

**April**

- 6 Saturday **Nature in Spring Hike, Somers, Connecticut**
 8 Monday **The Great North American Eclipse, Springfield**
 13 Saturday **The City of Westfield from Above, Westfield**
 14 Sunday **Earth Day Festival at the Springfield Museums, Springfield**
 17 Wednesday **APRIL MEETING: Edible Wild Plants of the Northeast**
 28 Sunday **Sanderson Brook Falls Hike, Chester**

May

- 5 Sunday **Camp Chair Birding, West Suffield, Connecticut**
 15 Wednesday **MAY MEETING: Wind as an Energy Source**
 18 Saturday **Spring Kayaking at Otis Reservoir, Otis**
 19 Sunday **The Sex Lives of Wildflowers, Westfield**
 22 Wednesday **Rock House Reservation, West Brookfield**
 25 Saturday **Lunden Pond and Temple Brook Loop, Monson**

June

- 2 Sunday **High Ledges, Shelburne Falls**
 8 Saturday **Gobble Mountain Preserve, Chester**
 15 Saturday **Minnechaug Mountain, Hampden**
 22 Saturday **Meigs Point Nature Center at Hammonasset Beach, Madison, Connecticut**
 24 Monday **Aldrich Lake Paddle, Granby**





NATURALIST'S CORNER

SCIENTIFIC NAMES AND COMMON NAMES

Apatosarus ajax, a.k.a. “Brontosaurus”

Naturalists certainly know the concept of scientific names, also known as Latin names, technical names, or binomials. Some of these names can be difficult to pronounce and spell and may look quite complicated. Scientific names for some plants, like *Rosa rugosa*, are used by many of us as frequently as common names (e.g., beach rose). Scientific names for some lineages of organisms are infrequently used, such as in ornithology, where common names such as scrub jay, Steller's jay, and blue jay are clear to all birders. By contrast, I suspect that few of us know and use *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, the scientific name for Steller's jay.

Elsewhere, one hears the argument that scientific names are preferred because the common name of a species varies considerably across the species' range or even within the same region. As an example, the species known as Puma concolor may be referred to as puma, mountain lion, cougar, or painter, among other names. Additional arguments for using scientific names include that they can be quite descriptive of the species to which they refer, that they do not change over time or vary regionally, and that they are the same in all languages. Regarding this last point, years ago I was on a natural history walk in the mountains of Austria. German was the primary language used by most of the participants. Someone pointed out a plant and called it “Erica”, which I knew was the genus name for the shrub called “heather” in English (although I had never seen the plant growing anywhere). I'm sure I do not know the German word for heather and had the scientific name not been used might not have known that's what the plant was.

Before considering other advantages of using scientific names, let's look at their origin, which many people know dates to the eighteenth century and is the work of the Swedish biologist Linnaeus. He was the first to use a two-name system for naming organisms (the binomial), as in the example *Populus grandidentata*, the name for the big-tooth aspen. Students are generally taught that the first name, the genus, should be capitalized and that the second name is the “species name” and is not capitalized. Although this capital/lower case rule is correct, it is not correct to refer to “grandidentata” as the species name. Recalling that scientific names are binomials, the correct scientific name of the species is the two names written together. (If someone asks what is the species to which humans belong, the correct answer is *Homo sapiens*, not just sapiens.)

Returning to the descriptive value of scientific names, *grandidentata* is a good example as it refers to the large teeth on the leaves of this aspen. Many additional examples could be provided, and it must be admitted that familiarity with Latin or Greek (more common in the days of Linnaeus) is helpful here. Many of us recognize alba in the name of the white oak (*Quercus alba*) but may not know that *botuliformis* means sausage-shaped! However, such descriptions can be misleading; there is a lichen whose full name I can't remember, but the second part is aromatica, which suggests that it is fragrant. It is not. The species was named by a lichen expert who had received the specimen in a scented envelope sent by a collector on another continent. Why not correct this mistake?

The reason errors like this persist is that botanists and zoologists have established detailed rules for how organisms can be named, and the names cannot be changed if the rules were followed when the new species was first named. So the non-aromatic lichen retains its misleading name. In other cases, it becomes quite necessary to change scientific names, not only for binomials, but also to move species from one family to another based on new understandings of relationships among species. Recent examples exist largely because modern technologies using DNA are showing relationships among organisms that were poorly understood previously. Contemporary classification systems group species together based on inferred ancestry. In the time of Linnaeus, the groupings were based on appearance since ancestry, i.e., “evolutionary relationships”, was not yet a known concept. As a result, the large plant genus *Aster*, formerly thought to be represented by about 30 species in Massachusetts, now has just one species, *Aster tataricus*. The others are spread over six different genera with names seemingly designed primarily to distress botanists, especially those long familiar with the former names and reluctant to learn the new ones.

An additional example of confusion regarding scientific names is seen in the well-known Brontosaurus dinosaur. Here's the situation: In 1879, the American paleontologist Othniel Marsh named a species found in Wyoming *Brontosaurus excelsus*. Two years earlier, he had named another large species from Colorado, *Apatosaurus ajax*. Around 1900, it was determined that these

two discoveries were merely two specimens of the same species. Therefore, paleontologists used the name *Apatosaurus* for the species because it had priority (had been named first), but somehow the name “Brontosaurus” became the name used by the public for more than 100 years, appearing in films, on logos, and on postage stamps.

Theoretically, the story could end with an “enlightened” public adopting the proper name, but in 2015 further research showed there are indeed two different species of this huge, long-necked dinosaur. So now, both names are correct, but it would seem that most of us need not be concerned with the technical differences between them.

Additional aspects of the topic of the naming of organisms, including some amusing anecdotes, could be included here. Perhaps another time.

~Dave Lovejoy

Nature in Spring Hike, Somers, Connecticut

Saturday, April 6, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup. Please call to register and for directions (413-525-4697).

Join us for a hike on a trail system maintained by the Northern Connecticut Land Trust. McCann Family Farm is a unique, pristinely maintained, 84-acre property in the center of Somers, Connecticut. The land is characterized by a variety of terrain, with a network of trails offering views of vernal pools, delightful brooks, and stands of mature white pine, plus many other tree species. You will enjoy the diversity of the landscape. It's nature at its best! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. This will be an easy-to-moderate hike on a roughly two-mile loop hike. Rain or bad weather cancels.

Naturalists' Club Elections

Naturalists' Club Elections will be held at the May Meeting. Members may contact the Nominating Committee to make any additional nominations.

Nominating Committee

- Colette Potter (413-786-1805)
- Leo Riendeau (413-224-1468)

The following members are running:

- President – Dave Gallup
- Vice President – Nancy Condon
- Treasurer – Tom Condon
- Corresponding Secretary – Sue Gallup
- Recording Secretary – Dave Lovejoy
- Directors – Carole Dupont, Dori Dittmer, Dietrich Schlobohm, Sonya Vickers

The Great North American Eclipse, viewed from Springfield

Monday, April 8, in the afternoon

The Quadrangle in Springfield

Where are you going to be on Monday, April 8th? Wherever you are, be sure to look up! The total solar eclipse will first be visible along Mexico's west coast, then proceed diagonally across the US to the Atlantic coast of Canada. To view the total eclipse, you don't have to travel very far. Rochester, New York will have totality for 3 minutes and 39 seconds of totality; Montpelier, Vermont, will have one minute 37 seconds of totality.

Springfield is not in the path of totality, but we will still get to see an impressive show. In Springfield, we'll be able to experience the eclipse beginning when the new moon starts to pass between the earth and sun at 2:13 p.m. The eclipse will reach its maximum (93.8%) at 3:27 p.m., and end when the disc of the moon passes by the sun at 4:37. Our president, Dave Gallup, will be at the Quadrangle to help you experience the eclipse. Find Dave and pay him a visit! When viewing the eclipse, remember that looking at the sun, even during an eclipse, is harmful to your eyes if you do not use proper eye protection. p.m. Our president, Dave Gallup, will be at the Quadrangle to help you experience the eclipse. Find Dave and pay him a visit! When viewing the eclipse, remember that looking at the sun, even during an eclipse, is harmful to your eyes if you do not use proper eye protection.



The City of Westfield from Above (and some plants, too!), Westfield

Saturday, April 13, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy

Registration: Not necessary

Meeting Place: Entrance to the Columbia Greenway from the Stop and Shop parking lot.

The newly opened northernmost section of the Columbia Greenway offers some views of Westfield from above (admittedly, not very far above). This new section begins at the bridge over Main Street and extends a mile or so to the Westfield River, near Depot Square. This level and leisurely walk will provide some opportunities to see some of the early spring flora. Many of the plants we'll see are considered to be "weeds", but at least they'll be in bloom!.

Earth Day Festival at the Springfield Museums, Springfield

Sunday, April 14, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Springfield Museums

This is a unique, wonderful opportunity to get the word out about the Naturalists' Club and to educate students, families and children about our natural world and its importance in our lives. If you would like to help out at the Naturalists' Club information table, please call Dave Gallup at 413-525-4697.



April Meeting

APRIL MEETING: Edible Wild Plants of the Northeast

Wednesday, April 17, starting at 7 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

John Root's presentation will offer a comprehensive introduction to the identification and uses of wild plants as food and drink. John will discuss distinguishing characteristics, seasons of availability, habitats, methods of preparation, and nutritional and medicinal value of our region's most common and appealing wild plants. He will welcome questions and comments during the presentation and will distribute illustrated pamphlets with plant descriptions, guidelines for responsible, safe foraging, and a bibliography for further study.

About the speaker: A naturalist, landscaper and educator, John Root has presented gardening and nature interpretation programs throughout New England since 2006. His expertise on botanicals includes both identifying wild edibles and establishing pollinator gardens and wildlife-friendly landscapes. To read about John's work, visit johnroot.net.

**FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT:
Eco-psychology with speaker Dori Dittmer**

Board member Dori Dittmer provided the February program on the interdisciplinary topic of eco-psychology. A brief history of this field shows that Freud wrote about the connection between the mind and the environment in the 1920s. E. O. Wilson, known for the biophilia hypothesis, believed that humans instinctively connected to nature. The author Theodore Roszak originated the term ecopsychology.

It is certainly clear that Club members "love nature"—but why? No easy answer is likely to be agreed upon. A theme of this talk, represented by the phrase *mitakuye oyasin*, is that we are all related, an idea illustrated using the Native American concept of the medicine wheel and relationship circles. Dori also related a personal case history of the impact that the building of a school in a wooded area close to the home of her parents, long-time Club members, Lotte and Ernst, had on their well-being.

~report by Dave Lovejoy

Sanderson Brook Falls Hike, Chester

Sunday, April 28, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup. Please call to let us know you are coming (413-525-4697)

Place: Commuter Lot at Westfield State University

Join us for a hike to one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Western Mass: Sanderson Falls at Chester State Forest, in the foothills of the Berkshires. As we hike, we should see a number of wildflowers including Dutchman's breeches, trillium, yellow violets, and snowdrops. We'll hike about two miles along a dirt road through an oak and hemlock forest. Bring a lunch to enjoy near the crystal pool at the foot of this magnificent waterfall. Hardy climbers can explore the forest and even pay a visit to another waterfall that is seldom seen! Sturdy hiking boots are recommended. Heavy rain cancels.

Nature is always hinting at us. It hints over and over again. And suddenly we take the hint.

—Robert Frost

Camp Chair Birding, West Suffield, Connecticut

Date and Time: Sunday, May 5, from 7 to 10 a.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Tom (413-454-2331; or tomnancycondon@gmail.com)

Meeting Place: Suffield Wildlife Management Area, 199 Point Grove Road, West Suffield, Connecticut

Sitting still and attentively observing birds offers a multitude of benefits for both mind and soul. In this tranquil practice, one becomes attuned to the subtle symphony of nature, finding solace in the gentle rustle of leaves and the melodic chirping of birdsong. Such moments of quiet observation provide a respite from the frenetic pace of modern life, allowing for introspection and mindfulness.

As we immerse ourselves in the natural world, stress dissipates, and a sense of calm envelops us. Birdwatching fosters a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living beings, instilling a sense of wonder and humility.

For our experience you'll need to bring a comfortable camp chair that you can carry for at least 15 minutes at a time. Also bring binoculars, and maybe some snacks and water. If you have a smartphone, please download the Birdnet or Merlin app. These apps will allow you to record bird songs and generate sonograms to study. We will walk to four different locations no more than one-half mile apart. At each site, we will sit and enjoy the birds for about 20 minutes. Heavy rain will drive the birds in, so we'll cancel if that happens.

**May Meeting****MAY MEETING: Wind as an Energy Source**

Wednesday, May 15, starting at 7 p.m.

Speaker: Dave Lovejoy

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

This presentation will include a brief history of wind power, from early applications for grinding grain and pumping water to current advances in electricity generation. Attendees may be surprised to hear of the significant role played by pioneers in several New England states in the development of wind technology. Recent advances in offshore wind will be covered, including the massive scale of modern offshore wind turbines and a presentation of the political issues involved with using this energy source.

About the speaker: Dave spent nearly 50 years at Westfield State teaching Environmental Biology, among other courses, and is pleased to offer this program on a timely environmental topic. Many of his previous Club programs have focused on the local flora.

Stump Sprouts Weekend 2024, Hawley

Friday evening through Sunday morning, September 6 through 8

Leaders: Sheila and Richard Paquette, Kevin Kopchynski

Registration: Please register ASAP by submitting a deposit of \$65. Please make your check payable to The Naturalists' Club, and mail to Sheila Paquette, 62 Brentwood Drive, Westfield MA 01085.

A new era has begun for Stump Sprouts, as Lloyd and Suzanne have retired from cooking. We now have the opportunity to make Stumps an even more intimate community experience by preparing and sharing food while enjoying nature together. We will have complete access to the kitchen facilities, utensils, and dishes, so long as we commit to cleaning up after our meals.

The pricing structure has also changed from previous years. In the past, a stated attendance level guaranteed a certain per-person cost. Under the new structure, attendees simply split the cost of renting the lodge. For example, if 12 to 14 people join in, the cost will be \$105 to \$123 per person for the 2 nights, including tax. This is our estimated capacity of the lodge and the target we will aim for.

As we organize and talk to attendees, we will gauge preferred meal arrangements. As you budget for the trip, please plan to include the cost of the groceries you contribute for our shared meals. The deposit to reserve your spot will be \$65, along with a commitment to contribute to meals. Your balance will be due at the event and depends on how many people join in for the weekend. Spots will be filled first-come, first-served. We already are near capacity, so please act quickly. Please also note that your deposit will not be refundable if you later opt not to attend and we can't fill your spot. For further details, contact Sheila Paquette (413-262-8994; spaquette139@gmail.com).

Spring Kayaking at Otis Reservoir, Otis

Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m. to noon

Leader: Dietrich Schlobohm

Registration: Please call Dietrich (413-262-9588).

Meeting Place: Southern end of Otis Reservoir. One way to get there is to take Route 57 west to the town of Tolland, where you make a right hand turn onto School House Road and a bit later a left onto Belden Road. When you get to the Narrows, take a right and you will shortly arrive at our put in site.

Join us for some spring paddling on the Otis Reservoir! There are good places to park. You will need to bring all of your own paddling gear. Please be sure to bring a hat, water and some food, too. Let's hope for good weather.



The Sex Lives of Wildflowers, Westfield

Sunday, May 19, from 9 to 11 a.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Tom (413-454-2331; or tomnancycondon@gmail.com)

Meeting Place: Grandmother's Garden, Smith Ave, Chauncey Allen Park

The relationship of wildflowers to insects is a fascinating aspect of wildflower reproductive strategies, intricately intertwined with the rhythms of nature. Unlike many animals, wildflowers cannot move to find mates; instead, they rely on pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and birds to transfer pollen. Wildflowers have evolved an array of enticing colors, shapes, and scents that effectively attract pollinators.

Our walk at Grandmother's Garden is part of their 90th Anniversary Celebration. The level terrain will make for an easy walk. Wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. We'll walk rain or shine.

Rock House Reservation, West Brookfield

Wednesday, May 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Dori Dittmer

Registration Please contact Dori (917-346-0969; or dordittmer@gmail.com)

Meeting Place: We will carpool from Stop & Shop on Route 5 in West Springfield.

The shallow, spring-fed Carter Pond is the centerpiece of this Trustees of Reservations property. It provides a safe habitat for various creatures, including fishes, dragonflies and amphibians. We will explore three miles of trails that are moderate overall, but potentially strenuous in a few places. There is also a butterfly garden for us to visit. Bring snacks, lunch, water, sunscreen, bug spray, binoculars, camera.

Lunden Pond and Temple Brook Loop, Monson

Saturday, May 25, from 10 a.m. to afternoon

Leader: Sonya Vickers

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

Meeting Place: Trailhead on Butler Road in Monson, one-half mile in from Lower Hampden Road. The parking area is on the right, and the sign says "Peaked Mountain Tract".

This is a wonderful tract of land. It was saved by the Trustees of Reservations and offers a pond and a stream to explore. While the walking is a little hilly, it is not steep. We will be traveling about 2.2 miles. There are beavers living in the pond. I have seen an assortment of dragonflies around the shore. As we walk, I will point out differences among the ones we see. We'll also see lichens on boulders and logs and discuss their significance in the environment. Wildflowers will be busting out at this point in the spring, and I can show you where orchids emerge each year. Birds will also be plentiful, so bring binoculars and a cell phone. I will introduce the Merlin app, which makes it possible to find out which birds are calling, even when we cannot see them.

High Ledges, Shelburne Falls

Sunday, June 2, from 10 a.m. to midafternoon

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup

Registration: Please call to register (413-525-4697).

Meeting Place: Table and Vine parking lot, Route 5, West Springfield

Enjoy the beauty of the forest and its wildflowers—including rare yellow lady slippers—on this moderate two-mile hike. One of the many treats of this route is the breathtaking view from High Ledges, overlooking Shelburne Falls and the valley below. After the hike we will visit Shelburne Falls, a picturesque New England town known for its Bridge of Flowers. If you wish, take the afternoon to explore the town's unique shops and glacial potholes. Wear sturdy footwear, and bring lunch. Rain cancels.

Gobble Mountain Preserve, Chester

Saturday, June 8, starting at 1 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

Registration: Not required.

Meeting Place: Parking lot at Chester Elementary School, on Middlefield Road, about 1.4 miles north of Route 20, in Chester. Allow 25-30 minutes to get to this point from the center of Westfield.

Gobble Mountain Preserve is a Nature Conservancy property that reaches 995 feet elevation and includes very steep east-facing slopes overlooking the west branch of the Westfield River. The 1.3-mile main trail to the forested summit avoids the steep east-facing slopes. There is a summit tower, visible from the road, which is accessed by a scary ladder and allegedly provides extended views. This has not and will not be experienced by the leader, nor will he recommend this experience for other participants. One of the several emery mines in Chester (all of which are now abandoned) is visible from the trail. On the return to the trailhead, anyone interested may accompany Dave onto the steep slopes to look for some violet and sedge species, for which the only Hampden County records are from this mountain. This trip was originally scheduled for May 2023, but did not occur because of bad weather—we'll hope for better conditions this year.

Minnechaug Mountain, Hampden

Saturday June 15, starting at 10 a.m.

Leader: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Please call Sonya (413-218-7742)

Meeting Place: We will meet at Laughing Brook Massachusetts Audubon area parking lot, then drive to the trailhead, which is just one mile away.

This mountain was saved from development by the Minnechaug Land Trust. We will be climbing to the summit. The trail is a little steep in places, but the climb is easier than it might be, thanks to work done many years ago by the farmers who established cart paths and stone walls. The view from the summit is worth the climb. We will be walking about two miles. The maximum elevation of the mountain is 900 feet, but we will only climb 500 of that. With Tom Wessels's book *Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape*, we will stop often to look for clues from nature and from previous human usage.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
—John Muir

Meigs Point Nature Center at Hammonasset Beach,

Madison, Connecticut

Saturday, June 22, from 10 a.m. until at least 2 p.m.

Leader: Dori Dittmer

Registration: Please contact Dori (917-346-0969 ; or dordittmer@gmail.com)

Meeting Place: We will carpool from the parking lot of Stop & Shop on Route 5 in West Springfield

This is one of my favorite places to go for a leisurely walk. We'll hike to the moraine ("dumping grounds") where the receding last ice sheet melted 10,000 years ago. We'll have the opportunity to see evidence of various shore birds, including an osprey nest. We will stop in at the Nature Center, and explore its ten themed gardens, which include the Friendship Pond Garden, Shade Garden, Spiral Herb Garden, and the Purple Martin Meadow. Or, if you prefer, you can spend the day relaxing on the beautiful beach watching sailboats float by in the distance. Often, the sunset is beautiful from this vantage point, and, if there is time and inclination, we can stay to watch. Bring snacks, lunch, water, sunscreen, bug spray, binoculars, camera. Rain date: Saturday, June 29.

Aldrich Lake Paddle, Granby

Date and Time: Monday, June 24, from 9 a.m. to noon

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Tom (413-454-2331; or tomnancycondon@gmail.com)

Meeting Place: Parking lot of the Barnes & Noble in Holyoke

Nestled at the base of the Mount Holyoke Range is a 66-acre pond known as Aldrich Lake. This shallow lake offers us the opportunity to enjoy a tranquil paddle on an early summer day. The lake is divided into two sections. The west section used to be home to a boy scout camp and is now state-owned land. The east section is a bit more developed and quite a bit shallower, but still offers some unique opportunities. Chief among these is the opportunity to paddle through the culvert that connects the two basins.

The ponds shallow-up in dry weather when weeds fill the basin. We'll bring along some aquatic plant guides to help us identify what we see. Dress for the weather and bring water and snacks, in addition to your boat and paddling gear. Binoculars will also help in identifying birds.

Live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

FROM THE TREASURER

Those with a date of "23-24" (or later) on your newsletter mailing label have paid for this year. Otherwise, your dues are owed for the year that started in September 2022. You may renew by sending a check (payable to The Naturalists' Club), to

Tom Condon,
80 General Knox Road,
Russell, MA 01071

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 Tom Condon, who maintains our mailing list. And please let Tom know if you would like to receive your newsletter electronically.

Thank you!

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

A Reminder

To receive electronic updates, please send us your email address

On occasion, information of interest to club members becomes available after our Newsletter has gone to press. Such information can include, for example, 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 Tom Condon (*science@condon.net*), who maintains the Club membership list.

Renew your membership

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Requests for programs/trips _____

Would you like to receive the electronic newsletter instead of a paper copy?
Please send information per the above to: Club Treasurer, Tom Condon, 80 General Knox Road, Russell, MA 01071



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.

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