

November 2023



* * * ANNOUNCEMENTS * * *

DECORATE RESPONSIBLY THIS FALL

For birds, fall can certainly be a spooky time of year. Many species wing their way south, some on epic journeys stretching thousands of miles, facing threats like window collisions, outdoor cats, hurricanes, and more along the way. Even those that don't migrate great distances are preparing for months with fewer resources and harsher weather.

From American Bird Conservancy come these suggestions to protect birds:

- Keep the Fake Spider Webs Inside the House

While yard decorations are a fun way to celebrate the holidays, some types of decor can be more disruptive to birds than others. The worst offenders are fake spider webs, which can act like a net that catches unsuspecting birds flying through your yard. The best thing to do is to keep these webs up against a surface where they are less likely to entangle flying birds, or better yet, display the webs on the inside of your window rather than the outside.

- Stop Tricking Birds — Treat Your Windows

Windows reflect surrounding foliage, tricking birds into thinking the hard surface is a continuation of their habitat. This can have devastating consequences — up to 1 billion birds die from window collisions alone each year, with half of those incidents being at homes. And birds are most vulnerable during migration. To make sure your home is a safer place for birds this fall, treat your windows to a bird-friendly makeover.

Options like bird tape are affordable and easy to apply, and decals can add to your autumn decor while also protecting birds. Or, next time you're embarking on a home improvement project, you can go all-out and fit your home with ABC-approved bird-friendly glass. Finally, remember to turn out the lights at night to reduce the risk of confusing night migrants.

- Avoid Using Sticky Traps to Catch Insects

We know it's tempting to reach for the sticky trap when you have unwanted pests (like the invasive Spotted Lantern Flies that have been damaging plants across the Northeastern U.S.) around your home. But sticky traps are a blunt instrument, and they can also catch critters you aren't targeting — including birds.

Instead consider a few alternative options. A solution of water and dish soap can be sprayed directly on unwanted insects for a more targeted approach. A vinegar solution can also work, though this might also harm the plant they are sitting on, so only spray it on weeds.

You can learn what the egg masses of serious pests (such as spongy moth—formerly called gypsy moth—or spotted lanternfly) look like and go hunting in autumn for egg masses to destroy before they hatch in the spring. The masses can be scraped off surfaces into a container of rubbing alcohol. If you feel you must use sticky traps, only get traps that can be wrapped around a tree trunk and covered with chicken wire to protect birds and small mammals from getting stuck.

CONSERVATION NEWS

HERE WE SOAR. . . AND DIE WHEN WE COLLIDE WITH WINDOWS

For more than two years some birders in central MA have been urging Fitchburg State University to address the alarming pattern of bird kills on that campus caused by window strikes. Sadly, no progress has been made. Here is some history:



Beginning in 2021 and continuing into 2022, all attempted communication by WRNC with FSU went unanswered. Finally, in September 2022 a response from a new employee generated some optimism that the University would take a serious look at the bird mortality concerns. A discussion with several key FSU employees finally took place via ZOOM. It was agreed that record-keeping by WRNC would continue while the University considered options for mitigation.

The Club subsequently furnished information about and resources for window treatments to address the problem. Representatives from two companies, *Feather Friendly* and *Collidescape*, communicated directly with FSU and offered consultation, expert opinions, and samples. Unfortunately, FSU quickly responded that window treatments would be far too costly (without indicating a projected cost), and thereafter stopped responding to further communication.

The Club continued to reach out, suggesting other options for treating windows that could be much less expensive, such as window painting, and furthermore offering to lead a fundraising effort. Many messages to this effect went unanswered.

Meanwhile, concerned birders continued to collect and analyze information about the bird/window collisions. Knowing that it's probably just the tip of the iceberg, given the high volume of tall window banks on campus, a significant amount of "data," i.e. dead birds, has in fact been gathered about one specific location which is obviously an ongoing death trap, especially in fall.

Treatment of windows in this one specific high-risk area—the north side of the Hammond Building-- would seem to be a reasonable and less-costly approach and could significantly reduce or eliminate bird kills. Along with the report on the bird fatalities, the idea of tackling one limited section of windows with some type of window treatment was proposed (by email) in late summer 2023. That suggestion was ignored.

While the bird mortality report for FSU doesn't rise to the level of tragedy experienced recently on a single night in Chicago <https://www.aba.org/chicago-megaflight/>, at FSU it's a matter of death-by-a-thousand-cuts.

The FSU report:

http://www.warerivernatureclub.org/uploads/4/4/1/6/44166651/bird_mortality_report-fitchburg_state_university.pdf

To learn more about the glass collision threat to birds:

<https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/>



We're disappointed that, in spite of a huge amount of effort and outreach, as well as an offer to help raise funds, the bird/window collision situation at FSU is at a standstill. We're seeking more ideas and suggestions as to how to approach this stalemate. We need volunteers with a variety of skills—social media, interpersonal, artistic, community organizing, and more--to join a Club team looking at this local conservation effort. Please pass the word to friends and colleagues.

Contact warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com to get involved.

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

****RE-SCHEDULED****



Dark-eyed Junco

Photo by Doug Wipf

BIRDING &
NATURE HIKE
HARVARD
POND
PETERSHAM

Saturday November 4th 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a walk around this scenic pond to look for ducks, fall sparrows, and resident woodland species. We'll also be on the lookout for interesting fungi, animal sign, and other natural features.

This is an easy-going hike of about 3 miles.

To sign up, contact warivernatureclub@yahoo.com .



Royal Fern

Photo by Doug Wipf



Athol Bird & Nature Club

ABNC 60th ANNIVERSARY DINNER CELEBRATION Athol American Legion Hall, 325 Pequig Ave., Athol Wednesday November 8th

Doors open: 5:30 p.m. Dinner: 6 p.m. Program: 7 p.m.



Join the Club for a festive evening as we go back in time to its origin and look ahead to its future. Following a meal (two dinner options) there will be a presentation about the Club. The traditional Tin Can Auction will take place (guests may bring up to 5 new or lightly used items for the auction), there will be a 50/50 raffle and other activities, and there will be the opportunity to socialize with fellow members. Folks who do not wish to join us for dinner may arrive before 7:00 for the presentation, auction, and raffles.

For dinner options/reservations, click [HERE](#)

Please reserve by November 3rd





Habitat is Home

Explore Three Critical Bird Habitats

FREE WEBINAR

Wednesday, November 8th, 4pm ET

Northern Bobwhite, Danita Dellmont/Shutterstock



Home is where the habitat is – the mixed forests of Michigan where the Canada Warbler sings, the grasslands of South Texas where the Northern Bobwhite dwells, the rainforests of the Ecuadorian Chocó where the Endangered Baudó Guan forages. Join American Bird Conservancy (ABC) on Wednesday, November 8th to learn more about these habitats and what ABC is doing to conserve their most vulnerable bird species.

Birds need healthy habitats to survive and thrive, but habitat loss is still the biggest reason for continuing declines in bird populations. ABC is working to conserve habitat across the hemisphere, whether it's partnering with landowners to plant trees in the U.S., or supporting the creation of reserves in South America.

WEBINAR: Habitat is Home: Explore Three Critical Bird Habitats

WHEN: Wednesday, November 8th, 2023 at 4:00 PM

WHERE: Zoom (link provided upon registration)

COST: Free!

If you can't make the webinar live, RSVP now and we'll send you a recording to enjoy when the time is right for you!

RSVP

[Editor's note: the webinar is free, but you will be asked if you would like to receive ABC mailings and to donate if you wish.]

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB

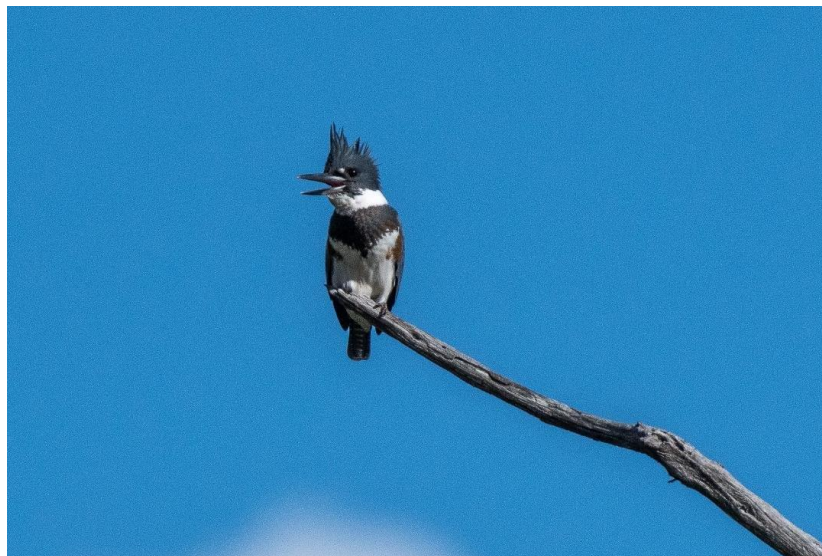
BIRDING WORCESTER'S PONDS

Saturday November 11th 8 a.m.- mid-day

Leader: John Shea john@beachwells.com 508-667-1982



Discover some of the beautiful natural ponds within the city. Migrating ducks and other waterfowl congregate at these spots, and other species are also attracted to the micro-habitats. Meet inside the entrance to All Faith's Cemetery. We will drive to other nearby locations.



Belted Kingfisher

Photo by Bill Platenik

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!

HIKE AT CALAMINT HILL
CONSERVATION AREA PRINCETON
Saturday November 11th 9 a.m.

Hikers can choose either a 7-mile moderate hike from Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary or a 4-mile hike around Calamint Hill and Appell trails. Calamint is a quiet woodland trail with some great viewing areas of a large beaver pond. The Appell property includes a nice boulder field and a flat walk along an open forest that runs parallel to Calamint Hill North Road.

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



Photo by Alan Rawle

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

CONSERVATION OF THE AMERICAN KESTREL IN MASSACHUSETTS

with Drew Vitz,
State Ornithologist

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and
Wildlife

Tuesday November 14th
7 p.m.

Rutland Public Library
280 Main St. (Rte. 122A)



Photo by Bill Platenik

One of Drew's first projects as state ornithologist involved efforts to address the declining population of American Kestrels. In this presentation, we'll learn details about various conservation strategies. Included will be a description of the ever-expanding nestbox program and information on partnerships developed to promote kestrels. We'll also hear about a recently-launched tracking study utilizing the latest technological advances in wildlife monitoring and research.

Drew has been the state ornithologist with MassWildlife since 2012. Since starting in the position, he has worked on many projects, addressing the conservation needs of grassland birds, marsh birds, forest songbirds, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, colonial nesting waterbirds, Piping Plover, and the Eastern Whip-poor-will.



PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!

HIKE ON THE WHITMAN RIVER TRAIL, WESTMINSTER

Wednesday November 15th 2 p.m.

The entire Whitman River is 8.4 miles in length, originating at Lake Wampanoag in Ashburnham, passes through Westminster, and ultimately joins Phillips Brook in Fitchburg to form the North Nashua River. This easy-to-moderate walk alongside the river will be out to Crocker Pond and back.



White-breasted Nuthatch
by Barry Van Dusen

LEOMINSTER STATE FOREST HIKE

Saturday November 25th 9 a.m.

This hike will take participants out on Bartlett Road and onto some less-frequently-used trails on the southeast side of the state forest. A moderate level hike of about 4-5 miles.

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

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB



BIRDING QUABBIN
PARK, WARE

Sunday November 26th

8 a.m.- mid-day

Leader: Nick Paulson

grendelpgill@yahoo.com

508-330-4401

Quabbin Reservation is a great place to look for a wintering Golden Eagle and other uncommon late-fall species. Meet at the parking lot at the Old Ware-Enfield Road Gate off Route 9 in Ware.

Directions: From Route 9 in Ware, drive west approx. 5 miles and turn

right onto Old Ware-Enfield Road, just before the entrance to Quabbin Park Cemetery on the left. GPS: 42.28140, -72.30620. Meet at the parking lot on the right, before the gate.

*HAPPY
THANKSGIVING!*



Photo by Anne Greene