

2021



The

NATURALISTS CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

July to September ~ Calendar of Events

JULY

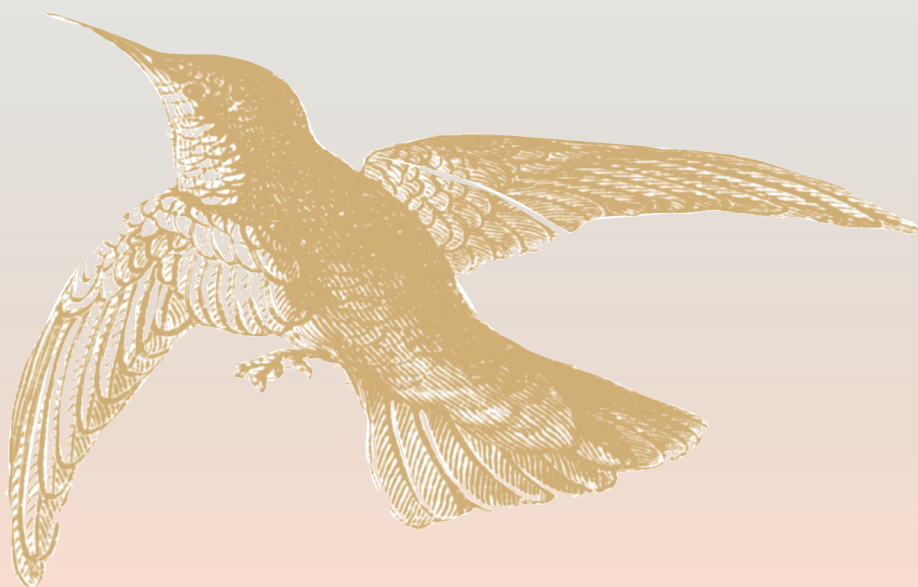
- 5 Monday - Boreal Spruce and Fir Forest Exploration at Tamarack Hollow, *Windsor*
- 10 Saturday - Life in a Stream at Laughing Brook, *Hampden*
- 25 Sunday - Summer Flora in Forest Park Extension, *Springfield*

AUGUST

- 1 Sunday - Deadline to Register for Stump Sprouts Weekend
- 2 Monday - Noble View Excursion, *Russell*
- 14 Saturday - An Evening with Beavers, *Otis*
- 31 Tuesday - Paddling on the Chicopee River, *Wilbraham*

SEPTEMBER

- 10-12 Fri.-Sun. - Stump Sprouts Weekend, *West Hawley*
- 15 Wednesday SEPTEMBER MEETING: The Importance of Bees
- 18 Saturday - A Forest Walk on Mount Hunger, *Monterey*
- 26 Sunday - Nature in Autumn at Lunden Pond, *Monson*



When the sun is shining, I can do anything; no mountain is too high,
no trouble too difficult to overcome.

~ Wilma Rudolph

NATURALIST'S CORNER

Eager Beaver

Meet Eager. He is a two-and-a-half-year-old beaver.

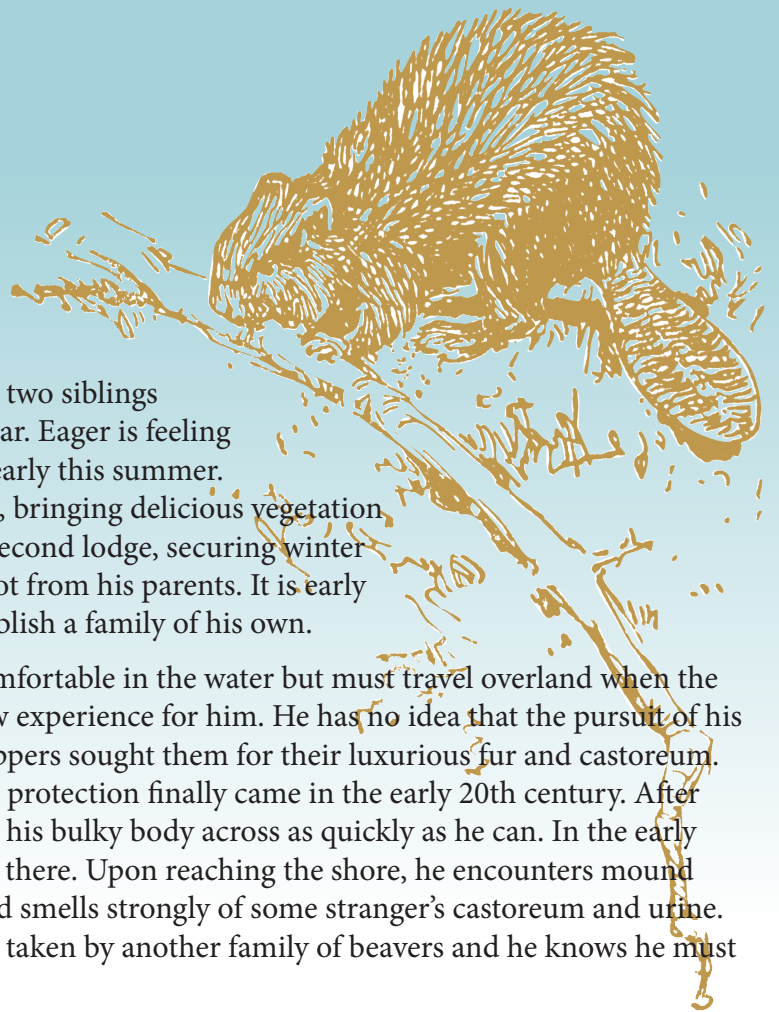
His family has eight members now: his mother, father, two siblings from two years ago, plus the three siblings born last year. Eager is feeling the need to move on before his mother has more kits early this summer. Don't be critical – Eager has always been ready to help, bringing delicious vegetation to the kits, helping maintain the dam, constructing a second lodge, securing winter stores. It all comes pretty naturally, but he's learned a lot from his parents. It is early spring and Eager is feeling ready to move out and establish a family of his own.

Without much ado, he ventures upstream. He feels comfortable in the water but must travel overland when the stream trickles out. He comes to a road, which is a new experience for him. He has no idea that the pursuit of his ancestors opened traveling routes across the US as trappers sought them for their luxurious fur and castoreum. Beavers were nearly exterminated in the US until legal protection finally came in the early 20th century. After some consideration, Eager ventures onward, waddling his bulky body across as quickly as he can. In the early spring there isn't much cover, but he smells water over there. Upon reaching the shore, he encounters mound after mound of mud and vegetation. Each scent mound smells strongly of some stranger's castoreum and urine. He knows this is a "No Trespassing" sign. This pond is taken by another family of beavers and he knows he must move on.

It is still cold outside, but his two-layered coat protects him. The underfur keeps him warm and the outer guard hairs protect him from abrasions. His hair is so thick, a postage-stamp sized area has more hair than that on an entire human head. For some people, that may not be surprising. Waddling along in a ditch now, Eager catches scent of another beaver. It's a girl beaver! They hit it off and continue their wanderings together. They find and follow a small stream. It soon gets deeper. The edges are full of cottonwood, willow and even a few aspen trees. His favorite! The perfect home – but it needs improvement.

The two now work tirelessly building a dam to widen their stream. They each pick a tree not too far from their chosen dam site. Eager uses his wide tail to prop himself up on his hind legs, and with front paws against his tree, he begins to gnaw. First biting with head tilted left, then tilting his head to the right, he takes big chunks of bark and wood out of the trunk. His teeth are specially adapted for such work. Each of the four incisors – two on top and two on the bottom – has iron-infused enamel on the outside, covering softer dentin below. This inner layer wears away faster than the enamel, keeping his teeth cutting-edge sharp. Good thing they keep growing, because he has a lot of gnawing to do, which wears them down quickly. In two hours, the work is done and the cottonwood falls right where he wants it – into the stream, where the upper branches are within easy reach.

It is hard work, and fueling himself is a continuous task. He scrapes and eats the inner bark of a chosen branch and chows down on the buds and leaves at the end. Delicious! His digestive system is built for this food. Not just anyone can digest this stuff. His big caecum is rife with cellulose-digesting bacteria and his intestine is six times longer than his body, so he can digest a third of the cellulose he consumes. To get even more of the nutrients, Eager snacks occasionally on his own feces, digesting every last usable bit until his scat is ultimately just a ball of sawdust.



Eager and his mate secure long branches into the bank of their dam site and plaster mud and vegetation in place to make a firm foundation. They continue to bring long wooden sticks and secure them at an angle into the bank and muddy foundation. To this they add smaller sticks and branches woven into the superstructure. More and more sticks, ingeniously woven and secured, are caulked with mud, grasses and leaves. The wider and taller the dam gets, the more their newfound pond fills up, creating the perfect habitat, not only for themselves but for innumerable other pond-loving organisms. Beaver are considered a keystone species: an entire community of organisms depend on the habitat beavers create.

Housing is also needed for Eager and Castor, who will be Eager's lifelong partner. Their first home was a burrow dug into the streambank. That was much easier and faster to construct. They could stick with it; after all, one quarter of all beavers live in bank burrows. But with the water level rising every day, they are setting their sights on either a bank lodge or one surrounded by water. A bank lodge, built partly on land, has an underwater entrance just like a water lodge but is more accessible by predators. Inside both types of lodges is a room above water level where they will sleep, raise young, and maybe someday, tolerate muskrats or other unobtrusive free-loaders. The lodge is plastered on the outside with mud that freezes into a hard, plaster-like barrier, protecting the inhabitants from clawing predators.

All this work requires lots of timber. The beaver's stout body is strong, necessary for dragging heavy branches from land into water. Once in the water, they can still gnaw and carry wood since a second lip closes behind the incisors. Flaps also close off the ears and nose, and clear nictitating membranes protect their eyes underwater. Although Eager can hold his breath for 15 minutes, usually underwater forays last 6-8 minutes or less. Eyes, nose, and ears are conveniently located atop his muscular head so his profile above water is minimal.

Through the years, Eager and Castor raise their own kits, keep the dam mended, and host innumerable other species in their pond. Consequently, groundwater is recharged, trout and salmon populations flourish, and sediment is reduced for downstream organisms. With luck, Eager and Castor may live up to 25 years in the wild. We wish them well as they are good stewards of their corner of the world.

~Nancy Condon



A note from the Author

I invite you to An Evening with Beavers on August 14th.
See description on page 5 for details.

Recommended reading and primary source: *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* by Ben Goldfarb, 2018.

www.naturalist-club.org

Alone in the Woods

*In a wooded area
runs a path seldom trod
it forks off then divides
one leads to the river bank
where beavers built a bridge
of logs, mud and stone
the water just trickles
at one end while holding
back the river water
the other leads deep into
a dense evergreen forest
filled with tiger lilies, ferns
thistles and green moss
the denseness can confuse
you can lose direction easily
if not familiar you can
become lost in the thick
undergrowth of the forest
so you had to pick your
path wisely and know your way
or get lost and wonder half the
day finding your way out
like the forest we have to see
a clear path in life and do our best
not to get lost in everyday things.*

~Phyllis Babcock

Boreal Spruce and Fir Forest Exploration at Tamarack Hollow, Windsor

Monday, July 5, from 9:30 a.m. to noon

Leader: Aimee Gelinas & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call to sign up (413-297-0778)

Meeting Place: Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center, by way of Griffin Hill

Road. See website for directions: [http://www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org/Donate_](http://www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org/Donate_Directions,_Contact.html)

[Directions,_Contact.html](http://www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org/Donate_Directions,_Contact.html)

Naturalist and Director Aimee Gelinas will enlighten us about the wonders and beauty of the high elevation spruce and fir forest in which Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center resides. Tamarack Hollow is dedicated to educating visitors and conserving this unique forest type in Massachusetts, as well as sharing world cultural traditions through music. With Aimee's guidance, we'll learn about the trees, wild edibles, birds, and other forest inhabitants on a hike of 2-3 miles in this cool, high elevation forest. Expect cooler temperatures and dress for the weather.

Hiking boots, hiking poles (if you use them) binoculars, water and a snack are recommended. On our way home, we'll stop at The Old Creamery in Cummington for a deli sandwich or ice cream.

Life in a Stream at Laughing Brook, Hampden

Saturday July 10, time TBD

Leader: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Please call Sonya to register and for start time (413-218-7742)

Meeting Place: Laughing Brook on Main Street, Hampden

July can be a warm month. How about learning the nature of a stream by actually standing in it and seeing what makes it such a nursery for the life in the forest around it? We will be doing some investigating of Laughing Brook and enjoying the trails in this Audubon Sanctuary. You will need shoes that can get wet and a sense of adventure.

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.

~ Archibald Macleish

Summer Flora in Forest Park Extension, Springfield

Sunday, July 25 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Registration: Not needed

Meeting Place: Temple Beth El parking lot, where plenty of parking is available.

Forest Park Extension is a City of Springfield conservation area across Dickinson Street from the portion of Forest Park better known to most visitors. A trail runs from Temple Beth El through upland woods and wetlands generally following Pecousic Brook to the Longmeadow line.

Noble View Excursion, Russell

Monday, August 2, from 9 a.m. to noon

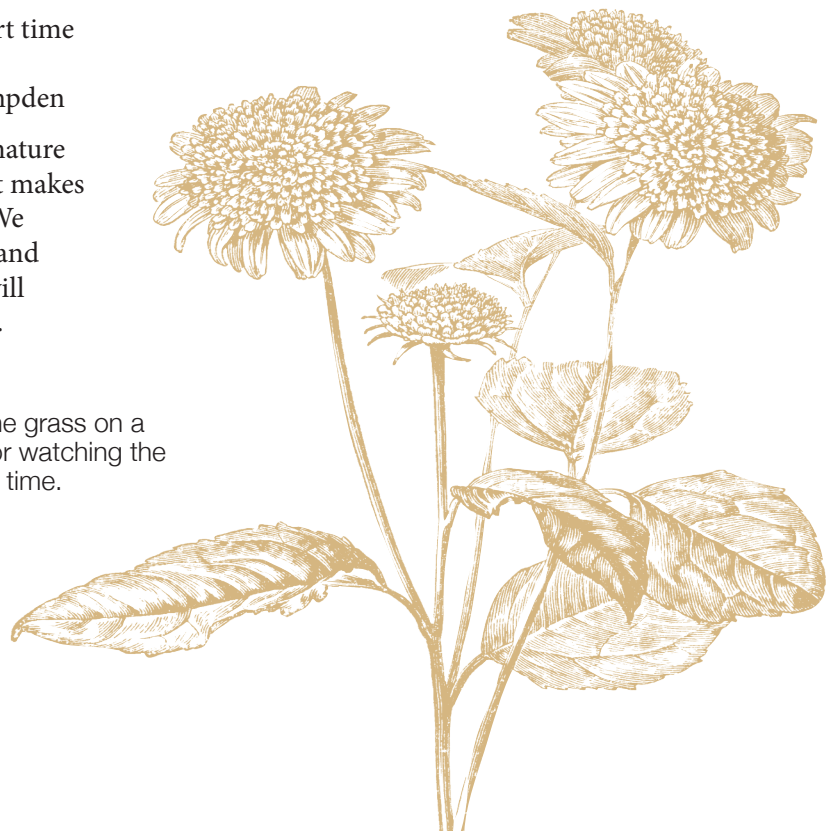
Leader: Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call to sign up (413-297-0778)

Meeting Place: Lower Parking Lot of Noble View Outdoor Center, 635 South Quarter Road, Russell

Come up to Russell Mountain for a respite from heat down in the valley. This 2.6-mile hike will be in the shade of a mixed forest. Expect some slight up and down sections but no significant elevation changes. Along the way we'll identify a few ferns, trees, and wildflowers and inspect some old cellar holes.

Wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring hiking poles if you use them, plenty of water, and a bag lunch to eat at the picnic table in front of the 50-mile view at the end of our hike.



An Evening with Beavers, Otis

Saturday, August 14, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: Papa's Gulf Station, Route 23 (2000 E. Otis Rd.), Otis

Upper Spectacle Pond is a small but active beaver pond with at least four beaver lodges and is surrounded by multiple scent mounds. This is not a destination paddle, but an experience to enjoy beavers. These scenes can be fully appreciated from the seat of a quiet boat. Evening gives us the best shot at viewing these shy creatures. We will stop on an island, so bring along an evening bag meal and perhaps a folding chair. Join us with your own canoe or kayak, or you can rent a canoe from our local scout troop.

The pond is down a mile-long dirt road. We have done it with our Prius, so your vehicle should be fine. Plan for the weather and bring along a camera or binoculars.

The winding down of summer puts me in a heavy philosophical mood. ~ *Thomas Carlyle Robert Fulghum*

Paddle on the Chicopee River, Wilbraham

Tuesday, August 31

Leader: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Please call Sonya (413-218-7742) to register and for start time.

Meeting Place: Parking lot of the YMCA, 45 Post Office Park in Wilbraham

The Chicopee River is only 18 miles long, but it has the largest drainage basin of any river that empties into the Connecticut river in Massachusetts. The drainage basin spans 721 square miles and 32 towns. The River used to be much larger just after the ice age ended. Because it drops 260 feet in those 18 miles, the area was much sought after for hydroelectric power and was the reason Ludlow, Indian Orchard, and Chicopee Falls became industrial sites in the 1800s. In comparison, the Connecticut River only drops 50 feet from Springfield to the mouth where it enters Long Island Sound. Industrialists built dams, taking advantage of the Chicopee River's drop, and those dams have made wonderful ponds for canoeing and kayaking. We will start at Red Bridge in Wilbraham and paddle upstream past old stoneworks.

September 10 - 12 ...

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

We are anticipating having our normal September weekend at Stump Sprouts this year from Friday evening, September 10 through luncheon on Sunday, September 12. As of press time, a few spots remain available!

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm

Registration: Reservations and 50% deposit should be sent to arrive by August 1. This trip may be cancelled if fewer than 18 people have paid by that date. For current information, please call Dietrich or Julie (413-788-4125). All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$172 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. They offer a choice of meat or vegetarian fare. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity, and a sense of adventure. To ensure a safe weekend, we are expecting every participant to have completed a full course of vaccination against Covid-19. If additional safety measures are required, we will announce them in late August. Limit: 20 people.



SEPT.
Meeting

The Importance of Bees

Wednesday, September 15

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum, Starting at 7 p.m.

Speaker: Susan Ashman, Springfield Armory



Great news: After a year on Zoom, Naturalists' Club meetings are moving back to Tolman Auditorium! We'll kick off the season with a talk by Susan Ashman, an active and knowledgeable beekeeper. She will inform us about the importance of bees and their plight. She will also let us know what we can do to protect these remarkable creatures for their own sake, as well as our own.

A Forest Walk on Mount Hunger, Monterey

Saturday, September 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Tom Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy at (413-297-0778; nancy@paddleforwater.net)

Meeting Place: Papa's Gulf Station (2000 E. Otis Rd.)
Route 23, East Otis

Climbing along low ridges in the Tyringham Conservation Easement, Mount Hunger Loop Trail will take us through a variety of forest landscapes. We'll explore hemlock groves, beech gaps, and northern hardwood forests. Along the way, we'll look for signs of wildlife such as a well-marked bear tree and potential dens in rocky outcrops. There will be plenty of signs of previous human use as well, including a well-preserved stone barway.

Set back away from the busy traffic of Route 23, the forest is full of bird song and wildflowers. For most of the 2-mile loop the trail is gently sloped, but there are a couple of spots with fairly short steep climbs, so come prepared with good boots and a stiff walking stick. Bring a lunch and some water to enjoy at the peak where we can get glimpses of the Catskills in New York.

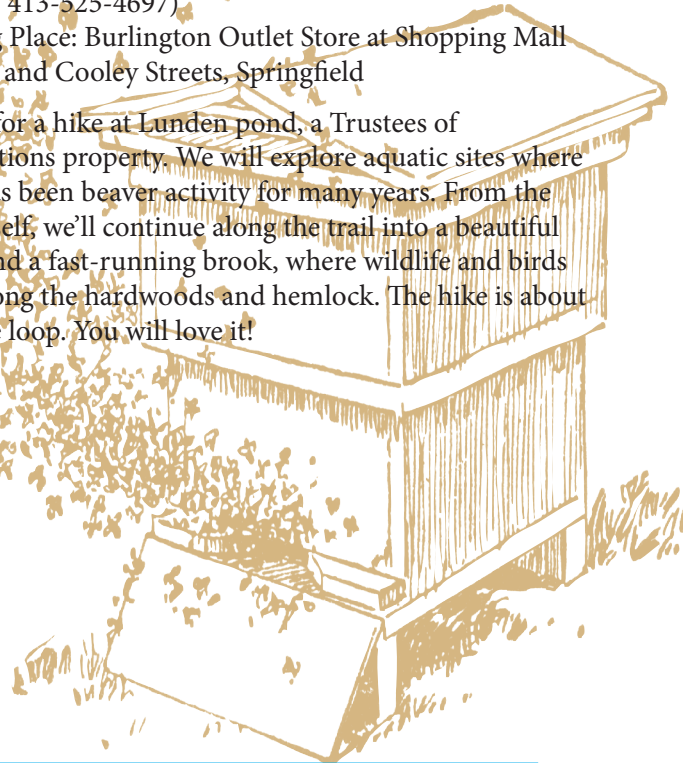
Nature in Autumn at Lunden Pond, Monson

Sunday, September 26, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (Please call us if you are coming; 413-525-4697)

Meeting Place: Burlington Outlet Store at Shopping Mall
at Allen and Cooley Streets, Springfield

Join us for a hike at Lunden pond, a Trustees of Reservations property. We will explore aquatic sites where there has been beaver activity for many years. From the Pond itself, we'll continue along the trail into a beautiful forest and a fast-running brook, where wildlife and birds live among the hardwoods and hemlock. The hike is about a 3-mile loop. You will love it!



Thank you note from Tamarack Hollow

To the Springfield Naturalists' Club

Greetings, my name is Aimee Gelinas, M.Ed, and I am the Director and Co-Founder of the Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center in Windsor. Our mission is to conserve land, educate the public and inspire environmental and cultural awareness, appreciation and stewardship through our educational programs.

On behalf of myself, our trails and intern coordinator Daniel Cohen, and our seasonal staff and board members, we THANK YOU for your generous donation to our nature and cultural center building fund. We are a grassroots non-profit conserving 32 acres of rare, high elevation spruce-fir boreal forest and currently fundraising to build a small, sustainable nature and cultural educational center. We offer year-round programs for all ages in both nature and cultural programming. The planned building will provide the opportunity for us to expand our programming regardless of weather conditions. Please reach out to me with any questions (aimee@gaiaroots.com), and visit our website to learn more about our conservation and educational efforts <http://www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org>.

We hope to hike with you all soon.

Happy trails!

Aimee Gelinas, M.Ed.

Events at Laughing Brook

These programs at Laughing Brook require registration with Mass Audubon (800-710-4550) and most require a registration fee. To register, and for possible Covid-related updates, please, visit the Mass Audubon website at www.massaudubon.org

Breeding Birds (online)

Friday, July 16, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Summer is the perfect time to watch our common birds pair up, build nests, and fledge their young. In this course we will explore the elaborate displays and songs male birds use to attract a mate and defend territory, the intricacies of nest building, incubation, parental care, and fledging. You will learn how to find breeding birds near you, how to observe without disturbing them, and how to understand the fascinating behaviors you see. Audubon members: \$20.00; Nonmembers: \$24.00.

You will receive the Microsoft Teams Link to log into the program in your confirmation. An email reminder will also be sent to you 24 hours before program start.

Identifying Hawks in Flight (online)

Thursday, September 9, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

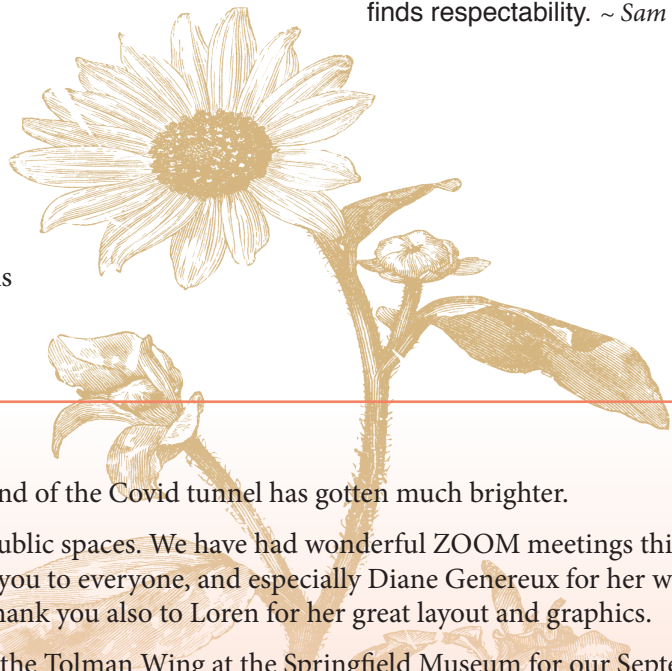
Every autumn millions of hawks migrate south, providing the best opportunities to see them in flight. However, identifying hawks in flight is very different from seeing them close-up in photos. This presentation will introduce you to the eleven most commonly seen hawks in New England, providing the 'keys' and a few tricks for you to begin identifying them at a distance on your own. By the end of the course, you'll know where and when to look for them, and how to identify what you find. Audubon members: \$20.00; Nonmembers: \$24.00.

You will receive the Microsoft Teams Link to log into the program in your confirmation. An email reminder will also be sent to you 24 hours before program start.

Reminder- To receive electronic updates, please send us your email address

Occasionally, information of interest to club members becomes available after our newsletter has gone to press. For example, such information can include changes in speakers for upcoming meetings and late-breaking trip announcements. If you'd like to receive these electronic updates, please be sure to share your email address with Dave Lovejoy (dlovejoy@westfield.ma.edu), who maintains the Club membership list.

Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability. ~ Sam Keen



Letter from the President

Greetings Everyone,

Welcome back to some normalcy; that light at the end of the Covid tunnel has gotten much brighter.

We are emerging into our lives outside and inside public spaces. We have had wonderful ZOOM meetings this past year, and the newsletter has been great! Thank you to everyone, and especially Diane Genereux for her work with the ZOOM meetings and on our newsletter. Thank you also to Loren for her great layout and graphics.

As you can see in this newsletter, we will be back at the Tolman Wing at the Springfield Museum for our September meeting, with Governor Baker's lifting of restrictions on indoor gatherings and also the CDC recommendations for everyone who has been vaccinated, unless things change, we will be able to enjoy our one-on-one gatherings again. I hope to see you at the meeting in September! We also are lifting our mask requirements and other protocols on field trips. I know wearing a mask can be very hard for many members, so we can now enjoy our nature hikes much more.

Thank you all for your continuing support during this pandemic. Our ZOOM meetings have had great attendance. Looking forward to seeing you on our field trips and at our upcoming meetings!

Thank you, Dave

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB

FROM THE TREASURER

As a result of Covid-19, everyone's membership status was changed to 20-21, so no one owes dues for the September 2020-August 2021 year, but dues should be paid starting September 2021. (Those few members who had already paid for 20-21 were granted an additional year without charge).

You may renew by sending a check (payable to The Naturalists' Club) to DaveLovejoy, Westfield State University, Department of Biology, Westfield, MA 01086 or by giving the check to Dave at the next monthly meeting.

Note: If your contact information has not changed, the form below need not be completed. We would, however, like to have your email address if you haven't sent it previously. Please direct changes or inquiries to Dave Lovejoy, who maintains our mailing list.

And please let Dave know if you would like to receive your newsletter electronically.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$20 per year for Individual
or Family Membership
\$30 per year for Supporting Membership
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership
\$300 for Lifetime Membership

Renew your membership

Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

Do you opt for electronic delivery of the Naturalists' Club Newsletter? Yes _____ No _____

Requests for programs/trips

Please send information per the above to: Club Treasurer, Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA 01086



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 create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature.

Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

2021 JULY to SEPTEMBER

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

David Gallup
(413-525-4697)
davesuzy5@hotmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Nancy Condon
(413-297-0778)
nancy@paddleforwater.net

TREASURER

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

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Suzanne Gallup
(413-525-4697)
davesuzy5@hotmail.com

RECORDING SECRETARY

Sonya Vickers
(413-218-7742)
sonya.vickers@yahoo.com

DIRECTORS

Tom Condon
(413-454-2331)
science@condon.net

Carole Dupont
(413-896-0124)
carole0136@gmail.com

Jack Megas
(413-782-3962)

Dietrich Schlobohm
(413-788-4125)

VOLUNTEERS

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

Leo Riendeau
(413-224-1468)
facebook.com/Springfield-Naturalists-Club/420275528018838

WEBMASTER

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Diane Genereux
(413-388-2830)
natclubnewsletter@gmail.com

LAYOUT & GRAPHICS

Loren Hoffman
(413-569-5689)
lkhrdes@gmail.com