

February 2022



* * * **ANNOUNCEMENTS** * * *

MYSTERY PHOTO QUIZ IS UP AND RUNNING

As part of the celebration of our ninth year and inspired by continued coronavirus restrictions of in-person activities, we are once again offering an educational and entertaining on-line photo quiz. Ready for a challenge? Have a look at the thirty mystery photographs, then take a shot at identifying the subjects and sending us your answers. A wide range of plant, animal, and invertebrate species are represented. We know it's not easy, but you can use any resources to help you in your quest. And you have a couple of weeks to work on it, too. Online presentation of the answers will take place after our monthly program on February 23rd. GOOD LUCK!

To view the photos and guidelines, go to:

<http://www.warerivernatureclub.org/mystery-photo-quiz-2022.html>

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN. . .

. . for membership dues renewal. We recognize that the past couple of years have been a tough time for many of you. We hope that you have derived enjoyment from our newsletter, web-site, and/or the virtual or in-person programs and field trips. For those who are able to support the Club with membership dues, thank you!

Members are eligible for event discounts and participation in special programs.

Annual dues of \$15 per individual/couple or \$20 per family may be sent to:

Ware River Nature Club, P.O. Box 76, Hardwick MA 01037

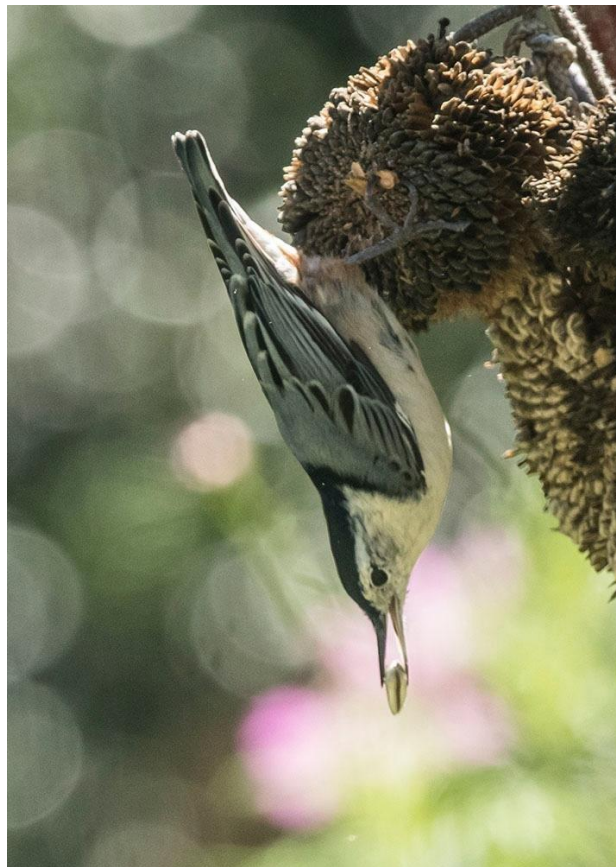
or through PayPal to warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com.

Anyone who wishes to receive the newsletter is welcome to be on our mailing list. Please let your nature-loving friends know about us!

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, drop us an "unsubscribe" note at warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com. We promise our feelings won't be hurt!

TERRIFIC RESPONSE TO CALL FOR “BEST OF 2021”

Dazzled and amazed! That’s what we’re feeling about the responses to our call for descriptions of best nature experiences of 2021. We have received some incredible stories and illustrations, each with a unique perspective and style. There is a wealth of material that will keep your editor very busy for the next few weeks. Having said that, however, we get the feeling that some of you have something to share, and the deadline snuck up on you. After all, central MA was contending with a serious nor’easter at the end of January. The deadline is hereby extended! If you would like to share the outdoor/nature experience that made the biggest impression on you in 2021, please send it by email as soon as you can. After all, memories don’t have deadlines.



White-breasted Nuthatch by Bill Platenik

* * *

UPCOMING EVENTS

* * *

QUABBIN VISITOR CENTER

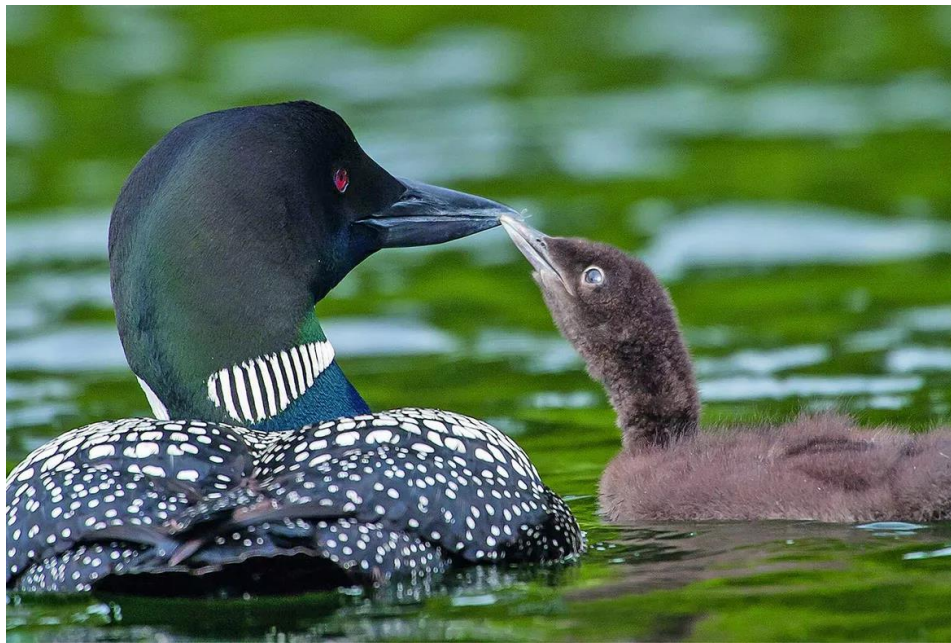
Online program--

LIFE OF A COMMON LOON

with

Jill Whitney, DCR Wildlife Biologist

Sunday February 6th 2-3 p.m.



The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) watersheds are breeding areas for the largest concentration of Common Loons in Massachusetts. Join DCR Wildlife Biologist Jill Whitney for a program about these beautiful birds, how they are monitored and what we have learned about them.

[REGISTER](#)

ATHOL BIRD & NATURE CLUB

Online program—*

WHY IS BROOK FLOATER RARE? SYNTHESIZING POTENTIAL THREATS TO A FRESHWATER MUSSEL'S PERSISTENCE

with Ayla Skorupa Ph.D.

Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units Program: Massachusetts

Wednesday February 9th 7 p.m.

Freshwater mussels are in many rivers and ponds throughout Massachusetts. Species presence varies by habitat and dispersal via parasitic relationships with host fish. One mussel, the brook floater (*Alasmodonta varicosa*), continues to decline in abundance relative to co-occurring species. In Massachusetts, some river populations are already lost. This presentation will synthesize potential causes behind brook floater loss in the number of populations and their decline in abundance.



Photo: Michael Perkins/North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vVEzmvJIS2qR1KUOBeVQ2A

****A limited-size group MAY be able to attend in person (depending on pandemic status) at Miller's River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Stay tuned for updates.***



Webinar—

WHY BIRD-FRIENDLY CACAO IS THE PERFECT VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT

Thursday, February 10th 4- 5 p.m.

Speakers:

Emily Stone, CEO and Founder of Uncommon Cacao, a company buying cacao from farmers in Latin America and beyond;

Dr. Ruth Bennett, Research Ecologist at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, responsible for developing the new Bird Friendly cacao certification standards;

Andrés Anchondo, Associate Director of Impact Investing in Latin America and the Caribbean and lead for neotropical migratory bird conservation projects at ABC.

Moderator: Jordan Rutter, Director of Public Relations at ABC



Americans are expected to buy more than 58 million pounds of chocolate the week of Valentine's Day. Production of chocolate's main ingredient, cacao, can have a huge environmental impact, but there are ways to produce it that conserve and restore habitat for birds.

Join American Bird Conservancy to learn all about cacao production in Central America and the Caribbean, and how it impacts migratory and resident birds. In this webinar we'll discuss the new Bird Friendly cacao certification that will be launched this spring by Smithsonian, and show on-the-ground efforts that are helping birds and farmers.

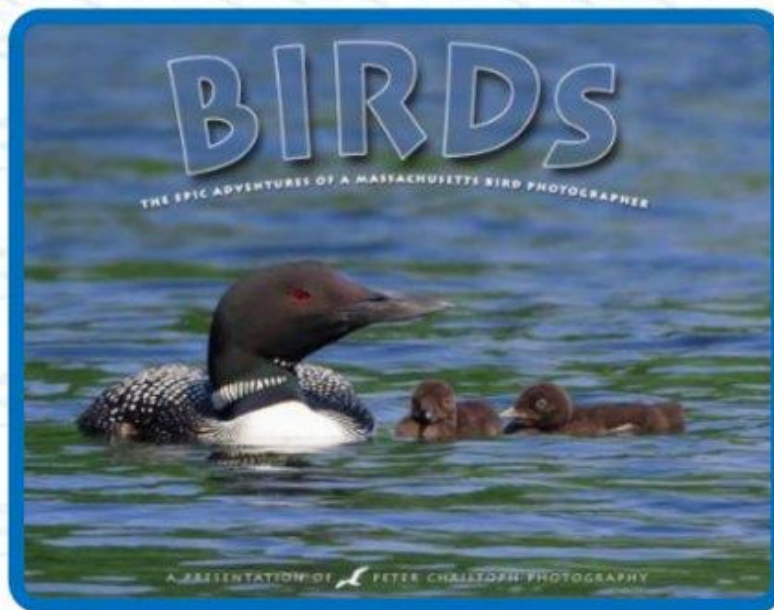
Finally, we'll provide some tips so when you're buying chocolate you get the best possible for birds.

[REGISTER](#)

This webinar will be recorded and shared with all registrants.
Automated closed captions will be available.



Virtual Event:
**BIRDS, The Epic Adventures of a
Massachusetts Bird Photographer
by Peter Christoph**



Thursday, Feb. 10th | 7 - 8pm

Join us for a Zoom webinar from wildlife photographer, speaker, and author Peter Christoph. Peter will share his favorite bird photographs taken in Massachusetts and share stories of his adventures and techniques used to capture his images.

[PRE-REGISTER](#)

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB

BIRDING CAPE ANN

Saturday, February 12th 9 a.m. (Gloucester)

Leader: Dan Berard (508-277-1450)

Pre-registration is strongly advised in case of inclement weather.

Please email Dan by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 11, to register: djberard84@gmail.com



Photo by Hema Shasta, February 24, 2019 Gloucester MA

Wintering saltwater species and much more can be found on this very popular trip.

We will stop at Fisherman's Memorial, Eastern Point, Bass Rocks,

Rockport Harbor, Granite Pier, and Cathedral Rocks.

Meet at the end of the Jodrey Fish Pier off Parker Street in Gloucester at 9:00 a.m.

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – PRINCETON HIKES!

HEYWOOD RESERVOIR HIKE

STERLING & LEOMINSTER

Saturday February 12th 9 a.m.



Detailed information about this trail can be found at:

https://www.sterling-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1266/f/file/file/heywood_reservoir_trail_brochure.pdf

For more information or to register: TrailAroundPrincetonMA@gmail.com



Blue Jay by Alan Rawle



WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Sunday February 20th 9 a.m. – early afternoon

Rutland

This is the 25th year of the Great Backyard Bird Count being coordinated by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The goal is to encourage more birders and more birding, with special emphasis on using eBird to enter the species and numbers of birds seen. To learn more about the GBBC and how you can take part on your own, go to birdcount.org.

If you'd like to get out in the field with other birders, the Club is hosting a

Rutland Runaround for Birds

in the town that usually hosts our monthly meetings.

Our team will visit various sites and try to find as many species as possible. We'll mostly be birding by roadsides and from parking spots, with occasional short walks, in an effort to cover as much of the town as possible. Let's see what we can find!



Winter Wren by Alan Rawle

Contact warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com if you'd like to join the quest.

Ware River Nature Club

Online program–

LICHENS FOR BEGINNERS

with Joe Choiniere

Wednesday

February 23rd

7 – 8 p.m.



Lichens are everywhere—those grayish and greenish splotches on tree trunks, boulders and stone walls which brighten and enlarge in wet weather. They are common in almost every habitat and present on all continents, growing on-tree limbs, rocks, stone walls, cemetery markers, asphalt, sidewalks, concrete abutments, soil, sand, and even metal roofs.

So, what are they? How many species? Can we learn a few common species? This will be a broad look at lichens with some biology (especially that awesome partnership between fungi and green algae/cyanobacteria that forms lichens), ecology, and identification. We'll learn what you need to understand for identification and recognition, including color, substrate and growth form. We'll look at the four growth-form groups of lichens (Wait a minute. . .aren't there three groups? No...four! That's why you need this class!) Finally, we'll study the three or four most common and easy-to-ID species in the common lichen substrates of soil, rock, and bark, using Powerpoint slides AND live specimens!

Joe is a lifelong naturalist who particularly enjoys teaching beginners the basics and common species in a wide variety of natural history subjects. He teaches and leads nature programs and courses in central MA.

To register, contact warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com for meeting link.

Mystery Photo Quiz

Answers to the quiz and announcement of winners
will be presented by Powerpoint following our monthly program via ZOOM on
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd.

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

WINTER WALK

QUABBIN GATE 40, PETERSHAM

Sunday February 27th 9:30 – early afternoon



Considered by some the best historical hike in the Quabbin Reservoir lands is the 1½-mile road to Dana Common that begins at Gate 40. Woodland and open fields lead to the common, dotted with stone walls, cellar holes, and brooks. In winter the historic remnants aren't so obvious, but it's a scenic walk and is home to many wildlife species. We'll be on the lookout for tracks and sign of mammals and listen for winter birds. On this out-and-back hike, we may explore for a short distance beyond the common before turning back, depending on time.

Gate 40 is located in Petersham on the west side of Rte. 32a, also known as Hardwick Road. It's about 3 miles down on the right of 32a from Rte. 122 in the north. Coming from Rte 32 in the south, it's about 9 miles up the road on the left from where scenic Rte. 32a breaks off, not far after Dana Road on the right.

To sign up, contact warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com