ware river nature club

**October 2026**

# * * * NATURE NEWS * * *

## *SEPTEMBER MUSHROOMS ALONG RUTLAND'S RAIL TRAIL*

*Photos by Lindsay Gwyther and Alan Rawle*

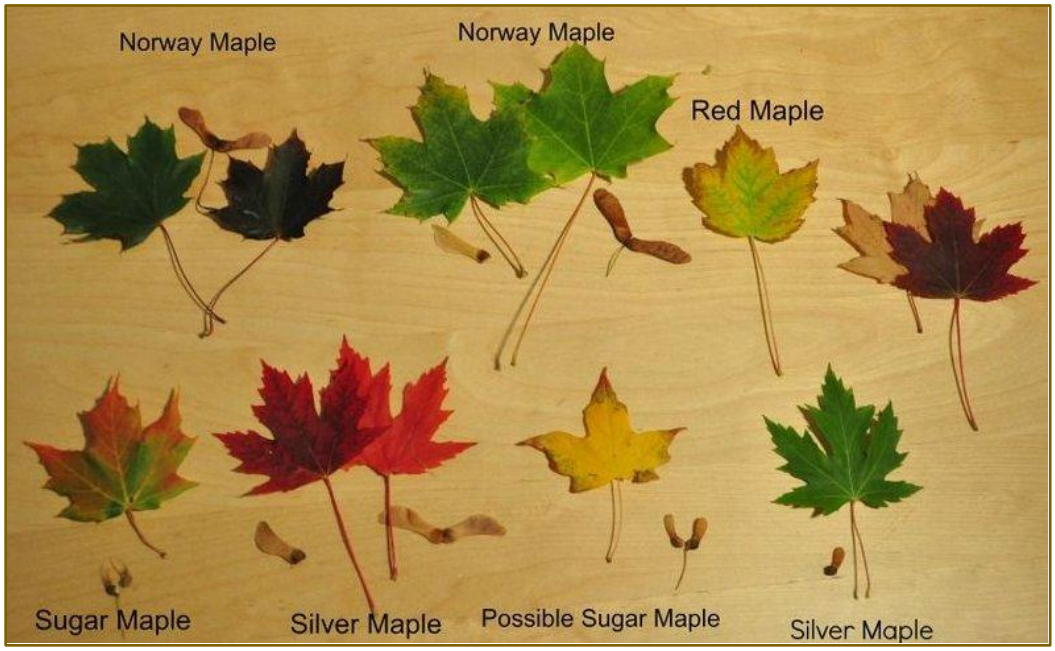
# Maple Leaves

**Mountain Maple**
(***Acer spicatum***)

**Striped Maple**
(***Acer pensylvanicum***)

**Red Maple**
(***Acer rubrum***)

**Sugar Maple**
(***Acer saccharum***)



## ***2026 SEASON NESTBOX REPORTS: EASTERN BLUEBIRD, TREE SWALLOW, HOUSE WREN***

*Bluebird nestlings July 26, 2026*
*High Ridge WMA Jon Skinner*

Thank you to our volunteer nestbox crew for installing, maintaining, and monitoring boxes at DCR Watershed Prison Camp property in Rutland and High Ridge Wildlife Management Area in Westminster/Gardner: John and Kathy Egan, Doug Wipf, Ted Purcell, Gail and Jay Cormier, Jon Skinner, Wendy Howes, and Alan Rawle.

Some loss due to bear predation at the Prison Camp area was reported earlier in the season, but the overall nesting success rate for all species was very good. At High Ridge WMA, changing the locations and box-mounting strategies worked well to foil both bear(s) and human pilferers. Only one nestbox was known to have been ransacked by a bear; it was full of twigs, holding either a dummy or active next of House Wren. In addition to House Wrens, many pairs of bluebirds and Tree Swallows nested successfully.

The monitoring effort at DCR's Riis Hill property in Barre was abandoned by the former volunteer, and by the time a replacement volunteer could visit the property the five nestboxes installed there seemed to have vanished. Based on various clues and past history, it's likely that all boxes were destroyed/ knocked down by bear(s) late in 2025 and subsequently hidden deep in the vegetation and not noticed during the late fall mowing of the fields.

**We are seeking nestbox volunteers for the 2027 season.** Let us know if you're interested: warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com .

*Bluebird nest 7.26.26*
*High Ridge WMA*
*Photo by Jon Skinner*

*House Wren nest*
*Prison Camp 7.10.26*
*Photo by Doug Wipf*

*Downed nestbox filled with*
*House Wren nesting material*
*High Ridge WMA 7.26.26*
*Jon Skinner*

*Four bluebird nestlings 8.02.26*
*Prison Camp Doug Wipf*

*Bluebird eggs 7.10.26*
*Prison Camp Doug Wipf*

*Five bluebird nestlings 7.18.26*
*Prison Camp Doug Wipf*

*Nestbox with bear deterrent sachet 7.18.26*
*Prison Camp Doug Wipf*

# * * * ANNOUNCEMENTS * * *

## *BUILDING A NATIVE PLANT AND POLLINATOR GARDEN AT RUTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY*

The revitalization of the garden space surrounding the Rutland Public Library is being spearheaded by WRNC and supported by Acting Library Director Tricia Lowe and the library Board. Helping hands gathered during the summer to and made some headway in the battle to remove invasive Oriental bittersweet and black swallow-wort. Boxwood shrubs in the front of the library were almost completely dead and were removed by a Rutland DPW crew, thereby opening up a terrific space for a native garden bed. This new section will complement the pollinator garden near the front entrance and hold different native plants beneficial to pollinators and birds.

Next steps in the process will entail a few more work sessions this fall. In addition to once again removing as much bittersweet and swallow-wort as possible, we will need help to pull late-season weeds; prepare garden beds for planting by adding compost and digging holes; then plant three small shrubs, a row of little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and a variety of pollinator-friendly perennials.

**Two work sessions are coming right up: Friday, October 9th, 10 a.m. and Tuesday October 13th, 9 a.m.** Contact warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com for details.

THANK YOU to our volunteers: Scott & Justine Wahlstrom, Abigail Kokernak, Christy Barnes, Ted Purcell, Bethany Nichols, Lisa Van Dusen, and George Farrington.

# * * * UPCOMING EVENTS * * *

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!

## HIKE EAGLE LAKE, HOLDEN

### Wednesday October 7th 10 a.m.

This will be a short, slow, and smooth hike at Mass Audubon's Eagle Lake Sanctuary, an easy-to-moderate 2 miles.

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

*Carpenter bee and jewelweed* *Photo by Bill Platenik*

ATHOL BIRD & NATURE CLUB

# EARLY BIRD BIRDING

## with Jeff Johnstone

## Friday, October 9th

## 7:30 a.m.

Join Jeff Johnstone for the final Friday morning of birding during the busy autumn migration season. After meeting at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, participants will head out to a favorite local birding spot. Call Jeff to reserve your spot: 978 249-9052.

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!

# HIKING THE MIDSTATE TRAIL
# WESTMINSTER ROAD TO REDEMPTION ROCK
# Saturday October 10th 9 a.m.

This is the sixth segment (for this group) of the Midstate Trail, a moderate-to-difficult hike of about 4.5 miles. We will start on the Harrington Trail up Wachusett Mt., then continue over the mountain to the ski area. From there the Midstate Trail leads to Redemption Rock.

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

*September frogs: Wood frog*

*Spring peeper*

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

# HARVARD FOREST NATURE HIKE, PETERSHAM

## Sunday October 11th 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Join us for a hike to explore the forest in autumn, when the black gum or tupelo tree (Nyssa sylvatica) found here is sporting its spectacular red foliage. Black gum is a long-lived tree typically confined to swamps, here at the northern limit of its range. Black gums are the oldest trees in the northeast. They're notable for their unusual 90-degree branching pattern and fall color. The oldest living tree at Harvard Forest is here, a large black gum that is over 420 years old.

We'll walk the French Road Trail, a 2.5-mile loop with 17 numbered stations at points of interest along the way, including the black gum stand.

We'll also be watching for mushrooms, forest birds, animal sign, and other interesting natural features.

Bring beverage, snacks, or lunch if you wish.

Sign up at warerivernatureclub@yahoo.com for directions and notifications about possible changes.

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB

# BIRDING MASS AUDUBON'S LAKE WAMPANOAG SANCTUARY, GARDNER

## Saturday October 17th 8 a.m. – mid-day

Leader: Tom Pirro tpirro2010@gmail.com

This beautiful Mass Audubon property is a hidden gem. Fields and forest provide year-round habitat for many species and a stopover for seasonal migrants. We will explore trails around the meadow, through the spruce/pine forest, and near the pond. If conditions are favorable, we'll spend some time hawk-watching from the high point in the meadow.

Please bring water and lunch or snacks. Waterproof footwear is recommended for possible wet areas on the trails.

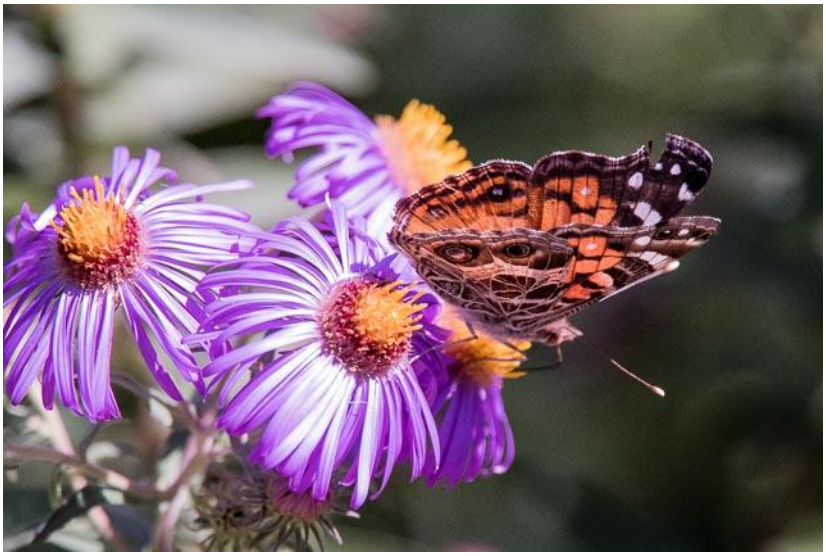
Directions: From Route 2 in Westminster, drive north on Rt. 140 for 4.5 miles and turn right onto Stone Street. Travel 0.4 miles, and turn right onto Wheeler Street. Follow Wheeler Street for 0.5 miles to the second left onto Raymond Street. Follow Raymond Street for 1.1 miles to the dead-end parking area at the Sanctuary's entrance.

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!

# Senior Hike- WACHUSETT MEADOW SANCTUARY, SOUTH SIDE

## Wednesday October 21st 10 a.m.

This will be a loop hike of about 3 miles at this popular Mass Audubon Sanctuary. Starting along Beaver Bend Trail, then taking the Fern Forest trail, the hike's return leg will be via the Pasture trail. This is an easy hike.
For more information or to register: TrailaroundprincetonMA@gmail.com



*American lady (Vanessa virginiensis) on aster* *Photo by Bill Platenik*

*Pale beauty (Campaea perlata)*
*Photo by Jim O'Toole*

WARE RIVER NATURE CLUB

# Wednesday October 21st 7 p.m.

## Rutland Public Library 280 Main Street (Rte. 122 A) Rutland

Dale has been sharing his photographs and presenting programs for 14 years. He took note of the comments of attendees, who frequently told him that they enjoyed hearing the stories and details of where he took the photos and how he made certain images. For this program and the accompanying book, Dale decided to expand on his descriptions of his amazing wildlife encounters in the north central Quabbin region. In this presentation, he'll also talk about his methods, camera gear, and personal ethics regarding wildlife photography.

Dale Monette is a nature photographer specializing in wildlife and landscapes mainly of the Quabbin Reservoir. He resides within two miles of the Quabbin Reservoir in New Salem. In addition to birding and fishing, Dale spent his early years hiking many of the trails, ponds and swamps of the northern Quabbin region. Through his photographs he shares his unique familiarity with the land and the animals that call Quabbin home. Dale spent his career working at Quabbin as a Program Coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, retiring in 2014.

NORTHEAST WILDLIFE TRACKERS

# 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

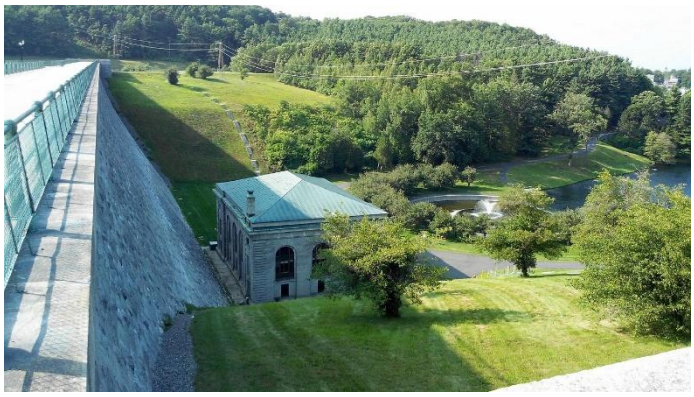
## Friday October 23rd – Sunday, October 25th

## Prindle Pond Conference Center, Charlton, MA

We warmly invite you to be a part of our Northeast Wildlife Trackers Annual Conference—a gathering for everyone passionate or curious about wildlife tracking, nature, and community. Whether you're an experienced tracker or just beginning to explore the fascinating world of tracking, this conference offers something special for you.

Information and registration: https://northeastwildlifetrackers.org/

PRINCETON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - PRINCETON HIKES!



# HIKING WACHUSETT RESERVOIR'S NORTH DIKE AND TUNNEL STERLING & CLINTON

## Saturday October 24th
## 9 a.m.

From Route 110 in Sterling this hike will traverse the north dike, head out past the dam, and continue to the old railroad tunnel in Clinton. This is a moderate-to-difficult hike with many stairs around the dam to navigate. There will be two options: a 3.5-mile one-way hike or a round-trip hike of 7 miles.
For more information or to register: TrailaroundprincetonMA@gmail.com

*Shadow darner*
*Photo by Alan Rawle*

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB

# BIRDING WORCESTER'S CEMETERIES ON HALLOWEEN

## Saturday October 31st

## 8 a.m. – late-morning

Leader: John Shea

john@beachwells.com

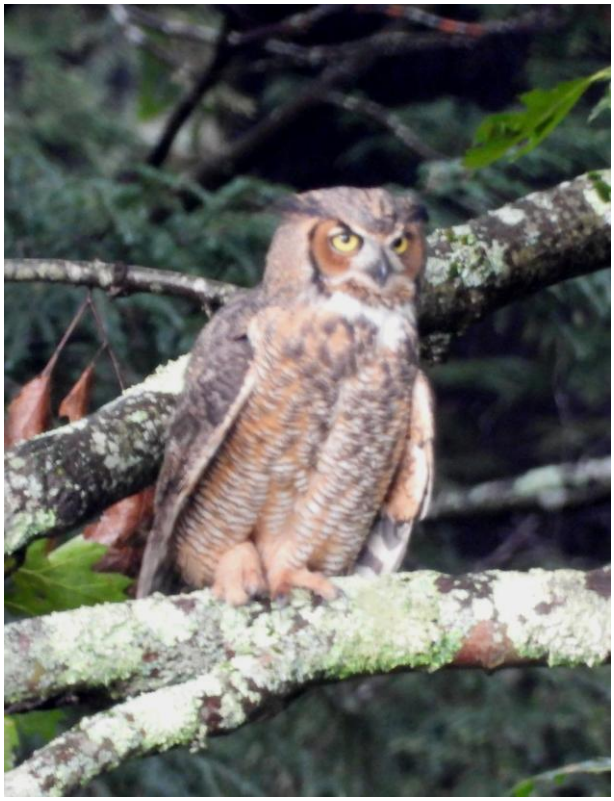


*Photo by Ted Purcell*

The mature hardwood trees and evergreens in these historic cemeteries are attractive to year-round birds and winter visitors. We will visit Hope Cemetery, Notre Dame near the Curtis Ponds, and All Faiths at Leesville Pond. Meet inside the entrance to Hope Cemetery, Webster Street.

Happy Halloween!