

January 2022



* * * **ANNOUNCEMENTS** * * *

ANNUAL MEETING POSTPONED

We've all been on a wild COVID-19 roller coaster ride for nearly two years, so we know the twists and turns and sudden steep descents are inevitable, even if we don't know exactly when they'll occur. Unfortunately, the past several weeks brought a series of dramatic pitches and rolls in the COVID ride. Again it's time to exercise increased caution when planning or taking part in social events. The decision has been made to re-schedule our annual dinner meeting and silent auction at Hartman's Herb Farm in Barre. The new date is Sunday, April 24, 2022. Guest speaker Tom Tynning and special guests Natasha Nowick and Alexxia Bell of Turtle Rescue League are happy to join us at the later date. As Natasha writes, "If there's anything we have learned through this pandemic, it is to be patient, flexible, and safety-minded." Mark your calendars, and keep your fingers crossed for healthier days ahead!



RESUMING ZOOM

As much as we enjoy our in-person monthly meetings, we're going back to remote via ZOOM for our January program. Just in case you've been away from ZOOM or other on-line virtual programs for awhile, now's the time to sign up for a free Zoom account if you haven't done so already. It's easy to access online programs once you've registered for an account. You might wish to tidy up the area behind your seat if you plan to join us by video! And take a moment to get reacquainted with the ZOOM features and controls. Check your speaker(s) and camera, although the camera/video is optional.

We look forward to ZOOMING with you at the end of January!

CENTRAL MA WILDLIFE TRACKING COLLABORATIVE



This newly-forming collaborative invites the wildlife-tracking and seasonal natural history enthusiast – whether experienced tracker, completely new, or somewhere in between -- to meet at and explore various locations in Central MA and perhaps beyond. Learning will be collaborative and encouraging as we support each other along our journey and have fun while doing so. Contact Pam Landry at naturetrax@gmail.com for more information.

MYSTERY PHOTO QUIZ 2022

In lieu of the in-person February annual meeting where we enjoy an afternoon having lively conversations and learning about wildlife and nature, Ware River Nature Club will again offer a mystery photo quiz challenge. Modest prizes will be awarded, but it's really all about thinking and learning with the part of your brain that's tuned in to natural science, wildlife, and the outdoors. Participants may use ANY resources to search for correct answers, but it can still be tough!

The quiz will be posted on our web-site in a few weeks, and we'll share the answers via a ZOOM meeting in late February.

To get an idea of what the quiz will be like, you can view the 2021 version here:

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



WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB IS 9 YEARS OLD...

and you can help us celebrate!

To mark our anniversary in February 2022,
we're asking for contributions to a compilation entitled:

TOP NATURE EXPERIENCES OF 2021: SHARING PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS

We'll publish the collection in a special issue of the newsletter and then adapt it as a permanent page on our web-site.

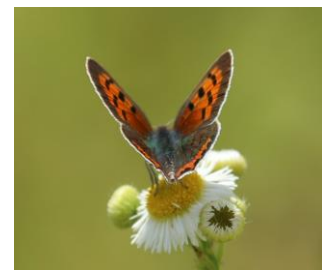
Please tell us your best nature experience of the past year. Did you encounter a rare plant you've always wanted to see? Did you observe a new behavior by one of your favorite bird species? Stumble into a patch of some unusual fungi? Learn a new outdoor skill? Get the mammal photograph you've tried to get for years? Solve a great identification puzzle?



Barry Van Dusen

For many of us it might be hard to select JUST ONE highlight. For others the favorite experience will be obvious and not difficult to choose. If you're somewhere in the middle and can't readily think of one experience that stands out, this is your opportunity to think back over the past year and all the interesting interactions you've had with the natural world. If you weren't able to be outdoors, consider whether you otherwise came across some information about nature or wildlife that made a big impression.

Send along your description of the TOP nature experience you had in 2021. Be as brief or as wordy as you like. Please send photographs or illustrations if you have them. Identify the general location of your highlight experience. Let us know your name and hometown, and how you would like to be identified in the newsletter and on the web-site; we're happy to use just first names or initials if you prefer.



Alan Rawle

For more information or to submit your experience:

warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com

DEADLINE IS JANUARY 31, 2022

* * *

UPCOMING EVENTS

* * *

MASS AUDUBON

Online program--

THE WONDER OF WINTER: SNOWY OWLS

with Doug Lowry

Thursday January 13th 7- 8 p.m.

Members: \$15 Non-members: \$20



Photo by Tanja Askani

These incredible, nomadic Arctic owls frequently visit New England coastal regions, and are often seen at Logan Airport. This program will explore the year-round life cycle of Snowy Owls and why they often spend the winter in Massachusetts. We'll share information, opportunities, and guidelines to safely and responsibly observe Snowy Owls while they visit Massachusetts.

Registration is required:

<https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/mass-audubon-education/80605-the-wonder-of-winter-snowy-owls-online>

MASS AUDUBON

Online program--

DUCKS & WATERBIRDS

with Kathy Seymour and Jane Sender

Friday January 14th 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Members: \$20 Non-members: \$24



Hooded Mergansers by Bill Platenik

More than 25 species of ducks, geese, loons, and grebes can be found in New England. It may be cold, but winter is the best time to view large numbers of ducks and waterfowl and to appreciate their exquisite plumages. In this online program, you'll be introduced to our local waterbirds, examine similarities and differences between them, and show you the best places to find them. You will learn how useful patterns of contrast can be used to identify both individual birds and distant flocks.

Registration is required:

<https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/mass-audubon-education/80604-ducks-waterbirds-online>

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

WINTER WALK at BARRE FALLS DAM Hubbardston Saturday, January 15th 9:30 a.m.



Join us for a leisurely morning walk to enjoy the winter landscape and get some fresh air! Depending on the snow depth, participants can choose whether to walk with snowshoes or in sturdy footgear. (The main trails are usually well-used and snowshoes unnecessary.)

We may venture off-trail to look for wildlife tracks and sign, and we'll watch for winter birds.

Plan to dress for the weather, and bring snacks/beverages if you wish.

We'll postpone in the event of stormy or super-cold weather.

To sign up: warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com



Doug Wipf's Rutland trailcam captures a bobcat on the prowl December 7, 2021

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE--PRINCETON HIKES!



**LEOMINSTER
STATE FOREST
HIKE
Tuesday January
18th
1 p.m.**

The plan for this hike is to do something involving the crazy bike route known as Hillbilly Heaven (3 miles), probably reaching the Brook Loop Trail (but it will depend on several factors). Hillbilly Heaven is a well-used, but little marked foot trail through a mostly pine forest, maintained by mountain-bikers. It goes over several bridges and past water pools, but is relatively dry year-round.

There is also the possibility of taking an interesting trail to the Wolf Rocks area, extending the loop to 6-7 miles.

To register: TrailAroundPrincetonMA@GMail.com



A lone Common Grackle was an apparent scout for the flock that showed up shortly afterward at Bill Platenik's yard in Brimfield December 23, 2021



MASS AUDUBON

Online program--

GRAY AND GRAYER: WINTER GULLS

with David Larson



Friday, January 21st

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Members: \$20

Non-members: \$24

Gull identification can be daunting: plumages change with age and season, and there are several species to consider, especially in winter. Rise to the challenge by learning a systematic approach to identifying the common gulls of New England. This online presentation will cover tips for identification, gull behavior, and

population dynamics, and compare and contrast our common wintering gulls. You too can get comfortable with the many shades of gray, from nearly black to nearly white. What's more, you can often study gulls from the warmth of your car, without exposing yourself to the winter chill- it's the perfect birding challenge to tackle this winter!

Registration is required:

<https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/mass-audubon-education/80627-gray-and-grayer-winter-gulls-online>

Photo: Gulls at Turners Falls, February 20, 2018 by James Smith, Pioneer Birding

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

ZOOM Program—

COLORADO GROUSE GRAND SLAM

with Scott Sumner

Wednesday January 26th 7 p.m.



Please join us as Scott shares his experiences traveling to Colorado in April for spectacular birds and scenery. April is prime time in the Colorado region for observing the remarkable breeding displays of several species of grouse and prairie chickens at their leks (traditional dancing grounds). And there are plenty of other

western bird species he encountered, including ducks, hawks, shorebirds, and western region finches and warblers. Scott will be our expert guide on this virtual trip to a truly special destination.

Scott Sumner has been studying and observing birds for over 45 years throughout Massachusetts, as well as the rest of New England and several other states. His travels have taken him to various “birdy” destinations in Central America, Mexico, and Canada. He has taught bird ID classes at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, MA since 1980 and is a founding member and past president of the Hampshire Bird Club.

Join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85489631495?pwd=blp0ZUIBU1FFSzNxVHlkWTlY2xXZz09>

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB

BIRDING CAPE ANN

Saturday, February 5th 9 a.m. (Gloucester)

NOTE: Date is subject to change depending on the weather.

Leader: Dan Berard (508-277-1450) Email: djberard84@gmail.com

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.



Photo by Hema Shasta, February 24, 2019 Gloucester MA