



The **NATURALISTS' CLUB**
 NEWSLETTER

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

July to September
Calendar of Events

JULY

- 11 Saturday Fabulous Ferns!, *Russell*
 23-26 Thursday-Sunday Exploring the Upper Connecticut River Valley,
Pittsburg, New Hampshire

AUGUST

- 9 Sunday Nature Walk at Mittineague Park, *West Springfield*
 10 Monday Registration due for Stump Sprouts Weekend
 (see p. 4 for details)
 15 Saturday Evening Paddle on Littleville Reservoir, *Huntington*
 30 Sunday Van Gogh and Whistler Exhibition: Nature and Art
 at the Clark Museum, *Williamstown*

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 Friday-Sunday Stump Sprouts Weekend, *West Hawley*
 12 Saturday Discovering Woodland Mushrooms, *Russell*
 16 Wednesday SEPTEMBER MEETING Underground:
 Discoveries at the forefront of cave exploration
 17 Thursday Around the Reservoir, *Ludlow*
 19 Saturday Blueberry Hill Hawk Watch, *Granville*
 26 Saturday A Ramble up Mount Toby, *Sunderland*

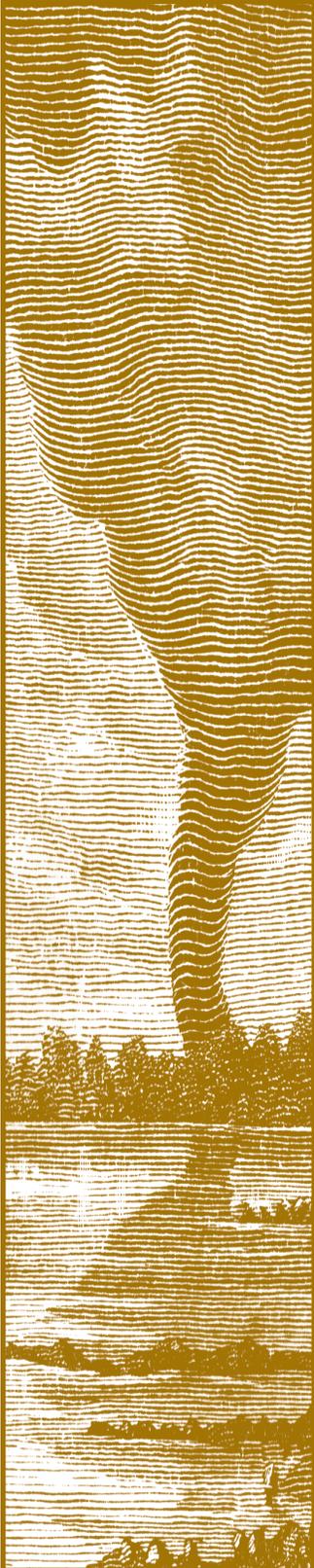
In summer, the
 song sings itself.
 ~ William Carlos
 Williams

Then followed that beautiful season...Summer...Filled was the air with a dreamy and
 magical light; and the landscape lay as if new created in all the freshness of childhood.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

NATURALIST'S CORNER

CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE - A GLIMPSE INTO HOW THE SPRINGFIELD TORNADO ALTERED BIRDLIFE



I was paddling the Connecticut River the other day with Fran and some other Naturalists' Club members. As the sun shone and the wind graciously pushed us along our course, Fran fascinated me with her nature observations. She lives in East Forest Park, one of the neighborhoods hit four years ago by the tornado that trampled many parts of Springfield and beyond. Our conversation got me thinking about how changeable and enduring nature is.

Prior to the tornado, evergreens populated Fran's neighborhood – huge spruces, along with rows of hemlocks and the occasional white pine. Interspersed among the evergreens were some maples and other deciduous trees. All these trees provided shade for humans and shelter and food for birds. Fran regularly hosted tufted titmice, nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays in her yard. Cardinals were abundant and goldfinches profuse. Plenty of black-capped chickadees and dark-eyed juncos frequented her feeder every winter.

Now, four years after that fateful June 1st storm, the skyline in Fran's neighborhood is bare. She has a few small hemlocks and just one pine. No spruce, no maples. The quantity and diversity of birdlife has changed dramatically. The goldfinches – previously so abundant – are no longer there. Nuthatches, titmice, downy woodpeckers and cardinals that were so plentiful before, are now hardly ever seen. Mourning doves and blue jays still come around occasionally and a red-tailed hawk patrols overhead, its view no longer obscured by trees. Interestingly, European house sparrows, seldom seen before the tornado, now visit regularly in droves. These introduced sparrows are quite adaptable, and their presence in this disrupted area is a reminder of how their species has been able to spread so far and wide.

Sue, from another section of East Forest Park, suffered the tornado's effects as well. In her neighborhood, sites once beautifully shaded are now laid bare. Huge maples and beautiful trees on the tree belt are now gone and solar panels have been installed to capture the light that now reaches some re-built and newly constructed homes. At least twenty-five species of birds frequented her yard prior to the tornado. All the species that had visited Fran, Sue also observed in her yard. In addition, brown creeper, yellow-shafted flicker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, yellow-bellied woodpecker, cowbird, white-throated sparrow, catbird, red-winged blackbird, and grackle round out Sue's list of regular visitors before the storm.

Interestingly, each of these observant women has traced similar events following the tornado. Like Fran, Sue now sees only an occasional cardinal and an infrequent downy woodpecker, blue jay and a hopeful hawk. She, too, is overrun with European house sparrows, which hide out in her one recently planted pine tree, flushing out in a mad dash when disturbed. She has had to change feeders to discourage these birds from dominating the feeding stations. Pigeons, who had never visited before, are finding the open space suitable to their needs. The diversity and abundance of birds Sue enjoyed when the life-giving trees flourished in the neighborhood are now only memories.

Natural disasters are nothing new in nature. Tornados, floods, hurricanes and fires dramatically change ecosystems, quite often in one fell swoop. Even if able to escape the event itself, wildlife that inhabited an area prior to such a disruptive force must find suitable habitat elsewhere. Where is “elsewhere” exactly? Does Springfield have enough alternative habitats to accommodate the displaced populations? I can think of no better reason to promote preservation of natural space than to ensure diversity and continuation of wildlife we already enjoy.

Sue and Fran and many others, I’m sure, are going to continue to provide for the birds that so enrich our lives. They will keep watch to see when and if any of their old friends return. It will be many years before the young tree growth is able to shade homes and nourish a diversity of wildlife but eventually that will happen. Natural disasters will continue to affect us and wildlife alike. When that happens, we can glean a tried-and-true lesson from nature: adapt and persevere. In time, things change. Nature knows no other way. ~ Nancy Condon

Fabulous Ferns!, *Russell*

Saturday, July 11, starting at 10 a.m.
 Leader: Anne Lombard, Fern Specialist
 Registration: Please call Nancy Condon, 413-564-0895
 Meeting Place: Noble View Outdoor Center, South Quarter Road, Russell

Anne has a native fern garden in her Northampton yard, with 21 species, and has developed a wood fern garden at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. She enjoys exploring our native ferns and club mosses and has trained at Garden in The Woods and the Hitchcock Center. On our walk, we will discuss the life cycle of ferns and the characteristics that aid us in distinguishing one species from another.

For more information on this and other Noble View trips, visit www.nobleviewoutdoorcenter.org



Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time. ~ John Lubbock

Exploring the Upper Connecticut River Valley,

Pittsburg, New Hampshire
 Thursday, July 23 through Sunday, July 26
 Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon, 413-564-0895
 Registration: To reserve a spot, call Tom & Nancy, or email Tom at science@condon.net by July 10th.

Join Tom & Nancy for four days of hiking and canoeing in one of the most beautiful areas in New England. The Connecticut River is New England’s longest river, reaching from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound. The river’s headwaters are home to moose, otter, deer and the plants and birds of the northern forests. This is a great place to explore by foot and by boat, which is just what we’ll do. We’ll hike out to the headwaters of the Connecticut River and step across it when it is but a trickle. We’ll paddle on small beaver ponds, quiet streams, and the lakes of the upper Connecticut River. If you don’t have your own boat, you can rent one nearby.

It is a five-hour drive to Pittsburg, too far for one day, but well worth an overnight trip. We will stay in a rental house at “Willy’s Corner” and take turns preparing shared dinners. Register early as 12 is the limit. Approximately \$150/person.



Bees do have a smell, you know, and if they don't they should, for their feet are dusted with spices from a million flowers.
~ Ray Bradbury

Nature Walk at Mittineague Park, West Springfield

Sunday, August 9, 10 a.m. to noon

Leader: Karen Daniels

Registration: Please call Karen, 413-786-8228

Meeting Place: Parking lot at the main entrance on Westfield St. (Rte. 20), W. Springfield

Mittineague Park borders on the Westfield River across from Robinson State Park. Mid-summer is a great time to enjoy the meandering river, sunny meadows, and shady woodland trails of the park. We'll travel at a leisurely pace, looking for wildflowers, butterflies, and perhaps a kingfisher or heron along the river. Bring binoculars, water, and a snack if you wish. Bad weather cancels.

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

Reservations and 50% deposit should be sent to arrive by Monday, August 10. This trip may be cancelled if fewer than 18 people have paid by that date. For current information, please call Dietrich or Julie at 413-788-4125.

Friday, September 11 through Sunday, September 13, from dinner on Friday evening through Sunday luncheon.

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm

Registration: All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$162 per person. Indicate your roommate preference and make your check payable to The Naturalists' Club and send to Dietrich Schlobohm, 52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089.



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 ninety-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 meat or vegetarian fare. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity, and a sense of adventure.

Limit: 20 people.



In the morning light, I remembered how much I loved the sound of wind through the trees. I laid back and closed my eyes, and I was comforted by the sound of a million tiny leaves dancing on a summer morning. ~ Patrick Carman

Evening Paddle on Littleville Reservoir, Huntington

Saturday, August 15, starting at 4 p.m.
 Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon
 Registration: Please call Nancy Condon, 413-564-0895
 Meeting Place: Littleville Reservoir parking lot

Let's let the heat of the day pass and then enjoy a quiet, 2-hour paddle on the beautiful Littleville Reservoir. What more do we need to say? Bring your own boat or rent one from our Scouts. Afterwards, we'll pop on over to Tom & Nancy's house for a little barbeque and some drinks to enjoy the remainder of the evening. A nice way to wind down the summer.

The summer night is like a perfection of thought.
 ~ Wallace Stevens

**Van Gogh and Whistler Exhibition:
 Nature and Art at the Clark Museum, Williamstown**

Date/Time: Sunday, August 30, starting at 9 a.m.
 Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup
 Registration: Please call Dave and Suzy, 413-525-4697
 Meeting Place: Table and Vine Rt. 5, West Springfield.

Join us for a day of nature and art at the Clark Museum of Art in Williamstown. Nature surrounds this charming museum nestled amidst the rolling hills of the Berkshires, an ideal setting for nature-themed paintings by one of the world's most misunderstood – and now beloved – artists. The very best of Van Gogh's paintings will be displayed in the Clark's stunning 42,600-square-foot addition that opened last year. Designed by world-renowned Japanese architect Tadao Ando, the addition to the Clark blends seamlessly with the surrounding landscape. Van Gogh and Nature will resonate especially strongly within the Clark's beautiful campus landscape. Also on exhibit is James Abbott McNeill Whistler's painting "Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1", popularly known as "Whistler's Mother", along with prints and drawings by Whistler. We will also walk the nature trails that are part of the Clark's new addition. Admission to the museum is \$20 for adults.

August rain: the best of the summer gone, and
 the new fall not yet born. The odd uneven time.
 ~ Sylvia Plath

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

Friday to Sunday, September 11 to 13
 Please see page 4 for details. Registration is due by
 Monday, August 10.

Discovering Woodland Mushrooms, Russell

Saturday, September 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.
 Location: Noble View Outdoor Center, Russell
 Leader: Dianna Smith, Pioneer Valley Mycological
 Association
 Registration: Please call Nancy Condon, 413-564-0895

Our moist Northeast woods are filled with beautiful and fascinating mushrooms. If you have ever been curious about huge shelf fungi, brilliant chanterelles, deadly amanitas, or tasty morels, this hike is for you. Come learn to identify some of these decomposers and appreciate their complex associations with plants.



See what a wide variety of colors and forms we have in our fields and woods. Find out which ones are edible which ones are deadly, and which ones can have health benefits.

Around the Reservoir, Ludlow

Thursday, September 17, starting at 9:30 a.m.
 Leader: Colette Potter
 Registration and Meeting Place: Please call Colette,
 413-786-1805

Enjoy a nice, easy stroll along the reservoir. This will be about a three-mile walk, all flat and level walking. Bring your binoculars!

Lo! a ripe sheaf of many golden days,
 Gleaned by the year in autumn's harvest ways,
 With here and there, blood-tinted as an ember,
 Some crimson poppy of a late delight
 Atoning in its splendor for the flight
 Of summer blooms and joys
 This is September.

~ Lucy Maud Montgomery



SEPT.
Meeting

UNDERGROUND: Discoveries at the forefront of cave exploration

Wednesday, September 16 at 7 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Kevin Downey

New techniques have helped open up a golden age of underground discoveries. Caves in their natural state offer excellent opportunities to see and study the geology, hydrology and mineralogy of an area. They can also present many challenges.

This month's speaker, Kevin Downey, will share images he has captured during more than 2000 cave projects in dozens of countries. Photos of the world's largest passages and rooms will be interspersed with images of exquisite, tiny crystals. The program will include images and discussion of caves in deserts, rainforests, alpine regions, and of some caves close to home. Deep technical caves, small awkward caves, underwater caves, beautiful caves, and very nasty caves all are part of the underground world and have much to teach us.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Kevin Downey is by trade a professional photographer. He also runs a mineral business, Well-Arranged Molecules, based in Northampton, Massachusetts. Worldwide, he is best known for his exploration, study, and photography of caves. These projects have led to some of the most significant international underground discoveries ever, have set several records for length and depth of caves discovered, and have revealed some spectacular and unique sites. Kevin's photographs of caves and caving challenges have been published in hundreds of magazines and dozens of books. His work has been featured in publications including *Geo*, *Smithsonian*, *Sports Illustrated* and has been used on television for programs including PBS's *Nova* and the BBC's *Planet Earth*.

Hawk Watch at Blueberry Hill, Granville

Saturday, September 19, from 10 a.m. to noon or later

Leader: Dietrich Schlobohm, 413-788-4125

Meeting Place: Blueberry Hill in Granville

Rain Date: Sunday, September 20, same time

September is a great time for viewing the fall hawk migration, especially Broad-winged hawks. We can expect to see a significant variety of birds: Broad-winged, Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Osprey, Kestrel, Peregrine, and Bald Eagles, for example. Blueberry Hill provides a broad view of almost 360° and access to an important migratory route for hawks. John Weeks is the official counter at this hawk watch site and will be present, barring bad weather. He is an expert birder and is open to helping newcomers. Dietrich, the amateur, will also help participants to recognize the primary identification characteristics of the different species. Pack a snack, and pay attention to the weather as the wind on the hill can be chilling at times. Don't forget to bring binoculars!



A Ramble up Mount Toby, Sunderland

Saturday, September 26, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call Nancy, 413-564-0895

Meeting Place: Barnes & Noble, Holyoke

At 1269 feet, Mount Toby is one of the highest peaks overlooking the northern Pioneer Valley. An old fire tower at its peak reflects the importance of this summit to the forest health in the region. In 1916, the mountain and surrounding forest were purchased by the State of Massachusetts as part of an effort to investigate the impact of Chestnut Blight on Massachusetts forests. Today, the area is part of the Mount Toby Demonstration Forest, and research continues under the auspices of the University of Massachusetts.

We'll start our hike by Cranberry Pond and work our way to the summit, walking mostly along the Roaring Branch Trail. In some places, the trail is steep and rocky, so wear solid hiking boots and carry a pole if you like. We'll hike the 3 miles to the summit and enjoy lunch and then meander back along the old fire tower road. Total distance is about 6 miles. Remember to pack water and bring along that raincoat. If we come prepared, it surely won't rain.

Events @ Laughing Brook, Hampden

These programs are offered by Mass Audubon and require registration. To register, contact Mass Audubon at Arcadia at 800-710-4550. For more information, please call Kevin Kopchynski at 413-267-4757 or visit the Mass Audubon website, www.massaudubon.org. Laughing Brook is located on Main Street in Hampden. Nonmembers who join during registration can take immediate advantage of member prices.

Insects of the Field and Forest

Saturday, July 18 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Instructor: Kevin Kopchynski, Naturalist

Come visit Laughing Brook to explore both field and forest to see and hear some of the many insects that live here. Watch as a bee pollinates a flower, see how many different types of butterflies you can count, and learn what lives within all that white spittle on the field plants. Please wear long pants. Suitable for families with children 5–12 years. Members: Adult \$5.00, Child \$5.00; Nonmembers: Adult \$7.00, Child \$7.00.

Introduction To Digital Photography

Sundays, July 19 and 26, from 1 to 4 p.m. on both days
Instructor: Kevin Kopchynski, Naturalist

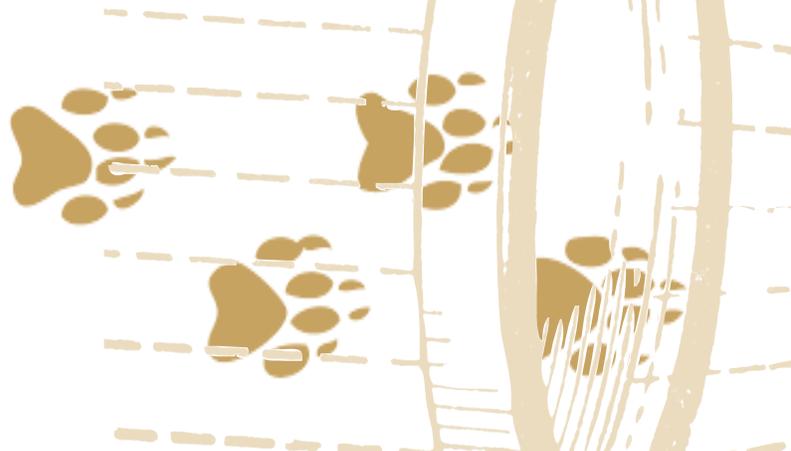
Learn the basics of nature photography just in time to photograph the beautiful autumn colors! We'll discuss best practices for capturing the image, understanding exposure and focus, and using both manual and automatic exposure settings. Both digital and film users can benefit from this instruction, though when discussing equipment we will concentrate on digital photography and the special opportunities and challenges it offers. After the first session, participants are encouraged to take photos for review at the second session. This program is designed for adults. Members: \$25.00; Nonmembers: Adult \$30.00.



Nature Mysteries

Saturday, August 22 from 10 to 11:30 am
Instructor: Kevin Kopchynski, Naturalist

Nature is filled with mysteries just waiting to be discovered and solved. Mysteries such as what animal left its track and where was it going, what critter ate a food item, or who left their scat behind. We'll take a walk at Laughing Brook looking for both mysteries and figuring out the answers to some of these and other questions. Please wear long pants. This program is suitable for all, including children 3–12 years. Members: Adult \$5.00, Child \$5.00; Nonmembers: Adult \$7.00, Child \$7.00.



A note of thanks

Dear Friends,
We were so very happy to receive the \$3,000 donation from you for our Student Environmental Education Classroom program. It is a gift very much appreciated.

This is the fourth year we have done our fifth grade class program. Principals, teachers and especially students greatly appreciate learning about nature first hand.

We give each an hour of classroom preparation. Then we take them into our Bear Hole Watershed so they can learn first hand about the forests, the reservoir and the woods. It is a favorite for them and they really love the program. And we greatly love you for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

Diane Crowell, President, West Springfield Environmental Committee

