

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
AUDUBON**

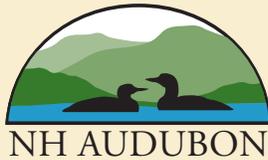
SUMMER 2024

Afield



Featuring

**SANCTUARIES
& EDUCATION**



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NH Audubon Afield

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FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

Go outside! You’ll feel better, I promise.

Seriously, all of the programs and projects at NH Audubon aspire to connect people to nature, usually in multiple ways. Just yesterday I led a late-spring/early-summer birdwalk, and sure enough we had lots of unexpected “nature moments,” like seeing three Indigo Buntings. Like the Veery singing from the forest as dusk settled. Like the sound of Pine Bark Beetles chewing on the wood of a decaying pine tree. We used all of our senses to connect and learn about nature, and about each other.

This issue of Afield celebrates our lands and education programs. These stories represent the rich tapestry of all we’re doing on our lands to manage habitats for wildlife, track insect and bird populations, and bring people closer to nature. Remember, our mission says “... for wildlife *and* for people.” Examples of that include our summer camp stories, the community science project that is teaching us about bee ecology (Beecology), highlights from some of our 40 wildlife sanctuaries, and profiles of a



few of our superstar volunteers (please join those ranks if you can!)

In the coming weeks and months, our social media will offer a way to share your experiences outside; watch for #LetsGoOutside to make sure others learn what you do.

Best wishes from all of us for a wonderful summer and fall!

See you out there,

Doug Bechtel, President

—in case you missed it—



This winter we launched a new section of the State of the Birds website! Discover details about NH’s birds in this searchable online guide, including population trends, seasonal abundance, and range maps. Most of the commonly seen birds in our state are already up on the site, with the remainder being added this fall.

VISIT:

<https://stateofthebirds.nhaidubon.org/birds-a-z/>

Cover Photo:

Nature’s little hitchhiker: A tiny bug makes itself at home on our camper during summer camp at McLane Center. Photo by Shelby Morelli.



Deering Wildlife Sanctuary photos by Phil Brown (top and left).

Deering Wildlife Sanctuary

There are 3.4 miles of easy to moderate trails and more than 700 acres of conserved White Pine and Northern Hardwood forests and wetlands waiting for you to explore at the Deering Wildlife Sanctuary. Forestry techniques on the sanctuary create wildlife habitat and a mosaic of unevenly aged forests which attract a large diversity of wildlife and avifauna.

Beavers “manage” a number of ponds and an extended network of wetlands throughout the sanctuary. These wetlands are interconnected with lovely musical streams. Black Fox Pond is maintained by a small dam with a managed spillway. Both the pond and Smith Brook provide important habitat to wildlife and have associated trails which provide a quiet, natural connection and beautiful vistas for visitors.

Clement Hill Road and the Patten Farm Trail allow dogs but they must remain on a leash to protect the wetland trails and trail around the pond from disturbance. Deering Wildlife Sanctuary has very sensitive areas vitally important



to wildlife and nesting birds. The pond, at times, may support a nesting pair of loons. Enjoyment with your dog is welcomed but limited to one trail in the uplands away from this nesting habitat.

Let's Go Outside

This issue of *Afield* celebrates our time outside with stories and news featuring NH Audubon's wildlife sanctuaries and nature education.

The newly established Ines and Frederick Yeatts Wildlife Sanctuary has its own webpage with a description of the property and a link to a birding hotspot on eBird where you can check on recent sightings:

www.nh Audubon.org/Yeatts

When you are out on the trails, report your sightings and trail conditions on the new Trail Report form to help us respond to conditions that may need attention:

<https://bit.ly/3zsywxo>

We encourage you to share your photos and nature experiences with us on social using:

#LetsGoOutside

Membership Pop Up

Plan a hike, bird walk, kayak or swim, and stop by our Membership pop up table to say hello to Jen Thomas, Membership & Development Coordinator. The next pop up is planned for Pondicherry; stay tuned to our social channels for additional pop ups as they pop up!

Not a member yet? You can sign up that day and get more information about discounts and other benefits.

Already a member? Stop by to grab an appreciation item that will come in handy during whatever outdoor adventure you have planned!

PONDICHERRY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Saturday, September 21
(Rain date, Sunday 9/22)

10am-2pm

Bumblebee Research Efforts at McLane Center

by Ellie Peabody and Sandy MacIntyre, Volunteer Gardeners and Beecologists

Last year at McLane Center in Concord you may have noticed people in the Pollinator Gardens holding their phones up-close to flowers taking videos and wondered, *what are they doing?* They are NH Audubon community scientist volunteers gathering data on bumblebees and the flowers they visit for the Beecology Project. Beecology is the brainchild of Dr. Robert Gegear at UMASS Dartmouth. The project studies why bumblebees are on the decline and how we can help them through observation, conservation, and restoration of habitat.

Bumblebees and other native pollinators play a crucial role in our ecosystems and food production. They are responsible for pollinating a significant portion of flowering plants, including many fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Without pollinators, these plants would not be able to produce fruits and seeds, which are essential for the reproduction of many plant species and the continuation of our food supply. Additionally, pollinators contribute to the health and diversity of ecosystems by facilitating the reproduction of wild plants. Overall, bumblebees and other pollinators are vital for maintaining biodiversity, ecosystem stability, and food security.

bumblebee species, the flower it was on, and the location of the video. It's roughly a 5-minute process. From there it gets reviewed and becomes part of a larger database of observations where the data will be analyzed.

Observations identify which plant species the bumblebees are frequenting for pollen and nectar-gathering for their survival. The process helps to answer questions such as, if a flower species isn't available in the area, will the bumblebee go to a different flower to meet its needs? Also, if a preferred flower was to be restored to an area, will that particular bumblebee species return?

Community scientists at McLane Center made observations approximately every few weeks. It is weather dependent, as rain hindered bumblebee activity last year as well as on windy days where attempts to capture a clear video proved to be challenging. Observations are made on native flowering plants and bushes, as well as on non-native flowering plants, which includes perennials and annuals. Tables 1 and 2 show last year's data that was collected from McLane Center and analyzed.

Last year's study is a baseline for McLane Center's pollinator gardens and it was the first year participating in the Beecology

Bee-Flower Network at McLane Center in 2023

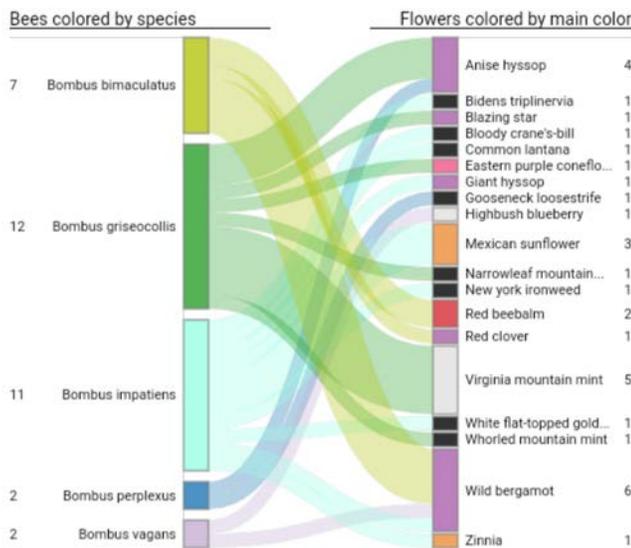


Table 1: Bumblebees grouped by species type and the number of observations on each flower species they visited. Year 2023 at NH Audubon's McLane Center. Photo source: Beecology website using data analysis tools.

Beecology utilizes a free web-based app where data is uploaded and studied. It's a very simple process; here's how it works. The community scientist uses their smartphone to take a minimum of a 10-second video of a native bumblebee interacting with a flower while also including a clear view of the head, thorax, and abdomen regions. Using the Beecology website/app, the video is then uploaded to the database where the user is guided through a series of screens that identify the



Table 2: Number of bumblebee species observed by month. Year 2023 at NH Audubon's McLane Center. Photo source: Beecology website using data analysis tools.

Project. This year, we plan to surpass last year's number of observations, and as the years progress on, the collected data will show which flowers the bumblebees prefer; and as additional native plant species are planted in the gardens, will the flower become more, or less, of a preferred nectar and pollen source?

To understand what type of flowers bumblebees prefer, you must first know a little more about bumblebees. They have three different tongue length sizes – short, medium, and long. Depending upon this tongue length, it will determine which



Table 3: Pictures from an observation log of a *Bombus griseocollis* collecting nectar on Slender Mountain Mint, showing head, thorax, abdomen, and plant. Photo source: Beecology website, observation log dated Aug. 14, 2023.

flower shape the bumblebee can reach down inside to drink the nectar. For example, Table 3 shows a medium-tongued, Brown-Belted Bumblebee (*Bombus griseocollis*) collecting nectar on Slender Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*) that is classified as short/no tube flower. Therefore, it's important to provide a variety of native flowers with varying flower shapes and bloom times throughout the year to accommodate the bumblebee's different needs according to their tongue lengths.

If this community science project has piqued your interest and you'd like to learn more, please visit the Beecology Project website at <https://beecology.wpi.edu/website/home>. It's a free program open to the public of all ages. Many Beecologists participate right in their own backyards collecting data as long

as flowers are in bloom and there's bumblebee activity.

In 2021, Exploring Connections: Beecology: a Community Scientist Helping Pollinators" which can be found on NH Audubon's YouTube channel, @NewHampshireAudubon.

And, the Beecology project has expanded to include butterfly observations, too!

An additional way to help is to add native plants to your yard which can be sourced locally throughout NH, and twice yearly at NH Audubon's native plant sales. A printable suggested plant list from the Beecology Project can be found at <https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html>. Providing a variety of native blooms all season long will ensure nectar and pollen sources for bumblebees and all pollinators in New Hampshire.

Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary (Smith Sisters \ Kwak's Parcels)

The seacoast region of NH contains many conservation gems. The Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary is part of a tapestry of conservation lands that have been stitched together by the Great Bay Partnership. The Great Bay Partnership is a blend of government and nonprofit partners putting land into protection for water quality, quantity, and intricacies of the region's rivers and streams as they flow into the estuary.

NH Audubon's Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Newmarket and Durham can be accessed on Rt. 152 or Wadleigh Falls Road. Our trails are connected to the Town of Newmarket's conservation ownership. The Follett's Brook Corridor today is an incredibly diverse arrangement of habitats including open old fields, grasslands, wet meadows, shrubland-thickets, Pitch Pine woodlands, and old second-growth Northern Hardwood-Pine woodlands. NH Audubon maintains the grasslands with a patchwork of late-season bush-hogging.

Lately, we have been working with volunteers from Timberland Corporation to improve access with boardwalks over soggy portions of the trails. Timberland volunteers have also started to help with the removal and cutting of invasive species along our borders. We've added a picnic table and a new

kiosk. Trail improvements continue across the Smith Sister's parcel, including fixing a border fence.

Historically, this parcel was part of a small, local dairy. The trail to be improved that bisects the old farm traverses an old road down to Follett's Brook. This old woods road was used daily by the milk cows to graze the marshy grasslands along the brook. Large Hemlocks are found on some north-facing slopes and some interesting Pitch Pine woodlands occur near an old quarry site. This seacoast sanctuary might be in your backyard or on the other side of the state for you, but the diverse habitats support an ever-interesting grouping of birds and animals, regardless of the season of your visit.



Columbine, by Phil Brown.

For a map, directions, and a closer look at Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, visit: www.nh Audubon.org/lands/sanctuaries/kwaks-smith-sisters.

A Native Garden Fit for a Barn

Story and photos by Stephanie Hanson, Massabesic Center Volunteer

If you had the opportunity to visit The Massabesic Center (MAC) last year during the growing season, you may have encountered a group of volunteers in the garden near the historic barn. This garden is passed by visitors each day as they approach the trailhead for one of the area's most popular birdwatching trails. Formerly known as the Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden, the space was originally designed and planted over two decades ago by longtime volunteer Chris McLaughlin, who recognized the need for native plant species to support local wildlife, such as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Monarch Butterflies. Chris has since passed but her memory lives through this special garden she created.



Rewind to late 2022 when Massabesic Center Director Kimmie Whiteman and Massabesic Garden Club (MGC) President Tracey Noonan met to discuss common missions and collaborative opportunities between the groups. Founded in 2021, the 75+ member MGC serves the greater Auburn area and is open to anyone with an interest in gardening and a focus on community activities and education. The revitalization of the garden Chris created years earlier seemed like the perfect opportunity to join MAC with MGC members to advance the missions of each group. MAC is an ideal central location for MGC volunteer members to connect, garden, and learn. In return, MAC gained a dedicated group of new volunteers to help revive this important space.

Upon completion of a formal stewardship agreement, the project, eventually named the “Barn Garden,” was born. The new volunteer cohort includes individuals new to MAC as well as those already familiar with a sanctuary that holds special memories. Volunteer Deb Asquith describes:

One of the reasons that I volunteer my time is because I remember the Barn Garden when it was first planted. I thought it was lovely, being the first garden that I came to as I began a trail walk many times at Massabesic Center! I would love for other trail walkers to have the same sense of a lovely familiarity as they walk each time.

Project volunteers held several planning sessions in early 2023. The garden space was new to many of us and we had very little information on some of the most basic garden planning questions. How much sun does the space receive and when? How dry or moist is the site? What is currently growing here? And most importantly, what do we want this garden space to become? We agreed that our focus should be on native plant species. New Hampshire's pollinators have evolved together with our native plants; demonstrating their relationships is critically important to the broader sustainability of our ecosystem.

Tracey hopes that the garden will educate and excite visitors who will “see pollinators at work” and encourage replication of native gardens at visitors' homes. “Everyone brings a different perspective, knowledge, and experience. We are better together.”

With our questions, goals, and Tracey's phrase of togetherness in mind, we decided that our first season (2023) would be spent on general garden cleanup and information gathering. We tracked sunlight throughout the day, took note of soil moisture, and removed invasive plants that encroached into the garden space. We met for work sessions twice a month from May through October and spent much of our time identifying and mapping the general location of existing plants.

With few photos of the original planted garden, we looked forward to discovering new blooms each month. We were delighted to find a number of native perennials such as Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), and Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium sp.*). Late summer and early fall culminated in a burst of yellow color from Cut-leaf Coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), Rough-stemmed Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*), and an abundance of Tickseed (*Coreopsis sp.*). Patti Elwell, a recent graduate of the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Extension Master Gardener Program, commented:

Watching [the garden] grow out during this first year, we could see its good bones and it will be exciting to make additions that will help it become even more attractive to insects and birds.

Work sessions have been filled with discovery and plant identification, but friendships have also been cultivated. Donna Walstrum looks forward to each work session where she learns from the other volunteers, “I am new to the area and feel good in this group where I'm learning about native plants and gardening in NH.”

Sharon O'Leary Graves shares:

The experience has been uplifting. I go away with great ideas and possibilities from a group of kind, humble individuals. I always leave in a great mood.

We've enjoyed learning more about the sanctuary in general too; the barn's attic is home to one of the largest Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus* – a species of special concern) nurseries in New

Hampshire. Creating habitat that will ultimately provide food (insects) for the bats makes our project extra special.

With years of biomass accumulation that needed to be thinned out, we were appreciative of the help provided by UNH Extension Master Gardener Tabor Browder. Tabor assisted us with material removal and transport to MAC's compost area that he recently rebuilt. Tabor also gave us a refresher on the importance of composting, along with some composting basics.

MGC Volunteer Pam Weeks donated a rain barrel to collect roof runoff from the barn to use for watering; it was installed by Bill Dumont, MAC's multi-talented "everything" volunteer who also serves on NH Audubon's Board of Trustees. Along with these examples of community buy-in, MGC has also generously contributed funding to the project.

Adjacent to the garden, we'll soon be converting an area of lawn to a native wildflower meadow as an example of how a small area can have a large impact on pollinator support. Native seed for this effort was procured by MGC through a grant received from Pollinator Pathways of New Hampshire, with funding from the Pollination Project. Pam hopes that this effort will inspire visitors and show that "you don't have to give up all of your lawn, but maybe plant a strip of native plants to one side, thus giving pollinators a chance!"

We deliberately did not tackle garden design in our first season. This provided us the opportunity to learn together in the garden and to leverage specific interests and strengths that each volunteer could eventually bring to this project. Hope Garner is excited to use her landscape design experience; "This project is a great way to give back to my local community, use my design skills, and make new friends."

We also wanted to identify and later incorporate into our design the native plant species that were uncovered throughout the first year. It is important for us to demonstrate how to use existing garden features and assets to revitalize a space with minimal resources.

With a year of site information now in hand and a core of 10-12 dedicated MGC volunteers, our growing group is beginning to discuss garden design and looking forward to bringing some new color and textures to the Barn Garden throughout the seasons. We're also implementing education opportunities and signage while seeking out additional resource



Plant identification and weeding was regularly on the agenda for volunteer work sessions in the early stages. Garden cleanup uncovered pathways and other materials that will be repurposed later during the design phase (inset). By the first fall, a burst of yellow color adorned the garden with Cut-leaf Coneflower, Goldenrod, and an abundance of Tickseed dominating the new Barn Garden (top).

and funding options.

In closing, Deb sums up her experience to date:

I have learned so much about plant identification and habitat by working on the Barn Garden, from my fellow volunteers and from the many other gardens at Massabesic Center. It has been a true labor of love! I hope that visitors can truly connect with the natural world and enjoy the beauty of the many plants as they either pass them on their way to a walk or sit among them on a beautiful day!

The next time you visit Massabesic Center, take a stroll over to the Barn Garden. We would be happy to give you a tour!

Stephanie Hanson is a MGC member, a UNH Extension Master Gardener, and serves as a member of the Massabesic Advisory Committee, among many other volunteer roles with New Hampshire Audubon.

For information on volunteering in the gardens at Massabesic, contact Anita Fernandez.

For more information on the Massabesic Garden Club, visit www.massabesicgc.org.

Nothing to Feel Blue Over

Nestboxes and Recovery of the Eastern Bluebird



Story and photos by Logan Young, Volunteer Bluebird Monitor

Eastern Bluebirds are an age-old sign for optimism, synonymous with clear skies and warming spring days. Bright blue males and gray-blue females are not an uncommon sight chattering from trees at the edges of lawns, cemeteries, and fields on any nice day. But just a few decades ago, these colorful birds faced such intense pressure from habitat loss and competition from non-native species that their population was estimated to have fallen by almost 90%! They had become so rare in New England that Connecticut once listed them as endangered. Thankfully, what might have been the complete loss of an iconic species was avoided through public conservation efforts, namely the establishment of Bluebird Trails.

If that term doesn't sound familiar, the sight of these trails might be. Visitors to Massabesic Center in Auburn will notice birdhouse boxes dotting the walking trails through the fields, which have been in place since the center was constructed in 1998. Along these trails are pairs of more than 70 nest boxes designed to imitate natural cavities (like woodpecker holes) that bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species would historically use. The boxes benefit birds by providing more nesting options and

they're taken care of by trained Bluebird Trail Monitors who carefully check the progress of eggs and young, and help keep House Sparrows, European Starlings, and predators at bay.

While Massabesic Center's nest monitoring program was originally established to focus on Eastern Bluebirds, it doesn't exclude other native species. Bluebirds are territorial among themselves, and one bluebird pair won't let another nest nearby, but won't mind if other species try to fill in that same space. Boxes are placed in pairs to increase nesting opportunities for all, resulting in greater biodiversity.

On Massabesic Center's trails, Eastern Bluebirds are very successful breeders, second only to Tree Swallows. On average, 74 Tree Swallows fledge each year from Massabesic Center's boxes, totaling over 1,100 fledglings since 2010. Beginning each May, these aerial insectivores (birds that eat insects while in flight) arrive in large numbers and fill a quarter of the available nest boxes, raising a single brood who typically fledge by mid-July. House Wrens are the third most common nesters and usually the latest, taking advantage of mid-summer vacancies to stuff boxes with nests of twigs that hide a small, deep cup where up to six young wrens will eventually fledge by mid-August.

Thanks to the establishment of the Bluebird Trail and continued dedication of volunteer monitors, Eastern Bluebirds have remained a regular sight in Massabesic Center fields, with some even staying through winter and nesting as early as April. They can raise up to three broods each season (meaning some pairs might be sitting on eggs when Tree Swallows are just arriving) and then fledging a final brood along with House Wrens at the end of the summer. Since 2010, this consistent approach has seen 345 Eastern Bluebirds fledge at the center, averaging 23 young birds every year, and following the same trends of stabilization and growth that are now seen in the rest of their range. A real conservation success!

Monitoring nest boxes is a unique opportunity to see the life of birds up close, following the progress of adult pairs and their young as they hatch and eventually grow into grumpy-looking fledglings impatient to stretch their wings. As a Bluebird Monitor, each year I'm reminded of how rewarding the experience can be. Since boxes can be placed in your own backyard, it's something anyone can try! Massabesic Center holds a training session every spring for anyone interested in learning more about the aerial insectivores that nest here, monitoring nest boxes, or installing them yourself. In 2022,

NH Audubon also became a chapter of NestWatch, a University of Cornell Ornithology Lab program used to manage our data, joining a national network of other environmental groups contributing to nesting bird research and helping the public do the same.

For information on using NestWatch or monitoring nest boxes of your own, please contact Massabesic Center.



Eastern Bluebird hatchlings (opposite page), House Wren eggs (top left), Tree Swallow fledgling (top right), Tree Swallow leaving through nest box hole (left), and young Tree Swallow nestlings (right).



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Silk Farm Sanctuary All Persons Trails Complete

*by T. Parker Schuerman, former Director of Land
and Ecological Management and Shelby Morelli,
Education Coordinator*

Silk Farm Wildlife Sanctuary now has two completed all access trails in Concord, NH. On October 4, 2023, a new bridge and trail construction was completed around the All Persons Forest Experience Trail with the help of consultant partners Lew Shelley from Snowhawk, LLC and Chris Olsen from Sapwood, LLC. This Phase 2 Forest Experience trail is connected to the Phase 1 Meadow Experience All Persons Trail to make close to 1 mile of smooth gravel trails for folks with the need of mobility assistance devices. The trails are now open and all clear for your seasonal enjoyment. This accessible project was funded by a NH Recreational Trails Program Grant (RTP), the Fields Pond Foundation, and members like you!

The construction of this all access Forest Experience Trail helped open up the existing forest trail for the Enchanted Forest, in October. Enchanted Forest now uses the All Persons Trail so that anyone with mobility assisted needs can experience this incredible event firsthand. Whether during the Enchanted Forest each autumn or while investigating spring ephemerals, come and check out our new trail addition for a short walk or roll through nature.

When asked about the vision behind this trail, Marc Nutter, our Conservation Program Director, expressed his enthusiasm: “I’m so proud that our flagship event will now be accessible to anyone who wants to participate, and it will be safer for everyone out on the trail.”

We are also pleased to announce the launch of the NH Audubon Phenology Project. This project has been in the works for some time and we are so excited to engage the community in phenology in and around our centers.

What is phenology, you ask? Phenology refers to life cycle events of plants and animals, such as leafing, flowering, and fruiting of plants, migration of birds, and emergence of insects. Walk the trails, learn about some of the key species on our property, and try your hand at some phenology observations! Explore the different seasons to discover different phenophases of these species and how they are ever changing. We invite everyone of all skill levels to come out, enjoy nature, and learn all about phenology in New Hampshire using our new maps and educational materials to help you navigate the changes at Silk Farm Wildlife Sanctuary all year long.

Continuing the All Persons Trail Initiative, Phase 3 will transform trails at Massabesic Center, in Auburn. We launch this phase with the announcement of being awarded another

RTP grant in the early summer of 2024. Stand by for more information about this new addition to NH Audubon’s growing number of all access trails, which includes the Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary in Sandwich, NH.



The All Persons Trail addition created a new location for the campfire amphitheater, seen here during the path construction (left) and in use during the Enchanted Forest for story telling (above). A new bridge sits near the entrance to the Forest Experience Trail (top).

Managing Grassland and Shrubland

Story, maps and photos by T. Parker Schuerman, former Director of Land and Ecological Management

Much of NH's forests are even-aged, having forest habitat showing structural and species compositions with great similarities across the state. This of course depends on other variables like aspect, elevation, and soils. In other words, NH forests don't provide much variability. Across New England, grassland, shrublands, and young forest habitats are relatively rare or under-represented across the landscape.

On the new Yeatts Wildlife Sanctuary in Warren, NH, 100 acres of grassland lie between Ore Hill and Black Brooks. Open grassland areas provide rare and critical habitat, especially so far north in New Hampshire. This grassland habitat supports grassland birds like the Bobolink, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

We establish rotational treatments designed to support grassland birds, shrubland, and young forests on many of our wildlife sanctuaries. We know that grassland birds have experienced a dramatic decline in recent years. Any healthy grassland habitat in NH is critical to protect, support, and maintain due to declining populations of this suite of bird species. This autumn, we started to manage the grassland at the Yeatts Sanctuary by deploying late-season mowing. We also used a bush hog in October and November at several other NH Audubon wildlife sanctuaries, including Silk Farm in Concord, Follett's Brook in New Market, and Massabesic Center in Auburn. We delay our mowing and other treatments until either late in the growing season or during dormant seasons because early mowing of grasslands can kill young ground-nesting chicks outright or cause nests to be exposed to more significant predation pressure.

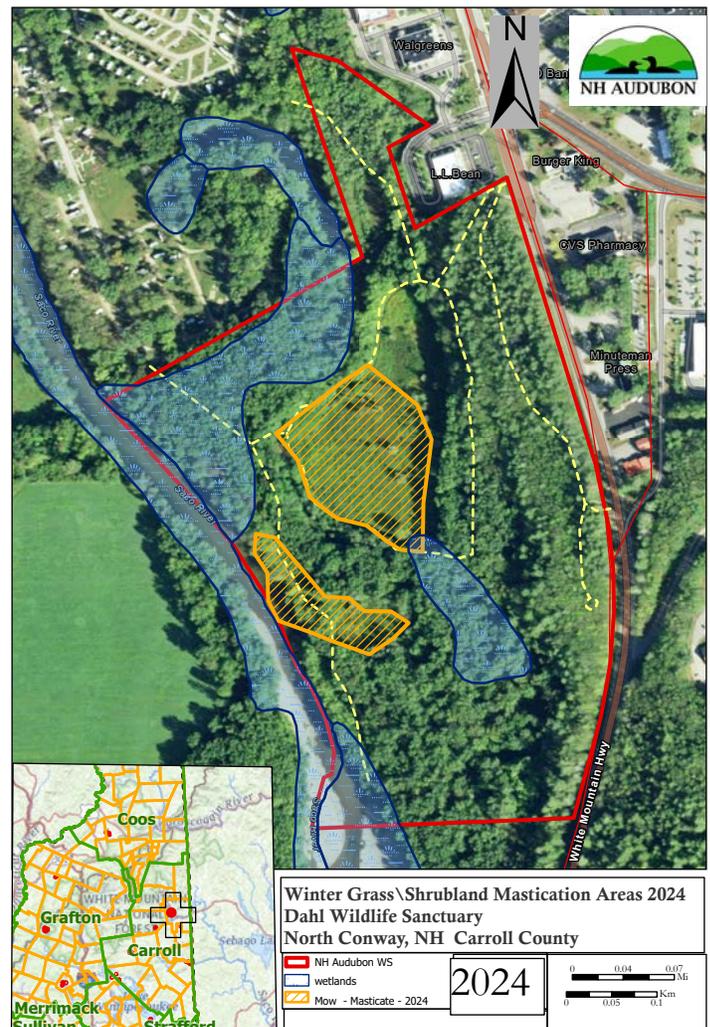
Shrublands require rotational treatments to support

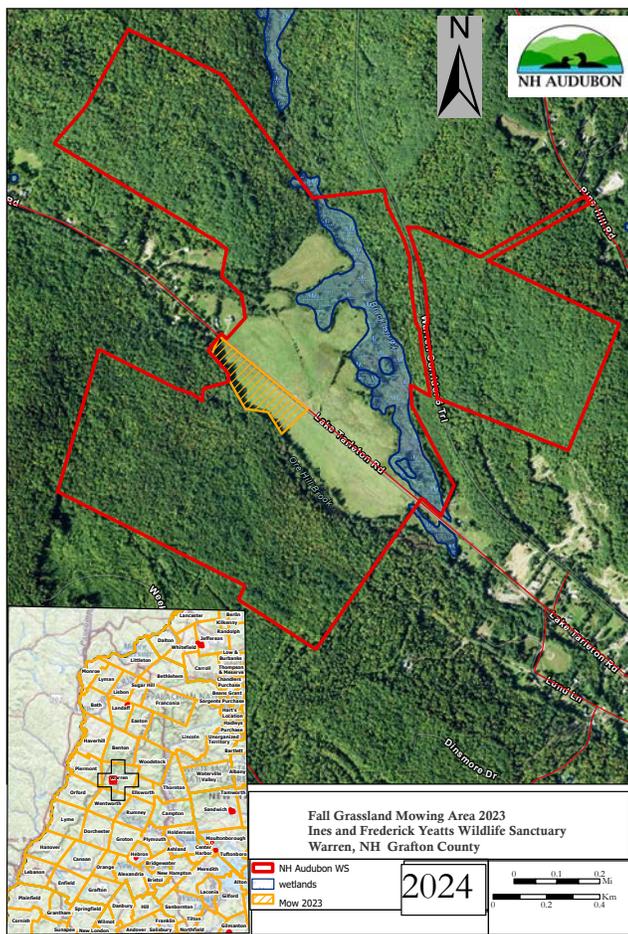


Grassland habitat mowed in the fall at Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary (above). Mastication efforts at Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary over the winter (inset).

habitat structures required by shrubland birds and birds that are attracted to transitional ecotones to thrive. At the Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary in North Conway, NH Audubon has the goal of maintaining a low habitat structure combined with a composition of diverse native shrubland with flowering non-grass species (also called forbs) for pollinators.

In December of 2019, about eight acres of open field and shrubland habitat at Dahl was masticated in mid-winter. Mastication involves the crunching up of vegetation into small chunks, also known as mulching or chipping. It is one way to thin or change the structure of overstocked forests. Mastication is completed with a special attachment that is able to mulch down smaller trees and brush with a skid-steer or excavator machine. This usually leaves a chipped-up debris that quickly decays and adds nutrients to the soil. After five growing seasons the habitat structure of these fields transitioned more toward a forest than a shrubland.





This winter, we returned to the Dahl Sanctuary to repeat the treatment of 2019 by mowing densely spaced woody vegetation. The goal is to keep the two historical fields at the Dahl Sanctuary in an early successional state with forbs, grasses, and native shrubs dominating these eight acres. The understory is distinguished by a diverse and variable suite of herbaceous plants including an abundance of Sensitive Fern and False Nettle.

Other species present in the herb layer include Drooping Wood Reed, Drooping Sedge, Wild Sarsaparilla, Wood Nettle, Canada Mayflower, Northern Short Husk Grass, Sessile-leaved Bellwort, Hairy Solomon's Seal, Inflated Sedge, Ostrich Fern, White Baneberry, Red Baneberry, Large Enchanter's Nightshade, Wake-robin, Tall Meadow-rue, and Northern Lady Fern.

Shrubs and understory trees at the edges and in canopy gaps include Ironwood, Choke Cherry, Mountain Holly, Red Elderberry, Meadowsweet, Dwarf Raspberry, Virginia Creeper, Maple-leaved Viburnum, and Partridgeberry.

The mastication treatment was accomplished with Martin Forestry and their track-mounted excavator. We completed this treatment during the winter to avoid conflicts with nesting birds and amphibians, to reduce the collateral damage of soil compaction, and to limit erosion. Future plans include increasing the diversity of native shrub species with plantings to attract and feed more migrating and nesting birds to these maintained, riparian shrublands.

110th Annual Member Celebration & Meeting

by Anita Fernandez, Community Outreach Coordinator

New Hampshire Audubon will be hosting our 2024 Annual Member Celebration & Meeting on Saturday, September 14 from 10am–3pm at McLane Center in Concord. The day begins with a choice of nature activity: mushrooms and moss walk with Claire Adams and Devin Guilfoyle, birding McLane Center with Doug Bechtel, keeping a phenology journal with Diane De Luca, and an exploration of the All Persons Trail with Marc Nutter including the completed phase two woodland trail. Next, we will move on to the Scientist Spotlight presentation by our NH Audubon wildlife biologists, who will reveal the successes and challenges of our Motus migration research and collaborations. A catered lunch will be provided followed by the 110th annual Business Meeting, Annual Awards for excellence in conservation, birding, and volunteerism, and a special presentation by our keynote speaker Sara Robertson Morris.

Sara Robertson Morris has been the Director of the Appledore Migration Station on Appledore Island for the past three decades! She is responsible for all aspects of the station, researching bird migration through spring and fall bird banding efforts. Her ties to the island run the gamut from lecturing and teaching courses about marine science, field ornithology, and ecology, to supporting Shoals Marine Lab's necessary functions. She recently accepted a position as the new Executive Director at Shoals Marine Laboratory and has been the President-Elect of the American Ornithological Society since 2022. Sara also holds Professor Emeritus status at Canisius University and teaches at the Audubon Ecology Camp in Maine. She is a well-respected leader dedicated to student academic experiences and a passionate ornithologist. As our keynote speaker, Sara will share her experience and findings on bird migration and the birds of Appledore Island.

Visit nhaudubon.org/center-and-events/annual-meeting for full details and registration.

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

10 AM – 3 PM

MCLANE CENTER, CONCORD



Keynote Speaker Sara Robertson Morris, Executive Director, Shoals Marine Laboratory.

Creating Climate-resilient Habitat at Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary

by T. Parker Schuerman, former Director of Land and Ecological Management

New Hampshire Audubon is embarking on a groundbreaking initiative to safeguard the vibrant ecosystem of Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary against the looming challenges of climate change. By harnessing the power of forestry, NH Audubon plans to cultivate resilient habitat conditions that will sustain birds and other wildlife amidst a changing climate dynamic. At the heart of this strategy lies a multifaceted approach. First and foremost, we are focusing on promoting diversity within the forest's age classes, ensuring a range of young to mature trees to cater to the varying needs of wildlife. Additionally, we seek to select tree species that are better adapted to the projected climate conditions, promoting the long-term health of the habitat.

We are also carving out early successional habitats to provide crucial breeding grounds for a suite of shrub and edge-attracted species. These areas are vital for birds and other wildlife that thrive in open environments. Moreover, NH Audubon is preserving legacy areas, and nurturing the preservation of old-growth forest conditions and characteristics.

Why the urgency? Forests surrounding Willard Pond are facing an onslaught of challenges due to climate change. From more frequent heatwaves to invasive species encroachment, the landscape may be rapidly transforming soon. However, by strategically delineating harvest areas and preserving legacy reserves, NH Audubon is laying the groundwork for a resilient future.

Spanning across 1,800 acres, Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary is a haven for diverse ecosystems. The rich tapestry of wetland complexes, forested ridgelines, and rocky shrubland pond shores, supports over 120 plant species, 18 amphibians, 10 reptiles, 50 mammals, and an amazing 136 bird species. Amidst this species diversity, the specter of climate change looms large.

In recent years, NH Audubon has already made significant changes towards our habitat goals. In 2012-2013, we harvested approximately 200 acres using group selection methods to enhance forest health and diversity. By retaining key species like Sugar Maple and Black Birch and creating ridge-top clearings for early successional habitats, we are sculpting a landscape resilient to the challenges of climate change.

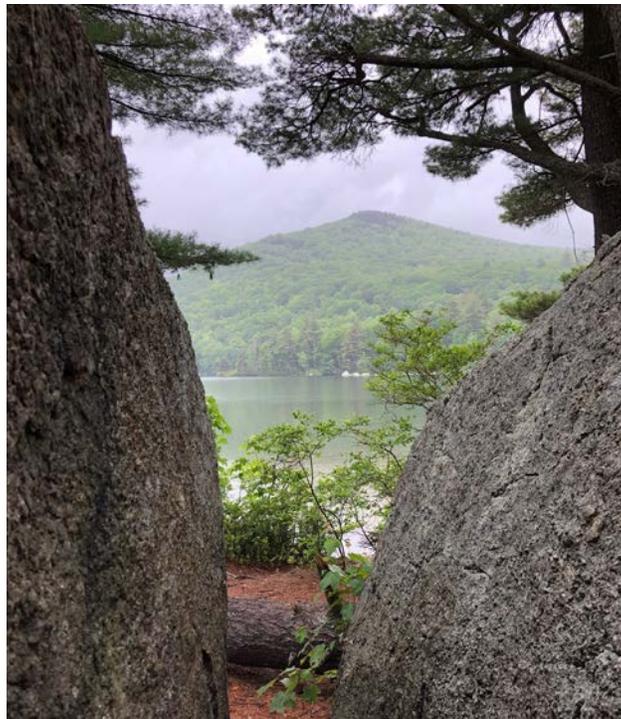
Our future management goals are ambitious yet crucial. From inventorying and mapping invasive species to supporting the reintroduction of blight-resistant American Chestnuts, the roadmap is comprehensive. By meticulously monitoring bird species diversity and assessing the impact of our interventions, we will ensure a data-driven approach to conservation. But challenges abound. The shifting climate brings with it a host

of uncertainties, from altered precipitation patterns to increased invasive species proliferation. Yet, amidst these challenges lie opportunities. Disturbances wrought by climate change could create new habitats for species like Scarlet Tanagers, Eastern Whip-poor-wills, and Eastern Towhees.

Ultimately, our mission is clear: to create a sanctuary that thrives in the face of change. By blending cutting-edge forestry practices with a deep understanding of ecological dynamics, New Hampshire Audubon is forging a path toward a climate-resilient future for Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary.

If you would like to dive more deeply into forest resiliency and the climate adaptation planning behind this effort at Willard Pond

and other natural areas throughout the country, visit <https://forestadaptation.org/adapt/willard-pond>. Our hope is to help nature, our wildlife, and the forests that support them, move into a climate change resilience future.



Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary photos by Phil Brown.

The American Chestnut Tree

Revisiting its Science and Restoration Status

by T. Parker Schuerman, former Director of Land and Ecological Management

Last year, in the Summer Afield 2023, NH Audubon presented an article about the status of restoration efforts for the American Chestnut Tree. In that article, we introduced you to Dr. Thomas Klak from the University of New England, in Biddeford, ME. Dr. Klak is on the front lines in the effort to speed-breed American Chestnut trees. He speed-breeds them in the lab to produce transgenic pollen in less than a year. He and his students can also produce transgenic American Chestnut seeds in about 14 to 16 months. In nature it can take 7-10 years, or more, to produce viable pollen and nuts from a mature American Chestnut tree. Whereas in the lab, Dr. Klak has bred viable blight-tolerant chestnut pollen and nuts in about 1/10th of the time it takes to produce these results in nature.

This speed-breeding allows for rapid generational advances. These are needed because the transgenic chestnut begins as a clone requiring diversification before being suitable for restoration. Speed-breeding in the lab also makes possible the production of full-term chestnuts with two copies of the transgene (homozygosity), which has been a restoration goal for years.

Dr. Klak is participating in a gene-splicing program that retains the complete American Chestnut genome plus the insertion of a blight tolerance gene from wheat. The splicing produces the ability to resist the tree-killing fungal blight in a 100% American Chestnut tree. The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) started and shepherded this transgenic American Chestnut program. The program's goal is to produce 100% American Chestnut seeds or nuts that are blight-tolerant and can be grown to produce seedlings for reintroduction efforts. These blight-tolerant seedlings keep all 35,000 American Chestnut genes intact. It is in NH Audubon's long-range plans to reintroduce these seedlings, when available.

For the last five years, Dr. Klak, his students, and many of his partners throughout the American Chestnut's range, were planting both transgenic American Chestnut seedlings and cross-bred American-Chinese Chestnut seedlings in test plots. Dr. Klak uses his lab and research to train students, educate the public, and expand the planting of American Chestnut orchards across Maine and New Hampshire. He also provides blight-tolerant pollen to similar permitted programs from Georgia to Maine. The test plots have been used to systematically document both the transgenic and crossbred seedlings' response



Fertile flowers on plants in the University of New England lab (top). Control-pollinating mother tree flowers with Darling pollen (above). Photos courtesy of Dr. Klak.

to blight and assess their ability to survive or have “natural fitness” through a controlled release in nature.

The American-Chinese Chestnut crossbreeding, or back-crossing program, faced an uphill battle in producing blight-tolerant trees. For the transgenic program, there have been both encouraging results and setbacks in producing viable, blight-tolerant seedlings. As Dr. Klak so eloquently said about his efforts last year, “Essentially, we are doing nature’s work by combining trees that are both geographically diverse and genetically diverse. Remember that some Large Surviving American (LSA) Chestnut trees have the blight, but the blight has not won. We use these trees to produce viable blight-tolerant 100% American Chestnuts” (which are bred with transgenic pollen and then grown in the lab).

In lab and field trials, the transgenic American Chestnut has promise, and researchers continue to monitor and study the possibility of transgenic trees surviving in nature. The jury is still out, so no “roll-out of nuts” to the general public as of yet (or to NH Audubon for distribution and replanting where it once occurred in our wildlife sanctuaries). After quite a bit more science, a transgenic restoration tree will be produced.

If you would like to dive more deeply into the genetic science behind this reintroduction effort, we have placed a new spring 2024 interview with Dr. Tom Klak alongside last year’s interview on our website. NH Audubon members will be updated on specific challenges and successes of reintroduction. Our hope is to help nature put this amazing tree back into the competitive rotation to help climate change resilience in our future forests.

Flicker Family at Brookside Wild!



What's New at Newfound

Story and photos by Devin Guilfoyle, Newfound Center Coordinator

It's no secret that the McLane and Massabesic Centers have lots of natural wonders to discover. In the summertime, a third center opens to the public—the Newfound Center. Composed of Paradise Point Nature Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, Hebron Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, and Bear Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, there's lots to do here, whether it's hiking through forest or grasslands, paddling around scenic Newfound Lake, or simply taking in the natural beauty of the area.

After the season closed in September, we started putting in some work to enhance your experience at Newfound. During the fall we conducted tree work on the property, and while we love our trees, this work will ensure the structural and aesthetic integrity of our center. No more need to duck and dodge hemlock branches to get to the center's entrance! Perhaps more noticeably, we also removed and replaced the center's aging roof. While most of the original lumber used to construct the roof was intact, replacement shingles were very much needed. The new roof will help to continue sheltering the building from the elements and improve ventilation within the building.

The center will also have new hours for the 2024 season, being open 9am-5pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, and weekends.

Finally, you asked for them and we heard you—we will be offering standup paddleboard rentals this season! In addition to kayaks and canoes, paddleboards allow for another means of connecting you to the beauty of Newfound Lake's north shore.

Additionally, what summer at Newfound would be complete without the Red Barn Speaker Series? We have some engaging talks lined up for the summer from NH Audubon biologists, local naturalists, and other researchers. Talks will run on Tuesday evenings starting July 16th through August 20th. This series focuses on ecological topics, particularly around Newfound Lake and the surrounding region, and provides the opportunity to have an engaging learning experience in an intimate setting.

At Newfound Center, we are committed to offering high-quality outdoor experiences through



Come on in! We're open Fri-Tues. Touch, ponder, explore our interactive displays inside the nature center (above right) then head out for a walk to Paradise Point along the Lakeside Trail (right).

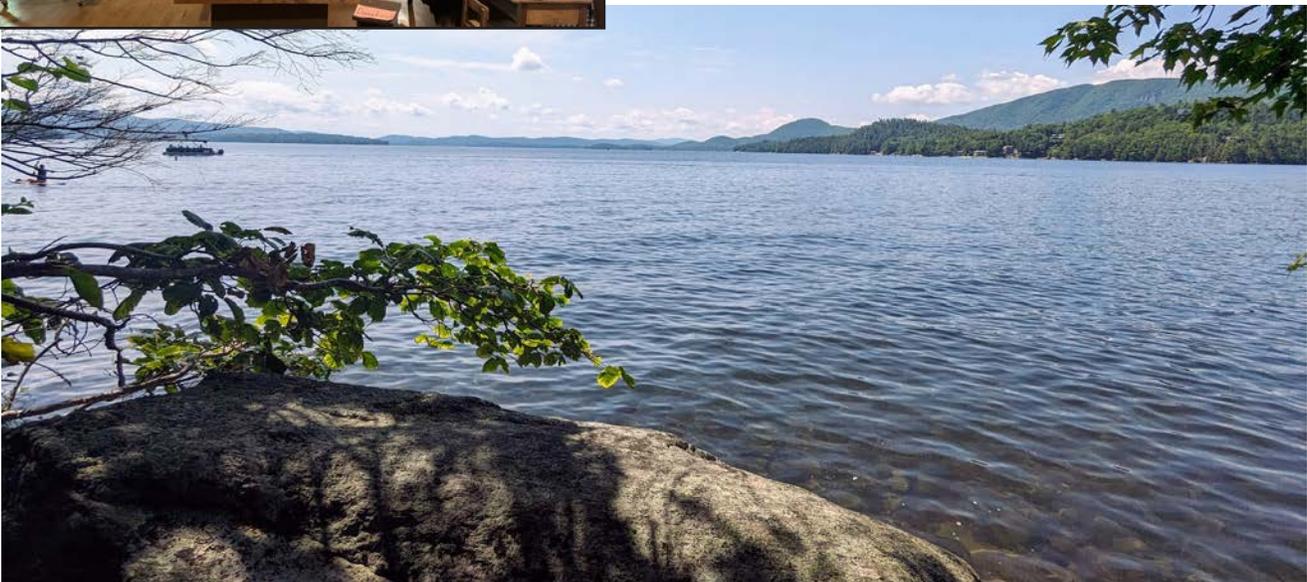
Life Sanctuary in South Hampton



educational programs, hiking trails, and boat rentals. Our programming this summer will include educational and recreational opportunities for the whole family. Take a guided hike or paddle with a naturalist, explore the exhibits at Paradise Point Nature Center, and hear from experts about nature in Red Barn Speaker Series. There's so much to explore here, so make plans to be bound for Newfound this summer!

Photographer Walter Keane shot this wonderful series documenting a Northern Flicker nest at the Brookside Sanctuary in early June. He describes the day's outing:

My intent going to the George Burrows Brookside Sanctuary in South Hampton, NH, revolved around locating a Pileated Woodpecker nest and checking the status of the Ospreys and Great Blue Herons nesting there. As always in spring, I'm on the lookout for the sounds of new bird-life, demanding to be fed as all hungry young do. Then I look for adult birds, in this case locating Northern Flickers flying back and forth with grubs to the nest site, a cavity nest set high up in a snag in the part of the sanctuary pond. A busy time it was, too, as these feedings occurred about every 7-10 minutes for most of the hour I was observing them. It was great for me, as well, as I could sit on a bench at the edge of the water, with a riverside seat and a head-on view. Great stuff!



Growing a Vision 2023

The McLane Center Pollinator Garden



Story and photos by Diane De Luca, Senior Biologist

“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.”

—Gertrude Jekyll, a prominent horticulturalist whose legacy lives on in the beauty and functionality of the gardens she created; her gardens and writings continue to inspire gardeners around the world.

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 their offerings. All of whom believe in the power of gardens to positively impact our future.

Creating and sustaining native pollinator habitat is vital for several reasons, including overall ecosystem health, providing food and habitat for native pollinators, conserving native pollinator species, and raising awareness of the importance of healthy pollinators and habitats. The beauty of nourishing pollinator habitat is that each of us can make a difference, even by just planting one container of pollinator flowers.

THE GARDENS

Trust in the gardens, trust in the time to prosper, trust in the natural process and trust in ourselves to nurture and care for these spaces.

The pollinator garden remains our steadfast teacher. Each year, we apply the lessons learned to nurture growth in our gardens. We have come to trust and rely on the knowledge shared by our garden. Five growing seasons have built a prospering ecosystem that supports a diverse range of pollinators and contributes to the overall health and biodiversity of the environment. This time has also guided us in understanding what is effective and where we need to adapt our approach.

Our expansion efforts continue, aiming to provide blooming native plants from early spring to late fall, cluster plants to help pollinators find food more efficiently, and offer a variety of flower colors and shapes. In 2023, we opened a new area in the butterfly garden that is primarily in full sun. This expansion allowed us to increase host plants and fall nectar sources, such as New York Ironweed (*Vernonia novaboracensis*), Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) and Joe-pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*). This is a work in progress and will allow us to

move some of our more prolific sun-loving species that are overflowing in places, such as Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Lance-leaved Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) and Sweet Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*). We look forward to observing the visitors to this new area in the upcoming field seasons.

OUR POLLINATORS

Our understanding of the pollinator visitors to McLane Center’s pollinator gardens and meadow continues to grow. The maturing pollinator meadow and well established pollinator gardens are providing us with many opportunities for close observation and study.

While we have intentionally planted Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) in our garden spaces to attract the Monarch butterfly and nourish the Monarch caterpillars, we are always learning of other pollinator plant relationships throughout our garden.

Pollinators offer us the gift of close observation. Several of these moments stood out during the 2023 garden season.

A gift of close focus

During the spring of 2023, while back in the gardens, we witnessed a remarkable event—the emergence of an overwintering pollinator from the leaf litter. A few years ago, a generous garden supporter gifted us a couple of Bush Honeysuckles (*Diervilla lonicera*). These plants have thrived, adding a vibrant color to our garden. More than just visually appealing, they serve as the host plant for the Snowberry Clearwing moth (*Hemaris diffinis*). Like many pollinators, Snowberry Clearwings lay their eggs on plants that their larvae can feed on. After hatching, the caterpillars feed on the host plant, eventually forming a cocoon on the ground in the leaf litter. They pupate through the winter months and emerge as adults in the spring.

One of the newly emerged Snowberry Clearwings clung to a lower branch of the honeysuckle as their wings unfurled. We were all fascinated and intently watching the process as another Clearwing flew in and immediately began to mate with the freshly emerged individual. *What??* A bit of investigation into the mating habits and we learned that the female clearwings send out a pheromone from a gland located near the tip of her abdomen to signal to any available male that she is ready to mate. Once mated, she will lay her eggs singly on the underside of the leaves of a host plant, such as the Bush Honeysuckle. Wow! How lucky we all were to witness this process!

The year of the butterfly

Perhaps we should call this the “year of the butterflies.” We partnered with New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) and many others to advance the knowledge and conservation of butterflies in New Hampshire through a series of webinar and field trainings. This initiative led to our inaugural Capital Area Butterfly Survey, aligning with the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) survey counts held across North America. The enthusiasm sparked by these events prompted a deeper interest in the butterflies frequenting our gardens and meadows. We endeavored to document their presence as thoroughly as

possible. This effort also allowed us to inventory the host plants and nectar sources currently available in our gardens and meadow, providing a foundation for future expansion plans.

Our gardens are filled with stories of butterfly host plants. We’ve observed the Northern Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) supporting the Spicebush Swallowtail, witnessing the growth from caterpillar to cocoon, which then hangs through the winter. Black Swallowtails lay eggs on the parsley we plant specifically to host them. This year, we also noticed some of the less showy butterflies. The Wild Indigo Duskywing, for instance, had previously escaped our notice.

These butterflies are part of a larger group of skippers—small to medium-sized, mostly brown, with a rapid darting flight pattern. Their primary host plant, the Yellow Wild Indigo (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*), has been growing in our gardens. As we paid closer attention, we spotted more Duskywings. We saw them perched with open wings on the Wild Indigo, laying eggs on the leaves of the same plant, allowing us to study their distinctive markings.

POLLINATOR CONTAINERS

We continue to grow pollinator containers. Lining the walkway into the garden, the containers share ideas for creating pollinator habitat in small spaces, illustrating how everyone can contribute to pollinator conservation. Each container is filled with plants



Wild Indigo Duskywing perched on the host plant Yellow Wild Indigo (top). Pollinator container with plants attractive to bees (middle). Snowberry Clearwing moths mating just after the female emerges (above). Note that the female’s wings are still dark and not yet fully dry. Crescent butterfly nectars in late summer (opposite).

Continued on pag 20

that attract a diverse group of pollinators. Signage at each pot and in the kiosk area provides detailed information on potential plantings and their appeal to specific pollinator species.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE

Data collection by our garden volunteers and other community scientists has been crucial for documenting and understanding our pollinator habitat.

Photos from our pollinator habitats are consistently uploaded to iNaturalist, allowing others to view and appreciate these observations. During the summer of 2023, Ellie Peabody and Sandy McIntyre collected data on bumblebees in our McLane Center Pollinator gardens for the Beecology Project. The results are fascinating and you can read more about them in the accompanying article.

2024 HAPPENINGS

We are excited to announce our plans for the upcoming field season and look forward to sharing our garden with visitors. Here are a few events to anticipate:

- ☼ In person Native Plant Sales continue each spring and fall
- ☼ Ongoing involvement of Community Scientists through the iNaturalist platform. For more information, visit www.inaturalist.org/projects/new-hampshire-audubon-mclane-center-pollinator-habitat
- ☼ Continued participation in the Beecology Project. For more information, visit beecology.wpi.edu/webapp/app/home
- ☼ Butterfly monitoring trainings and our second annual Concord Butterfly Survey on July 27; if you are interested, please email ddeluca@nhaudubon.org
- ☼ Regular “Ask a Pollinator Gardener” tabling throughout the garden season
- ☼ And more...please join us.

THANKS

We are incredibly thankful for the hard work of our garden volunteers. The garden flourishes because of their dedication: Sandy Bowles, Tom Bowles, Pam Freilich, Ginny Hast, Sheryl Ingraham, Linda Jaworski, Rakesh Loya, Sandy MacIntyre,



Ellie Peabody and Sandy McIntyre work to create new habitat in our garden(above). Rain brought our spring Native Plant Sale inside but did not dampen the visitors' enthusiasm (right).



Nanci Mitchell, Cheryl Moelleur, Lucy Murayda, Kate Osgood, Ellie Peabody, Paige Catherine Viglione, Stephen Walker, Margaret Watkins, and Nancy Wilson.

Sincere thanks to the funders and supporters of McLane Center pollinator gardens including the Butler Foundation, the Benjamin Couch Trust, the Gertrude Couch Trust, and the Cutler Fund. We would not be able to do this work without your support.

A Look Back at the 2023-2024 Brockway Wee Explorers Program

by Devin Guilfoyle, Newfound Center Coordinator

*I*t's Wednesday morning, around 10am. I park the car on a small dirt lot off a side road shrouded by woods in Hopkinton. This lot leads into a patch of coniferous forest with a pond on the other side. We step out of the car and marvel at the cones dropped by the tall White Pines.

We reach the pond and walk along its shore. A narrow bridge takes us over a small stream where the water from the pond flows. Sticks and branches, perhaps leftover from a beaver dam, slow the flow of the water. After we cross the bridge, a large, towering White Pine, nicknamed "The Welcome Tree," waves hello to us. The tree has probably welcomed hundreds, if not thousands, to the preserve.

After walking across another smaller footbridge, we reach a semicircle of wood benches facing the pond. We've taken in the beauty of nature thus far, and now it's time to make sense of it.

Dozens of children shared this experience taking part in the Brockway Wee Explorers Program series this past school year. The program connected children ages 3-5 to the natural world at the John Brockway Nature Preserve. The program was free to Hopkinton residents thanks to an endowment fund from Dorothy Brockway Osborne, the great granddaughter of the preserve's namesake. Children learned about a range of ecological topics from seasons to animal homes, exploring each theme through hikes, crafts, stories, and song.

In a world where time indoors on a screen has become the norm, it's more important than ever to engage children with nature, especially at a young age. When we learn about something, we have a deeper appreciation of it, leading us to care for it and advocate for its wellbeing. New Hampshire's

natural spaces need our care, and our program is committed to inspiring the next generation to protect them.

It can all start with a pinecone.

A day in March exploring the John Brockway Nature Preserve in Hopkinton. Walking along the pond trail (top) and listening to educator Devin Guilfoyle describe life underneath the frozen pond (left). Photos by Zoe Dawson.

WEE EXPLORERS, BIG DISCOVERIES





NH Audubon Education Coordinator, Slater Roosa, joins one of the many volunteers from Fidelity for a well-deserved break to enjoy the new Pollinator Pocket Gardens at Beech Street School (left). The new picnic table is a donation from Girls at Work. How it looked before all the action (inset).

Manchester's Pocket Pollinator Gardens

Story and photos by Willa Coroka, Project Implementation Specialist

This past autumn, NH Audubon installed a four-part garden lining the walkways leading to Beech Street Elementary School. These new gardens, termed Pocket Pollinator Gardens because of their compact size, were supported by funds received from the State Conservation Commission's Moose Plate Grant Program and US Fish and Wildlife Services. Replacing previously vacant landscape plots, each Pocket Pollinator Garden was designed with both pollinators and people in mind.

Once littered with invasives and overgrown cultivars, the four plots surrounding the main entrance to Beech Street Elementary now contain a variety of native perennials chosen

strategically for their hardiness, varying bloom times, and aesthetic appeal. Diverse specimens were chosen to attract a broad range of native pollinators, from butterflies and bumblebees to hoverflies and sphinx moths, with trees and shrubs selected for their ability to provide food, shelter and nesting sites for pollinators and birds alike.

The gardens were implemented in stages and spearheaded by a valiant fleet of volunteers composed of Beech Street faculty, naturgroupie.org registrants, and NH Audubon members. From removing invasives to relocating hedges, the initial few days were tough! Volunteers were feeling the heat one particularly



Completed side garden (left) with educational signage currently being developed in partnership with the SeeScience Center. The signs will include QR codes that link to interactive activities and additional learning opportunities. Crew members from St. Anselm (above) help during the reconstruction.

grueling day but were reinvigorated when Sapurka Supply of Goffstown showed up with a donation of 4 yards of compost!

Several companies, including Pleasant View Garden, donated plants or offered discounted rates to our project. Over the course of three weeks, the soil was amended, over 120 plants were planted, mulch was spread, paths were laid, high-fives were had, and a picnic table (donated by Girls at Work, Inc.) was delivered. The final gardens are full of potential and so are the newly established relationships between the diverse crew of volunteers this project attracted.

Fifth graders were introduced to their new pollinator garden just a few days after it was completed and tasked with creating plant labels for the newly installed specimens. These labels were collected and laminated then returned to the school where they were positioned next to their appropriate native plant. These hand-made signs created a connection between the gardens and the students and with hope, will inspire a sense of camaraderie and stewardship within the Beech Street community. Permanent signage is currently being designed with information pertaining to the layout and maintenance of a pollinator garden, profiles of native pollinators, and general insight on the health benefits of connecting with nature within the parameters of a garden.

Two additional sites for these Pocket Pollinator Gardens have been completed as of June 2024; one at Mill #3 where Girls at Work, Inc. and the SeeScience Center are located, and the other at the Manchester City Library (on their Auburn St. entrance). Our fourth site at Bakersville Elementary will break ground in autumn. Stay tuned for ways to get involved!

On July 16th between 6-8pm, NH Audubon will be hosting a free event at the Manchester City Library to introduce the small fleet of new Pocket Pollinator Gardens to the public. Come with questions about native plants and native pollinators and inquiries as to how to best support them in your own yards and gardens.

Massive thanks go out to the incredibly hard working individuals who discovered us through naturegroupie.org; kudos to the UNH Extension Master Gardener volunteers and the students from St. Anselm College who joined us for several Beech Street shifts; a round of applause to the amazing Ann and Jan who showed up almost every single day of the project; and a huge shout out to the Fidelity Investments team who comprised a large percentage of our amazing volunteers. Additional thanks go to Faulkner's Landscaping, Bagley Pond Perennials, and Dillon Old Farm Nursery for helping us source our native plants, trees, and shrubs. We look forward to watching these gardens grow!



Another day's work crew in the cleared and prepped gardens (top). Members of the same crew (below) engaging in the heavy labor of moving shrubbery! The pre-existing English Yews were repositioned to create a living boundary so that lessons can be conducted in the main garden with defined parameters to designate an outdoor classroom environment.



Join in on a Summer of Fun with our Nature Day Camps!

by Claire Adams, NH Audubon Camp Administrator

New Hampshire Audubon's Nature Day Camps will be experiencing some changes this summer with my guidance as the new Camp Administrator. With over seven years of environmental education experience and a passion for getting people of all ages outside and exploring nature, I am excited to expand the capacity of New Hampshire Audubon's largest education program through nine weeks of Nature Day Camps at both the McLane Center in Concord and Massabesic Center in Auburn this summer and beyond!

In alignment with New Hampshire Audubon's mission, our Nature Day Camps focus on getting kids outdoors, exploring nature with their senses, and developing a deeper sense of appreciation for and understanding of environmental stewardship. Through games, hikes, science projects, and interaction with our Ambassador Animals, our campers are immersed in experiential learning in a fun and safe setting.

This summer, I am excited to bring back a couple of our most popular camp sessions: Wet and Wild Watersheds and Survival Skills. While all of our camp sessions focus on the outdoors, these two weeks in particular encourage a deep understanding of our surroundings and stewardship of our local natural resources. During the Wet and Wild Watersheds session, campers will learn about the importance of the water cycle and how it sustains all life on planet Earth. They will also spend lots of time exploring Great Turkey Pond, Massabesic Lake, and the other small ponds and vernal pools throughout our sanctuaries to develop a deeper appreciation for all the plants and animals (including humans!) that rely on those freshwater resources. Of course, they will also spend some time of those hot August afternoons cooling off in the sprinklers and playing other watery games.

This year during our Survival Skills week, campers will take a deep dive into what it means to practice Leave No Trace. These seven principles are great guidelines for becoming Earth stewards, particularly when hiking, camping, or observing wildlife. From our preparation for outdoor exploration, to learning how to create and read a map, to knowing why and how to take care of the plants and animals that call our sanctuaries home, campers will practice the skills helpful in becoming more conscientious outdoor adventurers. They will also spend some time exploring the amazing adaptations that make wild animals survival extraordinaires. From camouflage to silent stalking, campers will have a chance to explore our sanctuaries through the eyes, ears, and noses of our wildlife.

Sessions are quickly filling up for the summer season, and I also want to make sure to mention our closing camp session for the summer: Becoming Scientists. This STEAM-focused week will get campers thinking and acting like scientists by using the scientific method, running experiments, and conducting wildlife surveys in our ponds, forests, and fields. By using tools like microscopes, field guides, binoculars, and ponding nets, campers will be formulating hypotheses, making observations,



and drawing conclusions based on what is happening in nature right before their eyes. I am hoping to get this next generation even more excited about science, and based on the registration numbers, it's looking like this will become another one of our popular sessions.

I am also excited to announce that New Hampshire Audubon is continuing our partnership with Media Power Youth of Manchester with not one but two sessions of Conservation Quest Camp at Massabesic Center. Media Power Youth is an organization that inspires young people to engage with media in thoughtful and creative ways that support well-being. These camp sessions focus on the integration of technology and conservation science, having the campers film their own videos about the local wildlife and ecosystems around the Massabesic sanctuary. It is also a great opportunity for our older campers or those that have just aged out of our Nature Day Camp to continue attending camp at a New Hampshire Audubon center. These sessions are for 10-14-year-olds and run during sessions three and four (July 8-12 and July 15-19). Registration is run through the New Hampshire Audubon "Nature Day Camp" webpage.

I am looking forward to continuing New Hampshire Audubon's legacy of our Nature Day Camps this summer!

Visit nhaudubon.org/camp for full camp details and session descriptions, and for a link to the registration portal. We hope to see you there!

2023 Camp Highlights

by Slater Roosa and Shelby Morelli, 2023 Camp Directors



Summer 2023 was certainly one we will never forget. It was filled with adventure amongst the woods, searching for wildlife, discovering new friendships, helping the environment, and having fun!

Each year, Camp Wildside and Friends of the Eagle brings all new adventures, experiences, and friendships. Each day is something new and exciting. While the summer of 2023 was a very rainy one, it certainly did not rain on our parade! We had hundreds of campers join us as we explored the trails, ponds, vernal pools, and gardens at Massabesic and McLane Centers and we all learned so much about New Hampshire's natural world. Some days you would find our campers scooping tadpoles and aquatic insects from the pond with nets to observe. Other days we would be running through the trails playing games, all the while keeping our eyes peeled for wildlife.

Summer camp is a place for our youth to come together to learn all about the environment and the plants and animals that make it so wonderful. Plus, the number of parents connecting at the end of the day to schedule new playdates was unprecedented this year.

It was a joy to be a part of such a wonderful nature experience for these future naturalists.



SUMMER CAMBERSHIPS

New Hampshire Audubon strives to make all of our educational programming as accessible as possible. In order to help achieve this goal, we have a Camp Scholarship fund for families who may need some financial assistance to attend our Nature Day Camps.

Additionally, the New Hampshire Department of Education is offering grant funding for summer camps through their *ReKINDling Curiosity* program. New Hampshire Audubon is a registered camp through this grant program if you apply with an invoice through our organization.

If you would like a 2024 Campership Application, are requesting a *ReKINDling Curiosity* invoice, or have additional questions about our summer camp programming, please contact Claire Adams, Camp Administrator, at cadams@nhaudubon.org or call (603) 224-9909 ext. 404.

We would love to make it possible for your family to join us for camp this summer!



Nature Day Camp photos from summer, 2023, by camp staff.

Member Spotlight:

The Rainier Family



by Jen Thomas, Membership and Development Coordinator, and Claire Adams, NH Audubon Camp Administrator

Last year when February and April school vacations were approaching, Heather and Todd Rainier gave their sons Nathaniel (12) and Tucker (8) some options on how to spend the weeks. “I told them I could take the week off, we could do activities together, they could go to camp, or we could do a combination,” Heather describes. “They both unanimously answered ‘camp!’”

The Rainier family from Hooksett recently sat down with Camp Administrator and Environmental Educator, Claire Adams, and Membership and Development Coordinator, Jen Thomas, to explore the reasons Nathaniel and Tucker are so excited to attend New Hampshire Audubon vacation and summer camps.

How did you first discover New Hampshire Audubon?

Todd: I attended a week-long hike of the Monadnock-Sunapee greenway as a young teenager and have joined my father in participating in the Christmas bird count for decades. We feel Audubon's values align with our family values. We were fortunate to have been referred to NH Audubon by a family friend when Nathaniel was

much younger, and he attended his first season of camp six years ago with his cousin, Luke.

What are some of Nathaniel and Tucker's favorite summer camp experiences/memories?

Todd & Heather: Both boys love the staff, building forts, the tree house is an absolute favorite, and making great friends!

What is your favorite animal ambassador?

Tucker: Probably the snake – the ball python.

Nate: the Barred Owls; sadly one of them just passed away.

As parents, what do you value the most about NH Audubon's camp programs?

Todd & Heather: Camp staff! The programs are always engaging and both boys have made lasting friendships with campers, but the camp staff is fantastic and our primary #1 reason for registering our boys each session.

Shelby, Henry, Stephanie, Slater; the list is extensive. We've made special connections with the staff over the years and we've always felt they handle our boys with the utmost care.

In addition to camp, the Rainier Family uses their NH Audubon membership discount on programs and events, including Enchanted Forest.

Heather: Nathaniel had a span of time when he was very into Greek mythology. That year Nathaniel came dressed as Demeter and Tucker in a fox pirate costume—that's my all-time favorite Halloween!

What one word would you use to describe NH Audubon?

Todd & Heather: Two words: happy place! The McLane Center has become our family's happy place.

Tucker: Awesome

Nathaniel: Fun

Nathaniel remembers the name of a puppet that counselors used as an ice breaker to help him feel more comfortable during his first summer at NH Audubon camps six summers ago, "Skunky."

Heather: The counselors at the McLane Center have gone above and beyond to help the boys feel comfortable. The first summer was challenging at drop off but every single day, a counselor would sit with Nathaniel and color or chat during that transition period. We visited and walked the trails on a weekend day and we watched our very shy, reserved child just open up and blossom as he told us all about things at camp.



Nathaniel (green cap) and Tucker (striped shirt) with friends during April vacation camp (opposite). Tucker with two friends out exploring (above). Nathaniel in his Leader-In-Training roll (right). Photos by Zoe Dawson and Shelby Morelli.

And now, as evidenced by his "Leader-In-Training (LIT) of the week" award during this year's April vacation camp, Nathaniel is helping younger children explore the wonders of the natural world at NH Audubon's summer and vacation camps.

Nathaniel: I helped the counselors with crafts, and I helped all of the campers (with enrollment as many as 20 in a single day!) at least once.

Claire: With one big group it is helpful to have somebody we can rely on to help get the kids into a line or call them over to a group, and set up and clean up crafts. It's a really big help.

CAMP INFORMATION

Visit our Nature Day Camp webpage (nhaudubon.org/camp) for more information on summer camp. If you have questions regarding camp registration, financial aid, or programming and policies, please contact our Camp Administrator, Claire Adams, at cadams@nhaudubon.org or (603) 224-9909 ext. 404.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New Hampshire Audubon members receive a 10% discount on camp registration and a special invitation and discounts to NH Audubon program and events, including our Annual Gathering, Earth Day and Enchanted Forest. For a list of all membership benefits and to join, visit nhaudubon.org/join/ and contact Membership Coordinator, Jennifer Thomas, at jthomas@nhaudubon.org or (603) 224-9909 ext. 310.



Legacy Guild Spotlight



NH Audubon makes it easy for anyone to support the values they believe in—simply by joining our Legacy Guild. When you leave a bequest or other planned gift to NH Audubon, you help ensure that our conservation science, policy work, and nature education will continue. New Hampshire’s wildlife will have strong advocates for years to come.

As one of our newest Legacy Guild members, Nisa Marks has served as a NH Audubon Trustee since 2021, and is currently the board chair. Last September, she added NH Audubon to her will as a beneficiary. Here’s how she describes her decision.

Nisa, you’re a Millennial. What inspired you to create a will?

I didn’t have a will, and I was starting to get to an age and a level of life complexity where I thought I should probably put one in place. At the same time, I was looking for another way to give to NH Audubon, which has a mission I believe in and support. I had finally arrived at a point of relative stability in my life ... a house, a partner, a job I enjoy. And I had people that I cared about who I wanted to ensure were taken care of, if something were to happen to me. I noticed that several well-respected conservation organizations were using the FreeWill platform (freewill.com) and there were enough reminders ... it seemed like the right time.

Why did you decide to name NH Audubon as a beneficiary?

I spend a lot of my life devoted to making the world a better place and living out my values. When I die, I want to make sure the money and assets I’ve accrued still support those values. NH Audubon is ensuring the future sustainability of our state in lots of ways—educating the next generation, getting people outside. Outside is where I go when I need to process something, to be inspired, to find something that makes me smile. I want others to enjoy that same gift.

Outside is where I go when I need to process something, to be inspired, to find something that makes me smile. I want others to enjoy that same gift.

What advice would you give to someone who may be considering creating a will?

I was astonished at how easy it was. It was something I had put off for a long time because I didn’t want to think about it, or I thought it would be difficult, and it really wasn’t. It was a remarkably straightforward process compared to what I had imagined. Doing this is a way that I can give, even in a phase of life where I don’t have a lot of discretionary income to make a large donation.

If you would like to find out more about ensuring the future protection of NH’s natural environment by joining the Legacy Guild at NH Audubon, please contact Hope Jordan, Director of Development, at hjordan@nhaudubon.org or by phone at 603-224-9909, ext. 307.



New Release: *The Stokes Guide to Finches*

by Anita Fernandez, Community Outreach Coordinator

Join author Lillian Stokes and NH Audubon on Friday, November 15, 2024 for a talk and book signing on the new ground-breaking guide: *The Stokes Guide to Finches of the United States and Canada*.

From goldfinches to crossbills, and backyards to wilderness peaks, finches are one of the most exciting, mysterious, and beloved groups of songbirds.

In this lively, information-packed talk, Lillian Stokes, best-selling author of 35 Stokes Guides, and finch expert Matthew Young will introduce you to the 43 finches of the United States and Canada. The presentation features stunning photography and highlights from the feeder-favorite goldfinches and Red Crossbill tribes, to the least known mountain-top Black Rosy Finches, plus endangered Hawaiian Finches with their own *Darwin's finches*-like story.

Lillian and Matthew will cover finch identification and behavior, irruptions, and how to attract and conserve finches. Sprinkled throughout with quotes from the creative Quick Take chapter intros, and filled with amazing facts, this talk will leave you knowing so much more about the finches you thought you knew!

Visit <https://www.nhaidubon.org/events/stokes> to register.

About Lillian Stokes

Lillian Stokes is an award-winning author and photographer who produced 35 Stokes Guides with her husband Don, selling over 5 million copies including the bestselling *Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, the *Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern and Western Regions*, the *Stokes Beginner's Guide to Birds*, the Stokes Nature Guides series, and the Stokes Backyard Nature Books. Lillian was producer and cohost of two national PBS birdwatching TV series seen by 40 million viewers. Other achievements and activities include: Federal Duck Stamp Judge, Partners in Flight National Conservation Award, and Lifetime Achievement Award Kappa Kappa Gamma, Board of Directors of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, Nuttall Ornithological Club, and former Board member of NH Audubon.



About Matthew Young

Matthew Young is the Founder and Board President of the Finch Research Network. Matthew has also worked in the field of social work with special needs populations at the William George Agency for 12 years. Additionally, Matthew worked at the Cornell Lab across 15 years where he worked on Golden-winged Warblers, Voices of Hawaii's Birds, Merlin Bird ID, and was Project Lead on the Lab's first Irruptive Finch Survey in 1999. Widely known as a preeminent authority on finches of North America, Matthew has written finch species accounts for breeding bird atlases, *Birds of the World* accounts, and published several papers on finches and the Red Crossbill vocal complex.



Photos (left to right): Red Crossbill, Alan Murphy; Pine Grosbeak, Alan Murphy; Black Rosy-Finch, Brian Small.

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15

6:30PM

MCLANE CENTER, CONCORD

Brilliantly conceived, magnificently illustrated, and full of information that any birder would devour, it would not surprise me if this unique guide earns the rank of top bird book of 2024. My opinion.

-John Kricher, author of Peterson Reference Guide to Bird Behavior

WOW! This gorgeously illustrated, rigorously researched, beautifully written field guide is ground-breaking! This is THE most comprehensive and engrossing book I have ever read on these fascinating, flashy, important birds. It really knocks my sox off!

-Sy Montgomery, author of Birdology and The Hummingbirds' Gift

In this new volume—detailed, accurate, and beautifully illustrated, like every Stokes guide—Lillian Stokes, a gifted communicator about the natural world, joins forces with finch expert Matthew Young to provide an essential reference for everyone curious about birds.

-Kenn Kaufman, author of The Birds That Audubon Missed and Kaufman Field Guides

Sanctuaries Thriving Through Volunteer Efforts

by Anita Fernandez, Community Outreach Coordinator

During the 2023 NH Audubon Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, several of our volunteers were recognized for the impactful work they do in partnership with our staff members in the areas of conservation, education, policy, and lands management. We would like to introduce you to some of those volunteers who support our sanctuaries and help to educate and engage the community through their work.

Meet Brenda McMahon!

NH Audubon signifies nature and a sense of calm to Brenda. She began volunteering here because she was spending a lot of her time watching birds and attending events at Massabesic Center and wanted to give something back and help in some way. She works right on the sanctuary property to make the lands a better and more welcoming place for both wildlife and for people, exemplifying our mission.

Brenda is one of about two dozen Eastern Bluebird Monitors who monitor “zones” of bluebird nest boxes on the Massabesic property during the breeding season. Because she doesn't often see them elsewhere, Brenda says that it is a treat to be able to see the blue color of bluebirds at Massabesic.

In addition, Brenda helps care for the grounds at Massabesic Center, mowing the fields and paths to allow visitors and staff to access wildlife observation areas and experience the beauty and the calm of the sanctuary.

When Brenda isn't working at Massabesic Center, she uses the inspiration of nature to spark her creativity as she pursues various art projects. She also enjoys playing pickle ball.

Thank you for sharing your passion with us, Brenda!

Meet Dee Cleary!

Dee stated that her time on Auburn's Conservation Commission was the impetus for her to become more involved with NH Audubon's mission—and become more involved she certainly has. Dee leverages her skills in marketing, sales, event management, leadership, and natural resource training to excel as a Massabesic Center Garden Specialist, sit on the Massabesic Center Advisory Committee, promote NH Audubon and facilitate community partnerships, and support our annual community events: Earth Day Celebration in April and Enchanted Forest in October.

As a member of the garden team at Massabesic Center, Dee is a part of a community of gardeners and conservationists whose mission is to make a difference through environmental education. She finds pleasure in the opportunity to work with other such dedicated people. One of the most rewarding projects Dee managed happened several years ago when she was presented with the idea of installing a Wedding Garden component to the sanctuary's gardens, with the vision of a beautiful backdrop for weddings in addition to a peaceful place for all people to just relax in nature. Thanks to the soil generated by UNH Cooperative Extension's Master Gardeners and the sunny location, plants are thriving in the Wedding Garden.

Dee has some positive advice to give others about the volunteer experience: “they say that volunteering ‘feeds the soul’ and I believe that to be true. I encourage people to give it a try!”

We appreciate all the effort Dee puts into multiple areas of the organization.



Meet Sandy MacIntyre!

As a Master Gardener, in 2018 Sandy found the newly designed Pollinator Garden at McLane Center an enticing project to begin her volunteer journey with NH Audubon. She sought to learn more about what our native pollinators need to thrive, and then work as part of a dedicated group, caring for them and supporting their survival. If you've ever visited the pollinator gardens at our center in Concord, you will see what a success Sandy and the team have achieved in providing a habitat for dozens of wildlife species.

Sandy learns from others working on the garden team, and enjoys providing educational opportunities for the many NH Audubon visitors who stroll amongst the gardens. She finds time spent at the McLane gardens relaxing and enjoyable, but she is also constantly discovering something new that she can share with a garden visitor who would otherwise pass on by without noticing the wonder of nature.

In addition to the gardens, Sandy expanded her volunteer contributions to the Monarch Tagging project, which monitors Monarch butterfly migration paths through the use of nanotags and the Motus program. She also participates in the annual Capital Area Butterfly Count in July, which begins at McLane Center, and The Beecology Project with UNH Cooperative Extension.

During the times of year when Sandy cannot get out into the gardens or support pollinators, she enjoys knitting and crocheting baby blankets, prayer shawls and knit hats, baking, and reading.

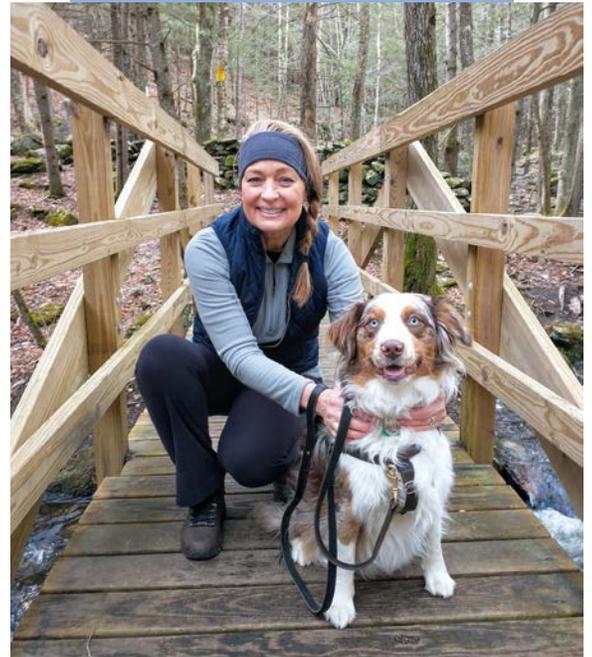
We appreciate the work Sandy performs on our sanctuary, as well as the education she provides to visitors.

Meet Ellie Peabody!

Ellie's is a familiar face in the pollinator gardens at McLane Center, where she works to support pollinator habitat on our capital area sanctuary. Ellie joined the NH Audubon garden team so that she could use her time helping others learn, make a positive impact, and discover more about helping the environment herself.

She isn't *just* supporting wildlife and the environment on NH Audubon property. In the time she isn't volunteering at McLane Center, Ellie also maintains her own pollinator and vegetable gardens at home. She says one of the most rewarding aspects about the work that she does has been learning about how important native plants are to support the natural environment, and being a part of an amazing team of volunteers who come together to keep the gardens looking beautiful and functioning as a complete wildlife habitat.

Ellie is also a volunteer of the Monarch Tagging project, working in many areas of the state to understand Monarch migration and help promote the importance of pollinators. At home Ellie knits hats and scarves for charity, and if you see her out and about, she may be combing the beach for sea glass or on a hike with her daughter's adorable dog, Pfosi.



BECOME A NH AUDUBON VOLUNTEER AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Volunteers for NH Audubon work in an astounding number of roles, from writing for our quarterly publication to climbing white pines and banding Bald Eagle fledglings. Our team of volunteer partners in conservation totals close to 500 individuals. To see how you can become a part of protecting New Hampshire's natural environment for wildlife and for people through our volunteer program, visit our website to see the open opportunities: www.nh Audubon.org/volunteer.



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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.

An Enchanted Event Awaits

SAVE THE DATES: FRIDAY OCTOBER 25 & SATURDAY OCTOBER 26

New Hampshire Audubon will be hosting our family-friendly fall Enchanted Forest event on Friday October 25 and Saturday October 26, 2024. Forest guides will lead you down the pumpkin-lit trail to encounter wild and wonderful creatures who educate and delight about the magic of nature in New Hampshire. Every year we present new creatures and stories. This year learn how interesting everyday birds can be, how weeds help wildlife, and why the coyote is an important part of our ecosystem. Arrive before your tour or plan to stay after to enjoy indoor crafts and games. There may even be a treat or two to try. This is a must-see event that sells out quickly; be sure to register early.

Visit nhaudubon.org/EF for more details and to register for your time spot. This year we have times starting at 4pm on Saturday for the earlybirds!

Call Anita Fernandez at 603-224-9909 ext. 400 with any questions.



Photo by Zoe Dawson.