and please help us continue these important projects!

I hope to see you outside!

Doug Bechtel, President

Cover Photo:

A male Canada Warbler, graces the cover of this issue, photographed by Donna Keller:

On June 20, 2021 my husband and I went out on a sunrise canoe trip to Bolster Pond which is part of the Otter Brook Preserve in Sullivan, NH. We were watching a loon family when I heard the song of the Canada Warbler in a wooded area behind us. We paddled

over towards the sound and the warbler gave us about 30 seconds of amazing looks and just enough time to lift up my camera to get a few images of this beautiful bird.

The Canada Warbler is on of the target species for our forest management plan on Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary, and it joins the list of songbirds that require early successional habitat. Read more about this on page 4-5.

Forests and Forestry

by Doug Bechtel

We are surrounded by trees. In fact, we all live in the middle of the largest contiguous forest ecosystem east of the Mississippi River. Commonly known as the Northern Forest, this 26 million acre forest dominates northern New England and southeastern Canada. The forests to the south that stretch along the Appalachian forest states include millions of additional acres of habitat for countless wildlife species.

Over the last 300 years, these forests have been cut by European and nonindigenous settlers at least two times, and each time have regrown into forests. For thousands of years Abenaki, Pennacook, and Wabanaki peoples managed forests by clearing areas with fire and other means to encourage certain species to return. One forest ecologist told me years ago, “Trees like to grow here.”

Today, New Hampshire is over 85% forested, after having at least two pulses of being cleared up to 85% for agriculture, sheep pasturing, and other economic drivers. Our forests are a blend of species and ages, supporting a wide diversity of wildlife requiring such diversity to thrive. Millions of residents and visitors use these habitats for everything from outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, camping birding, skiing) to economic support (timber revenue, maple sugar, tourism). New Hampshire’s timber-based economy exceeds \$2 billion per year, while timber-based recreation industry accounts for more than \$1 billion per year.

Multiple land trusts, and state and federal agencies, have recognized the values provided by our forests. The Weeks Act of 1911 was landmark legislation that provided a path for the Federal Government to continue protecting our nation’s forests for all of these uses and values. Two of our closest conservation partners, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, and Appalachian Mountain Club, were instrumental in successfully lobbying for the passage of the Weeks Act. The White Mountain National Forest (over 700,000 acres in New Hampshire and Maine) was one of the first acquisitions by the growing US Forest Service as the result of the Weeks Act.

Today, land trust organizations such as The Nature Conservancy (NH Chapter) and Society for the Protection of NH Forests have conserved thousands of acres of forest. Nonprofits such as NH Timber Owners Association and the Northern Forest Center support private landowners

This balance of respecting both human needs and nature conservation is a strong cultural force in New Hampshire, and one that NH Audubon is proud to play an important role in.



*An untouched section of forest on the Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary.
Photo by Hope Jordan.*

and the timber economy through legislative activities and creative economic support mechanisms that ensure our forests stay forest, while benefitting people. This balance of respecting both human needs and nature conservation is a strong cultural force in New Hampshire, and one that NH Audubon is proud to play an important role in.

NH Audubon owns 39 wildlife sanctuaries, and dozens of conservation easements across all of New Hampshire’s ten counties. These lands represent the full diversity of our state’s habitats, from wetlands to mountain slopes, coastal areas and inlands, large and small. Like any large private landowner, we make careful decisions about timber management. Primary among our goals is to continue providing habitat for our native wildlife species. Other goals also include providing outdoor recreation, securing timber revenue for ourselves and the local timber-based economies, and supporting the vast array of natural benefits nature provides, such as clean air and water.

Where we have implemented timber management, we have carefully measured the response of native birds to ensure we continue to support their populations, and add to the knowledge of how to maintain forests for the long-term. The most important way to ensure our forest habitats continue to be resilient in the face of climate change is to let the trees grow and re-grow, forever storing carbon in the soils and plants and wood that grow there. Our plan is to stay surrounded by trees. Our human and wildlife residents will be healthier and happier as a result.

Sanctuary Notes

Forest Management for the Birds, Part III

Photos and story by Marc Nutter



Walking through the seed cut, Phil Brown and Jeremy Turner appreciate the early successional habitat that was created in this patch cut. Wildlife snags were also left to encourage insects and cavity nesters.

New Hampshire Audubon Wildlife Sanctuaries provide many options for how to manage lands for diverse benefits. One of our most important strategic priorities is to demonstrate exemplary management on our lands. In some cases, this means letting natural processes shape the future of the landscape. Ice storms, floods, hurricanes, and other natural disturbances can re-set the age of a forest and create conditions for wildlife that weren't present before. In other cases, wildlife and habitat benefit from active management, including timber harvesting. There are many considerations we take into account when making decisions about how and if to manage our lands. Our long-term treatment of the Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary offers a great example of how we approach management for specific bird species.

Research in New England by universities and forest agencies, such as the US Forest Service, prioritize maintaining current forests into the future to help store carbon and increase ecological resilience from the impacts of climate change. As we know, forests provide clean air and water and essential features for all our wildlife. Our forests are resilient. The critical point here is that the forests NH Audubon protects will always be forests. Habitats we conserve will never be developed or converted.

The management of our lands begins with this grounding principle: we must look at the entire ecology of a wildlife sanctuary, see what is doing well and which elements need

adjustment. We keep a tally of species seen and heard, and consult with our science team and other professional partners to see where we can make improvements. The forestry work done at Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary over the past six years is a direct result of our careful planning and serves as a model for NH Audubon's land management vision.

This "part three" documentation continues our reporting on management activities for the 590 acre wildlife sanctuary. We are working from a 2015 forest management plan created in consultation with The Ecosystem Management Company, a subsidiary of Meadowsend Timberlands Ltd. In general, habitat goals for Kensan-Devan were and still are, "to protect and maintain interior forest habitat, protect interior wetlands, create early successional habitat, and increase forest structure and vertical diversity" (Forest Management Plan, pg 29).

Specifically, we are creating habitat and increasing the presence of these key breeding birds: Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Blue-headed Vireo, Eastern Wood Pewee, and Wood Thrush.

To make sure we knew how our actions on the landscape affected this list of focal species, we conducted breeding bird surveys in 2016 (before the timber harvest), 2017 (after harvest), and again last summer (2021). The results are in, and they indeed look promising.

SUMMARY OF 2021 RESULTS

The timber harvest of 2016-2017 created early-successional forest habitat within Kensan-Devan's Meetinghouse Pond section with broad success:

- ◇ Newly-present and abundant counts of Prairie Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Eastern Towhees.
- ◇ Some mature-forest species including Blue-headed Vireo appeared to decline after the harvest, especially within the reduced canopy areas, which was expected.
- ◇ Several species, including Eastern Wood-Pewee and Black-throated Green Warbler exhibited mixed trends, thereby indicating a potentially stable population. Future data will help paint a clearer picture of populations in this category.
- ◇ Ovenbird and Red-eyed Vireo remained the most abundant birds on the property despite an initial population decline immediately following the harvest, which suggests a satisfactory amount of mature forest exists at Kensan-Devan and within the surrounding landscape.

THE NEXT PHASE

The last phase of the plan was completed this past year under the direction of our consulting forester, Jeremy Turner of Meadowsend. Throughout the project, wildlife habitat improvements were made including leaving existing standing dead trees (snags), creating additional snags by girdling some trees, and being extremely careful around water resources.

We look forward to seeing how this next phase of forest management affects the breeding birds of the Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary in the coming years. Last spring, a trail crew



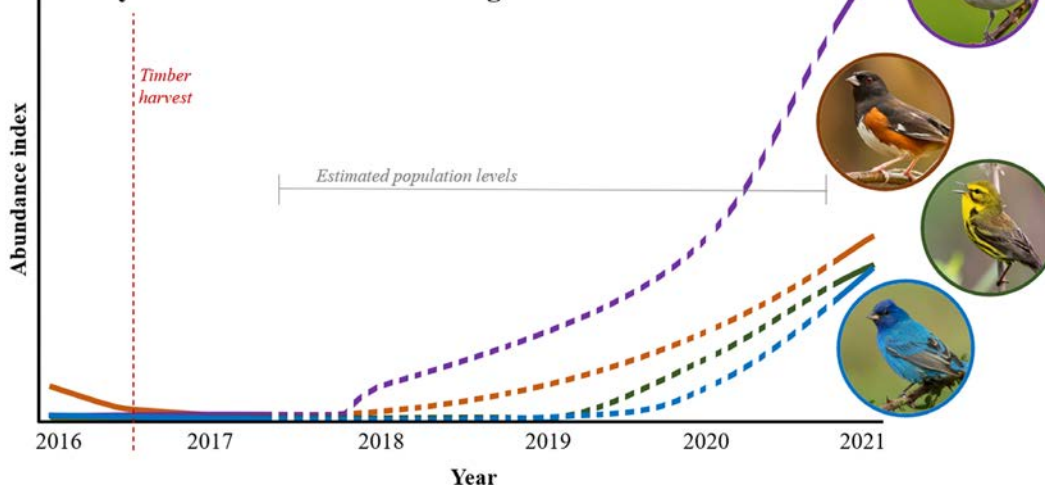
Loggers left coarse woody debris in strategic locations and even built some rustic structures like this tree leaning on its own trunk to create habitat.

from the Student Conservation Association updated the trails which will host self-guided interpretive signs that showcase some of the sustainable forest management practices in place and the results.

Please do visit the sanctuary to see for yourself the positive impact we've had on our forest birds this summer. And, for a guided experience, register for the walk on Sunday June 26 at 8am. We'll be out with our good friends Phil Brown and Steven Lamonde, talking about the forestry work and its impact on the breeding birds of Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary.

More information about this property and its management can be found at: nhaudubon.org/kensan.

Breeding Bird Population Responses to Early-Successional Forest Management



Graph of species abundance at Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary for New Hampshire Audubon's four early-successional forest birds: Chestnut-sided warbler (purple), Eastern Towhee (orange), Prairie Warbler (green), and Indigo Bunting (blue). Courtesy of Steven Lamonde.

Works Cited:

- Lamonde, S, and J. Littleton. (2021). *Five Years Post-Harvest: Breeding Bird Population Survey and Habitat Assessment for the Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary*. Moosewood Ecological LLC, Chesterfield, New Hampshire.
- The Ecosystem Management Company (TEMC). (2015). *Forest Management Plan for the New Hampshire Audubon Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary*.
- Breeding Bird Surveys conducted on the property: Chad Witco, Antioch New England (2016, 2017); Stephen Lamonde, Moosewood Ecological LLC (2021).

Sanctuary Notes

Pollinator Meadow Plants Seeds for the Future

by Marc Nutter

What an amazingly productive past year it has been at NH Audubon! Thanks to a Moose Plate Grant from the State Conservation Commission, support from StonyField Organics, and from an anonymous donor, staff and volunteers have taken major steps in restoring one acre of old field into a native pollinator meadow. Building off our successes in the demonstration gardens around McLane Center (check out the virtual tour of the gardens on our website), we have extended our work benefiting pollinators in the northwest field. This project, planned in 2019 and started in 2021, will take another 3-4 years to become the productively beautiful meadow we have envisioned.

Starting from a tiny seed is a tough thing to do, but the native plants we selected will do well in the growing conditions present in our meadow: full sun, well-drained, and productive soils. There is a wet spot where we added some additional water-loving plants into our seed mixture. A huge effort by a cohort of Student Conservation Association fellows took place on October 15. We first moved and secured the coverings from the year one plots over to the year two plots, and then seeding the half acre of exposed soil after being covered with black plastic and landscaping fabric since the previous June. It was amazing to see how these dedicated young people worked so hard to leave a lasting positive legacy on the land.

If you were to walk around the field in late August of 2020 before we cleared and smothered the first half acre, you might have seen a waving field of goldenrod and thought, “I love this place – it is so beautiful.” Rightfully so, the field waving in hues of amber did and will continue to have an abundance of late season pollen and nectar sources, but it was also choked by invasive shrubs, which left unfilled niches in the early and mid-summer seasons. As Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer wrote in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, “To love a place is not enough. We must find ways to heal it.”

We first loved, and then



A Student Conservation Association crew spreads a mixture of native seed on the half-acre pollinator meadow plot in October before pressing the seeds down into the soil with a lawn roller then covering with straw.

found a way to heal this place, re-establishing a more diverse collection of native plants that will provide insect forage via beautiful blooms in a patchwork of plants from May all the way through October. And where there are insects feeding on flowers and pollinating them in return, there will be a more abundant food source for our beloved birds and other wildlife. And in this healing process, I have developed a stronger connection with this land, checking in on it almost daily to make sure the tarps haven't blown around and waiting (impatiently) to see which

seeds have germinated in our newly planted half-acre. And yes, I still tell people that I've finally done something that can be seen from space – I'm just waiting for the next satellite image refresh to pin it on my refrigerator.

As a connection to this project, we want more people to experience the growing meadow with all its sights, sounds, and smells. We are excited to announce that thanks to a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, we will be initiating the construction of an all-persons trail around the perimeter of the meadow. This trail will be a raised, crushed gravel pathway finished with stone dust for a smooth traveling surface. A few spots will be built up as low bridges



Depicted here are the pollinator meadow demonstration quadrants: each block represents one-quarter acre with a different experimental treatment applied. The yellow flower lines are sunflower borders and the green blocks represent interpretive signage.

to allow seasonal water to flow across the landscape. This plan will be vetted by the communities we intend to serve – people living with paralysis and their family, friends, and caregivers; people who use assistive devices for mobility; and even new families with little ones in strollers – all people searching for a connection to the land.

Watch the recent Pollinator Panel Discussion on our YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/h2x9cGOYwhE>) which shared best practices for establishing pollinator habitat in New England. Discussion topics highlighted techniques for

creating pollinator meadows, native plant selection, benefits to pollinators, and invasives through the lens of insects. Panelists included: me, Marc Nutter, NH Audubon; Alina Harris, Xerces Society; Emma Erler and Matt Tarr, UNH Extension Cooperative Extension.

If you want to help us with this project, consider signing up for our BioBlitz on Saturday, June 25 where we will look at the success of our fall seeding effort as well as identify as many visiting pollinators as we can with NH Audubon staff and guest experts.

Summer Sanctuary Haikus

by Parker Schuerman

A traditional Japanese haiku is a three-line poem with seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Often focusing on images from nature, haiku emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression.

I wanted to introduce myself and some of NH Audubon's lands in this spirit of reverence and brevity.

In February, NH Audubon invited me to manage their lands with the help of all their committed volunteers. My name is T. Parker Schuerman, and I am a restoration ecologist with a

background in early successional habitat, forestry, and fire.

In a few words and pictures, I wanted to introduce some hidden gems in the colorful tapestry of our wildlife sanctuaries to perhaps help you plan a hike or adventure with your family this summer. Found in three parts of NH, these sanctuaries provide visitors habitat textures and discovery in bogs, floodplain forests and in classic Pine-Hardwood pond shores. Ponemah Bog is in the Merrimack Region in Amherst. Bellamy Marsh is tucked along the Great Bay in the Seacoast Region near Dover. And finally, Stoney Brook Wildlife Sanctuary is in the Monadnock Region in Newbury.

Bellamy River Wildlife Sanctuary in Dover, NH



*A secret grass sea
borders a tidal river
through swamp oak woodlands*

Photo by Dyanna Smith.

DIRECTIONS: From Rt 4 in Dover, drive 2.5 miles east of the junction with Rt 108 and turn onto Back River Road. After 0.8 mile, take Bayview Road to the right. At the end of Bayview Rd, past a stand of mature pine trees, bear left onto a gravel road and continue through the field to the parking lot.

Sanctuary Notes

2021 Volunteer Accomplishments

by Phil Brown

Our sanctuary volunteers again stepped up to the challenge of keeping NH Audubon's wildlife sanctuaries an enjoyable and safe experience for all, and helping the organization maintain and manage wildlife habitats across its land base of 7,500 acres on 39 distinct wildlife sanctuaries around the state. Below are a few outstanding examples of how we accomplished these objectives.

PONEMAH BOG IN AMHERST

The past year saw major improvements to several of the Bog's platforms including the replacement of major supports on the Hitchiner platform, which provides exceptional views of the bog pond from an upland environment. A short and relatively even walk leads to this overlook. Further out into the bog, the former Tamarack Platform was rededicated to the 'Friends of Ponemah Bog' in honor of the particularly engaged group of individuals who maintains the sanctuary. For his leadership of this group and engagement in so many bog projects over the past three years, Sanctuary Steward,



Ruffed Grouse nest at Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo by Phil Brown.

George Rollend was awarded the John Thalheimer Volunteer Award during NH Audubon's 2021 Annual Meeting.

KENSAN-DEVAN IN MARLBOROUGH

NH Audubon can always count on roving sanctuary volunteer, Andrei Campneau, who, along with his trusty electric-powered chainsaw, will show up wherever there are trails to clear. This was the case at the Kensan-Devan Wildlife Sanctuary, where NH Audubon, with help from a service crew from the Student Conservation Association – NH Corps, recently re-established an abandoned trail system. The trail, now at two miles, had a considerable amount of blowdowns from the past several years, and Andrei worked hard with me on some of the hottest days of the summer to get this trail back into shape. For more on this project, please see page 4.

SILK FARM IN CONCORD AND CHASE IN HOPKINTON

Volunteer Eddie Damon has provided capable and timely volunteer help to the Silk Farm Wildlife Sanctuary trails, outside McLane Center's doors, for several years. As Sanctuary Steward, he has helped NH Audubon maintain the sanctuary's Field Loop and Old Orchard Trails, freeing them from invasive shrubs and poison ivy in order to provide a safer and more enjoyable experience for all. Recently, volunteer Tom Weston has also come into the fold and has capably provided additional support at this popular trail system. Eddie and Tom, a dynamic volunteer duo, have cleared countless trees from across the trails, re-set a favorite granite bench overlooking Turkey Pond, and recently picked up trail maintenance responsibilities at the nearby Chase Wildlife Sanctuary. Their trail and boundary reconnaissance has provided a boost to NH Audubon and its membership by helping put this large and wild sanctuary back on the map.

DAHL IN NORTH CONWAY

In 2021, volunteer Colin Preece provided key support to NH Audubon by helping to restore a degraded portion of the Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary to a natural state. With the help of contractor Matt Coughlan of Recon Trails, LLC, Colin transported truckloads of debris from old homeless encampments that had covered a portion of the ecologically-rich sanctuary. This support saved the organization resources and demonstrated how partnerships can help solve problems effectively.

More opportunities like these exist for ambitious volunteers who are looking to get involved! Please contact Parker Schuerman at pschuerman@nhaudubon.org if you'd like to volunteer on a NH Audubon wildlife sanctuary.

Hawk Watch 2021



*A Merlin rests during the migration.
Photo by Levi Burford.*

Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory finished their 17th fall migration season in November with a total count of 190,580. The count includes over 143 thousand Broad-winged Hawks! For more information and links to the 2021 season report, visit: nhaudubon.org/conservation/raptor-migration/pack-monadnock.



The hawk watch team celebrates counting 1,000 Monarchs. Photo by Francie Von Mertens.

Stoney Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Newbury, NH



*Streams gurgle and sing
woodpeckers knock and echo
sounds across the pond*

Photo by Phil Brown.

DIRECTIONS: From Rt. 103 in Newbury, turn onto Route 103A North and drive for approximately 3 miles. Turn right onto Chalk Pond Road. Drive 1.3 miles to the trailhead on the western section of the wildlife sanctuary and 2 miles to the trailhead parking lot of the eastern section.

Sanctuary Notes



Ponemah Bog Winter Water Quality Monitoring Program

by George Rollend

Ponemah Bog (actually a poor fen), is a 75 acre wetland area characterized by an acidic floating sphagnum mat surrounding a 3 acre pond. The characteristic bog vegetation includes sphagnum mosses, sundew, pitcher plants, leatherleaf, highbush blueberry, tamarack and black spruce.

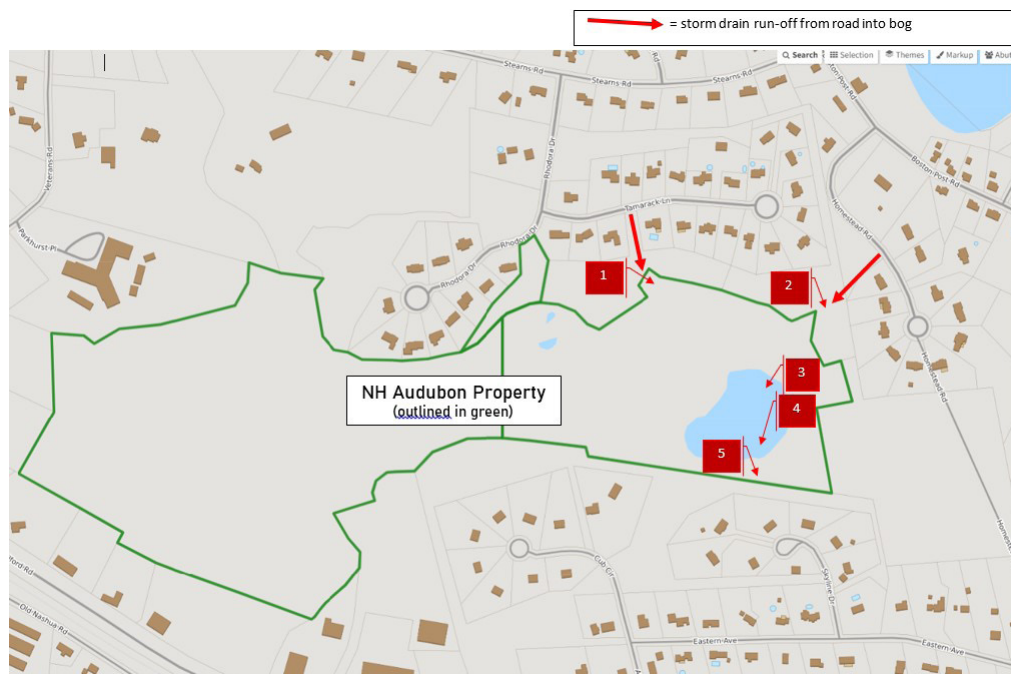
A collaboration between the Amherst Department of Public Works (DPW) and Conservation Commission and NH Audubon was initiated in 2019 to start the creation of a database to monitor any measurable effects on the water chemistry in the bog's ecosystem from the impact of deicing salts on the adjacent roads. The application of deicing salts to roads is an important component of maintaining road safety and sodium chloride is the most cost effective deicing chemical. The environmental impact of deicing salts on water supply sources and ecosystems can be minimized by use of 'best management practices' in applying salt to impervious surfaces.

The concern initially started around whether it made sense to initiate salting of roads near the bog that had been previously only sanded. Since the 2019-2020 winter season, the Town of Amherst adopted the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) program titled "Green SnoPro". Green SnoPro is recognized by

While the bog is dormant in the winter months, it continues to be under the watchful eyes of the 'Friends of Ponemah Bog' all year long.
Photo by Mark Warren.

NH DES and many local government organizations as a best management practice.

Historically, many towns including Amherst, attempted to reduce their salt consumption by mixing salt with sand. But sand can be as detrimental to the environment as salt. Fresh sand introduced to waterways from runoff can increase the level of phosphorus in the water. The effect is a depletion of available oxygen in the water, which can kill aquatic life. Additionally, it is more likely that multiple treatments of the road will be required to achieve the desired pavement condition. If more



Aerial map of the bog surrounded by both residential and commercial properties. Individual water-quality samples for bog water chemistry are taken from five critical points around and the bog perimeter and from two deep water points in the pond. The perimeter points coincide with run off from the storm drains on the adjacent roads that leach into the bog property.



Eric Hahn (DPW) and George Rollend shown collecting a deep water sample from the 'eye of the bog' pond. We can walk on water this time of year. Photo by Mark Radwan.

treatments are required, the salt savings are not realized and sand has now been unnecessarily introduced into the sensitive ecosystems.

Although the first few years under the Green SnoPro program have indicated a significant reduction in overall sand and salt usage, it is understood that weather patterns can change drastically from one winter to the next. Salt usage data has been collected for the past several years to serve as a baseline to compare future data results. It is difficult and can be unsafe to

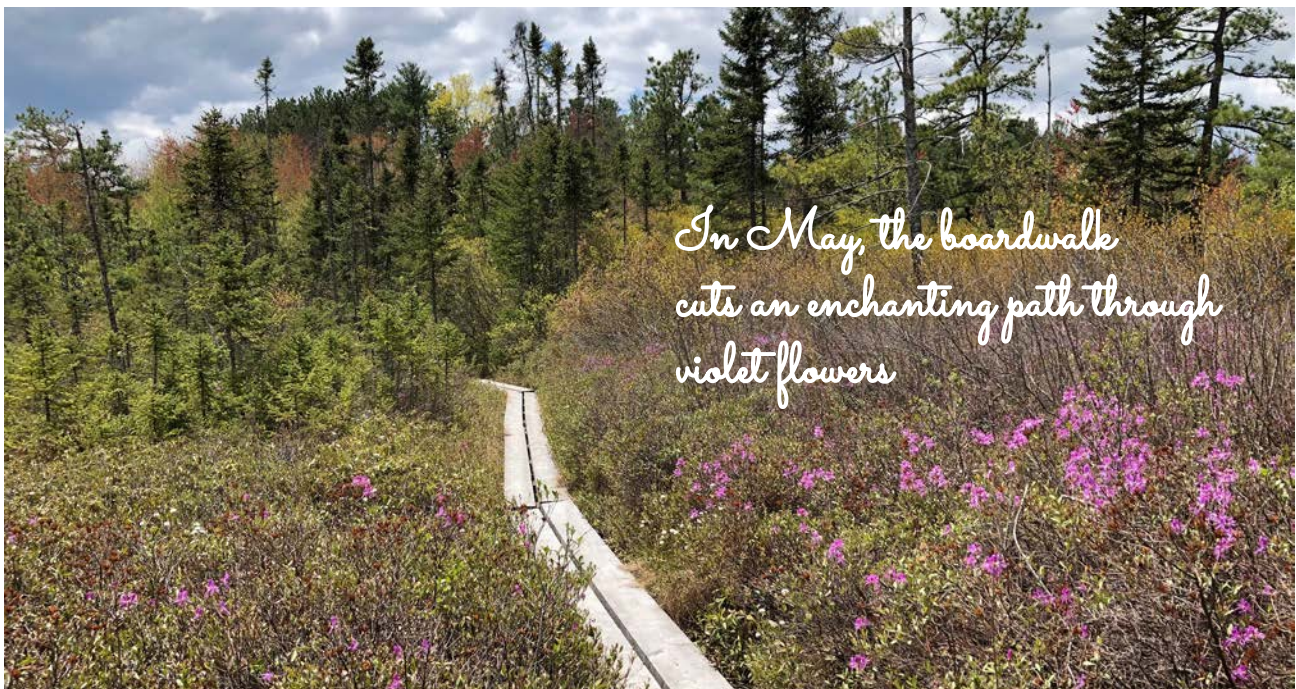
collect samples from the bog's sphagnum mat areas outside of the winter months; thus, only a small number of water samples is currently available. Based on contaminant levels from the initial deep-water samples in the pond and those from within the sphagnum mat surrounding it (specifically where the road storm drains feed into the surrounding property of the bog), the samples have not shown significantly elevated levels of contaminate concentrations such as chloride and phosphorus.

DES suggests levels of 50 mg/L indicate concentrations showing human influence. That said, the current water quality chronic criterion is 230 mg/L, so even the 50 mg/L is well below the standard to protect aquatic life and has what is referred to as assimilative capacity. The assimilative capacity refers to the natural ability of waters to dilute and disperse wastes and pollution without harm to the aquatic environment.

Longer term, an understanding of the potential benefit to the bog and other area ecosystems from DPW's program will likely take several more years. This monitoring program will help evaluate any potential links to salt transport due to heavy precipitation events/seasonal effects and evapotranspiration during dry summers. We will keep an eye on the chloride trend over time.

George is a Sanctuary Steward at Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary. Contributions to this article were made by Eric Slosek (Amherst DPW), Ken Edwardson (NH DES) and the Amherst Conservation Commission.

Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary in Amherst, NH



In May, the boardwalk cuts an enchanting path through violet flowers

Photo by Phil Brown.

DIRECTIONS: From Milford/Amherst: Go east on Rte. 101A for 0.5 miles, then turn left on Rte. 122. Immediately turn right on Stearns Rd and go 1.1 miles. Turn right on Rhodora Dr. and go straight ahead to parking.

Growing a Vision

THE MCLANE CENTER POLLINATOR GARDEN

Photos and story by Diane De Luca

I am thankful for the wide team that believes in the McLane Center pollinator garden—our dedicated volunteers, our many funders and supporters, and the visitors who come to share in the offerings. All of whom believe in the power of gardens to positively impact our future.

THE GARDENS

It is encouraging to see sustained growth in our pollinator gardens. Blooms stretch from early spring through October across the garden, supplying a long season of pollen and nectar to visiting pollinators. The grouping of similar plants gives the garden robust pockets of Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Anise Hyssop, New England Aster, just to name a few.

We find ourselves looking to thin or move plants around now. A great development. Spending time resting on our garden benches literally immerses you in blooms.

OUR POLLINATORS

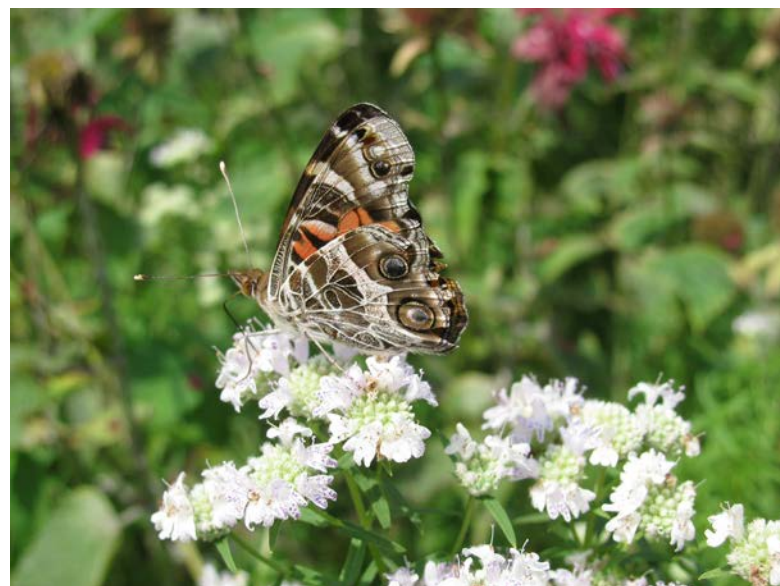
Community scientists continue to document the many pollinator visitors to our gardens. There are more than 100 species of pollinators that have been identified in the pollinator habitat at McLane, and we are excited to grow these findings. An iNaturalist project was initiated in 2021 that allows participants to photograph and upload findings, and broaden public engagement.

BUTTERFLY GARDENS

We continue to expand our butterfly garden area by adding plants that will allow for nectaring, especially as migrating butterflies like the Monarch head into their fall migration. These intentionally managed gardens to support Monarchs and other butterflies have been increasingly shown to be critical for sustaining their populations as they migrate across the continent. Common Milkweed and Swamp Milkweed fill some of our raised beds and serve as the host plant for the Monarch butterfly. Additions of asters, Ironweed, and some seeded annuals help allow for nectaring well into the fall.

GARDEN SHED

Last year we were excited to receive a gift of funds, and accompanying volunteer help, to rehabilitate the old raptor shed. This newly refurbished “Garden Shed” helps support our pollinator garden, and create a “home” for our crew of dedicated garden volunteers. This has proved to be a valuable and useful workspace. The garden shed received two new



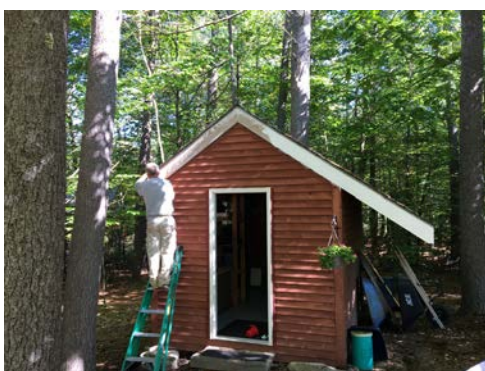
windows, a safer and easier entryway with a new door, a painted ceiling and floor to brighten up the inside, with shelving, tool and hose hangers. We are thankful to Stephen Walker and Tom Bowles for all their efforts to make this renovated building an integral part of our garden space.

PUBLIC EVENTS

For the second year in a row we were able to collaborate with Bagley Pond Perennials and Denise Dalaker to host an online plant sale. We are grateful to all those who participated and are working to create native pollinator spaces at home.

As part of a larger year-long webinar series supported through the New Hampshire Humanities Council and the Parker Nelson Foundation, we created a focused segment on pollinators and pollinator conservation. Over 800 participants attended the Pollinator Webinar series with more than 5000 others viewing it on Facebook and the New Hampshire Audubon YouTube channel. All of the webinars were recorded and available to the

public to watch at youtube.com/nhaudubon.



Photos, clockwise from above: an old shed becomes the garden shed, our amazing garden volunteers take a well-deserved social break, the beginnings of the butterfly garden (now full of plants!), an American Lady graces the gardens, the pollinator gardens at the front of McLane Center.

2022 HAPPENINGS

We are excited to bring back both online and in person happenings in the McLane Center pollinator habitat. Just a few of the events we are looking forward to:

- ◇ A series of pollinator webinars that will include details on native plants, pollinators, hummingbirds, bees and will conclude with a presentation from Doug Tallamy in the fall. Watch for the listings in our eNews and on the website calendar.
- ◇ An in person Native Plant Sale with Bagley Pond Perennials on June 12th.
- ◇ A BioBlitz in our pollinator habitat on June 25th. Pollinator and plant experts will lead groups as we work to increase our knowledge of what lives in these areas. Join us and gain the skills to be part of our community scientist pollinator crew.
- ◇ Family friendly pollinator programs that will take place in our gardens and run monthly from May through October. *And more....please join us!*

THANKS

We are incredibly thankful for the hard work of our garden volunteers: Sandy Bowles, Tom Bowles, David Forsyth, Pam Freilich, Jordan Greenberg, Ginny Hast, Sheryl Ingraham, Sandy MacIntyre, Ellie Peabody, Jessica Powers, Grady Sullivan, Stephen Walker, Margaret Watkins, and Nancy Wilson.

Sincere thanks to the funders and supporters of the McLane Center pollinator gardens including the Parker Nelson Foundation, Benjamin Couch Trust, Gertrude Couch Trust, Walker Family Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service, UNH Extension Master Gardener Program, and the NH Humanities Council.

We would not be able to do this work without your support.

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow"
-Audrey Hepburn



Education Notes



Jaeger in flight. The M/V Granite State at speed (inset).

The Joy of Pelagic Birding

Photos and story by Jon Woolf

It's 8:30am on a Monday morning. We're headed southeast at 14 knots, leaving a long churning wake astern. The Isles of Shoals are already behind us, and the whole of Jeffreys Ledge lies ahead. What adventures does the day have in store? And how did I come to be here and wondering about it?

When I moved from Ohio to New Hampshire in 2004, I expected to find new and different birds. There were the mountain birds that lived in the North Country, and there were the shorebirds that made birding the coast a new adventure every summer and fall. But one thing I never expected was to find birds out on the ocean.

Then I went on a whale watch. And at the end of the trip, when the naturalist was discussing the whales we'd seen, she threw in something about the ocean birds we had also encountered. Birds on the ocean?

What was she talking about?

Well, okay, gulls fly out over the ocean looking for food, and of course I'd heard of the albatrosses and frigatebirds, who spend most of their lives flying over the open sea. But those were tropical birds. What were these other birds the naturalist had mentioned? Shearwaters? Storm-petrels? I opened my bird guide to look for them, and soon discovered an entire group of birds I had never heard of before: pelagics. These are birds that spend most of their lives at sea, coming to land only to nest and raise their young. They rarely even come within sight of land if they can avoid it. So most of the time, the only way to see pelagic birds is to go to them, aboard a boat.



Adult Northern Gannet.

A couple of years later, NH Audubon was searching for new program ideas to get more people interested in the organization and in birding. I remembered my experiences with pelagic birds and suggested starting a pelagic birding trip, based in a New Hampshire harbor, and easily accessible to NH birders. In the fall of 2008 we ran our first pelagic trip, and we've been doing them twice a year ever since, weather permitting.

Which is how I got here, ten miles out to sea aboard the whale-watching boat M/V Granite State. Well, most of the time she's a whale-watching boat. Today, Granite State and her crew are hosting forty-odd determined birders on an all-day ramble out into the Gulf of Maine in search of pelagic birds. Captain Pete Reynolds has been hosting our pelagic trips since we started; after thirteen years, he and his crew are as good at pelagic birding as they are at finding whales. Field leadership is provided by Steve and Jane Mirick, two of the best birders in New England. Steve

is very good at calling out birds and describing the action on the boat's PA system too, and usually makes the day even more fun.

Our primary hunting ground is Jeffreys Ledge, an undersea ridge that stretches from Rockport, Massachusetts, up into Maine waters. The chilly waters of the Gulf of Maine are not as rich a hunting ground for pelagics as the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, but we have a list of expected species, and beyond that ... who knows? That's what makes it fun.

Wilson's Storm-petrels are generally common—by some estimates they're the most common species of bird on Earth. Northern Gannets are much less common than that, but they're still a typical pelagic bird. They're handsome birds too, with

their blazing white bodies and black outer wings. We can get any or all of the four species of shearwaters that are known to frequent the North Atlantic: Great, Cory's, Sooty, and Manx. Unusual gulls are always a possibility—Lesser Black-backed, Iceland, Laughing, and Bonaparte's gulls have all been seen. In spring, we may see migrating Red and Red-necked Phalaropes. We can even get some pretty good land birds since we always pass near the Isles of Shoals, which attract everything from warblers to Peregrine Falcons.

Then there are the truly rare birds. Jaegers, for example, don't appear on every trip, but we do see them. Unfortunately, most of the ones we do see are immatures, which are very difficult to identify as to species. Still, we're sure that over the years we've gotten all three possible species of jaegers—Pomarine, Long-tailed, and Parasitic. We've even seen them demonstrating their kleptoparasitic feeding method a few times. Once in a while we might see a Puffin that strayed south from the Maine breeding colonies. And on one very special day, we scored the first documented sighting of a South Polar Skua in New Hampshire waters.

Even when the birds are elsewhere, there are usually whales around. We usually come across Humpback, Fin, and Minke whales. Atlantic White-sided Dolphins are less common, making them a treat when we do encounter them. A few times we've gotten North Atlantic Right Whales, a critically endangered species. Sometimes we find other kinds of marine life: basking sharks, ocean sunfish, Lion's Mane jellyfish, perhaps even a wandering Loggerhead Turtle. It's a great way to spend a day: out on the water in company with a boat-full of equally crazy birders. Just us, the sea, the sky, and the birds.

NH Audubon's pelagic birding trips run twice a year, usually at the end of May and sometime in mid-September or early October. They're always announced at least six weeks in advance, and sign-up is always through the NH Audubon website. We have a gang of regular attendees, most of whom are very avid and experienced birders. And we always welcome new talent! When you join one of our trips, you immediately become part of the group, no secret handshake required. You'll become one of NH Audubon's citizen scientists, using your eyes and voice to add to our knowledge of these far-roving seabirds and the ecosystem they inhabit.

A word of caution, though: while we don't go out at all if the weather is really bad, we are dedicated birders and we can (and have) gone out in weather that is unpleasantly rough. So if you want to come, it's a good idea to find out if you can handle being out on the water for a whole day. The best way to do that is to go on one of Granite State Whale Watch's regular whale watches, which use the same boat and last 4 to 4 1/2 hours, instead of all day. It's a gentler, shorter introduction to the kind of trip we do. If you don't like it or can't take the motion (and not everybody can—seasickness is a common complaint and nothing to be ashamed of!), then you can be back on land that much sooner. If you do like it...sign up for the next trip, and I'll see you on board!



Cover crops planted last fall flourished as the temperatures dropped, showing visitors how to maintain healthy soils over the winter. Photo courtesy of UNH Extension.

Gardens for Growing and Learning

by Ruth Smith

Spring is a time of growth and renewal, a wonderful time to introduce a renewed and growing partnership between NH Audubon and the University of New Hampshire Extension Service. NH Audubon's Massabesic Center has been home to educational gardens since the early 2000s when the Common Ground 4-H Teaching Gardens were established. After various cycles of production and dormancy, the gardens are once again a place for learning, demonstration, and growth.

Extension Master Gardeners had been actively creating a pollinator garden at Massabesic Center since 2019. Last fall, an agreement between Extension and NH Audubon was formally revitalized. The first collaborative effort involved a hands-on workshop when participants constructed a 3-bin compost system. Other autumn activities included taking a soil test and smothering grass to prepare overgrown beds for planting cover crops. A rain garden that was previously established to capture runoff and conserve water was updated. This spring, the area that was planted with cover crops in the fall was prepared for the new vegetable garden.

Along the way, regular workshops, conducted by UNH Extension staff, Master Gardener volunteers, and other professionals have taught science-based gardening practices. Future workshops will be open to the public and will cover topics such as *Irrigation Systems for the Home Gardener*, *Garden Insects: Friend or Foe?*, extending the gardening season, making the most of garden space, companion planting, and much more. Watch the NH Audubon and UNH Extension calendar of events for updates. As the gardens progress, workshops will include best practices for bird friendly landscaping, and demonstrations on using native plants.

...continued on page 19



Paradise on the Point

Photos and story by Marc Nutter

Long, hot summer days are best spent on the water. Growing up in Ohio, my water was first a creek at the end of our street then the waves of Lake Erie. I only paddled a few times with my scout troop, but now as an indoctrinated New Englander, I try to spend summer weekends exploring the rivers, ponds, and lakes that make this state so special. Of all the bodies of water I've been on over the past four years, Newfound Lake at Paradise Point is still at the top of my list.

Imagine walking beneath the canopy of towering pine and hemlock trees toward the lapping shore of Newfound Lake. Dense shade opens to expanse views of crystal clear blue water and surrounding mountains. A friendly staff member helps you into your boat and waves as you float away from the dock. Looking back, you see those towering trees and remember reading in the nature center that there is an old growth stand of Eastern Hemlock on the property, some that germinated back in the 1600s.

Paradise Point is one of our most prized land holdings and our boat rental program offers a unique way of experiencing the wildlife sanctuary. If you've never rented a boat and paddled around the northern part of Newfound Lake, please do make a point of visiting the seasonal staff this summer. As one of the area's best kept secrets, our dock and rental fleet provide a picturesque experience from the water. Take a boat out from the dock and paddle along some of the last remaining undeveloped shoreline, west toward Hebron Marsh, and even up the Cockermouth River a ways to see a plethora of bird species. When I was there last summer, I encountered my first Yellow-billed Cuckoo, thanks in large part to my incredible birding guide, Dr. Pamela Hunt.

But that's not all Paradise Point has to offer—it's nature center is a cozy place to learn more about the area's natural history and

participate in educational programming. Programming normally occurs a few times per week for residents and visitors alike and includes hands-on activities for families as well as our recurring Red Barn Speaker Series geared toward adult audiences on Tuesday evenings.

This summer we are pleased to work with Camp Mayhew to deliver camp-specific environmental education programs to their boys thanks to a grant from the Irving Foundation. We are excited to work with Mayhew to offer meaningful experiences in nature observation and introducing campers to wildlife biology topics. One component of the program will be having the campers decide where to set up wildlife cameras in order to see which animals also call Mayhew Island their home.

For any of these great reasons, we really hope that you'll make the trip from wherever you are to see the many different ways that paradise really is on the point.



Last season's staff get ready for paddling at Paradise Point.

Education Notes

Resilient Raptors Webinar Series: The Unparalleled Peregrine Falcon

by Willamina Coroka

The all-new Resilient Raptors webinar series is reaching a broadscale audience, with attendees joining these monthly programs from not only neighboring towns and cities here in New Hampshire, but across the country. As expected, it is impossible to ignore the allure of the charismatic Peregrine Falcon!

I joined Senior Biologist Chris Martin to present these informative and entertaining talks on all things bird of prey, with a focus on our local celebrity falcons whose Manchester nest site is livestreamed on YouTube. Each webinar begins by showcasing the topic of the evening before offering opportunities for the audience to connect via inquiry or activity. Monthly topics aim to follow the general phenology of a breeding Peregrine Falcon pair. Beginning with general identification and raptor anatomy, the webinars continue by introducing participants to falcon adaptations, courtship displays and nesting techniques, incubation, chick development, fledgling flyers, and additional topics inspired by footage from the field.

Materials to accompany the presentations have been made available through a partnership with the Concord Public Library and Manchester City Library. At both locations, patrons and visitors alike can access a variety of different handouts to complete both during and after the webinar. We hope these accompanying materials—ranging from egg diagrams and observation sheets to owl pellets and coloring pages—provide attendees of all ages and stages with a more personalized



experience of the programs. With hope, these engagements will instill a lifelong curiosity and appreciation for wildlife and our natural world.

The fifth and final webinar in this series covers the annual banding of the falcon chicks at the Brady Sullivan Tower and examines the integral role long-term wildlife monitoring plays in research and conservation. With high attendance for our previous Resilient Raptors webinars, we anticipate return attendees and additional falcon fans to join us for the remainder as the season progresses.

The series is so well-received that we are in discussions over the possible focus of a year two series. There are multiple possibilities for the choice of focal raptor species, so stay tuned!

This series was supported by a grant from the Dorr Foundation.

“This presentation was the best I have ever seen. Looking forward to tuning in to the rest of the series. A wealth of knowledge that I will pass along to fellow naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts that I may meet along the way. Thanks so much for sharing and putting this series together.”

-Webinar Attendee



Photo by Lee Hansche

Education Notes



Box Turtle Dog Training

by Cahlia Carothers

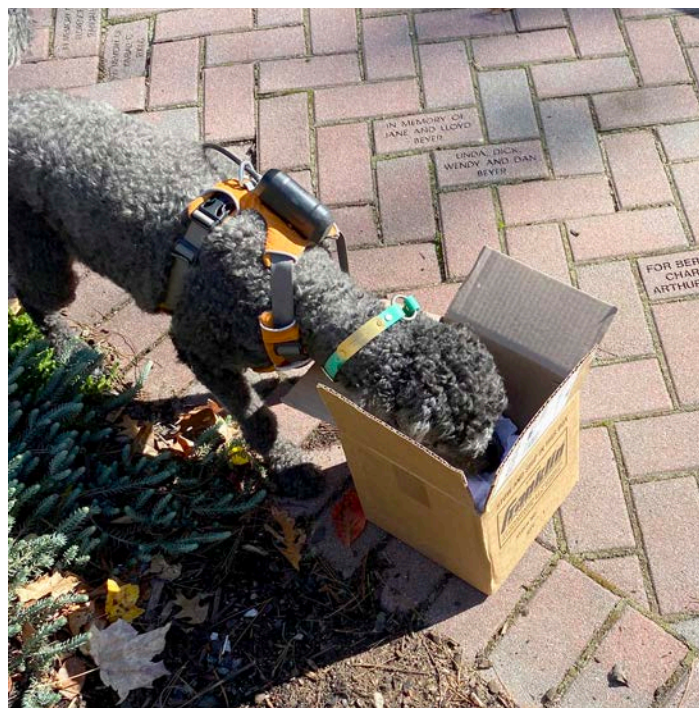
The Eastern Box Turtle is a rare reptile in New England. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department has identified only a dozen individuals within the state, and their current populations are unknown because of the difficulty in locating them in their natural habitat. This species is also native to Vermont, but the state cannot claim a population and suspects most of the ones identified in the wild are actually released pets. Although prevalent in other states, the Eastern Box Turtle is listed as endangered in New Hampshire. Both the NHFG and the VTFW are on the hunt to determine if these populations still exist and exactly where they need to be protected.

Due to the difficulty in locating the Eastern Box Turtle in the field, a new tactic is planned for 2022; specially trained conservation dogs. Several nonprofit organizations are assisting in the task, such as the Orianne Society, Vermont Herp Atlas, Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, and New Hampshire Audubon. Once in the field, a dog can cover woodland ground faster and more efficiently than a single person. Their nose is the key. A conservation dog locates species by scent, and is not distracted by leaf litter, debris or vegetation that effectively camouflages these small turtles. Well-trained dogs are proven to be more accurate and more efficient than a human in locating species like the Eastern Box Turtle, and are used regularly in several other turtle research projects.

It is the hope of NHFG and VTFW that additional species can be added to the conservation dogs search targets, and that future population counts will help establish exactly where endangered species are finding refuge. Determining where these elusive animals remain in the wild is crucial to their survival.

Cahlie with Kita, practicing searching for our Eastern Box Turtle. After the first couple of tries she is able to locate the turtle with ease.

For now, the Eastern Box Turtle is receiving special attention. Shelby Morelli, curator of the reptile collection at NH Audubon, was the first to assist in the conservation dog training. Wildlife refuges that care for native animals, like NH Audubon, are integral to conservation dog training.



Kita, successfully locating the Eastern Box Turtle during one of our training sessions. She uses her keen sense of smell to determine where the live box turtle is. This will translate in the wild to locating wild Box Turtles in their natural habitats for research and conservation of species.

...Gardens for Growing and Learning, continued from page 15

The goal of this partnership is to provide Extension with a location to teach and exemplify best practices for gardening in a way that is healthy for the planet and for people. By providing this space, NH Audubon is serving as an example of how to garden and do landscaping that is appealing to people, beneficial to wildlife, and helps sustain local ecosystems.

Between workshops, the gardens will be buzzing with volunteers who conduct regular maintenance and provide explanations of their activities to anyone who is visiting. Be sure to stop by if you are exploring the trails or visiting the center. There is also a virtual tour if you live far away or are unable to tour the gardens in person: nhaudubon.org/education/virtual-tours/.

Garden volunteers have made all the difference in returning the space to a vibrant location of growing and learning. They have researched the types of plants that are ideal for pollinators, worked with area providers to obtain plants and mulch, dedicated hundreds of hours to plant, water, weed, and generally maintain the gardens. Many of these individuals are UNH Extension Master Gardeners, but others are also dedicated to the place and purpose of these gardens. Whether you attend a workshop, volunteer in the garden or just stop by to chat, we invite you to join us in this exciting process of learning, sharing, and making a difference for people and the planet. See you in the garden—let's get growing!

Ruth is the UNH Extension Master Gardener Program Manager. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact Massabesic Center Director, Kimmie Whiteman.



At a workshop last September, participants learned how to build and worked together to construct a compost bin for use in the Demonstration Garden. Photo courtesy of UNH Extension.

Urban Wildlife Program

by Willamina Coroka

This year's Urban Wildlife Program visited Manchester schools from a remote standpoint as we continue navigating the ever-evolving pandemic. Third-grader classrooms received four different sessions: habitats, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, all connecting them to the wildlife they find in their urban habitats. All told, we reached 399 students with 76 total programs! Here are a few reflections on the fun we had:

Dear Willa, Thank you for teaching me more facts about animals. My favorite class was reptiles because I like turtles and I also like when you showed us your snakes and your turtles. I learned that ball pythons curl up in a ball when they're scared and I learned that a turtle's backbone is stuck to their shell. I wonder if a turtle can shed its shell and I wonder what types of turtles you can have as pets.

Dear Willa, Thank you for us Reptile. My favorite class was reptiles because I learned a bout a snakes and that they can retatch their jaw! I wonder if they can spit p Poison. You are the best! Love Izayah

Dear Willa,
Thank you for teaching us about animals! My favorite class was Mammals because it is cool to learn about your kind! I Wonder if you know what The first big cat on Earth was?
Love, Magdalena

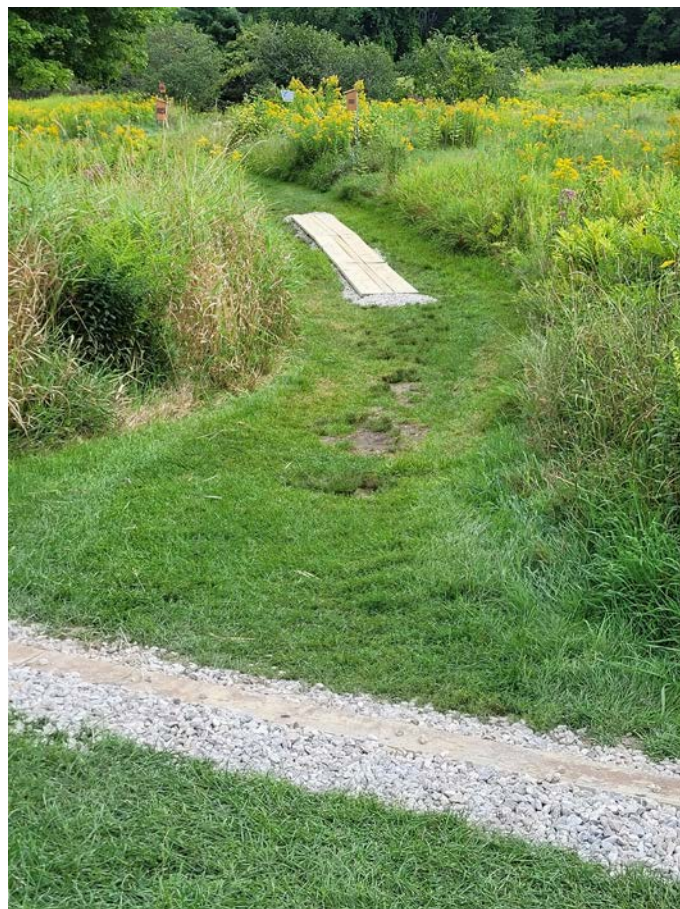
Updates from the Massbesic Center

by Kimmie Whiteman

New Hampshire Audubon's Massabesic Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in Auburn, NH has been a whirlwind of activity and changes since our reopening in October. We are picking up steam, with education programs and camps, volunteer opportunities, center displays and store hours ramping up. Infrastructure updates and signage improvements are also underway—keep your eyes on the signs as you're out on the trails, and read our eNews publication for the latest event updates.

We are most excited to announce the installation of our very own Motus radio telemetry receiver station on the Massabesic Center roof. This receiver will fit into the broader Motus Wildlife Tracking System and is a visible, working demonstration of the integral role that NH Audubon is playing in this international collaborative research network. Our receiver picked up a signal from a Hermit Thrush originally tagged in Massachusetts within just a couple days of being installed!

We are re-engaging visitors with conservation research within our organization, such as our Bluebird Monitoring Project and monarch tagging, as well as with partner organizations studying everything from bats in our barn to loons around Lake Massabesic. At the same time, we've discovered new partners, such as the League of NH Craftsmen, who showcased three local artists in the Nature Interpreted exhibition in our conference room in May. These juried craftsmen supported NH Audubon by donating 30% of proceeds from sales in our center to support our mission.



Trail improvements done by volunteer Bill Dumont including this water bar (bottom of photo) and mini boardwalk (top). Photo by Marc Nutter.

We remain committed to providing more access to our center and reaching more diverse audiences. One such initiative is a pilot program through Manchester Transit Authority in partnership with The Nature Conservancy that provided bus transportation for city residents to green space destinations throughout the region including Massabesic Center. Another example is the generous donation of time by UNH Manchester's ASL/English Interpreting program, that provided student interpreters to help us more fully share the activities and messages of our Earth Day celebration.

I hope all of you find a few hours to come out to Massabesic Center soon. Hike through the wildlife sanctuary and take in the aerial display of Tree Swallows. Leisurly stroll through the gardens and smell the earthy fragrances of budding blooms. Walk in wonder through the building, touching animal pelts, meeting live animal ambassadors, and learning all about NH's environment as you explore. We are back in action and eager to meet you!



New England Motus Installation Coordinator, Todd Alleger, affixed the Motus radio telemetry receiving station to the side of the Massabesic Center on April 27.

Ash Cottage

a new look at an old building

*Photos and story
by Mavis Brittelli*



Ash Cottage is a lovely red and white cottage at the edge of the village of Hebron on the north end of Newfound Lake. It is on one of three properties that are owned by NH Audubon in Hebron and is part of the Hebron Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, the only marsh on the lake.

The 30+ acre property has two fields with walking trails and part of it borders the Cockerhmouth River, which is one of the largest sources that empty into the lake. The cottage has a good view of the lake to the south, and to the north it has a great view of Mt. Crosby with Bald Knob showing prominently.

The cottage was built in pieces, some of which date to about 1800. It was part of the large Crosby farm, who were very early settlers of Hebron; then the Clements and Morgan farm and several others until 1935 when it was sold to Evermont Norton. It was then acquired by Paul Iaccaci in 1939 and donated to NH Audubon by Hope Norton Iaccaci in 1979. The original donation included 8.5 acres, but in 1985 Hope Norton Iaccaci donated another 23 acres (the Meadow Wind field). The cottage was used by the family as a summer residence in the 20th century. The last major addition was a large covered porch, where, in the early 2000s, there was a nature store that was staffed by locals.

Now the cottage is used by NH Audubon as a summer residence by naturalists and for occasional meetings and classes, such as yoga or tai chi. In 2005 it was included in a local house tour. Only a few rooms were open, but the tour committee did a great job making it look like a charming 1940's cottage.

The Newfound Advisory Committee (NAC) has planted a garden at Ash Cottage, and members are working with NH Audubon on future improvements. In 2019, improvements were made to the foundation and electrical system. In 2021, NH Audubon hired preservation consultant Mae H. Williams to

The original part of Ash Cottage was constructed in about 1800 as a small single-family residence on a much larger farm.

conduct a Historic Building Assessment. The recommendations, made by Williams and Stephen Bedard of Bedard Preservation and Restoration, LLC., call for additional upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems, repairing the historic windows, and roof and chimney restoration.

Based on Williams' assessment, NH Audubon is continuing to work on securing public and private funding to support restoration of this historic building for centuries of future use.

Mavis is a NH Audubon Board Member and a member of the Newfound Center Advisory Committee. This (historical assessment) report was funded, in part, by a grant from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, which receives support for its grants program from the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).



A view of the Bald Knob on Mount Crosby from Ash Cottage; this is a popular family hiking destination.

Sanctuary Notes

Improving Access to Wild Places

by Marc Nutter

In 2014, NH Audubon embarked on a three-year mission to provide better access to the beautiful Alice Bemis Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary and the unique wetland views framed by the Ossipee Mountains and the Sandwich Range. During this project, Matt Coughlan from Recon Trail Design, LLC designed a trail and boardwalk and a conservation service crew from the Student Conservation Association was contracted to plan and build this quarter-mile trail and boardwalk off the parking lot on Route 113 in North Sandwich.

Thanks to a grant from the Alfred Quimby Fund in 2021, we were able to make some improvements to our beloved Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary, some of which can be seen from the recently completed virtual tour posted on our website. We contracted Matt

again for some routine maintenance on this, our first accessible trail. He improved the tread of the hardpacked trail surface for ADA standards, leveled and resurfaced the trail and parking lot, reconstructed the gate opening and added a handicapped parking sign for a dedicated accessible parking space. Support from the Alfred Quimby Fund also enabled us to re-level the boardwalk to ADA standards, and to create and print two interpretive panels at the Ridgely Observation Platform orienting visitors to the landscape and ecology.

We are very pleased to accomplish this upgrade for better access to nature for all people. Please stop and visit this year and tell us what you think about it!



Matt Coughlan standing on the re-leveled boardwalk (top) and a refreshed entrance (below). Photos by Phil Brown.



Spring Benefits Refresh

Last year more than 650 NH Audubon members completed a survey and shared their insights into membership. It was heartwarming to hear that many members join to help and support our mission, and we thought it was important to refresh the benefits offered as a small way to say “thank you.”

As a member, you will continue to receive our biweekly digital eNews, which the majority of members tell us they depend on to stay informed. If you are not currently receiving this, check your junk or spam folder. You can subscribe on our website:

nhaudubon.org/about-us/news/weekly-e-news-archive

Members also receive tangible items, including the *Afield* magazine you are reading now, and a window decal. We're also happy to help you save some money with these discounts:

- ◇ 10% off most purchases at our McLane and Massabesic Center Nature Stores.
- ◇ 15% discount on camp registration and additional 5% off for siblings.
- ◇ Free binocular rentals and discounted snowshoe rentals from our McLane and Massabesic Centers, and discounted boat rentals at Paradise Point.
- ◇ Special invitation and discounts to NH Audubon program and events, including our upcoming Annual Meeting in September and Enchanted Forest in October.
- ◇ \$10 off a subscription to *New Hampshire Bird Records*.
- ◇ NEW—10% discount on select items at Agway stores in Belmont, Colebrook, Concord, Hillsboro, Hooksett, Keene, Milford, North Haverhill, Peterborough, and Walpole, NH; and in Brattleboro, VT.
- ◇ 10% off wild bird feed and suet purchased from Blue Seal company stores in Bow, Derry, Milford & Rochester, NH.

Next time you renew your membership (or join for the first time!), we invite you to select the \$100 Contributor or \$250 Supporter level:

- ◇ **Contributors** will receive a free boat rental at Paradise Point and a free snowshoe rental at Massabesic or McLane annually.
- ◇ **Supporters** receive all benefits of a Contributor, plus a free subscription to *NH Bird Records* and an invitation to a behind-the-scenes animal feeding at either the McLane or Massabesic Center.

If you need a new card, or have any questions about how to access your benefits, please email jthomas@nhaudubon.org or call (603) 224-9909 x310.

Member Profile: Rich Aaronian

by Hope Jordan

Rich Aaronian takes advantage of a mild March morning to go birding with a former student—one with a good ear for birdsong—who drove up from Cambridge just for that purpose. Now that he's retired, Rich has more time to chase birds; to travel to Rhode Island to spot a Common Cuckoo, to Maine to see the Steller's Sea Eagle, and to Greenland to look for the Northern Lapwing that visited New Hampshire's seacoast earlier this year.

That kind of travel wasn't possible during his long career as an educator. Now, in addition to birding and remaining active with NH Audubon's Seacoast Chapter, Rich stays busy substitute teaching and volunteering through his local church to help Afghan refugees. On retiring from Phillips Exeter Academy in 2020, he remarks, "Forty-nine years is a pretty good run. It's a more interesting number than 50."

Rich's 49-year run at Exeter matches his distinction (according to our records) as the current, longest continual dues-paying member of NH Audubon. For comparison, his 49 years of membership well exceeds the average NH Audubon membership of 13 years.

He grew up in Medford, MA, in an Armenian family; while his father was already in the United States, his mother had fled the Armenian genocide. His childhood lacked the nature field trips so integral to his own classes at Exeter, but a high school biology teacher inspired his love of the natural world. He then



Holding photo portrait by Camille Webber.

studied zoology at the University of New Hampshire, and felt lucky to secure a teaching job at Exeter in 1971.

Rich's last semester of teaching coincided with the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, making him uncharacteristically nervous about his work. Because it was remote he couldn't lead field trips. On the plus side, however, "People got outside more, it seemed that every week there was an article about some bird activity."

Rich became a dues-paying member of New Hampshire Audubon in 1973, the first year he began teaching an ornithology class at Exeter. (Annual dues back then were \$7.50). He received NH Audubon's Goodhue-Elkins Award in 2018, along with two other educators. That award, he says, was one of the greatest moments of his career.

Other highlights include learning from local birder and author (and fellow Goodhue-Elkins Award winner) Steve Mirick, traveling to Peru with NH Audubon biologist Carol Foss, and doing the Christmas Bird Count year after year, with friends, sometimes in freezing weather.

A lifetime of birding is as much about the friendships as it is about the birds. Rich says, "Getting together every year was as important as getting a sense of what birds were around."

Do you have a story about your membership with New Hampshire Audubon? Consider sharing it with Hope Jordan, Director of Membership & Development, at hjordan@nhaudubon.org.

Save the Date!

Annual Meeting: September 17

New Hampshire Audubon's 108th Annual Gathering and Meeting will take place on September 17, 2022 at the McLane Center in Concord. The day will kick off with a Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast and the presentation of Golden Binocular awards, followed by a choice of activities, picnic lunch, business meeting, annual awards, and keynote speaker Toni Lyn Morelli.

Toni Lyn is a Research Ecologist with the US Geological Survey based at the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst,

where she is also an adjunct professor in the Department of Environmental Conservation. Her research has ranged from studying lemurs in Madagascar to her current focus on the impacts of climate change in species and ecosystems in New Hampshire and beyond. We are thrilled to welcome her keynote address, *How Climate Change Will Affect New Hampshire's Wildlife*.

Visit nhaudubon.org/center-and-events/annual-meeting for more details. A registration link will be posted as we approach the event, and watch for an invitation later this summer.





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We are working to streamline our mailing list. If you would prefer to receive electronic communications from NH Audubon, please call 603-224-9909 or email nha@nhaudubon.org.



NH AUDUBON



**NH
GIVES**

JUNE 7-8, 2022

**TOGETHER
WE GIVE.**

**New Hampshire
Gives
is the state's
largest
day-of-giving.**

Last year 14,342 donors gave \$3.86 million to 584 nonprofits – **this included 139 donors generously supporting New Hampshire Audubon with a total of \$9,329.**

We invite you to support our conservation efforts on June 7 and 8 by visiting nhgives.org/organizations/nhaudubon and making a contribution. Check our Facebook page for updates during this exciting 24 hours!

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