



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

FALL ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

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Conservation Begins at Home

*By Jon Regosin, Chief of Conservation Science for the
National Heritage & Endangered Species Program of Massachusetts*



American Toad



Red-backed Salamander

Once in a while, I find a toad in my garden. Throughout much of the state, this observation wouldn't be noteworthy as American Toads are nearly ubiquitous. In Newton and other densely developed urban/suburban areas, however, toads are uncommon due to limited availability of wetland breeding habitat. In most Massachusetts landscapes, toads and many other common wildlife species are widespread "matrix" species, occupying both open space and private lands. In Newton, many of our native plants and animals, from birds to trees to frogs, are highly dependent on parks and conservation lands for their continued survival. My toad, by the way, apparently braved Walnut Street and traveled at least 800 feet from the nearest breeding pool to make it to my humble abode.

For wildlife enthusiasts, understanding the distribution of otherwise common species such as Red-backed Salamanders, Red-eyed Vireos, Red Squirrels and Yellow Birch here in Newton becomes an interesting exercise. How about slightly less common, more cryptic, or more disturbance-sensitive species? Flying squirrels, Eastern Newts, Spotted Turtles? How many bird species breed in Newton? Snakes? Turtles? While a glass half empty approach would emphasize how little natural habitat remains, during my wanderings in Newton open spaces, I am always struck by the incredible diversity and resilience of the native plants, animals, and natural communities that occupy our open spaces.

So why should we care about remnant natural areas and habitat patches that persist in densely developed communities such as Newton? While it's easy to dismiss the conservation value of urban oak forests, red maple swamps, and vernal pools, some would argue that these urban wilds are uniquely important, worthy of our respect, enjoyment, stewardship, and study. First, Newton's parks and conservation lands provide genuinely important oases of habitat for migratory and resident species alike. Without these habitat patches, many species such as Wood Thrush and Spotted Salamander would disappear from our urban/suburban landscape. With sound stewardship, we can ensure that these lands continue to support a diversity of plants and animals well into the future.

Continued on page 2

Second, these are *our* parks and conservation lands right here in *our* community. By appreciating, studying, and managing our open spaces, we can develop a connection to the land and a strong conservation ethic. As human societies become increasingly urban, the idea of biodiversity conservation runs the risk of becoming increasingly abstract. Places like Nahanton Park and Hammond Woods enable Newton residents to connect to nature directly, and repeatedly, across seasons and years. This can't be replicated through screens and books. Similarly, our parks and conservation lands provide unique hands-on learning opportunities for school children.

Through its volunteer work days, guided nature works, small grants program, and advocacy, the Newton Conservators is already deeply engaged in education and stewardship tied to Newton parks and conservation lands. As opportunities for large scale land protection decrease over time, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program at MassWildlife, where I work, is increasingly focused on active land management to protect our investment in public land. Without this investment we risk losing the ecological, scenic, and recreational values of the land we purchased at considerable expense. The Newton Conservators, also facing limited land protection opportunities, is in a unique position to promote (1) stewardship, (2) biological inventory and monitoring, and (3) education tied to Newton's open spaces.

Stewardship – Unfortunately, our natural areas often require active management to maintain the biological diversity they currently support. As highlighted on the Newton Conservators website, invasive species such as Black Swallow-wort, Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, and Buckthorn threaten to overwhelm our natural areas, driving out native species and diminishing habitat values. Invasive Black Locust and even excessive intrusion of native species such as White Pine and Red Cedar can threaten unique habitat areas such as the upper “Woodcock Field” at Nahanton Park. While dedicated public servants may be interested in invasive control and habitat management projects, they have limited resources for these projects. For many years the Newton Conservators have steadily removed Garlic Mustard, Japanese Knotweed, and the more recent-appearing Black Swallow-wort from public lands throughout the city. We can continue to play an important role planning, advocating for, and implementing this important work, perhaps with even more volunteer and student involvement.

Inventory and monitoring – My family likes to call me “turtle obsessed” because I spend much of my free time from April-September chasing turtles. But even for those of us who are less inclined towards obsession, there are endless opportunities to survey and monitor our open spaces to

gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of them and also to inform long-term management and engage people of all ages. While we already have a Christmas bird count, how about a Newton breeding bird survey? Vernal pool surveys? In my experience as we conduct such surveys, our knowledge, appreciation, and community of open space advocates grow, and we identify specific management needs (e.g. invasive Common Reed taking over one of the vernal pools in Hammond Woods). There are endless possibilities here.



Looking for Salamanders on a Vernal Pool Walk

Education – The Newton Conservators is already a leader in informal education through its nature walk series. We can do more, however, to support education tied to Newton open spaces, and particularly programming to engage students. At MassWildlife, one of our greatest privileges is to work with students on hands-on projects such as growing native plants or head-starting turtles for habitat restoration and population recovery projects. Here in Newton we have many opportunities for hands-on, local projects to advance conservation while providing unique educational opportunities. My friend and colleague, Bryan Windmiller of Concord, has worked with Newton public schools, and recently established a non-profit called Grassroots Wildlife Conservation. Their mission is “protecting the living treasures in our backyards,” and one of their mottos is, “We believe that conservation begins at home.” Through land stewardship, survey, and education, right here in Newton's open spaces, we can shape these words into realities. ■

For links to additional information:

1. <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/wildlife-habitat-conservation/key-sites-protecting-our-investment-in-public-land.html>
2. <http://www.grassrootswildlife.org>

President's Message

Each quarter, our newsletter articles provide you with an overview of what the Conservators Board and other members have been doing. However, there always are projects and issues that don't appear in articles. Some topics don't get covered because they haven't progressed far enough for us to write about them or because the situation is changing too quickly to capture in an newsletter that will be available for three months.

Here is information about one of those projects . . .

Our mission is to work on behalf of all open space in the city. Recently, Cabot Park, a park composed primarily of playing fields and play areas, has been one of those spaces. Parks and Recreation Commissioner Bob DeRubeis offered the Conservators a seat on a subcommittee that included representatives of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the City's Public Buildings Department, the School Department, and the neighborhood around Cabot School to try to reach consensus on whether a parking lot for teachers would be placed in Cabot Park.

The City felt that it would be parking to be shared by the school and the park, but we agreed with many neighbors who said that they did not want park land used for parking and that the park itself does not need additional parking facilities. The subcommittee agreed on a plan that reduced the size of the parking lot from 50 cars to 28 cars and allowed a row of 28-cars to be halfway on the very edge of the park land. Then no further common ground could be found.

At the August 24 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the City presented another alternative, which has a row of 28 cars halfway into the edge of the park but no separate lot in the park.

On Wednesday, September 30, there will be a public hearing at City Hall on both plans—the one with a 28-car lot in the park and the one without that lot. If you read this in time, please come to make your opinion known. The Commission will not make its decision until its next regular meeting on the third Monday of the month, October 19, so even if you miss the hearing, you still may have time to contact the Commissioners directly at rmclaughlin@newtonma.gov.

Find up-to-date details at www.newtonma.gov/gov/parks/commission/agendas/2015_meetings.asp

Invasive Plants



Garlic Mustard

The spread of invasive plants continues to be a threat not only to conservation areas but also to private yards throughout the city. Throughout the summer, Carrie van der Laan of the Environmental Committee of the First Unitarian Society of Newton joined with our invasives-removal volunteers to pull black swallow-wort at sites all over the city. She also created the flyer in this issue: please use to learn how to recognize the plants — and then pull them up!

Jonathan Regosin, Chief of Conservation Science for the National Heritage & Endangered Species Program of Massachusetts, also writes about the threat that invasive species pose to our open space. Once you read his article, I know that you'll want to volunteer to be part of a Conservators' project. You can reach me at president@nc.org.

Beth Wilkinson

Protect Webster Woods!

Congregation Mishkan Tefila owns 22 acres of land (shown in yellow in the photo below) that is surrounded by publicly owned conservation land. The city-owned Webster Conservation Area is to the north and west, and the state-owned Hammond Pond Reservation is to the south and east.



In August 2015, local news media reported that the congregation is close to reaching an agreement to sell its property to Boston College. The college's plans for the land are unknown, but a sale would increase the likelihood of development of some or all of the land. The Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators has written a letter to Mayor Setti Warren and the Newton Board of Alderman urging them to take action to protect this land.

The land owned by the temple is mostly undeveloped woodlands. Until 1954 it was part of the state reservation. It includes Bare Pond, a vernal pool that has been the site of Newton Conservators walks. The image below superimposes an aerial photo of the temple's buildings and parking lots onto a map of the woods. Note that the main east-west trails are on land owned by the temple, which is in white on this map.



This drawing presents a development that could be possible around the wetlands.

While Bare Pond and a small buffer zone around it is protected from development by state wetlands regulations, most of the land could be developed by Boston College for use as dorms, classrooms or office buildings, or parking lots. Such development would be a devastating blow to a beloved conservation area.

While the plan shown above for development of the site is not currently under consideration, it gives an idea of the extent of development that might be possible on the land.

Please contact Mayor Setti Warren and members of the Board of Aldermen to urge them to take action to preserve this conservation land. ■

✿ Dan Brody

For links to additional information or to contact Mayor Setti Warren and members of the Board of Aldermen:

1. <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-boston/hammond-pond-reservation.html>
2. <http://newton.wickedlocal.com/article/20150805/NEWS/150808134>
3. <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/executive/contact.asp>
4. <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/aldermen/default.asp>



◀ Bare Pond Vernal Pool

PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Earth is a Good Place to Live, Partially Thanks to the Ferns

By Don Lubin

Earth is a good place to live. We don't have a lot of choice at this point, but it is.

We are an ideal distance from our sun. Some call this a "class M" planet, in the "Goldilocks" zone. We have a lot of surface water in liquid form, not all steam or all ice. It covers 71% of the earth's surface. (And a little more every day.)

And yet there remains a lot of solid ground, home to land plants and animals.

Earth is large enough, and dense enough, to provide substantial gravity. The surface water, the land plants and animals, and, crucially, the atmosphere are held down tightly enough. Nothing much heavier than helium is lost to space.

There is a spinning core of molten iron that produces a magnetic field strong enough to deflect the solar wind, or at least to divert it to the poles, where it sparks the aurora. Otherwise, this stream of charged particles could be deadly.

We have an unusually large moon in a stable, nearly circular orbit, which stabilizes the spin access of the planet. Otherwise, our seasons would be erratic, and polar ice sheets would migrate around the surface.

Large outer planets, especially Jupiter, sweep most of the comets out of our orbit, reducing the risk of catastrophic collisions.

The top of the atmosphere contains sufficient ozone to block most harmful solar ultraviolet rays.

We are lucky. Perhaps that much luck is required for life as we know it to evolve.

And yet, despite all those advantages, earth has suffered five mass extinctions in which more than half of our species died out. (More than 90% for at least one of them.)

Actually, we're having the sixth mass extinction right now. And humans are mostly to blame. Species are going extinct at nearly 500 times the normal rate.

Much of the planet's surface has been cut over or burned and plowed, or paved over and built upon. Some species are transported away from their normal geographic range, but other species that keep them in check in their native ecology do not accompany them, so they multiply and spread out of balance with their new home. Chemicals that are bi-products of industrial processes are dumped into the ground, the water, the air.

Among these chemicals are gases that trap the sun's energy; especially atmospheric carbon dioxide and methane. The average temperature has been rising pretty steadily since the industrial revolution, at an accelerating pace. The oceans are becoming warmer and more acidic, a problem for coral reefs and shellfish.

Life is a tapestry. We are a thread of interconnectivity. If we tear holes, it will tatter and shred, with nothing much left to see.

Sixty six million years ago a meteor or something crashed into earth near the Yucatan Peninsula. The resulting devastation killed off the last of the dinosaurs along with most of everything else. No flowering plants survived here. But fern spores, persisting or blown in, did manage to rebuild the soil and atmosphere and eventually a thriving ecology. When Mt. St. Helens in Washington State exploded, most life was killed in a few hundred square miles. But, again, a "fern spike" was seen in which in-blown spores recreated a stable flora.

Ferns and related plants have created life on land as we know it, at least three times. If humans don't clean up their act, ferns may have to reboot life on earth again. ■

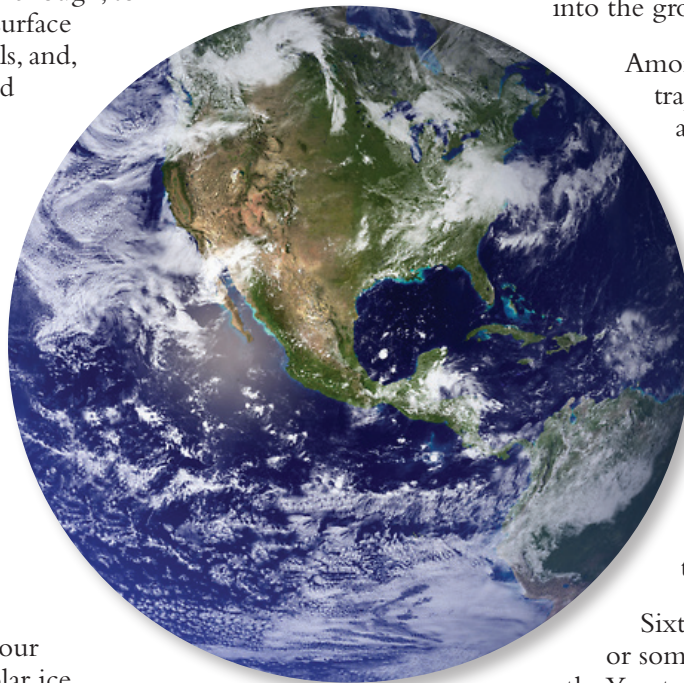


PHOTO: NASA'S EARTH OBSERVATORY

What Came to Our Hummingbird Feeder

When we set out our hummingbird feeder this spring, we expected our old friends, the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. We were not disappointed in their visits.

One hummingbird flew in and squeaked around the back yard and the feeder on April 19th. The male showed up first to take over his territory and was followed by the female. We did not see lots of activity at our feeder in the late spring and early summer, probably due to the availability of small flying insects, which pack more protein per pond than sugared water does. Flowers are also beginning to be more plentiful during this time.



Female Ruby-throated Hummingbird

exquisite little cup made of soft plant down and woven together with spider web to make it strong. They prefer deciduous trees and place the nest on a horizontal branch. It takes her a little over a week to create the nest. She then lays her eggs, which take about two weeks to hatch.

She broods the naked young almost continually at first. She does all the feeding alone. And she has her own, very high, metabolism to nurture at the same time. She will eat insects and insect eggs found in crevices of tree bark and then regurgitate this food down her youngsters' throats. The young fledge about 19 days later.

This often gets us to the middle of July, when we usually begin seeing more activity at our feeder.

This year we were in for a surprise. A partially leucistic Ruby-throated Hummingbird showed up at our feeder.



Male Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Leucism is the presence of white feathers in a bird that normally does not have white feathers. Melanism is the presence of black feathers, similarly. Both conditions are due to genetic mutations that are somewhat rare. You occasionally see crows with some white feathers. The little leucistic hummingbird came and went at our feeder. I managed a shot of it through a window screen, but

you can see the white feathering clearly.

The leucistic bird alternated with a male and at least one female-looking hummingbird at our feeder. I write alternated because hummingbirds are amazingly aggressive around feeders, chasing each other with what looks to us like ferocious speed. It may be second gear to them. The young hummingbirds are very similar to the female plumage, so it is hard to tell the mother from the offspring.

Now the interest level was up, and we were watching the feeder more often. Surprises were not over. One day, out of the blue, a beautiful

golden-orange male Baltimore Oriole appeared, slowly slipping down the stem of the feeder, and drinking the sugared water meant for the hummingbirds. The hummingbirds tolerated the oriole just fine. If they were possessive, the oriole would be no match for them. This Baltimore Oriole was leading his small flock of fledglings around, teaching them to find food. The young birds did not emulate his hummingbird feeder antics, however. So far, this oriole has returned over the period of a week, sipping from the hummingbird feeder.



Leucistic Ruby-throated Hummingbird



PHOTO: PETE GILMORE

Male Baltimore Oriole

Soon, all of these characters will head south. The Ruby-throated Hummingbirds winter in Central America, and the Baltimore Orioles winter in southern Central America and northern South America. A percentage of

the hummingbirds actually fly across the Gulf of Mexico, whereas the orioles go overland through Mexico. If a storm catches hummingbirds over the Gulf of Mexico, they do not survive.

Both species add wonderful color and interest to our lives. They are in Newton from May through September each year. It can add quality to your life if you can feed these flashes of brilliance while they are with us. ■

✿ Pete Gilmore

**If you haven't renewed your membership already, now is the time.
And consider a gift for a conservation-minded friend.**



NEWTON CONSERVATORS
PO Box 590011
NEWTON CENTRE
MA 02459

2015 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

YES! Please renew my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sustaining Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional contribution_____ |

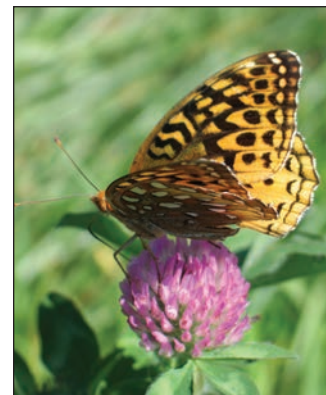
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.

Visit our website at www.newtonconservators.org if you wish to renew your membership online.



Fritillary

Photo by Suzette Barbier

MISSION Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 54 years ago in June 1961.

The Newton Conservators Newsletter® is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the first Friday of each month in which an issue is scheduled to be published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to bethwilkinson@mac.com. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Jon Regosin, Dan Brody, Don Lubin, Pete Gilmore, Beth Schroeder and Beth Wilkinson. As always, thanks to Doug Leith for his excellent proofreading.

Fall Gardening

We would like to have attractive gardens all year long. This is harder to do in the fall because spring ephemerals are gone, summer bloomers have wrapped up and many mainstays, like hostas, are getting burnt edges from too much sun and lack of rainwater.

Once the leaves on your perennials turn yellow or brown, you can remove them. This is an old rule I read long ago in a house plant book – once they look awful, it's time to get rid of them. They aren't going to miraculously bounce back and be beautiful again. In outdoor gardens, roots will remain tucked into the soil, waiting to return next year. They've done their job, and it's time for them to rest.



Hydrangeas, sedum and daylilies

Refresh your garden by deadheading flowers, cutting off old flowers and stalks. Some perennials will bloom again after deadheading. I cut off the dried-up blossoms of black-eyed-susans, *Rudbeckia hirta*, and spread their seeds into the flowerbed for next year. If the lawn mower accidentally goes over foxglove, *Digitalis grandiflora* 'Ambigua,' seed stems, I toss their seeds into the bed too. Some of

them will bring new plants next year. Deadhead most plants by cutting off a bit of stem with each flower – up until the next healthy green leaf. If the entire stem is dried up, cut it off at the base.

I leave a few foxglove stems uncut, their brown seed heads intact, hoping I have just enough seeds for next year but not so many they take over my flowerbed. I take all the tall seed stems off my prolific American bugbane, *Actaea americana*, and throw them away. I don't want them to reseed. They get overzealous, and I'll need to spend too much time pulling out tiny seedlings next spring. The amount of seed you leave in your flowerbeds will be a personal decision.

Deadheading works for annuals, too. I was surprised this year that my early spring geraniums are still green and sending up pretty pink flowers in September. They needed regular deadheading throughout the summer. Overly leggy, unattractive annuals should be removed. Remember they will not miraculously turn beautiful again. Those little plants that cost \$3.00 have done their job. It may be time to

replace them with fall mums. Go to your local nursery or supermarket and get a few new, fresh plants for your front door jardinières and walkway paths. You can add perennials this time of year, too, and with luck they may come back next year. Remember to plant the right plant in the right place. Read the plant tag to see if they need sun or shade.

Many plants can use a fall haircut. If your spring-blooming daylily leaves are lying flat, cut them off at ground level and throw the spent leaves onto your compost pile. If irises are lying down, snip them off about four to six inches up from the soil. Yellowed, wilted iris leaves can be pulled up and disposed. Leave only healthy green leaves. Every four years or so, it's best to dig up your irises and reset them; otherwise, they get overcrowded and stop blooming.



Walkway paths

If it's hard for you to bend over for a long time in the garden, a garden kneeler can help. You can get down closer to the soil. They work especially well if you are going to work in one area for a while. Kneelers can get dirty: If you want to keep your knees or trousers clean, lay a fresh dish towel on top. Another tip is to use a folding camp stool. They are lightweight, and when you sit down, you are closer to the soil. I pull my camp stool along as I work in my flowerbeds. Do a little each day so that you can see that you made progress in one area. Get a plastic bucket or wicker basket with a handle to haul tools and/or weeds. I usually travel with an old bucket for weeds and my pruner, enough to keep me busy and happy for an hour at a time.

Add a bit of mulch to fill in open spots in your garden. I keep bags of buckwheat hulls in my garage. As I weed and cut back faded flowers, I toss saucers-full of mulch into the empty areas. Though I put on a very thin layer, it helps prevent weeds and looks pretty. A drizzle of hose water will glue buckwheat hulls into place. During heavy rains, some will wash into the closest gully, but you can flick them back in place. Another benefit is that they are very lightweight. You don't need a shovel and a wheelbarrow to spread buckwheat hulls.

Trimming overgrown shrubs can be done whenever you have time. Remember most shrubs should not be sheared into a ball. Consider the structure of the shrub, and reach into the shrub to remove errant stems at their base. Take



PHOTO: BETH SCHROEDER

Fall Colors

your time, and stand back to inspect your work. Don't cut too much at once. Once you've cut the dead wood out of your shrub, it may not need any more attention. It will look refreshed.

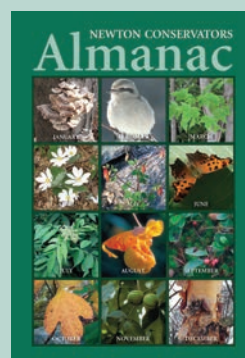
Fall is also a good time to call a local tree surgeon and have your old, high-canopy trees trimmed. Dead branches can be removed, and there will be less likelihood of them crashing down during winter storms.

One more fall chore: I've found a fresh enjoyment this year sweeping sidewalks and steps. We've asked our landscapers not to use their leaf-blowers. It's a simple pleasure, much like raking leaves. And it's quiet. There is a terrific feeling of satisfaction at a job well done when I walk on my freshly swept walkways. ■

— Beth Schroeder

Enjoy the Beauty of Fall!

Shop online at www.newtonconservators.org/books.htm to purchase Newton Conservators publications. Discounts for members: *Almanac* is \$19.95 + shipping, and the *Trail Guide* is \$9.95 + shipping. Buy today!



Donate to the Newton Conservators When Shopping on Amazon.com



Amazon Smile is a program through which Amazon donates .5% of most purchases (yes, \$5 of every \$1000) to a nonprofit (501c3) organization of your choice.

How do you use Amazon Smile? Instead of going to Amazon.com, you go to Smile.amazon.com. On your first visit, you will be asked to choose a nonprofit organization to receive the bonus donation. Enter "Newton Conservators," and you are ready to go. The rest of your shopping proceeds exactly the same as if you had logged in to Amazon.com initially.

Some Conservators board members have been using Smile.amazon.com for two or three months, and it has worked smoothly. We've already received three quarterly payments for eligible purchases by a transfer to the Conservators bank account.

If you have any further questions about the program, check the FAQ page: <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

We are not encouraging members to abandon local shopping (and, in fact, offered our local booksellers a listing on our website to support them). However, if people do make purchases on Amazon, it would be nice to have them benefit us.

Collectively, the donations will add up over time. Our first bonus check was \$40. With more members participating, the proceeds will be significant, possibly covering some of the costs of maintenance at our properties.

UNWANTED

Dangerous to Birds, Butterflies and Native Plants

BLACK SWALLOW-WART

Armed with seed pods that look like chili peppers, shiny green leaves that come in pairs, purple star-shaped flowers, and grappling spaghetti-like roots, this invasive non-native vine threatens monarch butterflies and songbirds and displaces native plant communities vital to insects, birds and other urban wildlife. Known to frequent chain-link fences, it is also found in woodlands and shrubs throughout Newton & surrounding neighborhoods – it has invaded and is spreading fast!

IF YOU SEE IT IN YOUR OWN YARD:

- **DIG OUT THE ROOTS.** With a trowel or similar tool, try to get the entire root system, put it in a tied plastic bag and dispose of it in the trash. Do not put black swallow-wort into yard waste bags or in your compost! The roots can resprout and seeds survive in compost.
- If you can't dig out the roots, you can pull the stems and leaves. It will regrow from the roots, but you have weakened it. Return to pull it again. It won't survive if you keep pulling the stems and leaves.
- If you see seeds pods, pull them before they release their seeds. **Dispose of all pods in a tied plastic bag, and put the bag in the trash. Do not put pods into yard waste bags or in your compost. THEY CAN GROW IF YOU DON'T DESTROY THEM.** Contact Newton Conservators if you want to help us eradicate this plant in other places in Newton: newsletter@newtonconservators.org.



IDENTIFYING THE PLANTS



Leaves



Flowers



Roots



Pods



Seeds

Leaves: shiny, green, come in pairs (i.e., they are “opposite”, not “alternate”), winding around fences and shrubs

Flowers: small mauve/purple color, star-shaped **Roots:** white and fleshy tentacles that break off easily

Seed Pods: pull when pods are still slim, smooth and green before they turn brown and open—mature seeds easily escape

WHAT DAMAGE DO THESE PLANTS DO?

In our yards, black swallow-wort attracts monarch butterflies, who lay their eggs on the leaves. The leaves are toxic to the caterpillars, and a generation of butterflies is lost. When the pods open, seeds quickly spread within your yard and travel by wind to other locations.

On a larger scale black swallow-wort can quickly cover meadows and other untended areas, smothering native plants that provide food for birds and other animals. For detailed information go to: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/cylo1.htm>

A collaboration of the First Unitarian Society in Newton Environmental Committee and Newton Conservators

WALKS SCHEDULE FALL 2015

www.newtonconservators.org

Please note: Walks meet at different times. Some trips are weather dependent. Please call trip leader if in doubt.

Sunday, September 27 at 1:00 pm

CANOE TRIP AT NAHANTON PARK

This canoe/kayak trip will start in Nahanton Park. We'll paddle upstream on the Charles against the current to the far reaches of Needham, Dedham and Wellesley. Bring your own canoe or kayak, or rent one at the canoe/kayak rental stand in Nahanton Park. The area up-stream is a region of significant beauty and almost pristine conditions.

Fall is a good time to view the many turtles and other wildlife along this stretch of water. We should see numerous fish, including pickerel, bass and carp. We also will see many birds that make their spring/summer/fall homes in this habitat. We will pass by Powell's Island, Millennium Park, and the large Dedham Ditch and then stop for lunch on Cow Island. On the trip back, the current will help carry us back. It is an interesting trip for adults and children and usually is completed within three hours.

Trip Leaders: Bill & Dottie Hagar (617-964-2644)

Saturday, October 3 at 8:00 am *(Rain Date October 4)*

FALL BIRD WALK AT COLD SPRING PARK

Fall is an excellent time to look for birds. We'll explore the various habitats at Cold Spring that are available inside the park. Park at the Beacon Street parking lot and meet at the circle. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Boots are recommended. If in doubt about the weather, please call.

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore (617-610-2477)

Sunday, October 4 at 8:00 am

FALL BIRD WALK WITH HAYNES MILLER

Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands, edge habitat, and meadows along the Charles River, making it one of the best birding spots in Newton for fall migrants as well as resident species. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Walking shoes are recommended. Co-sponsored by Friends of Nahanton Park and Newton Conservators. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance off of Nahanton St. between the JCC and the Charles. Parking is available inside the park. Cancelled if steady rain. If concerned about the weather, please call.

Trip Leader: Haynes Miller (617-413-2419)

Saturday, October 10 at 2:00 pm

INVASIVE-PLANT WALK: LEARN TO IDENTIFY THEM

What are the invasive plant species found in Newton and what harm do they do to the ecosystem? Newton Native Bruce Wenning is an invasive plant specialist and horticulturist. Join Bruce for a professionally guided walking tour of Cold Spring

Park to learn how to identify several types of invasive plants and to learn what you can do in your own yard to safely remove them. Bruce will explain how different invasive plants spread and what removal methods are effective on each. He also will discuss the important topic of how to properly dispose of the plants once removed.

Trip Leader: Bruce Wenning (617-962-0646)

Saturday, October 17 at 1:00 pm

A WALK ALONG THE CHARLES: RIVERSIDE TO LOWER FALLS

In the last few years, an old railroad bridge over the Charles has been converted into a footbridge, and an old pedestrian bridge has been restored. This four-mile out-and-back walk takes about two hours. It crosses both of these bridges and follows the proposed route of a trail that might someday connect them. The walk follows the riverbank in two areas that are not widely used. The trail is rough in spots, so hiking shoes are recommended. A detour is possible around the roughest stretch.

Due to rough terrain, the walk is not recommended for children under 10. Each participant (or parent/guardian) must sign a waiver. Waivers will be available at the walk, or can be downloaded at: <http://newtonconservators.org/waiver.pdf>. Meet at the parking lot on the Recreation Road exit (Exit 23 Northbound only) off Route I-95/128: <http://goo.gl/maps/Npzy3>

Trip Leaders: State Rep. Kay Khan and Conservators Website Manager Dan Brody (websitemgr@newtonconservators.org)

Saturday, October 24 at 9:00 am

BEDROCK GEOLOGY OF NEWTON AND ADJACENT AREAS

The bedrock geology of the Newton area tells a fascinating story of a time about 585 million years ago when Newton was part of the great southern continent of Gondwana and not far from the south pole. The rocks record a history of great volcanic eruptions and sedimentary basin deposits (the famous puddingstone!) in areas between the volcanoes. Join us and learn a bit about how the rocks tell us their story.

This trip will not be one of the usual "walks" since we will need to carpool to travel to 4 different sites in and around Newton to see the different rock types. Meet in the parking lot at the entrance to the Hammond Pond MDC Reservation area-east, at the west end of Hammond Pond off of Hammond Pond Parkway near Rt. 9, behind "The Street" complex near the movie theatre (see *Newton Conservators Walking Trail Guide* p.35). We will first visit rocks in the woods near here, then carpool to the other exposures. Trip will last 2-3 hours.

Trip Leader: Chris Hepburn (617-964-1137)



NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
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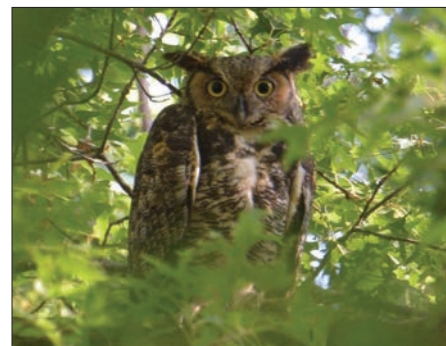
Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

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Great Horned Owl
Photo by Haynes Miller



Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at www.newtonconservators.org/newsletter.htm. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at www.newtonconservators.org