

The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

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<http://naturalist-club.org/>

J U L Y - S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 4 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

JULY	11	Sunday	Lavender Tea and Fields of Herbs
	13	Tuesday	Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten
	16	Friday	Star Party at the Astronomers' Conjunction
	🌿 Watch Club Website in July for Spontaneous Happenings! 🌿		
AUG.	7	Saturday	Keep Homestead and Flynt Park
	14	Saturday	Berry Patch Picnic
	22	Sunday	High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary and Shelburne Falls
SEPT.	10-13	Friday-Sunday	Stump Sprouts Weekend
	15	Wednesday	SEPTEMBER MEETING: Bugs ~ The Rodney Dangerfields of the Animal World
	18	Saturday	Digital Camera Hike
	25	Saturday	Keystone Arch Rail Bridges
	26	Sunday	Hawkwatch and Mt. Tom Meadow Maintenance



AVIAN ARIA

by Nancy Condon

Now that leaves adorn trees in abundance, bird-watching is more difficult than it was in early spring as the songsters were establishing their territories before leaves unfurled. In late spring and throughout the summer, those tiny birds way up in the treetops make us crane our necks and jockey to and fro in order to steal a little glimpse among the greenery. Often, we can hear the little mystery bird singing again and again ~ “Who is that little bugger? He’s got to be over there. Oh, I saw some movement. Now where did he go?” ~ and yet the rascal persists on evading our gaze. This is the time when “bird-watching” is more easily done by “bird-listening” for identification purposes.

I don’t pretend to be great at birding by ear, but when I can pick out some distinctive songsters from the forest chorus, it provides me great satisfaction. Without stopping, without craning my neck, I know I’m walking through the territory of a Veery, or that a Yellow-shafted Flicker is nearby. Following is a list of some commonly heard birds and the pneumatic description that may help you to recognize them. I hope this list helps you start to learn some avian songs. You may be surprised at how many you already know.

Red-tailed Hawk ~ a whistled descending “KEEERRRRR” lasting about 2 seconds.

Red-shouldered Hawk ~ a descending whistle similar to red-tailed, but much shorter duration: “KEERR KEERR KEERR KEERR.”

Killdeer ~ rapidly repeats its name: “killDEER killDEER killDEER.”

Great Horned Owl ~ hooting that can seem to say, “Whooo’s awake? Me tooo. Whooo’s awake? Me tooo.”

Screech Owl ~ a quavering whistle or a series of brief hollow hoots.

Barred Owl ~ hooting that can seem to say, “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?”

Barn Owl ~ a screechy, hissy, ascending cry.

Yellow-shafted Flicker ~ a very insistent “quick quick quick quick.”

Pileated Woodpecker ~ Loud ascending series of PIC’s that increases then quickly decreases, and ends abruptly. “pic pic Pic Pic PIC PIC PIC PIC PIC Pic pic.”

Red-bellied Woodpecker ~ Nasal sounding “CHUR CHUR CHUR.” Each CHUR ascends like asking a question.

Red-headed Woodpecker ~ raucous descending “queer queer queer.”

Hairy Woodpecker ~ loud “PEEK,” as well as a kingfisher rattle.

Downy Woodpecker ~ similar to Hairy but softer “PIC.” Rattle descends toward the end.

Great-crested Flycatcher ~ loud, insistent, ascending “WHEEP.”

Least Flycatcher ~ a sharp “CHE-BEK, CHE-BEK.”

Eastern Phoebe ~ says name, with a “raspberry” or trill on last syllable: “Fe-blleee Fe-blleee.”

Eastern Wood Pewee ~ says name, with a 3-syllable whistle: “Pee-a-wee Pee-a-wee.”

Black-capped Chickadee ~ says name: “chick-a-dee-dee-dee.” Also has a 2-syllable pewee call: airy “Pee-wee.”

Tufted Titmouse ~ 2-noted repeating “PEter PEter PEter PEter”

Robin ~ repeated “cheery-up, cheery-dee, cheery-up, cheery-dee.”

Rose-breasted Grosbeak ~ very robin-like, but with a more musical voice.

Northern Cardinal ~ strongly whistled: “CHEER CHEER CHEER PERTY PERTY PERTY.”

Black and White Warbler ~ high, thin, 2-noted whistle sounding like a squeaky wheel.

Yellow Warbler ~ bright, enthusiastic, “Sweet, sweet, I am so sweet”.

Hooded Warbler ~ ascending, then descending “WHEAT-A-WHEAT-A-WHEAT-E-O.”

Yellowthroat ~ distinctive “WICHITY WICHITY WICHITY.”

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Star Party at the Astronomers' Conjunction

Northfield, MA

Date and Time: Friday, July 16, at 8:00 p.m.
Clouds or Rain cancels.

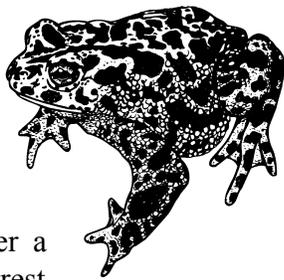
Leaders: Rich Sanderson, Dave Gallup (413-525-4697), Jack Megas (413-782-3962)

Meeting Place: Northfield Mountain Visitor Center, Route 63 (3 miles north of Route 2 in Northfield, MA

The Astronomers Conjunction started 22 years ago as a Naturalists' Club activity and has now evolved into an annual Northeastern regional three-day astronomy convention, with 100 participants and nationally known speakers. Help us celebrate this anniversary by joining us for Friday's free dark-sky Star Party in this beautiful rural setting.

BECOME A FROGWATCH VOLUNTEER

Heard any tree frogs lately, singing from the branches overhead after a thunderstorm? Rainforest weather! The National Wildlife Federation and the United States Geological Survey encourage people with an interest in frogs and toads, whether in their own backyard, nearby stream, or a local park and pond, to collect information about frog and toad populations. Survey a convenient wetland for the chorus of frogs or the cackle of toads. Then document and submit your findings to Frogwatch USA. Coordinators compile the information, so you can log on to see how frog populations in your area compare to those in the rest of the United States. Interested? Log on to their website, www.frogwatch.org, where you can learn the nine easy steps of how to observe and report on frogs. (Submitted by Art O'Leary)



Keep Homestead Museum and Flynt Park Hike

Monson, MA

Date and Time: Saturday, August 7, from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Doug Young (413-267-5883)

Registration: Not required.

Meeting Place: Front parking lot of Ocean State Job Lot (Big Y Plaza), Route 32, Palmer. (From Mass Pike Exit 8, turn left after toll booth and go approximately 1/4 mile.)

Within the hills of Monson lie the Keep Homestead Museum and neighboring Flynt Park. Between these two properties combined, the town owns over 200 acres of land open for hiking, cross-country skiing, and sports. We will hike some of these trails, along the way visiting two small granite quarries, two vernal pool sites, and the remains of structures once housing a museum and zoo. Upon our return from the hike, the Keep Homestead Museum will be open for a tour. See one of the largest button collections in the country, as well as antiques and a rock and shell exhibit, all in the former farmhouse of Myra Keep. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the garden. The hike on the trails will be moderate.

Spontaneous Happenings

Nature follows a broad schedule throughout the year. We know to expect the best wildflowers in May and hawk migration in September. But on what day and where will Nature reveal these displays? Modern technology can offer us the opportunity to react quickly to Nature's fickle timing of displays. In part to encourage use of the Club's web page and partly as an experiment to make our website reflective of seasonal happenings in the natural world, a couple of events will be offered in the month of July which will only be announced on the Club's web page. So go to the page late in the week to find out about an event scheduled for that weekend. The details of the event will be online. If you do not have the internet at home, remember that public libraries provide access. If you haven't visited our site recently, take a look at the new format!

Refer to the Club's Web Page at <http://naturalist-club.org>

Berry Patch Picnic

West Granville, MA

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2004
(rain date Sunday, the 15th)

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Leader: Art O'Leary (413-789-7274)

Meeting Place: Berry Patch, north side of Route 57 in West Granville, MA. (just east of the sign for Granville State Forest).

Registration: Call Art with questions.

Joyce Orsi, owner of the Berry Patch, graciously invites the Naturalists' Club to pick cultivated blueberries and to enjoy a BYO summer picnic on her beautiful country estate. Spend the morning learning about and picking nature's health food ~ blueberries. Reward your labor with a leisurely picnic, stretched out on the lawn under the stately trees at this 200+ year old period home. Also, rounding out the whole summertime picnic experience, Joyce is offering the opportunity to take a dip in her swimming pool, so don't forget your swimsuit and towels! The leader will contribute 22 old-fashioned flavors of gourmet soda in 7 oz. glass bottles, buried in a tub of ice. Bring berry money, containers for berries to go, and a creative picnic. A grill is available on the grounds.

Stump Sprouts Weekend

West Hawley, MA



Date: Friday, September 10, through Sunday, September 12

Time: Dinner on Friday evening through a Sunday luncheon.

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm (413-788-4125)

Limit: 20 people

Registration: All-inclusive cost for 2 nights' lodging and 6 meals is \$119 per person. Make check payable to The Naturalists Club and send to Dietrich Schlobohm, 52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089. Indicate in your registration your roommate preference. Reservations and a 50% deposit must be received no later than July 15. This trip will be cancelled if 18 people are not paid by that date. Call Dietrich or Julie for more information.

High on the side of a mountain with a magnificent view, Stump Sprouts ski lodge provides a beautiful setting for walking, hiking, or relaxing in solitude. A 90-minute drive from Springfield, the property consists of a 450-acre tract surrounded by Dubuque, Savoy, and Mohawk State Forests.

Guests need to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries. Bathrooms are shared. Our hosts will provide superb family-style garden-fresh meals, complete with homemade breads, and cookies. There is usually a choice of regular or meatless entrees. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity and a sense of adventure.

High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary and the Falls

Shelburne Falls, MA

Date and Time: Sunday, August 22, at 9:00 a.m.

Co-Leaders: Art O'Leary and George Gifford
(413-467-9518)

Registration: Not required. Heavy rain cancels.

To get to "High Ledges," we'll take the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) west, turning right after several miles onto Little Mohawk Road, left onto Patten Road, and follow the Audubon Society signs. We will walk on the Lady Slipper Trail and enjoy the westward view from the ledges.

Lunch in Shelburne Falls, near the 400-foot-long old trolley Bridge of Flowers ~ at a restaurant or bring your own. See the glacial potholes formed by swirling river flow carrying rocks and sand, eroding the river bed. View the North River Glass blowers.

Car Pool Meeting Place: A) 9:00 a.m. Town & Country Liquors parking lot, Route 5 North, West Springfield; B) 9:45 a.m. From I-91 Exit 26, Greenfield, take the first right from the rotary onto Route 2A East. Watch immediately for the Visitors Center sign and turn left there. Restrooms available.

S E P T E M B E R M E E T I N G

BUGS – THE RODNEY DANGERFIELDS OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

Wednesday, September 15, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Bugman Educational Entoprises

Tonight learn about the lifecycles of various Arthropods (the group of animals that includes insects, spiders, millipedes and crabs) and how these animals fit into the overall classification scheme in biology. Consider interactions between predators and prey, plants and animals ~ “us and them”! Share in an eye-opening experience, learning with bugs at this Family Program.

Bugman Educational Entoprises (BEE) instructors bring along a variety of *living* insects (including northern walking stick, rose tarantula, giant African millipede, scorpions that glow in the dark, and a giant hissing cockroach), presented in an engaging, hands-on educational lesson. The BEE curriculum is focused on global lessons, well-illustrated by the bugs showcased. To the people at BEE, the lessons are more important than the bugs, but they do understand the value of their living friends to get people’s attention!

Come for a fun-filled evening with Bugman Educational Entoprises, where perhaps you will forge a whole new attitude towards these creatures, the most numerous on Earth.

Digital Camera Hike

Hampden, MA

Date: Saturday, September 18

(Rain date - Sunday, the 19th)

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Place: Hampden Land Project, South Road, Hampden

Leader: Sonya Vickers (413-566-3406)

Curious about digital photography and its applications to photographing nature? Bring your digital camera or use one that will be provided. We will walk this new trail, taking telephoto and macro pictures, and then return to the cars to download onto laptops. You will be able to leave the workshop with a CD or disc with your own pictures.

Directions: From Springfield, take Route 83 through East Longmeadow center. Travel 1.5 miles south of the center and turn left onto Hampden Road at the big green sign for Hampden. At the second stop sign (Hampden House), turn right. In a few hundred feet turn left, opposite the gas station, and go almost 2 miles to the center of Hampden. Opposite the town hall, turn right onto South Road. Go over a bridge and bear right at the fork. One mile up on the right there is a parking lot for the trail.

Keystone Arch Rail Bridges

Chester, MA

Date: Saturday, September 25

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Co-Leaders: Art O’Leary & George Gifford
(413-467-9518)

Registration: Not Required. Heavy rain cancels.

Walk past the waterfall, along the Keystone Arch Rail Bridges blue-blazed trail, into the Walnut Hill Wildlife Management Area. The route for this rail line was surveyed by Major George Washington Whistler, father of James Whistler, the artist. Alex Bernie designed the keystone arch bridges. In the mid 1800's ten bridges were constructed by so carefully shaping stone, it fit together without cement. In 1912 part of the rail line was relocated, leaving some of the bridges unused, while others are still in use today. Come out to Chester as the leaves begin to turn, to view these amazing rail bridges traversing a dramatic river valley.

Car Pool Meeting Place: A) 9:00 a.m. Town & Country parking lot, Route 5 North, West Springfield, MA; B) 9:45 a.m. Walker Brook Convenience Store parking lot, near the intersection of Route 20 and Middlefield Road, Chester. Restrooms available for customers.

Mount Tom Wildlife Viewing Area Maintenance Picnic Party

Holyoke, MA

Date: Sunday, September 26

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

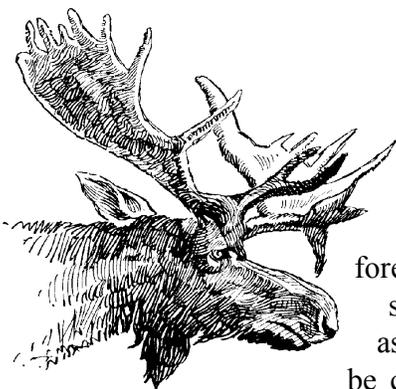
Registration: It would be helpful to know you are coming, but drop-ins are welcome and encouraged.

Meeting Place: Route 5 entrance to Mt. Tom State Park Reservation at 9:00. Later arrivals, meet us at the overlook, entering via Route 141.

Fall along the Holyoke Range makes for an outstanding time and place: Hawks soar on the thermals rising off the cliffs, as they continue their journey south. The color of early trees will begin to dot the hillsides of Easthampton and other towns across the landscape, heralding fall's approach. The Naturalists' Club will be continuing the work of removing invasive trees to encourage the growth of berry-producing shrubs. Everyone's help is needed to clip, trim, and saw our way to a fruitful, wildlife-enriching habitat.

Come for a couple hours, or for the whole time, and enjoy one of the best vistas of Pioneer Valley ~ made possible by our meadow. Stop to scan for hawks migrating overhead, then prune and clip a little bit more. A fulfilling morning of service, camaraderie, and enjoyment should be in store for you.

Come in work clothes, with water to drink, work gloves, and any pruning equipment you wish. The Mt. Tom staff will also provide tools and work gloves.



Looking Ahead ~

Naturalists' Club Director Dietrich Schlobohm wants members to know he will be booking outings in October or November to the **Graves Farm** in Williamsburg, a Massachusetts Audubon property with trails through a mixed forest of spectacular pine, oak, and beech trees. Because the sanctuary abuts several parcels of preserved watershed and state forestlands, large mammals such as bear, deer, fishers, coyotes, bobcats, and moose are present. Dietrich will also be coordinating a Naturalists' Club return trip to **Tom Ricardi's Birds of Prey Shelter** in Conway, Mass., dates yet to be set.

Wednesday Walkers

Join this small group of folks who know where to find the wildflowers blooming. Bring lunch and meet up with the Wednesday Walkers at 10 in the morning, walk till around noontime, then stop for lunch (often at a picnic table) before going on with your day. Destinations are often close by, though sometimes the walkers venture off, round and about, to places like the Quabbin or a fondly remembered flowering glen in the hills. Wouldn't you like to be part of this informal gathering? Places are decided by the group the week before. Please contact Barbara Farrington (413-786-7432) to join in.



Save the Date!

Wednesday, October 20 The Board of Directors has put plans in motion to hold the October membership meeting in conjunction with a Naturalists' Club dinner, place yet to be decided. Our new director, Sonya Vickers, worldwide-ranging naturalist, will present a talk on the Birds of Australia. She has taken four recent trips to Australia, with an eye for anything of natural interest, especially the birds. These trips have been along the eastern coast, from the northern rainforests to Sydney, and into the outback. Australia is a land of opposites, where the swans are black and the trees lose their bark rather than their leaves.

2004
2005

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President

David Gallup
(413-525-4697)

Vice President

Art O'Leary
(413-789-7274)
aoleary@wsc.ma.edu

Treasurer

Dave Lovejoy
(413-572-5307)
dlovejoy@wsc.ma.edu

Recording

Secretary
Nancy Condon
(413-564-0895)

Corresponding

Secretary
Colette Potter

Director

Tom Condon
(413-564-0895)
science@condon.net

Director

Robin Marie
Demetrius

Director

Dietrich Schlobohm
(413-788-4125)

Director

Sonya Vickers
(413-566-3406)

Publicity

Belle Rita Novak
belle-rita@map.com

Newsletter Editor

Debbie Leonard Lovejoy
(413-848-2047)
drleona@yahoo.com

Layout & Graphics

Loren Hoffman
(413-569-9577)
blackdogsims@yahoo.com

The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969, for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment. It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization. Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' CLUB. Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to enable people with diverse interests to get together and exchange ideas. Activities are geared to the layperson, to acquaint her/him with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

MEMBERSHIP

Here's how to become a member of the Springfield Naturalists' Club: Enclose a check, in the proper amount, payable to The Naturalists' Club.

- \$ 15 for a year of Individual or Family Membership
- \$ 25 per year for Supporting Membership
- \$ 50 per year for Sustaining Membership
- \$300 for Lifetime Membership

Mail to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Biology Department, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630. Include your mailing address. If there is any change in your mailing address, please notify Dave (413-572-5307, dlovejoy@wsc.ma.edu).

NEW MEMBERS AND RENEWING MEMBERS



RENEWAL TIME IS HERE.

Become a Club Member or Renew Your Existing Membership for 2004-2005.

Name

Address

Phone Number

Requests for programs/trips

Please fill out the above form, clip, and mail to: Club Treasurer, Dave Lovejoy, Biology Department, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630.