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Newton Nature Notes – May 27, 2002  
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Dear Folks interested in the Natural World around Newton,

Here is an update on upcoming nature related events in Newton. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization. Please visit our website at [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. Please join us for the third annual Newton Biodiversity Day on Sunday, June 2, at Cold Spring Park. This is a fun event geared to species identification. Many people know birds but can you name that wildflower, tree, shrub, frog, bug, or fern? See the info below.

Sincerely,

Ted Kuklinski  
Newton Conservators Education Committee  
[dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com)  
(617) 969-6222

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Newton Biodiversity Day - Sunday, June 2  
Where the Wild Things are in Cold Spring Park

Newton will be participating in this year's third annual statewide Biodiversity Days and you are invited. A series of free nature events sponsored by the Newton Conservators, are being held this coming Sunday, June 2nd, for the purpose of involving citizen naturalists in tabulating what species of living things inhabit Newton, and educating citizens as to the variety of life around them. This year our Newton Biodiversity Day will be on Sunday, June 2nd with the focus on the natural environment of Cold Spring Park. This 67 acre "central park" of Newton contains a number of diverse habitats including upland, open, wetland, and brushy areas, and even some vernal pools.

At 8:30 AM, a bird walk through the park will be held looking for the sights and sounds of late migrants and nesting species such as Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, and Carolina Wren. Bring binoculars if you have them and wear a comfortable pair of shoes as we traverse the natural areas of the park. Cold Spring Park local Cris Criscitiello (617-244-6397), who has been birding the park since 1965, will be leading this opening walk for Newton Biodiversity Day.

At 10:00 AM will be a reprise of last year's very popular "Creatures of the Forest Floor" with Dan Perlman. We will explore the diversity of creatures that inhabit the leaf litter that covers the forest floor. Using coarse-meshed shaker bags and boxes, we will search for millipedes, centipedes, sow bugs, snails, springtails, worms, nematodes, ants, beetles, and other creatures. If we are lucky, we will find glowing firefly larvae and the tiny but fierce pseudo-scorpions. Be prepared to sit on the ground; you may want to bring a plastic bag if the ground is damp. You may also want to bring a field notebook for your notes or drawings. The leader will provide magnifying glasses and other equipment. Trip leader Dan Perlman (617-969-3047) of the Brandeis University Biology Department, taught conservation biology at Harvard for nine years, has created "Conserving Earth's Biodiversity," a CD-ROM with Prof. E.O. Wilson of Harvard, and has lead hands-on science programs in elementary schools.

At 11:30 AM, we will have an "All Species Hunt" where citizen volunteers will be focusing on all

fungi, ferns, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, bugs (including butterflies and dragonflies), amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. While numbers will not be counted, evidence for the presence of species will be checked. Bring your favorite field guides along with bug boxes, magnifiers, nets, and notebooks. This information will provide a glimpse of just what we have here in Newton and may be used by the state to map out ranges for both rare and common life forms in Massachusetts.

All events are free and no preregistration is necessary. We will meet near the Duncklee Street entrance to Cold Spring Park. Going south on Walnut Street from Beacon Street (Bread and Circus), Duncklee is the fourth right. Follow Duncklee to its end within Cold Spring Park. Look for the Newton Conservators table a short distance beyond. If you wish further information, please contact Newton's Biodiversity Days coordinator, Ted Kuklinski of the Newton Conservators (617- 969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com)) or visit the Newton Biodiversity Days web page at [www.newtonconservators.org/biodiversity.htm](http://www.newtonconservators.org/biodiversity.htm).

Newton Biodiversity Day, part of the Massachusetts Biodiversity Days sponsored by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), is a challenge to citizens to familiarize themselves with the wealth of animal and plant species with which we share our communities and to identify in each participating city/town at least 200 species in backyards, schoolyards, conservation land, and other open space by permission. Participants will find, record and learn about the component species of flora and fauna in their home cities/towns. The EOEA encourages adults and children of all ages to participate in this event. The results from Biodiversity Days will be useful in our continued efforts to build public awareness and support for biodiversity conservation. We hope that Biodiversity Days will inspire citizens to get outdoors regularly and help inventory, monitor and protect the animals and plants with which we share our communities.

Experience is not necessary. It is hoped that a new generation of naturalists may be encouraged. Many children today know far more about dinosaurs than the wonders that can be found in their own backyard. Newtonians may also send species reports (time and location) from their own neighborhood over the period May 31-June3, especially any unusual mammals, birds, butterflies, or other creatures (email to [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com)).

Find more information about this years state events at: <http://data.massgis.state.ma.us/Biodiversity/BiodiversityDays.htm>. There you will find information on other biodiversity events all across the state over the period, May 31 - June3, 2002. The state website also links to a wonderful database of species findings (by town) all over the state. There are checklists of species with links to field guide info on many of them.

Come early for the bird walk at 8:30, check out the tiny tiny critters in the dirt at 10, or sleep late and join us for the all species hunt at 11:30, or come and stay for all three! So put Sunday, June 2 on your calendar to come out and help find the wild things of Cold Spring Park!

#### Charles Johnson Maynard Exhibit at Jackson Homestead

Don't miss the Charles Maynard exhibit at the Jackson Homestead, 527 Washington Street, Newton, MA ([www.ci.newton.ma.us/Jackson](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Jackson)). Charles Maynard was born in West Newton in 1845, attended Newton public schools and began life as a farmer. Self-educated in natural history, he conducted extensive research on the vocal organs of birds. He published a number of books, newsletters and articles in scientific journals. His bird books, in particular, are notable as the first to use color plates, drawn and colored by the author employ-ing a process he originated. In addition to books on birds, his works included a naturalist's guide, a manual of taxidermy, and books on butterflies.

Maynard helped found the Newton Natural History Society in 1878, an organization formed in part

to introduce natural history into the curriculum of Newton's public schools. He developed a new method of instruction that required students to observe facts in nature and to reason about those facts and form their own conclusions. Maynard published a magazine for teachers of primary grades called Nature Study in Schools. A self-educated naturalist with a deep love of nature, the multi-faceted Maynard made his living as a taxidermist. If he were alive today, he would be leading Spring and Fall Walks for the Newton Conservators, among his other pursuits.

The new exhibit is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and includes items from the collections of the Audubon Society, the Peabody Essex Museum and the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University in addition to material from the Jackson Homestead's own collection.

Of special interest to birders will be Maynard's Walks and Talks with Nature series. It's a fascinating chronicle of many of his field trips, many to the places we know today with notes on the birds that he saw. It was a pleasant coincidence this past weekend on the Maynard Memorial Bird Walk at Flowed Meadow that we also saw a Cooper's Hawk, remarkably noted in his Walks and Talks Vol. 2, on his walk there in May of 1909.

In addition, don't miss the "Mapping Newton" exhibit and the new exhibit about the Newton Conservators featuring maps and photos from many of our conservation areas.

Lastly, don't forget these two final walks in the Newton Conservator's spring walk series:

June 9, 1:00 pm, The Aqueducts-Newton's Linear Open Space

Newton's two aqueducts are of growing community interest, and Newton and the MWRA have recently begun working to plan their future as a more accessible open space. Explore the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts, which run through rarely visited pinewoods and meadows. Meet in the parking lot of the Waban MBTA Station. Trip Leader: Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, cpkastner@rcn.com).

June 16, 1:00 pm, Charles River Walk

This walk will introduce you to the lower Charles River basin and its magnificent walkway with overlooks that the MDC completed just over a year ago. Meet in Watertown Square at the stone MDC pillars on Galen Street. Parking is available at the nearby MDC parking lot off Pleasant St. in Watertown, next to the Sasaki Landscape Office sign and MDC pool. Trip leader: Peter Kastner (244-6094, cpkastner@rcn.com).

Hope to see you out and about in the wilds of Newton!

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Newton Nature Notes - September 14, 2002  
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Dear Folks interested in the Natural World around Newton,

Here is an update on upcoming nature related events in Newton. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization. Please visit our website at [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

Sincerely,

Ted Kuklinski  
Newton Conservators Education Committee  
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#### Newton Conservators Fall Walks

Below is the schedule for the Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series. All walks are free and open to the public.

#### Sunday, September 22, 2-5 PM, Charles River Lake District Walk

This walk is an opportunity to view the expansive waters of the Lake District along with intimate trails and the historical Waltham Watch Factory. The trip goes through varied terrain and walkers should wear comfortable shoes and long pants. The program starts at the Auburndale Playground and travels along Ware's Cove and the MDC Forest Grove to the Waltham Watch Factory and the north side of the Charles River through Waltham and Weston. The loop is completed by traversing Norumbega Park and Lyons Field. Meet at the sandy beach at Ware's Cove near the children's playground equipment at 2:00 PM. Leader: Peter Kastner, 617-244-6094.

#### Sunday, September 29, 2-4 PM, Reception at Jackson Homestead

Join members and friends of the Newton Conservators to view an exhibit chronicling the accomplishments of this open space advocacy organization over the past 40 years. The display includes maps, photographs, brief histories and key features of local conservation areas acquired during that period. Share an afternoon of celebration, memories and refreshments with like-minded friends and neighbors. While at the museum, be sure to see the exhibit on Newton's 19th century naturalist, Charles Johnson Maynard.

#### Sunday, October 6, 2-4 PM, Aqueduct Bike Tour through Newton, Needham, Wellesley

The aqueduct system is of growing community interest and provides an opportunity to develop an accessible open space network of walkways and bike trails. Explore with us the Sudbury and Cochituate Aqueduct trails and plant life. The tour travels through parts of Newton, Needham and Wellesley. This trip is an off-road tour and will be leisurely but sometimes strenuous. The 1½ to 2-hour ride is recommended for ages 12 and up and an adult must accompany all minors. Riders are required to wear helmets and use bikes able to travel off-road. The aim is to have a good time, not fastest times. The tour runs behind backyards and through established paths along with rarely visited pinewoods, meadows and hills. Meet in front of Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station. The trip may be limited depending upon response and interested riders are advised to call ahead. Leader: Henry Finch, 617-964-4488.

#### Sunday, October 13, 2-3:30 PM, Edmands Park

This is one of Newton's oldest parks, donated in 1913 by the Edmands family. Its trails and dammed skating pond were created by Depression-era "relief work," along with picnicking facilities that have largely reverted to nature. Walk the trail system through 33 acres of oak woods, wetlands, and glacial esker (about one hour). Park and meet at the lower entrance on Blake Street (north entrance) between Cabot and Mill Street. Leader: Ted Kuklinski, 617-332-7753.

#### Sunday, October 20, 2-3:30 PM, Hemlock Gorge Reservation

An old stone building, 1800 textile mill, prominent waterfalls and a handsome pedestrian bridge noted for its fine echo reveal Hemlock Gorge's important role in Newton's early industrialization. Stroll the hemlock-studded banks of the Charles River and explore the Devil's Den with Vaunita Schnell, 969-3620. Meet at the reservation parking lot on Ellis Street, just south of Route 9.

Sunday, October 27, 2-3:30 PM, Kennard Park

The completion of the new bog bridge inspires our return to Kennard Park, where a 32-acre post-agricultural forest has grown up on 19th century farmland that became an early 20th century gentleman's estate and finally a Newton Park. Explore South Meadow Brook, the mixed and conifer woodlands with colonial stone walls, a red maple swamp with century old trees, and a sensitive fern marsh. Trip leader: Larry Burdick, 617-584-4633.

Saturday, November 9, 1-3 PM, The Nature of Brook Farm

Brook Farm, just over the Newton line in West Roxbury, was the site of a Utopian community founded by some of Boston's leading literary and intellectual figures of the mid-1800s. Come wander the grounds with an MDC Ranger and enjoy the beautiful woods and fields that inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Ripley and Margaret Fuller. The walk will last approximately 1½ hours and is co-sponsored by the MDC Ranger walk program, 698-1802. Brook Farm Historic Site is located in Gethsemane Cemetery. From Route 9, take Parker Street, left onto Dedham Street, which becomes Baker Street in West Roxbury. Turn left (fairly abrupt) ¼ mile before you get to the VFW Parkway (Route 1). For other MDC walks, visit [www.state.ma.us/mdc](http://www.state.ma.us/mdc).

#### OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE:

Thursday, September 19, 7 PM - Newton Free Library

Walks and Talks with Nature - Charles Maynard Johnson, Newton's Naturalist. (Cosponsored by the Jackson Homestead and the Newton Free Library). Susan Abele, the Jackson Homestead's Curator of Manuscripts and Photographs, will speak about the current exhibit at the Homestead. The lecture will be at the Library. Don't miss this. Susan is an experienced birder and put together the exhibit on Johnson. Maynard began his career as a "shotgun" ornithologist, but by the turn of the century had become a teacher and environmentalist. His "Walks and Talks" book series provides a fascinating glimpse of birding in Newton in the early 1900's. For more info call the Jackson Homestead at (617-552-7238) or the library at 617-796-1360.

And if you are a birder, it's not too early to start thinking about joining in the Christmas Bird Count this year. If you are interested, reply to this email and your name will be passed on to the Newton organizer, Michael Partridge.

If you like walks oriented to history, there are several upcoming ones organized by the Jackson Homestead and the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs.

- \* Saturday, September 21, 10:30 am, Walking Tour of West Newton
- \* Saturday, October 5, 10:30 am, Walking Tour of Newton Centre
- \* Saturday, October 19, 10:30 am, Walking Tour of Oak Hill Park

For more info call the Jackson Homestead at (617-552-7238).

Tuesday, November 19, 7 pm - Newton Conservators Fall Lecture

The Newton Conservators in conjunction with the Newton Free Library is presenting geologist Robert Thorson speaking on his new book Stone by Stone. Although there are old stone walls located across the United States, only in New England do they rise to the status of landforms. Laid end-to-end, these walls, built mostly between 1750 and 1850, would have encircled the globe ten times and New England's landscape, then and now, would simply not be the same without them. According to Robert M. Thorson, professor of geology and geophysics at the University of Connecticut, the stone wall is the key that links the natural history and the human history of New England. "Although most of these stone walls are crumbling, they connect a magnificent scientific and cultural story about the forces that formed their stones, the movements that brought them to the surface, the glacial tide that broke them apart, and about the humans that built them," Thorson notes. "The archetypal stone walls of New England--primitive, mortar-free, and 'tossed' rather than carefully laid--give us a clock by which we can judge the passage of almost unimaginable time." Watch for further info on this interesting lecture.

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Newton Nature Notes - November 18, 2002

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Here is an update on upcoming nature related events, exhibits, and information in Newton. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

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Tuesday, November 19, 7 pm - Newton Conservators Fall Lecture  
Geologist Robert Thorson to Speak on Stone Walls

Geologist and author Robert Thorson will speak on and show slides from his new book Stone by Stone: the Magnificent History in New England's Stone Walls at the Newton Free Library on Tuesday, November 19, 7:00 pm as the fourth program in the Newton Conservators Lecture Series. This program is co-sponsored by the New England Mobile Book Fair, and the Newton Free Library. A book signing will follow.

There once may have been 240,000 miles of stone walls in America's northeast, more than the distance to the moon. They took 3 billion man hours to build, the majority between 1750 and 1850. Although mostly crumbling today, they contain a fascinating story about our past for "the stone wall is the key that links the natural history and the human history of New England," the

author writes. "They tell a story about the forces that formed their stones, the movements that brought them to the surface, the glacial tide that broke them apart, and about the humans that built the walls."

These walls were not fences that separated neighbors. The stones were impediments to the farmers cultivating the land and were carted away by hand or with the assistance of oxen and draft horses, and seldom further than necessary. The resulting walls, Thorson says, draw our attention to the edge of what the farmer really cared about - the fields we can no longer see. "The archetypal stone walls of New England - primitive, mortar-free, and 'tossed' rather than carefully laid - give us a clock by which we can judge the passage of almost unimaginable time ... By studying stone walls, you'll see the unending struggle of Yankee farmers."

A lively examination of stone wall types, their function and structure, their construction and collapse, *Stone by Stone* is the story of how New England was formed and gives a fascinating picture of the land the Pilgrims settled.

#### About the Speaker

Robert M. Thorson is a Professor of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Connecticut, where he holds a joint appointment in the Department of Anthropology. Dr. Thorson received a Ph. D. in Geology from the University of Washington in Seattle for his research on glaciation and earthquake hazards of the Pacific Northwest. He holds an M. S. degree in Geology from the University of Alaska, granted for his work on Paleolithic archaeological site in the Alaska Range. Dr. Thorson began his career as a field assistant with the U. S. Geological Survey, where he participated in projects involving geologic hazards, glaciology, and paleontology in Alaska. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he worked as a Research Associate for the archaeological projects funded by the National Geographic Society and the National Park Service. In 1984, he directed the first detailed excavation of a frozen mammoth in Alaska, and has since dissected New England's largest sand dune, built by ice-age winds, and most of the wetlands in the colonial town of Lebanon, Connecticut.

As a visiting faculty fellow in the Department of History at Yale University, Thorson participated in an interdisciplinary environmental seminar that helped forge the ideas in *Stone by Stone*. Later, he spent a year-long sabbatical leave at Dartmouth College where he had access to the archives of early New England agricultural history and to the U. S. Army's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. During his leave, he led an Earthwatch expedition to examine the walls of a pioneering homestead in New Hampshire and since then, he has spent many years studying walls in the forests of New England and observing them from his kitchen window in Connecticut. His latest sabbatical was to Chile, where he worked on seismic hazards mapping, and when free, explored stone walls.

This free lecture is cosponsored by the New England Mobile Book Fair, the Newton Free Library, and the Newton Conservators ([www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org), [info@newtonconservators.org](mailto:info@newtonconservators.org)), an organization that promotes the protection and preservation of Newton's open space areas. Robert Thorson's lecture is the fourth in our twice yearly, Newton Conservators Lecture Series, which features renowned experts in areas related to the open space mission of the Conservators. As part of their educational outreach, the programs are free and open to the public. For further information on this event, please call the Newton Free Library at 617-796-1360 or the Conservators event coordinator, Ted Kuklinski at 617-969-6222 ([dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com)). Robert Thorson's book is will be available at the lecture and locally at the New England Mobile Book Fair (82 Needham Street, 617-527-5817).

Leonid Meteor Shower Tonight - Monday Evening, November 18, 2002

If the skies are clear tonight, we may get a chance to see the Leonid meteor shower this evening

and very early tomorrow morning. This may be the last chance for a real burst of Leonid meteor activity for quite some time. Peak times are 11 pm on Monday evening and at 5:36 am on Tuesday morning. For further information and details check out this article in Sky and Telescope.

[http://skyandtelescope.com/observing/objects/meteors/article\\_719\\_4.asp](http://skyandtelescope.com/observing/objects/meteors/article_719_4.asp)

A NASA expert offers practical advice to meteor watchers who wish to observe the display at this link:

[http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2002/14nov\\_leonidtips.htm](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2002/14nov_leonidtips.htm)

#### Wildlife Photos on the City of Newton Website

By the way, there has been an exciting new addition to the City of Newton's website, <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/> at the initiative of Parks and Recreation wildlife enthusiast, Carol Stapleton. Visit the new photo page "Wildlife from Around the City" by scrolling down the city's home page and clicking the swan photograph or go there directly at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/parks/wildlife.htm>. You can see a nice collection of photos Carol has taken over the years, including an unusual "to be identified" hummingbird. If you would like to contribute your own wildlife photography (preferably in jpg format) please contact Carol at [dstapleton@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:dstapleton@ci.newton.ma.us).

#### Newton Christmas Bird Count - December 15, 2002

If you have an interest in our feathered friends, perhaps you'd like to take part in the annual Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 15. Begun in 1900 and done all over the country by teams of birders, the local counts are done within a specified circular area. Parts of Newton are within the count circle centered on Boston.

Participants usually gather at the home of Conservators member Chris Criscitiello (the leader of our Biodiversity Days bird walk last June) near Cold Spring Park for coffee and to pick up maps. Beginning around 7 am, about five teams fan out all over Newton to count as many birds of all types as they can especially in conservation, park, and cemetery areas. Any woody areas near water are usually quite productive. Larger open space areas are the focus in the morning, with smaller pocket areas and residential neighborhoods checked later in the day as time permits. For the truly intrepid, there is also an owling party which heads out at around 3 am. Typically, they get great looks at as many as a half a dozen screech owls and occasionally Great Horned and Barred Owls. Aptly named Michael Partridge has coordinated the Newton Count for several years but the arrival of a stork at his house around that time may limit him to the early morning owling party this year.

Any birds seen during the count are recorded as to the species and the number of individuals. The amount of hours and distance traveled by count participants are also recorded (which helps to normalize results to the effort expended). Changes in numbers of our most common birds over the years help to spot environmental trends. Over the history of the count in Newton, over 90 species have been tabulated.

Representative members from the teams gather back at the meeting place around 4 pm to pool the results from Newton. It's always exciting to hear what the other groups have found, especially any rare or unusual sightings. Later, our local results are taken over to Mass Audubon's Habitat in Belmont where other town coordinators gather to pool the data for the entire Boston count circle. Consider that this same process is done all over the country in roughly the same time



period, and it helps to get a handle on the bigger environmental picture.

Experienced and non-experienced birders are welcome. Newcomers will be paired with an experienced group. Even if you would like to participate for only a few hours, you are welcome. For more information, please contact Ted Kuklinski (dolanpond@aol.com, 617-969-6222). You can even contribute to the effort from your own backyard this year by providing counts of the types of birds that visit your feeder on Sunday, December 15. By 3 pm, simply send an email, or phone the above number to leave a message, with a list of types and number of birds and period of observation.

For a perspective on the value of open space and its effect on the wild inhabitants of Newton, consider the following article by Charles Johnson Maynard written some 95 years ago.

Birds of Newton, Past and Present  
by C.J. Maynard

from The Mirror of Newton Past and Present, 1907,  
Newton Federation of Women's Clubs, Newton, MA

The number of birds in any section of country must be regulated by two factors; first and chiefly by the food supply; second, to a less degree, and often supplementary to the first, by the facilities afforded for nesting. Birds vary greatly as to the food they require, and the environment they prefer for nesting, and regions which are most varied in their production of bird food and in their offering of suitable nesting places will naturally have the largest number of avian species. Such a section was once found here in Newton.

Let us for a few moments turn back the leaves of the book which Time is ever writing, and glance at the Newton of forty years ago, --at the woodlands, fields, and streams as they were, --and listen to the voices of the birds which lived here then. I will take as an example the environment of my own home as a type of many places in our town. Below the house was a pretty brook that in summer wound in and out among luxuriant grasses, the home of rails and bitterns, where the red-wings delighted to build their cup-shaped nests. Here, too, in places, tangled thickets of wild roses, alders, and ilex overarched the stream; in these secure hiding-places lived swamp sparrows, and now and then a short-billed marsh wren came to them and built his nest in the neighboring sedges. They were also the chosen home of the northern yellow-throat. Willows grew beside the stream in detached clumps, or in long rows. To them came hosts of migrating warblers when on their way north in spring, to glean among the growing leaves. Here I always went to find Wilson's blackcap. Later, in early July, the goldfinches nested in these willows.

Above the brook was an old orchard, and in the cavities of the huge limbs of the apple-trees bluebirds and flickers found homes. When these trees were covered with pink-tinted blossoms, they were also visited by many warblers. Here I found the rare Tennessee warbler, and as for blackpolls, they came by scores; sometimes during favorable years, great waves of a number of species of other warblers would sweep across these apple trees. I remember once seeing them fairly covered with Canadian warblers. Orchard orioles sometimes came here to nest. In the higher meadows, near the house, meadow larks and bobolinks nested and sang all through the June weather. On a cedar-covered hill behind the house a number of pairs of purple finches built in the slender, swaying tops of the cedars, and I could hear them singing every day as I sat at work in my laboratory. In the barberry bushes that skirted the old stone walls nested yellow warblers and chipping sparrows in abundance. Song, vesper, and field sparrows we had galore; indigo birds were common, and of course Baltimore orioles hung their swinging nests from the branches of all the tall trees about us.

Some of these birds are with us now, but they are few, for many changes have taken place. The meadow is drained and the waving sedges have gone. The beautiful brook has been

straightened into a ditch, and most of the willows have been cut down. The cedar hill is now an unsightly gravel pit. The golfer rolls his ball where once the meadow lark and bobolink sang. The old orchard has nearly gone, and few or no migrating warblers visit the few trees that remain; in short, the place has been made a desert for the birds, and as such possesses no attractions for them. There are many such deserts to-day in our city which were once the chosen resorts of many species of birds.

Cold Spring Swamp, near the Newton Cemetery, once the home of hundreds of black-crowned night herons, and of an occasional long-eared owl, has been drained, and most of the white cedars in which the herons built their nests so many years have been cut down. Cabot Woods, formerly a famous place for birds, has had the undergrowth removed and is constantly being burned over, destroying the carpet of dead leaves in which ovenbirds, towhees and brown thrashers used to nest. West Newton Hill, which I remember as a great forest, is now nearly covered with houses, and what has long been the wildest part of Newton, the region about Oak Hill, is gradually being cleared of wood. Can we wonder that we are losing out birds?

I do not think I am overstating the matter when I say that, taken all in all, we have not more than one pair of birds nesting in Newton now where we had fifty pairs forty years ago. What is the remedy for this depletion? Briefly, let me say first, to those who have private grounds and want wild birds, --and who does not?--plant native shrubbery, barberries, privet, and similar close-growing shrubs, and let them close together without trimming. Do not remove undergrowth from woodlands, and above all, do not allow fire to consume the fallen leaves; let them lie. Public parks should have whole sections left perfectly wild for the birds, without trimming, or without underbrush or fallen leaves being removed. Trees in such parks should not be sprayed (poisons so used are an injury to the birds), but gypsy and brown-tails should be removed by hand. The time has come for us to make an effort to keep what birds remain; let us make that effort earnestly.

#### Summary of Birds Found in Newton

I have found in all about 184 species; 70 of these have bred in the city, but 11 now longer do so; 14 are residents through the years; we have 7 regular winter visitors and 9 that come to us irregularly at this season; 27 are migrants in spring and fall; 63 are either of accidental occurrence, or are found very irregularly, or have ceased coming at all for various reasons.

To learn more about Charles Johnson Maynard, the study of ornithology and the naturalist movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, visit the Jackson Homestead (527 Washington Street) and view the exhibit Walks and Talks with Nature, Newton's Naturalist. Maynard began his career as a "shotgun" ornithologist, but by the turn of the century had become a teacher and environmentalist. His "Walks and Talks" book series provides a fascinating glimpse of birding in Newton in the early 1900's. Thanks to Susan Abele, Curator, for providing the above material by C.J. Maynard. While there don't miss the exhibit on the Newton Conservators and Newton's open spaces.

#### Volunteer Opportunities

Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in the Newton Conservators Spring walk series? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com)).

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interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn (mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

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If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc. , P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

#### About Newton Nature Notes

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com) or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222).

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Newton Nature Notes - January 13, 2003  
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Here is an update on upcoming nature related events, exhibits, and information in Newton. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

In this issue:

- \* Newton Camera Club Presents Slide Show on Seabirds,  
Monday, January 23, 7:30 pm - Nonantum Branch Library
- \* Results from the Newton Christmas Bird Count - Sunday, December 15, 2002
- \* Wildlife Photos on the City of Newton Website
- \* Volunteer Opportunities
- \* About the Newton Conservators
- \* About Newton Nature Notes

Newton Camera Club Presents Slide Show on Seabirds  
Monday, January 23, 7:30 pm - Nonantum Branch Library

The Newton Camera Club will present a slide show by Greig Cranna on "People and Seabirds: The Struggle for Coexistence" on Monday, January 13, 7:30PM at the Nonantum branch of the Newton Free Library. This program is co-sponsored by the Boston West Center for Writing and Photography and is free and open to the public. The presentation will focus on Cranna's interest in seabirds and their historic and present-day interactions with people. He will take his audience on a photographic tour of seabird colonies in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the North Pacific and the British Isles while discussing their uneasy coexistence with people and the explosion of ecotourism.

Born in Vancouver, Cranna has taken photos for seabird research, salmon aquaculture and environmental issues for a broad base of prominent clients for many years. For further information on this free event, please call NCC at 617-243-0557.

Results from the Newton Christmas Bird Count - Sunday, December 15, 2002

The annual Christmas Bird Count was held in Newton on Sunday, December 15. Begun in 1900 and done all over the country by teams of birders, the local counts are done within a specified circular area. Parts of Newton are within the count circle centered on Boston. Participants gathered at the home of Conservators member Chris Criscitiello near Cold Spring Park at 6:45 pm. Beginning around 7 am, five teams fanned out all over Newton to count as many birds of all types as they could, especially in conservation, park, and cemetery areas. An owling party led by Michael Partridge had headed out earlier around 3 am.

Any birds seen during the count were recorded as to the species and the number of individuals. The amount of hours and distance traveled by count participants are also recorded (which helps to normalize results to the effort expended). Changes in numbers of our most common birds over the years help to spot environmental trends. Over the history of the count in Newton, over 90 species have been tabulated.

Representative members from the teams gathered back at the meeting place in the afternoon to pool the results from Newton. Later, our local results were taken over to Mass Audubon's Habitat in Belmont where other town coordinators gathered to pool the data for the entire Boston count circle. Consider that this same process is done all over the country in roughly the same time period, and it helps to get a handle on the bigger environmental picture.

The weather for our count was very reasonable - with seasonable temperatures but at least not precipitating. In Newton, a total of 41 species were tabulated. There were approximately 113 species seen in the Boston count (of which Newton was a part). We had a total of 14 volunteer observers in 5 parties (and a number of local feeder reports). This year we welcomed a number of first time counters. A total of 18.4 party hours were spent on foot covering about 14 miles and 4 party hours were spent by car covering almost 38 miles. There were two owling observers who traveled 21 miles over 3 hours. The detailed counts are given below.

Canada Goose, 233  
Wood Duck, 6  
American Black Duck, 4  
Mallard, 271  
Hooded Merganser, 14  
Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2  
Cooper's Hawk, 2  
Red-tailed Hawk, 15  
American Coot, 1

Ring-billed Gull, 218  
Herring Gull, 24  
Great Black-backed Gull, 6  
Rock Dove, 92  
Mourning Dove, 103  
Eastern Screech-owl, 3  
Great Horned Owl, 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker, 5  
Downey Woodpecker, 23  
Hairy Woodpecker, 1  
Northern Flicker, 4  
Blue Jay, 42  
American Crow, 169  
Fish Crow, 1  
Black-capped Chickadee, 97  
Tufted Titmouse, 47  
White-breasted Nuthatch, 46  
Carolina Wren, 8  
Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1  
American Robin, 120  
Northern Mockingbird, 22  
European Starling, 403  
Northern Cardinal, 29  
American Tree Sparrow, 5  
Chipping Sparrow, 1  
Song Sparrow, 20  
White-throated Sparrow, 18  
Dark-eyed Junco, 166  
House Finch, 47  
American Goldfinch, 78  
House Sparrow, 478

#### Wildlife Photos on the City of Newton Website

Check out the exciting new addition to the City of Newton's website, <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/> at the initiative of Parks and Recreation wildlife enthusiast, Carol Stapleton. Visit the new photo page "Wildlife from Around the City" by scrolling down the city's home page and clicking the swan photograph or go there directly at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/parks/wildlife.htm>. If you would like to contribute your own wildlife photography (preferably in jpg format) please contact Carol at [cstapleton@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:cstapleton@ci.newton.ma.us).

#### Volunteer Opportunities

Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in the Newton Conservators Spring walk series? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com)).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn

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\*\*\*\*\*  
Newton Nature Notes - Wednesday, January 22, 2003  
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Here is an update on upcoming nature related events, exhibits, and information in and around Newton, MA. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

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- \* Report on the Newton Camera Club Slide Show on Seabirds, Monday, January 13
- \* Mass Audubon's Focus on Feeders Annual Event, February 8-9
- \* Alaska Wilderness and Live Owls Coming to Weston, February 16
- \* Volunteer Opportunities
- \* About the Newton Conservators
- \* About Newton Nature Notes

\*\*\* Report on the Newton Camera Club Slide Show on Seabirds held Monday, January 13

On Monday, January 13, the Newton Camera Club presented a slide show by Greig Cranna on "People and Seabirds: The Struggle for Coexistence" at the Nonantum branch of the Newton Free Library. Due to some mistyping on your editor's part, the date given in the heading was Monday, January 23 not January 13 as it was supposed to be. The date in the text was correct. Our sincere apologies to anyone who might have missed the program.

The presentation focused on Cranna's interest in seabirds and their historic and present-day interactions with people. He took his audience on a photographic tour of seabird colonies in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the North Pacific and the British Isles while discussing their uneasy coexistence with people and the explosion of ecotourism. Born in Vancouver, Cranna has taken photos for seabird research, salmon aquaculture and environmental issues for a broad base of prominent clients for many years. Mr. Cranna's photos were quite beautiful and varied, whether of the people, the landforms, or the seabirds. As might be expected there were gorgeous close-ups of many people's favorite, the almost comical, Atlantic Puffin. If you ever get a chance to see this photographer's work again, it's well worthwhile.

Their upcoming meeting on Monday, January 27 features a member's competition in the Nature / Open category according to their website schedule. Some future meetings focus on weather related photographs while in March is the annual print exhibit at the Newton Free Library (reception on March 6, 7:30-9 pm).

The Newton Camera Club ([www.newtoncameraclub.org](http://www.newtoncameraclub.org)) is sponsored by the Newton Public Library, Newton, MA. The club is open to all interested photographers regardless of skill level. Their mission is to provide a compatible group of people with whom to discuss photography. While they occasionally use prints, most of the work of the club focuses on color slides. Meetings usually alternate between presentations by invited professional or advanced amateur photographers and slide competitions. The slide competitions are judged by outside photographers and provide a good learning experience for both novice and advanced photographers. They also go on occasional field trips to photograph local sights. They meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays, , 7:30pm to 9:30pm at the Nonantum Branch of the Newton Free Library at the corner of Bridge St. and Watertown St. (Rt. 16) in Nonantum (a village of Newton). For further information on the Newton Camera Club, please contact president, Elisif Brandon ([elisif@rcn.com](mailto:elisif@rcn.com), 617-243-0557).

\*\*\*\* Mass Audubon's Focus on Feeders Annual Event, February 8-9

Time flies, and Mass Audubon's annual Focus On Feeders event is fast approaching! This year, Focus on Feeders will be held on the weekend of February 8th and 9th, 2003. Here's a chance to do some birding just looking out your window!

Massachusetts Audubon invites you to participate in the seventh annual Focus on Feeders Weekend. Join fellow backyard bird enthusiasts of all ages by noting the number and species of birds that visit your feeders during the Focus on Feeders weekend. Record your observations on the official Focus on Feeders Report Form ([www.massaudubon.org/PDF/News/focusfeedform02.pdf](http://www.massaudubon.org/PDF/News/focusfeedform02.pdf)), and send them to Mass Audubon headquarters in Lincoln by February 21, 2003 to Focus on Feeders, Massachusetts Audubon Society, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773. The weekend's results will be summarized and published on Mass Audubon's website and in an upcoming issue of Connections, their member newsletter. Great prizes-Mass Audubon tote bags and T-shirts, bir feeders, binoculars, bird identification calendars -will be awarded to five people drawn at random from the pool of respondents.

To add to the fun, Mass Audubon will be awarding additional prizes to participants who submit wildlife photographs with their Report Forms. Prizes will be awarded in the following categories:

- Best overall photo
- Most humorous wildlife at a feeding station
- Most unusual bird
- Most unusual wildlife
- Most interesting behavior

Please note: One or more of the winning photo(s) will be published with the results, as space permits. All wildlife photographs are welcome and need not be limited to birds. Submissions are restricted to amateur photographers only, please. All photos become the property of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

The official forms lists the following species but, just as in the Christmas Bird Count, you never know what birds might be around.

Rock Dove (pigeon), Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House (English) Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed junco, Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak.

So grab your official Focus on Feeders Report Form and your camera, and join us for Focus on Feeders 2003! If you participate, please send Newton Nature Notes ([dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com)) a copy of your report at well if you can.

### \*\*\* Alaska Wilderness and Live Owls Coming to Weston, February 16

A special opportunity to experience part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is being offered on Sunday, February 16th at 3 PM by Land's Sake, Weston's community farm and forestry non-profit organization ([www.landssake.org](http://www.landssake.org)). "Alaska Wilderness: A Canoe Journey into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" will be presented by a team of naturalists, Mark and Marcia Wilson. Tickets are \$5 per person at the door, and all profits support future educational programming at Land's Sake. The program is suitable for ages 6 to 96.

In the Weston Middle School's Amy Potter Center, a fast-moving slide show with renowned wildlife photographer Mark Wilson will treat you to intimate views of Snowy Owls at the nest, caribou maneuvering icy river crossings, arctic foxes and grizzly bear sign. Meet lemmings, peregrine falcons and yellow-billed loons feeding their young; get a rare glimpse of musk oxen. Naturalist Marcia Wilson will bring out a Snowy Owl and a Short-eared Owl, two birds of prey that are found both in the Arctic and New England. Marcia will demonstrate ways that these species have adapted to life in this continent's most remote wilderness, yet are seen foraging at Logan airport too.

Marcia and Mark Wilson, both lifelong naturalists, spent nineteen days canoeing the Canning River on the western edge of Alaska's Arctic Refuge. Floating north from a gravel airstrip in the Brooks Range, the Wilsons paddled a 17-foot folding canoe to explore seventy miles of arctic wilderness. With stunning photos and passionate commentary drawn from this trip and six other trips to the arctic, the Wilsons open a window on the Arctic summer.

A touch table of Arctic treasures is set up for all to explore at the end, while door prizes of a signed Mark Wilson owl print and Land's Sake's own Maple Syrup will be announced.



Refreshments will be served and families are encouraged to check out summer program information such as "Greenpower" and "The Maple Project" for middle school students. Internships for high school and college students teach farm and forestry skills. For more information, call Land's Sake at 781-893-1162 or [www.landssake.org](http://www.landssake.org).

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## Newton Nature Notes - Friday, February 14, 2003

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Happy Valentine's Day, nature lovers! Here is an update on upcoming nature related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area. This news is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. There is a lot of news in this issue!

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- \* Focus on the Vernal Pools of Newton - Newton Conservators Spring Lecture, March 19
- \* Alaska Wilderness and Live Owls Coming to nearby Weston, Sunday, February 16
- \* Science Tuesday at the Newton Free Library presents Wingmasters, February 25th
- \* Dolan Pond Grand Re-Opening in May
- \* Recent Nature Reports - Eagles and Owls
- \* Jackson Homestead - Charles Maynard Johnson Exhibit through April
- \* A Birder's Singer/Songwriter - Oen Kennedy
- \* Open Space Opportunities
- \* Newton Garden Tours Offers Notecards
- \* Changes at the State House
- \* New England Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology
- \* Volunteer Opportunities
- \* About the Newton Conservators
- \* About Newton Nature Notes

### **Focus on the Vernal Pools of Newton - Newton Conservators Spring Lecture Wednesday, March 19, 7 pm at the Newton Free Library**

**Speaker: Jon Regosin, Environmental Consultant and Tufts University Ph.D. candidate in Biology**

Did you know that spotted salamanders, spring peepers, and wood frogs make their homes in parts of Newton? Have you ever heard strange sounds on early spring nights, and wondered what you were hearing? Many amphibian species still reside on Newton Conservation lands and other urban forest fragments. Vernal pools, small ponds lacking fish, provide critical breeding habitat for Newton's remaining amphibian populations. On rainy nights during March and April, many amphibians in our area stage dramatic migrations to their breeding sites.

Jon Regosin, a Ph.D. candidate in Biology at Tufts University who studies vernal pool amphibians, will present a lecture and slide show on vernal pools in Newton, and on conservation issues affecting amphibians in eastern Massachusetts. The lecture will take place on Wednesday, March 19, 7 pm at the Druker Auditorium of the Newton Free Library. Jon, a Newton resident, is an environmental consultant on wildlife and rare species issues with Hyla Ecological Services, and was formerly a Conservation Planner for The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island. A board member of the Newton Conservators, he has led a number of programs as part of Newton Biodiversity Days and the Conservators walk series. A vernal pool walk will be scheduled later this Spring in conjunction with the Newton Conservators to see first hand the wonders of vernal pools in Newton.

According to A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools (Leo Kenney and Matthew Burne), "Once thought to be just puddles in the forest, vernal pools are now recognized as rich but temporary ecosystems. Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands which fill annually from precipitation, runoff, and rising groundwater. Most years they become completely dry, losing water through evaporation and transpiration. The wet-dry cycle prevents fish from becoming

established, yet presents a rich, albeit temporary, habitat for many species. Beneath the still waters of these woodland pools is a staggering array of life. In Massachusetts, vernal pools are afforded some protection through local bylaws and regulations such as the Wetlands Protection Act." This publication of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Vernal Pool Association ( <http://www.vernalpool.org> ) will be available at the lecture. This book serves as a photographic guide to all of the amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates that utilize vernal pools for portions of their life (including all the salamanders, frogs, toads, turtles and snakes found in Massachusetts). It includes species accounts, key diagnostic features, natural history notes, and lists of vernal pool resources.

This free lecture is co-sponsored by the Newton Free Library and the Newton Conservators ( <http://www.newtonconservators.org> ), an organization that promotes the protection and preservation of Newton's open space areas. Jon Regosin's lecture is the fifth in our twice yearly, Newton Conservators Lecture Series, which features renowned experts in areas related to the open space mission of the Conservators. As part of their educational outreach, the programs are free and open to the public. For further information on this event, please call the Newton Free Library at 617-796-1360 or the Conservators event coordinator, Ted Kuklinski at 617-969-6222 (mailto:dolanpond@aol.com).

### **Alaska Wilderness and Live Owls Coming to nearby Weston, Sunday, February 16**

Land's Sake, Weston's community forestry and farming organization, offers a special opportunity to experience the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, February 16th at 3 PM. "Alaska Wilderness: A Canoe Journey into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" will be presented by a team of photographer/naturalists, Mark and Marcia Wilson. Dragon Books is co-sponsoring the event and will have a selection of books about the Arctic available for purchase in the lobby.

Tickets are \$5 per person at the door, and all profits support future educational programming at Land's Sake. The program is suitable for all ages.

In the Weston Middle School's Amy Potter Center, 468 Wellesley Street, a fast-moving slide show with renowned wildlife photographer Mark Wilson will treat you to intimate views of Snowy Owls at the nest, caribou maneuvering icy river crossings, arctic foxes and grizzly bear sign. Meet lemmings, peregrine falcons and yellow-billed loons feeding their young; get a rare glimpse of musk oxen. Naturalist Marcia Wilson will bring out a Snowy Owl and a Short-eared Owl, two birds of prey that are found both in the Arctic and New England. Marcia will demonstrate ways that these species have adapted to life in this continent's most remote wilderness, yet are seen foraging at Logan airport too.

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A Touch Table of Arctic items is set up for all to explore; door prizes of a signed Mark Wilson owl print and Land's Sake's own maple syrup will be announced. Refreshments will be served and families are encouraged to check out summer program information such as "Greenpower" and "The Maple Project" for middle school students. Land's Sake also offers internships for high school and college students that teach farm and forestry skills. For more information or in case of severe weather, call Land's Sake at 781-893-1162 or <http://www.landssake.org> (27 Crescent Street, Weston, MA 02493)

The Weston Middle School is just a short easy hop from Newton. Take Route 30 west from 128 through Weston. You will see the Weston High School Athletic fields on your left at Wellesley

Road. Take a left on Wellesley Road at the light which takes you south in the direction of the Mass Pike. Continue past the entrance for Weston High School. A little further down the road, take a left into the entrance for Weston Middle School. Thanks to Nina Danforth, Watershed Education Coordinator for the DEM Office of Water Resources, for alerting us to this great event.

### **Science Tuesday at the Newton Free Library presents Wingmasters, February 25th**

Julie and Jim of Wingmasters will present an exciting, informative, live animal program about Birds of Prey. Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 3:30 p.m. The program is geared to ages 5 and older, and will take place at the Druker Auditorium of the Newton Free Library (617-796-1360).

### **Dolan Pond Grand Re-Opening in May**

The Dolan Pond Conservation Area (tucked between Auburndale Ave and Webster Street in West Newton) has been undergoing a massive renovation since this past summer and, while work has stopped for the winter, it is expected to be completed this spring in time for a grand reopening in early May. The new boardwalk there has been substantially completed except for some side curbing. New stabilized soil paths will be installed in the spring. The work includes new signage, information kiosks, some new side trails, and handicapped parking. The path and boardwalk will be one of the few natural areas in Newton that is handicapped accessible (a great boon for those with strollers too!). A little known secret is that Quinn Pond, one of the four ponds there which is closest to Auburndale Ave, often has great ice skating due to the area's locally low elevation which traps cold air and its shallow depth (perhaps 2 feet). The locals even have a bench to change into skates, hockey goal nets, and a Zamboni. Just kidding about the Zamboni but they do keep the ice mostly cleared. You are welcome to receive the free Dolan Pond News email newsletter of the Friends of Dolan Pond by sending a request to [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com).

### **Recent Nature Reports - Eagles and Owls**

Boston College is apparently not the only place to see Eagles locally any more in Newton. We had two recent reports of Bald Eagles along the Charles River in Newton.

Jon Regosin (1/27/2003) reported: "I saw an immature Bald Eagle yesterday south of Nahanton Park in the MDC land along the Charles. This is an excellent area to see raptors, in general, including an occasional Rough-legged Hawk in winter. Especially good birding if you can get out of the woods and into the frozen marsh." Jon, our local vernal pool expert, says he saw the eagle from the bridge over the Charles, near the entrance to Nahanton Park.

It must be a good year for eagles because around February 3, there was another report of a bald eagle (mature--with white head, about 7:20 a.m., flying downstream over the Charles River from the Forest Grove Park promontory in the Lakes district of Newton in Auburndale. This is in the vicinity of Cold Spring Park and near the outflow of Flowed Meadow. Forest Grove is accessed by going to the end of Rumford Avenue and turning left. It ends in a circle. Thanks to Lesya and Joris who originated this report and Bart Nichols who passed it along.

We have also lately received information on some local owl sightings. Michael Partridge led the owling search party on our Newton Christmas Bird Count and in response to an inquiry as to where the owls were seen provided the following:

"The Screech Owls we got this year were in Cold Springs Park (2) and Edmands Park (1). We got flashlight looks and OK digital photos of one of the Cold Springs Screeches (red phase) and the Edmands Park Screech (gray phase). The other screech in Cold Springs was a "voice only" which is countable in the census.

The Great Horned was heard but not seen at Kennard Estate in South Newton, right near the Brookline border. The bird responded to a tape we played at the end of Pond Brook Road. This was the first Great Horned we have had on the Newton section of the count since 1995, and the first at Kennard (where they used to breed) since 1992 or so. If I had to hazard a guess I would say that the bird was calling from a tall pine grove that is on a hill at the eastern edge of Kennard, near the Brookline line. This is about 1/4 mile or more from where we played the tape. In my limited experience Great Horneds can be difficult to see even when you know they are there, because they prefer to roost 40 feet up and out of sight within the branches. Hearing the owl this year gives me hope that they will once again breed at Kennard, which is some of the only reasonable habitat they have in the Newton section of the Christmas count circle.

We have found Screech Owls in all parts of Newton during previous counts. They are fairly common, but hard to locate unless you call them in. If anyone want to join us for the owling part of the census next year (4 am), you are welcome to join us. The more, the merrier!"

Just this past week, we received this report from Beth Schroeder about a Great Horned Owl in Cutler Park in nearby Needham, "We just saw a great horned owl in Cutler State Park. It was in the third tree back from the path, 100 yards from a big tree that is lying across the path if you are going clockwise around the pond. It's the second day I was looking for owls there and it was so exciting to see it." Beth provided the following directions to Cutler Park: You go down Needham Street from Newton Highlands heading toward Needham. It turns into Highland Avenue. You turn left on 2nd Avenue in Needham. Continue along and it becomes 4th Avenue. Turn right on Kendrick Street. The parking lot for Cutler Park is on the left side of the street. It's a great place for hiking. We cross country ski there.

Here's some more information on Cutler Park from the web site <http://www.state.ma.us/mdc/hemlock.htm> : "The seven hundred acres known as Cutler Park comprise the largest remaining fresh water marsh on the middle Charles. Located in Needham and Dedham, the marsh and small lake attract over 100 species of birds which make Cutler Park a prime spot for nature study. Other activities suitable to this wetland preserve are hiking, canoeing and fishing. Open year-round, dawn to dusk. For more information call (617) 698-1802." There is a great map of Cutler Park on this web site.

And lastly, as reported by Mary Lewis, the screech owl inhabiting the wood duck house overlooking the skating pond (Quinn Pond) at Dolan Pond Conservation area has returned. She reports, "We have seen the little brown owl poking his head out while we are all gathered.. He has become quite comfortable with us all. The kids think seeing an owl is very cool."

If you visit any of these places, please be sensitive to the birds and try to be a quiet distant observer and not disturb them.

### **Jackson Homestead - Charles Maynard Johnson Exhibit through April**

If you haven't seen it yet, don't miss the final months of the Charles Maynard Johnson exhibit. To learn more about Charles Johnson Maynard, the study of ornithology and the naturalist movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, visit the Jackson Homestead (527 Washington Street) and view the exhibit Walks and Talks with Nature, Newton's Naturalist. Maynard began his career as a "shotgun" ornithologist, but by the turn of the century had become a teacher and environmentalist. His "Walks and Talks" book series provides a fascinating glimpse of birding in Newton in the early 1900's. Visit their website at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson/> or call 617-796-1450. The exhibit continues through April 19, 2003.

### **A Birder's Singer/Songwriter - Oen Kennedy**

We recently attended a benefit concert for the Franklin School PTO at the First Unitarian Church in West Newton. The last performer of the evening was a Cambridge based singer/songwriter by the name of Oen Kennedy who was incredible. His songs were very reflective of his love of nature and especially of his passion for our avian friends. Who else would do a song which includes his efforts to fall asleep by naming all the species of woodpeckers in the world (over 200!)? The audience was brought to its feet by his song "Yellow Bird", which featured some fine guitar work along with Oen's bird whistles.

On one of his CD's is the sad song about the last remaining Dusky Seaside Sparrow, called "Aluminum Green" (he was banded with silver and green bands) with the refrain "my lover gone, my language gone, drained and burned to the ground, I sing my song in the dusky dawn but there's never any answer, no familiar sound ...". You can sample portions of some of these songs at <http://www.folkweb.com/oenkennedy/index.php3#aluminumgreen> and <http://www.folkweb.com/oenkennedy/index.php3#liveatclubpassim>. He has worked at Perkins School for the Blind and his wife, Patricia works with special needs students at Bigelow Middle School. You can visit his website at <http://www.oenkennedy.com> or email him at [oenanthe61@hotmail.com](mailto:oenanthe61@hotmail.com). (Oenanthe oenanthe is the Latin name for Northern Wheatear!). If you ever get a chance to see (and hear him) do so. Beautiful music!

### **Open Space Opportunities**

There are a number of important open space opportunities which have arisen lately. The most visible has been the property known as Kessler Woods. These 42 acres of Newton open space will be auctioned by the owner, NSTAR utilities, but the city has managed to have the auction delayed for several months to come up with a plan. The parcel in question is by far the largest remaining block of vacant, privately-owned open space in Newton. As Jon Regosin noted in his letter to the Tab recently, "In Newton, we now have a unique opportunity to protect 42 acres of strategically located open space that simply will not come again. The alternative is, in all likelihood, to see this land sold to the highest bidder for residential development."

We received some sad news recently that Irene Forte', whose property abutted the Dolan Pond Conservation Area, passed away recently at the grand age of 104 years. A service will be held for Irene on Saturday, February 15, 1:30 pm at the Newton Cemetery. She was beloved by many in the neighborhood and was a wonderful steward of her land, whose big backyard was always a stop on the Dolan Pond birdwalks. Irene had expressed concerns about what would happen to her property when she passed away. It was her desire that, if possible, it be sold to the City of Newton rather than be fully developed. We had discussions about how that might be possible under the provisions of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) which was passed in Newton. Some discussion has been initiated between the Newton Conservators and her family in this regard having in mind putting in a CPA proposal which would possibly convert some of her property into open space as part of the Dolan Pond area and preserving her house under historical and affordable housing provisions.

Another parcel abutting the Webster Conservation area (offered for sale by the Wilmerding Family) was the subject of a recent CPA application by the Newton Conservators. If you are interested in such open space issues, consider joining the Newton Conservators. See details later in this newsletter.

### **Changes at the State House**

We have a new administration at the State House and there have been a number of environmental administrative changes. Bob Durand, the Paul Cellucci appointed head of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), had a lot of support from local environmental organizations to remain in that position. He spearheaded such initiatives as Massachusetts

Biodiversity Days. He has been replaced by Ellen Roy Herzfelder as the new Secretary for the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs who surprisingly has local connections, having grown up in Newton. Check out their website at <http://www.state.ma.us/envir/> for more info and background.

Like all state departments, their office is under budget squeeze and hearings were held yesterday on their budget. There will be a transition period while the new EOEА gets up to speed and gathers knowledge of state's critical areas, river systems, urban needs, etc. Innovative programs such as Massachusetts Biodiversity Days, the Watershed Initiative, and Lakes and Ponds grants were all on the chopping block. Here is the address if you wish to communicate your thoughts to them: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Ellen Roy Herzfelder, Secretary, 251 Causeway Street, 9th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02114, Phone: (617) 626-1000 FAX: (617) 626-1181.

The following was received the other day from Sheila Decter: "I thought you might be interested in this conservation alert from the Appalachian Mountain Club. Governor Romney is proposing to cut \$1.3 million from the forests and parks budget, but our parks already suffer from previous budget cuts. In addition, the forests and parks budget is just a fraction of the 1% of the budget that Massachusetts spends on all environmental programs. If you go to the URL below you can check out what is at stake and send your own message directly to Governor Romney - [http://ga0.org/campaign/Forests\\_Parks?rk=071r\\_p51mPDbW](http://ga0.org/campaign/Forests_Parks?rk=071r_p51mPDbW)"

### **New England Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology**

We recently received a nice note from Lelia Orrell Elliston of the New England Chapter - Society for Conservation Biology. They have a great website at <http://www.NESCB.org>. She wanted to make our readers aware of their free online journal, "Conservation Perspectives", which you can find online at <http://www.nescb.org/epublications/>. It is quite a nice publication and worth a look.

### **Newton Garden Tours Offers Notecards**

The Newton Pride Committee and the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs promote Newton Garden Tours with a set of eight botanical notecards. The cost is \$6. Proceeds will help defray the costs of many of the free events sponsored by the Newton Pride Committee. Photographs used for the cards were taken by Ken Bernstein of Newton. "Light & Form in Flowers," an exhibition of his work, is on view at the Newton Free Library through Jan. 30. Newton Garden Tours take place Saturday, June 7, and will feature 21 gardens. Advance tickets are \$15. To order the notecards or to receive more information about the Garden Tour, call 617-527-8283.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in the Newton Conservators Spring walk series? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, <mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com>).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn (<mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us>, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

## About the Newton Conservators

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization that promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or contact us at 617-969-8661 or the address below.

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

For you Newton nature lovers who love to get out on the trails, there is very exciting news. With the hard work especially of Judy Hepburn, the new map and trail guide for Newton's open space is almost complete. Instead of a paper map as in the past, it will take the form of a small pocket guide book and covers the open spaces of Newton. All the individual maps from the past Judy have been redrawn and updated. This will be an invaluable guide to your nature outings. All the more reason to join the Conservators! The guide will also be available in local bookstores.

## About Newton Nature Notes

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to <mailto:dolanpond@aol.com> or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadical newsletter to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel may be interested.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Newton Nature Notes - Wednesday, March 19, 2003  
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The swallows return to Capistrano today! And locally? At the Newton Free Library this evening, you can find all about the migration of spotted salamanders to vernal pools! Tonight at 7pm is the Newton Conservators Spring Lecture by Jon Regosin on Vernal Pools. See our first article for more details.

This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at



<http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. We have an issue chock full of information.

In this issue:

- \* Focus on the Vernal Pools of Newton - Newton Conservators Spring Lecture, March 19
- \* About the Vernal Pool Association ([www.vernalpool.org](http://www.vernalpool.org))
- \* Mount Auburn Cemetery Slide Show - Newton Free Library, Thursday, March 20, 10:30 am
- \* Benefit Concert for the Green Decade Coalition - March 20th at 7:30 pm, Boston College
- \* Naturally Great Gardens & Landscapes - Monday, March 24, 7 PM - Newton Free Library
- \* Records of Walks and Talks with Nature: Charles Johnson Maenad, Newton's Naturalist
- \* Dolman Pond Grand Reopening on May 3
- \* Newton Conservators Annual Dinner Meeting - Wednesday, May 21, 6:30 pm
- \* Newton Garden Tours on June 7 - Notecards Available
- \* The State of Songbirds - EcoAlert from American P.I.E. (Public Information on the Environment)
- \* Recent Nature Reports
- \* Volunteer Opportunities
- \* About the Newton Conservators
- \* About Newton Nature Notes

Focus on the Vernal Pools of Newton - Newton Conservators Spring Lecture  
Wednesday, March 19, 7 pm at the Newton Free Library

Speaker: Jon Regosin, Environmental Consultant and Tufts University, Ph.D. in Biology

Did you know that spotted salamanders, spring peepers, and wood frogs make their homes in parts of Newton? Have you ever heard strange sounds on early spring nights, and wondered what you were hearing? Many amphibian species still reside on Newton Conservation lands and other urban forest fragments. Vernal pools, small ponds lacking fish, provide critical breeding habitat for Newton's remaining amphibian populations. On rainy nights during March and April, many amphibians in our area stage dramatic migrations to their breeding sites.

Jon Regosin, a Ph.D. candidate in Biology at Tufts University who studies vernal pool amphibians, will present a lecture and slide show on vernal pools in Newton, and on conservation issues affecting amphibians in eastern Massachusetts. The lecture will take place on Wednesday, March 19, 7 pm at the Druker Auditorium of the Newton Free Library. (Admittedly we are trying to hurry spring along!) Jon, a Newton resident, is an environmental consultant on wildlife and rare species issues with Hyla Ecological Services, and was formerly a Conservation Planner for The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island. A board member of the Newton Conservators, he has led a number of programs as part of Newton Biodiversity Days and the Conservators walk series. A vernal pool walk will be scheduled later this Spring in conjunction with the Newton Conservators to see first hand the wonders of vernal pools in Newton. The lecture tonight will have both visual and audio components. You will be able to become familiar with the calls of frogs and peepers.

This free lecture is co-sponsored by the Newton Free Library and the Newton Conservators (<http://www.newtonconservators.org>), an organization that promotes the protection and preservation of Newton's open space areas. Jon Regosin's lecture is the fifth in our twice yearly, Newton Conservators Lecture Series, which features renowned experts in areas related to the open space mission of the Conservators. As part of their educational outreach, the programs are free and open to the public. For further information on this event, please call the Newton Free Library at 617-796-1360 or the Conservators event coordinator, Ted Kuklinski at 617-969-6222 (<mailto:dolanpond@aol.com>).

About the Vernal Pool Association ([www.vernalpool.org](http://www.vernalpool.org))

The Vernal Pool Association is an environmental project of Reading Memorial High School, Reading, Massachusetts. Their goal is to encourage the appreciation, protection, and interdisciplinary study of vernal pools, particularly by students. To meet this objective, they produce educational materials, present workshops and talks, and interact with educators and students both in person and through the Internet. They are actively involved with state, federal and private environmental protection and education agencies and organizations. Their website, "The Vernal Pool" (<http://www.vernalpool.org>), is an on-line effort at education and outreach.

According to *A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools* (Leo Kenney and Matthew Burne), "Once thought to be just puddles in the forest, vernal pools are now recognized as rich but temporary ecosystems. Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands which fill annually from precipitation, runoff, and rising groundwater. Most years they become completely dry, losing water through evaporation and transpiration. The wet-dry cycle prevents fish from becoming established, yet presents a rich, albeit temporary, habitat for many species. Beneath the still waters of these woodland pools is a staggering array of life." This terrific publication of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Vernal Pool Association (<http://www.vernalpool.org>) will be available at the lecture. We will have some number personally signed by author Leo Kenney. This book serves as a photographic guide to all of the amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates that utilize vernal pools for portions of their life (including all the salamanders, frogs, toads, turtles and snakes found in Massachusetts). It includes species accounts, key diagnostic features, natural history notes, and lists of vernal pool resources. It makes a terrific companion field guide to cover those creatures that your bird guide does not.

The VPA encourages individuals and classes to find and study vernal pools near their homes and schools. Once located, in Massachusetts, vernal pools should be "certified" so that the pool "exists" in the legal sense. Certified pools receive whatever protection is provided by various state regulations and practices. In other states, although there is no certification procedure, vernal pools should still be "documented" or otherwise cataloged so that agencies will be aware of their existence and offer whatever protection is available.

Leo Kenney at Reading Memorial High School (who runs an absolutely terrific program in Field Biology there) was kind enough to provide us with an array of vernal pool materials for tonight's lecture. Vernal Pool posters (while supplies last) will be provided to anyone who joins the Newton Conservators this evening. In addition to the field guide above, we will have a few copies of "Wicked Big Puddles", a guide to certifying vernal pools. For those who wish to be fashionable, we have a nice selection of very handsome Vernal Pool Association shirts. They depict salamanders, frogs, snakes, dragonflies, and other vernal pool creatures. They come in a variety of colors and both short and long sleeved sizes (M,L,XL). A sample set of thirty small color posters depicting vernal pool creatures will be available at the lecture - this would be great for classroom use. Proceeds from the book and shirt sales help support the work of the Vernal Pool Association, the Newton Conservators, and the Newton Free Library.

Newton teachers and others may be interested in the "Fairy Shrimp Project" where participants are urged to collect fairy shrimp samples from local vernal pools for identification. Free brochures and instructions will be available.

In addition, we have on loan examples of large posters done as part of the Vernal Pool Association's Poster Outreach Project. The Poster Outreach Project is designed to help a teacher and class produce an attractive large-format poster of their work which will be displayed in various locations within their community. The project encourages the teacher to take classroom studies into the greater community with the support of the Vernal Pool Association. The teacher's students investigate vernal pool organisms and ecology, produce graphic and written observations, and send these materials to the VPA. Students at the VPA edit the text for biological accuracy, scan the artwork, and produce a large format poster. The original students

and teacher edit and approve the proof copy of the poster. Seven copies of the poster are printed by the VPA and sent to the participating teacher. The class and teacher keep two posters for school use and place the other five posters in the community in libraries, town halls, nature centers, medical centers, etc. This project has been done successfully by all elementary and middle school grades. If you have an interest in participating in this project, check out their website <http://www.vernalpool.org> or email them <mailto:vernal@vernalpool.org>.

Mount Auburn Cemetery Slide Show - Newton Free Library, Thursday, March 20, 10:30 am

Mount Auburn is America's first garden cemetery. A memorial to the more than 92,000 people who are buried there, it is a historic landscape and an outdoor museum of art and architecture, located in Watertown/Cambridge. Join Janet Heywood, vice president of interpretive programs, Thursday, March 20, 10:30 a.m., at the Newton Free Library for a slide/lecture. The lecture will feature stories of the history, monuments and lives of those buried in this garden of history. As you may know, Mount Auburn Cemetery is one of the most famous birding hotspots especially during spring migration when one can find a bird walk there practically every morning. For more information on this free event, call the library at 617-796-1360.

Benefit Concert for the Green Decade Coalition - March 20th at 7:30 pm, Boston College  
Pierre Bensusan In CONCERT

International Acoustical Guitar Virtuoso and Singer/Songwriter, Pierre Bensusan (<http://www.pierrebensusan.com>) will perform in the Robsham Theatre at Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Ave. (MBTA: Boston College) on Thursday, March 20 at 7:30 pm. Pierre's music is a stunning blend of jazz, folk, world, classical and pop. He is the winner of the Association for Independent Music Award for best acoustic instrumental album of the year in the USA and "Guitar Album of the Year" in the UK. Tickets are \$20.00. For more information or to purchase tickets, please call The Green Planet (617) 332-7841, send e-mail to [as@thegreenplanet.com](mailto:as@thegreenplanet.com) or drop in to The Green Planet at 22 Lincoln St. in Newton Highlands.

Naturally Great Gardens & Landscapes: A Guide to Organic Land Care  
Monday, March 24, 7 pm - Newton Free Library

March is Newton's seventh annual Alternatives to Pesticides Month. GreenCAP, the Green Decade Coalition's Committee for Alternatives to Pesticides, will kick off its 2003 campaign to eliminate pesticides with a "Growing Green" program Monday, March 24, at 7 p.m., at the Newton Free Library. This program will feature their new video "Naturally Great Gardens & Landscapes: A Guide to Organic Land Care." In it, professionals and Newton neighbors provide expert advice on growing flowers, vegetables, lawns, trees and shrubs without pesticides. Viewers will learn about site selection, soil preparation, composting, fertilizing, watering, mowing, non-toxic insect and weed control, companion planting, alternatives to the lawn and more.

Following the screening, a panel of experts will answer questions on organic gardening and landscaping. Michael Talbot, president of Michael Talbot & Associates Inc., is a certified arborist, landscape designer, professional horticulturist and educator specializing in ecological design, restoration and plant care services. Don Bishop of Gardens Are ... is a NOFA-accredited organic land care professional, one of the writers of the Massachusetts Northeast Organic Farming Association's Standards for Organic Land Care and serves on the board of the Ecological Landscaping Association. Ann Barker of Ann Barker Design is an award-winning horticulturist and landscape designer, a charter member of the Arnold Arboretum Council and teaches courses in garden design. Tea will be served at the program; bring a cup or mug. For more information on the Green Decade Coalition, visit <http://www.greendecade.org>. For more information on this free event, call the library at 617-796-1360. On April 28, Warren Leon will speak on "Consumer's

Guide: Effective Environmental Choices" in the next program in the Environmental Speaker Series.

Records of Walks and Talks with Nature: Charles Johnson Maynard, Newton's Naturalist continuing at the Jackson Homestead through April 19, 2003

If you haven't seen it yet, don't miss the final weeks of the Charles Johnson Maynard exhibit. To learn more about Charles Johnson Maynard, the study of ornithology and the naturalist movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, visit the Jackson Homestead (527 Washington Street) and view the exhibit Walks and Talks with Nature, Newton's Naturalist. Maynard began his career as a "shotgun" ornithologist, but by the turn of the century had become a teacher and environmentalist. His "Walks and Talks" book series provides a fascinating glimpse of birding in Newton in the early 1900's. Visit their website at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson/> or call 617-796-1450. The exhibit continues through April 19, 2003. For you animal lovers, check out another exhibit: Four-Legged Newton What do dairy farms, a herd of performing elephants, a pioneering female vet, and Internet pets have in common? Meet Tillie the elephant, Major the dog, and other famous Newton animals in this family-friendly exhibition. The exhibition will run through August 2004.

Dolan Pond Grand Reopening on May 3

The Dolan Pond Conservation Area (tucked between Auburndale Ave and Webster Street in West Newton) has been undergoing a massive renovation and the finishing work is expected to resume next week. The stabilized soil paths will be installed in the spring. The work includes new signage, information kiosks, some new side trails, and handicapped parking. A grand opening ceremony is planned for Saturday, May 3 as part of the CDBG celebration week. Watch for further details. You are welcome to receive the free Dolan Pond News email newsletter of the Friends of Dolan Pond by sending a request to [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com).

Newton Conservators Annual Dinner Meeting - Wednesday, May 21, 6:30 pm

The annual dinner meeting of the Newton Conservators will take place on Wednesday, May 21, 6:30 pm at Noyes Hall on the campus of Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center. Mark your calendar and watch for further details.

Newton Garden Tours on June 7 - Notecards Available

The Newton Pride Committee and the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs promote Newton Garden Tours with a set of eight botanical notecards. The cost is \$6. Proceeds will help defray the costs of many of the free events sponsored by the Newton Pride Committee. Newton Garden Tours take place Saturday, June 7, and will feature 21 gardens. Advance tickets are \$15. To order the notecards or to receive more information about the Garden Tour, call 617-527-8283.

The State of Songbirds  
EcoAlert from American P.I.E. (Public Information on the Environment)

Total bird population in the U.S. is estimated to be 10 to 20 billion representing roughly 650 species, more than half of which are perching birds, technically called passerines. It's hard to imagine life without them. Their fate, however, is in question and numerous organizations such as the Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, are working to assure their song for future generations.

Human activities threaten native songbird populations. As people move into formerly wooded areas, for example, they are usually accompanied by cats, racoons, squirrels, chipmunks, blue jays, cowbirds, and other animals that harass and kill small birds. Domesticated cats alone kill 4 million songbirds every day, over a billion each year; feral cats add to this toll. Collisions with plate glass windows of homes and office buildings kill an estimated 80 million songbirds annually throughout the United States. Millions more are killed by colliding with car, lighted buildings and communication towers. Bird mortality from pesticides has been conservatively estimated at 67 million annually. Climate change, too, is threatening the existence of songbirds; one forecast suggests that the range of the Baltimore Oriole will shift north until it is no longer found in Baltimore.

A small notch upward on the thermometer is causing big changes for North American wildlife. Nowhere are these changes more evident than in songbird species. According to references from the American Bird Conservancy, added to the northward shift of the Baltimore Oriole are numerous other instances of regional loss of species; for example, parts of northern Minnesota and southwestern Ontario may end up with 14 fewer species of warblers than are currently found there. Many bird species are now arriving an average of 21 days earlier at one site on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The ranges of most North American grassland birds will shift northward into areas that currently contain forests. Unless all species (birds and plants) shift at the same time - an unlikely prospect - then habitat may be limiting for these species in the future.

For an analysis of how global climate change may effect songbird populations in your state, go to <<http://www.abcbirds.org/climatechange/statepage.htm>>. Prepared by the American Bird Conservancy, information is available for each of the lower 48 states. American PIE advocates for bird sanctuaries in backyards across the country. Birds are attracted to bird feeders and bird baths. A variety of native trees, shrubs and flowers provides good nesting sites, winter shelter, places to hide from predators and natural food supplies that are available year-round. Care for the passerines...you'll fall in love.

This information is from American P.I.E., Public Information on the Environment, P.O. Box 676, Northfield, MN 55057-0676, Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724, E-mail: [Info@AmericanPIE.org](mailto:Info@AmericanPIE.org). They put out free email EcoAlerts. Find information at their website: <http://www.AmericanPIE.org>

#### Recent Nature Reports

A Bald Eagle was seen on several occasions (usually about 7:30 am) this past month in the vicinity of Flowed Meadow Conservation area (Forest Grove). This is near Auburndale Park (the Cove) and not near Cold Spring Park as I mistyped in the last issue.

Larry Burdick has reported a number of interesting sightings over this past winter. Most recently (3/8/03) he had an early female Rose-Breasted Grosbeak at his sunflower feeder which was several days earlier than the Massachusetts early record (3/10/03) reported in the book *Birds of Massachusetts*. "That 'sneaker on a basketball court' call is one I never have to think about -- It's so distinctive, like the first Towhee and Oriole -- They just pop into the brain.", he says. He also reported (2/14/03) "15 Robins stripped the berries from our *Ilex opaca* (American Holly) in short order this morning. Not many of these berries had been eaten before today, but all other holly and viburnum fruits were eaten by mid-January." A probable hermit thrush was also a visitor to his yard this winter.

Lidia Rosenbaum (3/5/03) sends this inquiry: "I saw a bird about the size and coloring of a mourning dove carrying a smaller dark bird, right side up. I was so disappointed that it flew around a house and disappeared. Was it some small raptor?". Any ideas out there?

Twice this winter, our neighbors reported House Sparrows being taken in mid-air near their feeder by what was probably a Sharp-shinned Hawk. It's a bird-eat-bird world out there! On the past wonderfully warm Monday morning, it was a pleasure to see three Red-tailed hawks riding the thermals overhead in West Newton.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in the Newton Conservators Spring walk series? The spring schedule is being put together NOW so let Peter know soon. Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, <mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com>).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn (<mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us>, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

Congratulations to Alex Morse of Boy Scout Troop 355 (St. Bernard's) in West Newton who recently was awarded his Eagle Badge. His project was improving the parking lot and walking trail (and building benches) along the Charles River in Newton Upper Falls. Matthew Gray, also of Troop 355, will be commencing his proposed project of building bridges and providing turtle habitat around the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area.

Are there any environmental or nature writers out there who would like to be published in the Newton Tab? Francoise Lamonica (<mailto:franswas@juno.com>) would welcome your contributions to the Tab Environmental Pages, included once a month in the Newton Tab.

### About the Newton Conservators

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization that promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or contact us at 617-969-8661 or the address below.

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

For you Newton nature lovers who love to get out on the trails, there is very exciting news. With the hard work especially of Judy Hepburn, the new map and trail guide for Newton's open space

is almost complete. Instead of a paper map as in the past, it will take the form of a small pocket guide book and covers the open spaces of Newton. All the individual maps from the past Judy have been redrawn and updated. This will be an invaluable guide to your nature outings. All the more reason to join the Conservators! The guide will also be available in local bookstores. The price will likely be \$7.95 at stores but a copy will be included with a new or renewed membership in the Newton Conservators.

#### About Newton Nature Notes

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to <mailto:dolanpond@aol.com> or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic newsletter to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel may be interested in the information contained herein.

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Newton Nature Notes - Sunday, April 6, 2003  
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This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. We have an issue chock full of information.

In this issue:

\* Wednesday, April 9, Help Support Open Space Preservation in Newton by Shopping at Bread and Circus

\* Newton Conservators Spring 2003 Walks and Events Calendar

- Sunday, April 20, 2 pm, Kessler Woods-Saw Mill Brook
- Sunday, April 27th, 2 pm, Webster Woods
- Saturday, May 3, 9:30 am, Grand Re-Opening of Dolan Pond Conservation Area
- Sunday, May 11, 7 am, Birding Nahant Park- Mothers Day
- Sunday, May 18, 11:30 am - 5 pm, Newton Historical Society's 21st Annual House Tour
- Wednesday, May 21st, 6 pm, 41st Annual Newton Conservators Meeting and Dinner
- Saturday, May 24, 2 pm, Canoe Trip Through the Charles River Lake Area
- Saturday, June 7, 8-11:30 am, Newton Biodiversity Day - Where the Wild Things Are at

Edmands Park

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- Sunday, June 15, 2 pm, Fathers Day Regional Aqueduct Mountain / Cross Over Bike

Tour

\* Other Events

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- Monday, April 7, 5-7:30 pm, Run of the Charles Volunteer Training
- Saturday, April 12th, 9 am - 12, 4th Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup
- Saturday, April 12, 10 am - Noon, Spring Spruce-up of Hemlock Gorge

- Saturday, April 12th, 'Sun, Wind and Earth' Tour Planned
- Records of Walks and Talks with Nature: Charles Johnson Maynard, Newton's Naturalist through 4/19
- 2003 Spring Flower Sale
- Newton Garden Tours on June 7 - Notecards Available
- \* About the Newton Conservators
- \* About Newton Nature Notes

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Wednesday, April 9 , Help Support Open Space Preservation in Newton by Shopping at Bread and Circus

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This coming Wednesday is a real opportunity to help support open space preservation in Newton by doing something you normally might do anyway - shopping at either of the two Bread and Circus Whole Food Markets in Newton. The Newton Conservators have been selected as their sponsored environmental organization. Bread and Circus will generously donate 5% of their revenues from Wednesday at the Newton stores to the Newton Conservators. No special coupons are required - just shop there anytime on Wednesday and encourage your friends to do so also. The Newton Conservators will have display tables set up at each of the stores from 4 pm until 8 pm. There will be information on the organization, membership applications, and copies of the brand new walks and trail guide to Newton's open spaces will be available. The stores are located at 916 Walnut Street in Newton Highlands (Four Corners, Walnut and Beacon) and at 647 Washington Street in Newtonville. Many thanks are due to Whole Foods (especially Terry Weber) for this wonderful offer. So get out and shop, shop, shop on Wednesday at Bread and Circus. You know they have things you like! You will be helping a good cause.

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Newton Conservators Spring 2003 Walks and Events Calendar

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The following is a draft calendar of upcoming Newton Conservators walks and events. Some events have a Walk # listed. This corresponds to the Trail number in the "hot off the press" Newton Conservators trail guide to open space areas around Newton. This new guide will be automatically sent free to currently renewed members of the Newton Conservators. Otherwise it will soon be available in local bookstores.

Sunday, April 20, 2 pm, Kessler Woods-Saw Mill Brook (Walk #20 Conservator Guide)

Walk along Kessler trail into Saw Mill Brook and view the NStar lands that conservation groups and the city are trying to protect. As noted in the Newton Conservators Guide the trail along the brook goes through wooded upland and wetland areas and by old stone fences. The woods are an excellent area for bird watching ,nature studies and have dramatic puddingstone and rock outcroppings. John Regosin, (617-244-0736), will walk though Kessler south and north from Saw Mill Brook and from Lagrange St., and depending upon time possibly to Baldpate Meadow. He will bring maps and aerial photographs and will discuss Kessler NStar acquisition. Meet at the parking area at the corner of Vine Sreet and Wayne Road.

Sunday, April 27th, 2 pm, Webster Woods (Walk #16 Conservators Guide)

This walk, on the western side of Hammond Pond Parkway, will highlight the trails, streams, ponds, wetlands, and large rock outcroppings of the area. Brief and simple examples of orienteering will be introduced. The woodland has been used for orienteering by the New England Orienteering Club. Meet at the entrance to the Webster Conservation Area at the end of Warren St (off of Glen Ave). Trip leaders: Sarah and Octo Barnett (617-969-6988).



Saturday, May 3, 9:30 am, Grand Re-Opening of Dolan Pond Conservation Area (Walk #4 Conservators Guide)

The Dolan Pond Conservation Area has just been renovated under a federally funded Community Development Block Grant with new nature overlooks, steps, information kiosks, handicapped parking, accessible stabilized soil pathways and even a boardwalk through this wetland habitat. While only eight acres in size, it contains four vernal pools and a great diversity of plant, animal, and bird life. Join us for a ribbon cutting ceremony, refreshments, and tours starting at the Webster Park entrance. The street called Webster Park is off Webster Street, three blocks west of Cherry Street in West Newton. Wheelchairs welcome! Contact Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com), <http://www.dolanpond.org>).

Sunday, May 11, 7 am, Birding Nahanton Park- Mothers Day (Walk #22 Conservators Guide)

The mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows adjacent to the Charles River makes Nahanton a wonderful place to see spring arrivals as well as birds migrating through. Enter the park at the Winchester Street entrance in order to reach the upper parking area located a short way down the road on the left opposite an open field. This entrance is off Winchester Street between the Charles River Country Club golf course and the Jewish Community Center. Please gather at the upper parking area at 7:00 a.m. Trip leader is Cris Criscitiello, an experienced birder. (617-244-6397) Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as established enthusiasts are welcome!

Sunday, May 18, 11:30 am - 5 pm, Newton Historical Society's 21st Annual House Tour

The Newton Historical Society's 21st Annual Spring House Tour, to benefit The Jackson Homestead Museum, is Sunday, May 18, 2003, from 11:30 am - 5:00 pm. The tour includes a splendid array of private homes open to the public for one day only. This popular annual event celebrates the distinctive architectural heritage of Newton, MA and showcases unique Newton homes. The City is best known for some of the finest examples of 19th and early 20th-century domestic architecture in America. Those who appreciate distinctive homes, classic and innovative renovations, unique additions, and inspiring interior and landscape designs must save the date. If you are looking for renovation ideas, industry professional referrals, or just want to appreciate the work, this is the event for you! Tickets are \$20 if purchased by May 16, \$25 thereafter and may be picked up at the Homestead on the day of the House Tour. Discounts apply for Newton Historical Society and WGBH members. Call the Jackson Homestead at 617-552-7238.

Wednesday, May 21st, 6 pm, 41st Annual Newton Conservators Meeting and Dinner

The 41st Annual Meeting and dinner of the Newton Conservators will be held on Wednesday evening, May 21, in Noyes Hall at the Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center. The meeting will start with a 6 pm social hour. Dinner will be served at 7 pm and the evening program will start at 8 pm. A short business meeting will be followed by the Presentation of the annual Environmentalist of the Year Award to Martha Aherin Horn, and the Charles Maynard Award to Ted Kuklinski. Nancy Avery will accept for the Chestnut Hill Garden Club a special award for the restoration of Houghton Garden. Brandeis Professor Dan Perlman will speak and about "Cold Spring Park: Our Small Piece of Wilderness." For further information about the annual dinner please contact Lucy Caldwell-Stair by email [longwood@attbi.com](mailto:longwood@attbi.com).

Saturday, May 24, 2 pm, Canoe Trip Through the Charles River Lake Area

The canoe trip through the Charles River Lake district, a mixture of residential commercial areas and wetlands, starts from the MDC boat house on Commonwealth Avenue and continues past Norumbega Park, Fox Island, Auburndale Park, Weirs Cove, MDC Park land, the Waltham Watch Factory, Mount Feake Cemetery, Purgatory Cove, and just short of the Moody Street

Dam. This section of the Charles River is populated with ducks, geese, herons, hawks, and even eagles, so you may wish to bring binoculars.. If you would like to join the trip, need a canoe or could loan a canoe or kayak, call the trip leader, Peter Kastner (244-6094 or [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com)). Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Meet at Charles River Canoe service at the junction of Commonwealth Avenue and 128. Those bringing canoes should bring life jackets and park their cars at the duck feeding area and canoe across to the landing at the CRC Service where we will arrange for people to rent canoes.

Sunday, June, 2 pm, A Tour of Kennard Park (Walk #18 Conservators Guide)

Join a walk along the trails of the Kennard properties, where a 32-acre post-agricultural forest has grown up on 19th century farmland that became an early 20th century gentleman's estate and finally a Newton park, adjacent to Brookline's Lost Pond properties. Explore South Meadow Brook, the mixed and conifer woodlands with colonial stone walls, a red maple swamp with century-old trees, and a sensitive fern marsh. Meet at the main entrance, 246 Dudley Road. The trip leader is Larry Burdick, (617-584-4633).

Saturday, June 7, 8-11:30 am, Newton Biodiversity Day - Where the Wild Things Are at Edmands Park (Walk #5 Conservators Guide)

Newton will be participating in this year's fourth annual statewide Biodiversity Days for the purpose of involving citizen naturalists in tabulating what species of living things inhabit Newton and educating citizens as to the variety of life around them. This years' focus will be on the natural environment of Edmands Park (Cabot Woods). At 8:00 am, a bird walk through the park will be held, looking for the sights and sounds of late migrants and nesting species. Bring binoculars if you have them. At 9:30 am, we will have an "All Species Hunt" where citizen volunteers will be focusing on all fungi, ferns, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, bugs, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. While numbers will not be counted, evidence for the presence of species will be checked. Bring your favorite field guides along with bug boxes, magnifiers, nets, and notebooks. Park and meet at the lower entrance on Blake Street (north entrance) between Cabot and Mill Street. Contact Ted Kuklinski, 617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com). Raindate: Sunday, June 8 at the same times.

Sunday, June 8, 2 pm, Houghton Garden Restoration Tour (Walk #17 Conservators Guide)

Around the turn-of-the-century Martha Houghton surrounded her Chestnut Hill Spanish Mission-style home with a naturalistic garden featuring a tranquil pond, waterfall rock formation, and an alpine rock garden. Now owned by the City of Newton, the garden has recently under gone a major restoration with funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. The original plan can still be discerned as you stroll its azalea and rhododendron-bordered paths. Trip leader Nancy Avery , as a member of the of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club, has taken an active role in restoration for the garden and will for this work will receive a special award at this year's annual dinner of the Newton Conservators. Meet at the entrance on Suffolk Road. (call 964-1137 for more info).

Sunday, June 15, 2 pm, Fathers Day Regional Aqueduct Mountain / Cross Over Bike Tour through Newton, Needham, Wellesley

The aqueduct system is of growing community interest and provides an opportunity for more accessible open space to develop a network of walkways and bike trails . Explore with us the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts trails and plant life. The tour travels through parts of Newton, Needham and Wellesley. This trip is an off road trip and will be a leisurely tour but at times a strenuous experience. This 1 ½ to 2-hour ride is recommended for ages 12 and up, and an adult must accompany all minors. Riders are required to wear bike helmets and to use bikes able to travel off road. The aim is to have a good time, not the fastest time. The tour runs behind backyards and through established paths and rarely visited pinewoods, meadows and steep hills.

Meet in front of Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station. The trip was very popular last year and may be limited depending upon response and interested riders are advised to call ahead.  
Leader: Henry Finch (617-964- 4488)

Note:

This walk schedule was compiled by Peter Kastner of the Newton Conservators. By the way, check out his new website <http://www.communityheritagemaps.com> where he has available beautiful full color printed historical maps of Newton, Boston, and Cambridge or email him at [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com).

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Other Events

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Monday, April 7, 7:30 pm, Friends of Dolan Pond Open Meeting

A meeting of the Friends of Dolan Pond organization will take place on Monday evening, April 7, at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be hosted at the home of Linda and David Shapiro who live at 79 Webster Park, West Newton. Webster Park is a loop street off of Webster Street in West Newton. Parking is available on the street. There will be an update on the CDBG funded renovation work done at Dolan Pond and plans for the grand re-opening on May 3rd. At the grand opening, a ribbon cutting ceremony will take place for the new pathway and boardwalk as well as an unveiling of new information kiosks. Refreshments will be served and guided tours will be provided. Congressman Barney Frank and Mayor David Cohen are expected to attend. A pre opening cleanup at Dolan Pond is scheduled for Saturday, April 26 at 9 am.

In addition, there will be discussion of the possible acquisition by the Newton Conservators of the property of Irene Forte' at 76 Webster Park who passed away at age 104 recently. Much of the property would be preserved as open space according to her wishes. The acquisition would hopefully be funded under the Community Preservation Act (CPA) by which a portion of property taxes in Newton go to a special fund which is matched by the state. The fund can be used for open space, historical preservation, and affordable housing. The CDBG West Newton Advisory Committee meets on Tuesday, April 15 at NCSC, 492 Waltham Street to discuss ongoing their ongoing projects including Dolan Pond. The annual CDBG dinner will be held at NCSC on Thursday, May 1st.

Monday, April 7, 5-7:30 pm, Run of the Charles Volunteer Training

The 21st Run of the Charles Canoe & Kayak Race seeks new volunteers to join the corps of annual volunteers to help staff the river celebration which returns Sunday, April 27. A Volunteer Training open house will be held Monday, April 7, at CRWA's old offices at 2391 Commonwealth Ave. in Newton, from 5-7:30 p.m. Hosted by the Charles River Watershed Association, the Run of the Charles Canoe & Kayak Race showcases the ongoing improvements in the Charles River while drawing over 1800 participants and thousands of spectators to enjoy a day on the river. The Run of the Charles is the largest one-day canoe & kayak race in North America. The Run of the Charles volunteer pool has been headlined in recent years by the colorfully-dressed members of the Parrot Head Club of Eastern Massachusetts. Another group of dedicated volunteers comes from the Amateur Radio Relay League. For more information on the 2003 Run of the Charles Canoe & Kayak Race, please call 800-969-RACE, 508-698-6810, e-mail [rotc@charlesriver.org](mailto:rotc@charlesriver.org) or visit [www.charlesriver.org](http://www.charlesriver.org).

Saturday, April 12th, 9 am - 12, 4th Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup

Join over 1,000 volunteers from communities, universities, civic groups, and businesses along the Charles River for a massive Earth Day river cleanup on Saturday, April 12th from 9 am - 12 pm. The 2003 cleanup will focus on more than thirty sites along the 80-mile river from Milford to Boston. To establish a site in your area or for more information, contact Colleen Tuohy at 617-879-7735 or email [charlesrivercleanup2003@yahoo.com](mailto:charlesrivercleanup2003@yahoo.com). Organizers include Massachusetts Community Water Watch, a project of MASSPIRG, Americorps and the MA Service Alliance, Charles River Watershed Association, Clean Charles Coalition, State Senator Steven Tolman's Office, Charles River Stream Team, the Charles River Conservancy, and the Metropolitan District Commission. All volunteers will receive t-shirts and lunch for their hard work.

#### Saturday, April 12th, 'Sun, Wind and Earth' Tour Planned

The Green Decade Coalition of Newton's Energy Committee will lead a Sun, Wind and Earth tour to two homes of local energy pioneers Saturday, April 12. The first stop will be a working farm just over the Needham line in Dover, where the owners will describe the challenges and pleasures of making their own electricity with photovoltaic panels and a wind turbine. The second stop will be a home in Sudbury, where the owners have gone underground in search of renewable energy, retrofitting their home with a ground-source heat exchange system. Carpools will form between 9 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. at the Newton Community Services Center, 492 Waltham St. Expect to return to Newton around 1 p.m. RSVP at [info@greendecade.org](mailto:info@greendecade.org) or leave a message at 617-965-1995. The fees are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, send to Green Decade, P.O. Box 59242, Newton, MA 02459 and write "Energy Tour" on the memo line of the check. Proceeds benefit environmental groups in Newton, Sudbury, and Dover. For more information, visit [www.greendecade.org](http://www.greendecade.org).

#### Saturday, April 12, 10 am - Noon, Spring Spruce-up of Hemlock Gorge

The Friends of the Hemlock Gorge Reservation, a nonprofit organization, need volunteers for the Spring Reservation Cleanup Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to noon. Spruce-up materials are supplied. Refreshments are provided. Dress appropriately for the work and weather (rain or shine). Everyone will meet in the parking lot at Hamilton Place, Needham. For more information or map, go to [www.channel1.com/users/hemlock](http://www.channel1.com/users/hemlock) or call Brian Yates at 617-244-2601.

The Friends of the Hemlock Gorge Reservation, is a community organization dedicated to preserving and improving Hemlock Gorge, a 23-acre reservation along the Charles River in Needham, Newton and Wellesley. They offer year-round volunteer opportunities in historical research, fundraising events, maintaining trails, and contributing to the Friends' Web site. Upcoming projects includes the restoration of the Echo Bridge railings and platform, the Friends bridge and walkways. Next meeting is Tuesday, May 6, at 7:15 p.m., at the Emerson School, Pettee Street, Newton Upper Falls. For more information, visit [www.channel1.com/users/hemlock](http://www.channel1.com/users/hemlock) or write to Friends of Hemlock Gorge Reservation, 1094 Chestnut St., Newton Upper Falls, MA 02164.

Records of Walks and Talks with Nature: Charles Johnson Maynard, Newton's Naturalist continuing at the Jackson Homestead through April 19, 2003

If you haven't seen it yet, don't miss the final weeks of the Charles Johnson Maynard exhibit. To learn more about Charles Johnson Maynard, the study of ornithology and the naturalist movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, visit the Jackson Homestead (527 Washington Street) and view the exhibit Walks and Talks with Nature, Newton's Naturalist. Maynard began his career as a "shotgun" ornithologist, but by the turn of the century had become a teacher and environmentalist. His "Walks and Talks" book series provides a fascinating glimpse of birding in

Newton in the early 1900's. Visit their website at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson/> or call 617-796-1450. The exhibit continues through April 19, 2003. For you animal lovers, check out another exhibit: Four-Legged Newton What do dairy farms, a herd of performing elephants, a pioneering female vet, and Internet pets have in common? Meet Tillie the elephant, Major the dog, and other famous Newton animals in this family-friendly exhibition. The exhibition will run through August 2004.

#### 2003 Spring Flower Sale

The Newton Pride Committee's Spring Flower Catalog is now available, offering an array of perennial plants for gardens. In a departure from Dutch flower bulbs, this year's brochure has 29 plants potted and growing. Gardeners need only to prepare the soil and pop them into the ground. Choose from shade plants like Japanese painted fern in variegated fronds of green, gray and wine, or partial shade like Hosta "Halcyon" which is low growing in a gray-blue color. Proceeds from the sale of these plants are used to support the many projects of the Newton Pride Beautification Committee such as the All American Site Garden in Newton Centre, school plantings and traffic island plantings. To receive a brochure, call Newton Pride at 617-527-8283. Deadline for orders is Thursday, April 24.

#### Newton Garden Tours on June 7 - Notecards Available

The Newton Pride Committee and the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs promote Newton Garden Tours with a set of eight botanical notecards. The cost is \$6. Proceeds will help defray the costs of many of the free events sponsored by the Newton Pride Committee. Newton Garden Tours take place Saturday, June 7, and will feature 21 gardens. Advance tickets are \$15. To order the notecards or to receive more information about the Garden Tour, call 617-527-8283.

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#### Volunteer Opportunities

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Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in one of the Newton Conservators walk series? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, <mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com>).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn (<mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us>, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

Are there any environmental or nature writers out there who would like to be published in the Newton Tab? Francoise Lamonica (<mailto:franswas@juno.com>) would welcome your contributions to the Tab Environmental Pages, included once a month in the Newton Tab. Are there folks out there with experience with website design? The Newton Conservators have a website address, [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org) but our site content is split between a private server and a server at BC. We would like to reorganize the content of the website into more logical categories and make it much easier to navigate. In addition we would like to be able to have our newsletters available online. If you have experience with web development tools or HTML and could volunteer to help keep our content up to date, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Ted Kuklinski, 617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com).

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About the Newton Conservators

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If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

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Newton Nature Notes - Monday, April 28, 2003

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This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

If you get two copies of this we apologize - this is being sent to the Newton Conservators email list as well as a separate Nature Notes list. Unfortunately, there is some overlap of the distribution lists which will be corrected in the near future. We wanted to let you know about some upcoming events this week.

## Calendar

Tuesday, April 29, 10-11 am Nahanton Park Dedication Ceremony (CDBG)

Come to the dedication ceremony for the new CDBG funded accessible extension to Florrie's Path at Nahanton Park. Use the Nahanton Street entrance. Florrie's Path, near the canoe put in at Nahanton Park, has been a very pleasant accessible walkway adjacent to the Charles River. This is CDBG Week! The City of Newton has been utilizing Community Development Block Grant funds for the past 29 years to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income Newton residents. Join in a weeklong celebration of CDBG accomplishments. Contact Dee Spiro at 617-796-1125 (dspiro@ci.newton.ma.us) for more info. From Monday, April 28 through Friday May 2 there will be Photo Display of CDBG Funded Projects in the City Hall Rotunda. On Thursday evening at 6 pm is the annual CDBG Celebration Dinner at Newton Community Service Center (492 Waltham Street).

Meeting of Friends of Dolan Pond on Tuesday, April 9 at 7:00 pm

An important meeting of the Friends of Dolan Pond organization will take place on Tuesday evening, April 29, at 7 pm. The meeting will be at the home of Linda and David Shapiro who live at 79 Webster Park, West Newton. Webster Park is a loop street off of Webster Street in West Newton a few blocks west of Cherry Street. Parking is available on street. There will be a brief update on the renovation work done at Dolan Pond and plans for the grand re-opening on May 3rd. We will discuss the possible acquisition by the Newton Conservators of a property on Webster Park, adjacent to the Dolan Pond Webster Park entrance.

Wednesday, April 30, 7:30 pm Birding - a Multi-Media Visual Experience

Hey birder's - travel a little across the border to the Wellesley Community Center to this special event sponsored by the Wellesley Conservation Council. Shawn Carey of Migration Productions will use 3 slide projectors and a computer synchronized soundtrack to follow the lives of birds, beasts, and the people who watch them. The program at 219 Washington Street (on Rt16 west, just before Rt 9) is free. For information please call 508-528-3140.

Saturday, May 3, 9:30 am, Grand Re-Opening of Dolan Pond Conservation Area (CDBG) (Walk #4 Conservators Guide)

The Dolan Pond Conservation Area has just been renovated under a federally funded Community Development Block Grant with new nature overlooks, steps, information kiosks, handicapped parking, accessible stabilized soil pathways and even a boardwalk through this wetland habitat. While only eight acres in size, it contains vernal pools and a great diversity of plant, animal, and bird life. Join us for a ribbon cutting ceremony, refreshments, and tours starting at the Webster Park entrance. Mayor Cohen and U.S. Rep Barney Frank are expected. The street called Webster Park is off Webster Street, three blocks west of Cherry Street in West Newton. Contact Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com), <http://www.dolanpond.org>). Volunteers to help with this event are welcome. Important Late Note for wheelchair users: the boardwalk itself

is fully completed - however there has been a manufacturers delay in the making of the stabilized soil and those pathways may not have the final layer applied by the scheduled opening. The undersurface gravel layer, if dry and compacted, can be still be used to some extent. Assistance will be available for this portion of the path.

Sunday, May 11, 7 am, Birding Nahanton Park- Mothers Day (Walk #22 Conservators Guide)

The mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows adjacent to the Charles River makes Nahanton a wonderful place to see spring arrivals as well as birds migrating through. Enter the park at the Winchester Street entrance in order to reach the upper parking area located a short way down the road on the left opposite an open field. This entrance is off Winchester Street between the Charles River Country Club golf course and the Jewish Community Center. Please gather at the upper parking area at 7:00 a.m. Trip leader is Cris Criscitiello, an experienced birder. (617-244-6397) Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as established enthusiasts are welcome!

#### About the Newton Conservators

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization that promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or the address below.

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

If you would like to be more directly kept informed of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to <mailto:dolanpond@aol.com> or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic newsletter to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel may be interested in the information contained herein.



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Newton Nature Notes - Monday, May 12, 2003  
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This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. With this issue we have combined the separate Nature Notes email list with the membership list of the Newton Conservators so hopefully you will only receive one copy.

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CPA Proposal to acquire 76 Webster Park (Dolan Pond Area)  
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The Newton Conservators have been presented with another opportunity for open space preservation adjacent to the newly restored Dolan Pond Conservation Area in West Newton. On Wednesday, May 14, the Newton Conservators, the Newton Conservation Commission, and the Newton Housing Authority will jointly submit a proposal to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for the acquisition of the property at 76 Webster Park (almost 50,000 square feet, 1.1 acres) from the estate of Irene Forte. Irene Forte, a former music director and violin teacher at the All Newton Music School, passed away in January at the age of 104. It was her desire that, if possible, much of her large lot be preserved as open space. Under this plan, if CPA funds for this combined open space and community housing project are approved and the transaction takes place between the Newton Conservators and the Forte' Estate, the property would subsequently be subdivided into two parts, an open space portion (expected to be at least 70% of the lot, approximately 0.8 acres) and a housing portion.

The open space portion would be deeded to the Newton Conservation Commission as an adjunct (as much as 10%) to the existing Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Potentially, a new path and overlooks would be developed in a later phase. The housing portion would be deeded to the Newton Housing Authority for use as affordable housing which is desperately needed in Newton (and mandated by law). They would use funds from the so called "10% Ordinance" to fully refurbish and improve the existing single family house and to build two smaller additional attached units, with minimal footprint, compatible in style with the existing house.

There is no guarantee of success for this proposal. The estate has set very firm requirements of meeting a timetable for various phases of the process and is offering the property at a cost below what developers might pay with the condition that open space can be preserved. Any letters or

emails of support could be included in the application to the CPC on Wednesday. The Newton Conservators have been quickly getting a proposal together to meet the limited time window of opportunity.

One of the key items in the proposal is letters of support for the project from the community. The letters (or email) could express support for any aspect of the project - the open space benefits in adding this strategic parcel immediately adjacent to the main entrance, its different habitat and overlooks into otherwise inaccessible wetland areas; community housing benefit of creating three very needed units to help meet the serious shortfall of affordable housing (over 800 on the waiting list); or even the fact that the existing house (c 1925) will be restored to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. Due to time constraints, it would be better to email (dolanpond@aol.com or reply to this newsletter) any support letters as soon as possible with a follow up by regular mail. Please feel free to contact Ted Kuklinski if you have any questions (617-969-6222). Please include your name and address in the email. Do it today while you are thinking of it. Even if you can't get a letter off immediately, please send one when you are able - they will still be helpful for later in the CPA process. Your letter or email could be addressed to:

Open Space Committee  
Newton Conservators  
c/o Ted Kuklinski  
24 Henshaw Terrace  
West Newton, MA 02465

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#### Newton Conservators Events and Walk Schedule

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Wednesday, May 14, 2003, 5:30 pm  
FREE PUBLIC LECTURE AT THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM  
Cold Spring Park: The Power of Small Decisions, The Power of Multiplication.  
A Discussion of Conservation Heroes and Their Effects.  
by Dan Perlman, Assistant Professor, Biology Department, Brandeis University

Every city and town has some small precious parcel of nature remaining, just as each has some deeply dedicated individuals who try to make a difference in the world around them. Set against a background of the history and ecology of Cold Spring Park in Newton, Dan Perlman highlights the actions of individuals in his community and elsewhere who have made a tremendous difference by the decisions they make and the actions they take. Lectures are held on Wednesdays and begin at 5:30 p.m. in the New England Aquarium's Immersion Theater, part of the Exploration Center on the ground floor of the Boston Harbor Garage. Presentations will be followed by a coffee and dessert reception. Talks are approximately 45 minutes, after which there is time for questions from the audience. The Aquarium encourages you to do your part to curb carbon emissions and reduce global warming by taking the T to the Aquarium stop, now open on the Blue Line, on State Street near Quincy Hall Marketplace. For more information, contact: Ken Mallory at 617-973-5295 (kmallory@neaq.org) or Dr. Caroly Shumway at 617-673-6570 (cshumway@neaq.org).

Sunday, May 18, 11:30 am - 5 pm, Newton Historical Society's 21st Annual House Tour

The Newton Historical Society's 21st Annual Spring House Tour, to benefit The Jackson Homestead Museum, is Sunday, May 18, 2003, from 11:30 am - 5:00 pm. The tour includes a splendid array of private homes open to the public for one day only. This popular annual event

celebrates the distinctive architectural heritage of Newton, MA and showcases unique Newton homes. The City is best known for some of the finest examples of 19th and early 20th-century domestic architecture in America. Those who appreciate distinctive homes, classic and innovative renovations, unique additions, and inspiring interior and landscape designs must save the date. If you are looking for renovation ideas, industry professional referrals, or just want to appreciate the work, this is the event for you! Tickets are \$20 if purchased by May 16, \$25 thereafter and may be picked up at the Homestead on the day of the House Tour. Discounts apply for Newton Historical Society and WGBH members. Call the Jackson Homestead at 617-552-7238.

Wednesday, May 21st, 6 pm, 41st Annual Newton Conservators Meeting and Dinner

The 41st Annual Meeting and dinner of the Newton Conservators will be held on Wednesday evening, May 21, in Noyes Hall at the Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center. The meeting will start with a 6 pm social hour. Dinner will be served at 7 pm and the evening program will start at 8 pm. A short business meeting will be followed by the Presentation of the annual Environmentalist of the Year Award to Martha Aherin Horn, and the Charles Maynard Award to Ted Kuklinski. Nancy Avery will accept for the Chestnut Hill Garden Club a special award for the restoration of Houghton Garden. Brandeis Professor Dan Perlman will speak and about "Cold Spring Park: Our Small Piece of Wilderness." For further information about the annual dinner please contact Lucy Caldwell-Stair by email [longwood@attbi.com](mailto:longwood@attbi.com).

Saturday, May 24, 2 pm, Canoe Trip Through the Charles River Lake Area

The canoe trip through the Charles River Lake district, a mixture of residential commercial areas and wetlands, starts from the MDC boat house on Commonwealth Avenue and continues past Norumbega Park, Fox Island, Auburndale Park, Weirs Cove, MDC Park land, the Waltham Watch Factory, Mount Feake Cemetery, Purgatory Cove, and just short of the Moody Street Dam. This section of the Charles River is populated with ducks, geese, herons, hawks, and even eagles, so you may wish to bring binoculars.. If you would like to join the trip, need a canoe or could loan a canoe or kayak, call the trip leader, Peter Kastner (244-6094 or [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com)). Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Meet at Charles River Canoe service at the junction of Commonwealth Avenue and 128. Those bringing canoes should bring life jackets and park their cars at the duck feeding area and canoe across to the landing at the CRC Service where we will arrange for people to rent canoes.

Sunday, June 1, 2 pm, A Tour of Kennard Park (Walk #18 Conservators Guide)

Join a walk along the trails of the Kennard properties, where a 32-acre post-agricultural forest has grown up on 19th century farmland that became an early 20th century gentleman's estate and finally a Newton park, adjacent to Brookline's Lost Pond properties. Explore South Meadow Brook, the mixed and conifer woodlands with colonial stone walls, a red maple swamp with century-old trees, and a sensitive fern marsh. Meet at the main entrance, 246 Dudley Road. The trip leader is Larry Burdick, (617-584-4633).

Saturday, June 7, 8-11:30 am, Newton Biodiversity Day - Where the Wild Things Are at Edmands Park (Walk #5 Conservators Guide)

Newton will be participating in this year's fourth annual statewide Biodiversity Days for the purpose of involving citizen naturalists in tabulating what species of living things inhabit Newton and educating citizens as to the variety of life around them. This year's focus will be on the natural environment of Edmands Park (Cabot Woods). At 8:00 am, a bird walk through the park will be held, looking for the sights and sounds of late migrants and nesting species. Bring binoculars if you have them. At 9:30 am, we will have an "All Species Hunt" where citizen volunteers will be focusing on all fungi, ferns, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, bugs, butterflies,

amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. While numbers will not be counted, evidence for the presence of species will be checked. Bring your favorite field guides along with bug boxes, magnifiers, nets, and notebooks. Park and meet at the lower entrance on Blake Street (north entrance) between Cabot and Mill Street. Contact Ted Kuklinski, 617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com). Raindate: Sunday, June 8 at the same times.

Sunday, June 8, 2 pm, Houghton Garden Restoration Tour (Walk #17 Conservators Guide)

Around the turn-of-the-century Martha Houghton surrounded her Chestnut Hill Spanish Mission-style home with a naturalistic garden featuring a tranquil pond, waterfall rock formation, and an alpine rock garden. Now owned by the City of Newton, the garden has recently under gone a major restoration with funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. The original plan can still be discerned as you stroll its azalea and rhododendron-bordered paths. Trip leader Nancy Avery , as a member of the of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club, has taken an active role in restoration for the garden and will for this work will receive a special award at this year's annual dinner of the Newton Conservators. Meet at the entrance on Suffolk Road. (call 964-1137 for more info).

Sunday, June 15, 2 pm, Fathers Day Regional Aqueduct Mountain / Cross Over Bike Tour through Newton, Needham, Wellesley

The aqueduct system is of growing community interest and provides an opportunity for more accessible open space to develop a network of walkways and bike trails . Explore with us the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts trails and plant life. The tour travels through parts of Newton, Needham and Wellesley. This trip is an off road trip and will be a leisurely tour but at times a strenuous experience. This 1 ½ to 2-hour ride is recommended for ages 12 and up, and an adult must accompany all minors. Riders are required to wear bike helmets and to use bikes able to travel off road. The aim is to have a good time, not the fastest time. The tour runs behind backyards and through established paths and rarely visited pinewoods, meadows and steep hills. Meet in front of Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station. The trip was very popular last year and may be limited depending upon response and interested riders are advised to call ahead. Leader: Henry Finch (617-964- 4488)

Note:

This walk schedule was compiled by Peter Kastner of the Newton Conservators. By the way, check out his new website <http://www.communityheritagemaps.com> where he has available beautiful full color printed historical maps of Newton, Boston, and Cambridge or email him at [cpkastner@rcn.com](mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com).

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Volunteer Opportunities

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Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in one of the Newton Conservators walk series? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, <mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com>).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's environmental planner, Martha Aherin Horn (<mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us>, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

Are there any environmental or nature writers out there who would like to be published in the

Newton Tab? Francoise Lamonica (mailto:franswas@juno.com) would welcome your contributions to the Tab Environmental Pages, included once a month in the Newton Tab.

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## Nature

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This is the big season for change in nature. We'd be happy to hear of any great animal or bird sightings that you would like to share. This is the time when warblers are migrating through the Newton area on their way northward. Many have already been seen. The chatty catbirds and melodic orioles can be heard. Three Northern Waterthrushes were recently heard at Dolan Pond. Carol Stapleton reports some exciting news from the Flowed Meadow landfill area as of last Friday. Observers there could not decide if the bird they saw there was an immature Osprey or Eagle. If you visit the area (8 am sightings so far) please feel free to render your opinion. So keep your eyes open out there. You never know what you will find in Newton's wild kingdom!

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EcoAlert from American P.I.E. - Wetland watch, 16 April, 2003

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The global loss of wetland habitats is a cause for considerable concern. There are many names for these shallow, aquatic environments, including marshes, swamps, bayous, bogs, potholes, sloughs, wet meadows, etc. According to some sources (e.g., "The Human Impact on the Natural Environment," Andrew Goudie, 1990), the world may have lost half of its wetlands since 1900. The U.S. alone has lost 54 percent of the original wetland areas that existed in colonial times. Over 100,000,000 acres have been destroyed in the U.S., primarily because of agricultural development. There are, however, other and increasing threats coming from drainage, dredging, filling, peat removal, pollution, and channelization.

Why watch our wetlands? The reasons are enormously important. Dr. William Niering, a leading, national expert on the functional value of wetlands, once referred to wetlands as "built-in flood mitigation structures." They control flooding by providing water storage, reducing flood peaks, and slowing flood waters. By removing silt and filtering out or absorbing many pollutants, wetlands act as natural water purifiers. They also serve to reduce erosion by blunting the force of storms. Wetland trees and other vegetation stabilize river banks and lake borders. A most critical reason to watch our wetlands is that their diversity and productive ecosystems provide crucial wintering, breeding and refuge areas for wildlife. Niering called wetlands both our nation's "liquid assets" and its "duck factories."

Open space, unaltered by human activity, is becoming increasingly rare in and around cities and towns. Wetlands preservation in heavily populated areas is vital to preserving the environmental quality and diversity of the land. Much of the nation's environmentally significant land, particularly in wetlands and coastal areas, is in the hands of individuals. Your own backyard may be a scrap of wetland or abut a community wetland resource. Stewardship, then, falls to citizenry and to members of local wetland or conservation commissions.

Public information is fundamental to community-based wetlands preservation. Educate yourself, and members of your local wetlands or conservation commissions, about environmentally fragile regions in your community.

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EcoAlert from American P.I.E. - Safe Sinkers, 7 May, 2003

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The multifold dangers of lead to humans are well-known. This heavy metal has been in common use for thousands of years, and its deleterious effects - especially on children - remain all too common. Symptoms of chronic lead poisoning include muscle cramps, abdominal pain, and eventual nervous system and brain damage.

Less well-known are the effects of lead on the North American waterfowl population. For humans, the sources of lead poisoning include dust and chips from lead paint, industrial exposure, acidic tap water traveling through lead pipes, lead glazes on ceramics, and exposure to automobile fumes. For waterfowl, primary sources of lead poisoning include the lead weights which sport anglers attach to fishing lines to sink the hook, bait or lure in the water. Some anglers use lead-weighted hooks, called jigs. A sinker or jig may accidentally detach from a line and fall into the water, or the hook or line may become tangled and the line may break or be cut. U.S. anglers buy and use millions of pounds of lead fishing tackle every year.

Many ducks, loons, swans, cranes and other waterbirds find food in the mud at the bottom of lakes and streams. Most waterfowl also swallow small stones and grit that aid in grinding up their food. Attracted by the sight of bait or lure, a bird may also swallow a sinker or jig let loose from a fishing trip. A bird that eats lead will become ill and die. Ingested lead enters the gizzard, where a combination of stomach acids and abrasion breaks down the metal, and it is absorbed into the bloodstream. Following a sequence of distressing physical and behavioral disturbances, birds often die within two to three weeks after eating the lead.

While sinkers are small, the problem of lead-poisoning in waterbirds is not. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, between 1.5 and 2.5 million migratory waterfowl die annually from consuming sinkers, jigs and shot made from lead. This represents 2 to 3 percent of the entire North American waterfowl population. On freshwater lakes of the Eastern United States and Canada, lead poisoning is the most significant contributor to death in adult loons, causing at least 50% of known deaths.

These staggering morbidity statistics are avoidable. Sinkers and jigs do not have to be made of lead. Inexpensive and ecologically sound alternatives made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel and recycled glass are now available. Urge your angler friends to use non-lead weights. Ask local sporting goods stores to stock non-lead fishing tackle. Make the switch to safe sinkers.

Act today on these EcoAlerts, and thank you for your environmental responsibility.

American P.I.E.  
Public Information on the Environment  
P.O. Box 676  
Northfield, MN 55057-0676  
Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724  
E-mail: [Info@AmericanPIE.org](mailto:Info@AmericanPIE.org)

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About the Newton Conservators

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playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or contact us at 617-969-8661 or the address below.

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You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands", a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton. This outstanding new publication replaces our previous paper map guides and was put together with the tremendous effort of Judy Hepburn, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Caldwell-Stair. It is priced at \$7.95 (free with membership) and should be showing up soon in local bookstores. It fits nicely in your back pocket and will be a terrific companion to introducing you to places in Newton you never knew existed.

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#### About Newton Nature Notes

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If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to <mailto:dolanpond@aol.com> or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadical newsletter to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel may be interested in the information contained herein.

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#### Newton Nature Notes - Tuesday, June 3, 2003

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This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

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- \*\*\* CPA Hearing on Thursday, June 5, 7:30 pm  
Open Space and Community Housing Proposal for 76 Webster Park (near Dolan Pond)

The Newton Conservators were recently presented with an opportunity for open space preservation adjacent to the newly restored Dolan Pond Conservation Area in West Newton. On Wednesday, May 14, the Newton Conservators, the Newton Conservation Commission, and the Newton Housing Authority jointly submitted a proposal to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for the acquisition of the property at 76 Webster Park (almost 50,000 square feet, 1.15 acres) from the estate of Irene Forte.

Irene Forte, a former music director and violin teacher at the All Newton Music School, passed away in January at the age of 104. It was her desire that, if possible, that much of her large lot be preserved as open space. Under this plan, if CPA funds for this combined open space and community housing project are approved and the transaction takes place between the Newton Conservators and the Forte' Estate, the property would subsequently be subdivided into two parts, an open space portion (expected to be at least 70% of the lot, approximately 0.8 acres) and a community housing portion.

The open space portion would be deeded to the Newton Conservation Commission as an adjunct (as much as 10% more) to the existing Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Potentially, a new path and overlooks would be developed in a later phase. The housing portion would be deeded to the Newton Housing Authority for use as affordable housing which is desperately needed in Newton (and mandated by law). They would use funds from the so called "10% Ordinance" to fully refurbish and improve the existing single family house and to build up to two smaller additional attached units, with minimal footprint, compatible in style with the existing house.

This project would be the first CPA proposal to combine the open space and community housing aspects of the Community Preservation Act. The project has also received the endorsement of the Newton Historical Society since it addresses the preservation aspect of the CPA as well and the property is within the Webster Park Historic District. This project has open space benefits in adding this strategic parcel immediately adjacent to the main entrance to Dolan Pond, its different habitat and overlooks into otherwise inaccessible wetland areas; community housing benefit of creating up to three very needed units to help meet the serious shortfall of affordable housing (over 800 on the waiting list); and the preservation benefit of saving existing house (c 1925) will be restored to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

There are a number of steps for this proposal to be implemented. The estate has set very firm requirements of meeting a timetable for various phases of the CPA process. The CPC is considering this proposal at this time with special consideration due to the time sensitivity of



settling the estate. For success, it must be favorably received by the CPC, and subsequently by the CPC AD Hoc Committee and Finance Committees of the Board of Aldermen and eventually by the full Board of Aldermen (within the next two months). Failing this process, the property could go on the open market resulting in a much higher development density and loss of open space.

A public hearing will take place on this proposal on Thursday evening, June 5 at City Hall in the lower cafeteria. The hearing begins at 7:30 pm and the 76 Webster Park Proposal is the second item on the agenda (after Pelham House). The first item might be expected to be concluded possibly by 8:15 pm. There is limited seating in the cafeteria and a number of proponents and opponents are expected. There will be a 15 minute slide presentation on the project, followed by questions from the CPC about the project. Members of the public can sign up to comment on a project (for or against) and if there are a large number of speakers, a time limit (for instance 3 minutes) may be imposed.

A PDF version of the CPA proposal can be found at <http://newtonconservators.org/WebsterPkCPA.pdf> if you wish to take a look at it. This PDF does not include the extensive appendices however. One can view a paper copy of the complete proposal at the Planning Department in City Hall and a number of copies have been distributed in the Webster Park neighborhood.

Thanks to all those who have already written letters of support (which were included in the proposal submitted to the CPC). Presence at the hearing is an important factor since a decision could be forthcoming at the hearing itself. Please attend if you are able. One could also send letters or email to Jennifer Goldson as described below. The following is the official public notice about the hearing:

#### PUBLIC HEARING:

#### Newton Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding Proposals

The Newton Community Preservation Committee is holding a Public Hearing on new applications for CPA Funding, Thursday, 5 June, 2003, 7:30pm, Newton City Hall Cafeteria (lower level)

#### Public Hearing Agenda:

1. Pelham House, 45 Pelham Street - CPA funding request for \$200,000 by Cooperative Living of Newton to create 11 new community housing units for low-income seniors in the existing building. The CPA funds are requested specifically for exterior rehabilitation and site work.
2. Forte Property, 76 Webster Park - CPA funding request for \$1,110,000 by the Newton Conservators, Newton Conservation Commission, and the Newton Housing Authority for the acquisition of the property (1.15 acres) for open space preservation and the creation of community housing.

Comments on the public hearing items will be accepted at the public hearing or by writing to: Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner, Planning and Development Department, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., Newton, MA 02459 or [communitypreservation@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:communitypreservation@ci.newton.ma.us).

#### \*\*\* Upcoming Events

- \* Saturday, June 7, 8-11:30 am, Newton Biodiversity Day  
Where the Wild Things Are at Edmands Park  
(Walk #5 Conservators Guide)

Newton will be participating in this year's fourth annual statewide Biodiversity Days for the

purpose of involving citizen naturalists in tabulating what species of living things inhabit Newton and educating citizens as to the variety of life around them. This year's focus will be on the natural environment of Edmands Park (Cabot Woods). The park contains woods, small clearing, wetlands, Edmands Brook, and a glacial esker. Its open oak forest contains beeches, locusts, maples, birches and pines. It was donated to the City in 1913 by the Edmands family and there is still evidence of some WPA stonework from the 1930's.

At 8:00 am, a bird walk through the park will be held, looking for the sights and sounds of late migrants and nesting species. Bring binoculars if you have them. Both experienced birders and novices are welcome at any of our biodiversity events. At 9:30 am, we will have an "All Species Hunt" where citizen volunteers will be focusing on all fungi, ferns, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, bugs, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. While numbers will not be counted, evidence for the presence of species will be checked. Bring your favorite field guides along with bug boxes, magnifiers, nets, and notebooks. We especially want to invite those with specialized knowledge, either formal or informal, in any of these areas. It's a great opportunity to learn from each other and to expand our knowledge of the natural world. We usually have a good collection of field guides of various types with us (many on loan from the Newton Free Library) to aid us in identifying species. Our results will be sent to the state's biodiversity database and also filed with Martha Aherin Horn, our Environmental Planner for Newton and Conservation Commission Coordinator.

Park and meet at the lower entrance on Blake Street (north entrance) between Cabot and Mill Street. Contact Ted Kuklinski, 617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com). In case of severe rain, we will have a raindate the following day, Sunday, June 8 at the same times. You can check out the state Biodiversity Blitz page at <http://data.massgis.state.ma.us/Biodiversity/BiodiversityDays.htm> for a listing of other biodiversity related events.

\* Saturday, June 7, 11 am - 3 pm, Newton Pride Garden Tour 2003

The Newton Pride Committee and the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs is sponsoring a tour of 21 gardens throughout the city on Saturday, June 7, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine. The tour features a wide range of gardens, from small urban spaces with intricate paths and plantings to large sunny gardens overflowing with flowering perennials. There is even a garden railway. A guided tour of seven gardens on an air-conditioned small coach with a knowledgeable docent and free refreshments is also available for \$50 per person 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12:30-3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$18 on the day of the event, children under 10, free. Tickets can be ordered by making checks payable to: Garden Tour, 70 Crescent St., Newton, MA 02466, or call 617-527-8283 or 617-796-1540. Tickets and Program Guides can be picked up at City Hall beginning at 10 a.m. on the day of the tour only.

\* Sunday, June 8, 2 pm, Houghton Garden Restoration Tour  
(Walk #17 Conservators Guide)

Around the turn-of-the-century Martha Houghton surrounded her Chestnut Hill Spanish Mission-style home with a naturalistic garden featuring a tranquil pond, waterfall rock formation, and an alpine rock garden. Now owned by the City of Newton, the garden has recently undergone a major restoration with funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. The original plan can still be discerned as you stroll its azalea and rhododendron-bordered paths. Trip leader Nancy Avery, as a member of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club, has taken an active role in restoration for the garden and received a special award at this year's annual dinner of the Newton Conservators. Meet at the entrance on Suffolk Road. (call 617-964-1137 for more info).

\* Sunday, June 15, 2 pm, Fathers Day Regional Aqueduct  
Mountain / Cross Over Bike Tour through Newton, Needham, Wellesley

Hey bikers! Join in on this event, brought back by popular demand. The aqueduct system is of growing community interest and provides an opportunity for more accessible open space to develop a network of walkways and bike trails. Explore with us the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts trails and plant life. The tour travels through parts of Newton, Needham and Wellesley. This trip is an off road trip and will be a leisurely tour but at times a strenuous experience. This 1 ½ to 2-hour ride is recommended for ages 12 and up, and an adult must accompany all minors. Riders are required to wear bike helmets and to use bikes able to travel off road. The aim is to have a good time, not the fastest time. The tour runs behind backyards and through established paths and rarely visited pinewoods, meadows and steep hills. Meet in front of Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station. The trip was very popular last year and may be limited depending upon response and interested riders are advised to call ahead. Our leader will be local architect and Newton Conservators board member Henry Finch (617-964- 4488)

### \*\*\* Volunteer Opportunities and Announcements

Perhaps you know a local open space area quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in one of the Newton Conservators walk series in the spring or fall? Please Contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, <mailto:cpkastner@rcn.com>).

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's Environmental Planner, Martha Aherin Horn (<mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us>, Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

Matthew Gray of Boy Scout Troop 355 is doing his Eagle project at Flowed Meadow in Auburndale. It involves installing new bridges (actually partly recycled from the old bog bridges at Dolan Pond), installing bluebird houses, trail signs, and even a turtle sunning station. Site work will probably take place on Saturday, June 14 at Flowed Meadow. Local volunteers may be welcome to assist the troop that day. You may call 617-969-6222 for information on helping with this project. Congratulations to Isaac Carlen of the same troop who recently received his Eagle award last month for trail work, improvements, and bird houses at Norumbega Park.

Anatol Zukerman, in conjunction with the Newton Conservators, is looking to form a group of those interested in the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area. Please call (617-527-1501) or email him at [a-zukerman@attbi.com](mailto:a-zukerman@attbi.com) if your are interested. A meeting may be set up in the near future to discuss such topics as the main entrance from Lexington Street, an observation platform on top of the dump, or a boat launch at Wabasso Street.

Doug Dickson is the editor of the Newton Conservators Newsletter and would welcome contributions from members. The next deadline for submission is this coming Thursday, June 5. Send material to Doug at [dgdickson@rcn.com](mailto:dgdickson@rcn.com). Also, are there any environmental or nature writers out there who would like to be published in the Newton Tab? Francoise Lamonica ([franswas@juno.com](mailto:franswas@juno.com)) would welcome your contributions to the Tab Environmental Pages, included once a month in the Newton Tab.

### \*\*\* Nature Happenings

With all the recent rain, Newton is a very lush place indeed. All those dense leaves make it a little

harder to see the birds. This is the time for intensive nesting activity - so keep an eye out for young birds. If you find any, its best to leave them be in place. Keep watch for snapping turtles which may leave the ponds to lay eggs. Keep a good distance from them for their name is justified by their powerful jaws. However, we'd be happy to hear of any great animal or bird sightings that you would like to share. So keep your eyes open out there. You never know what you will find in Newton' s wild kingdom!

\* Flamingos Return to Newton!

It has recently come to our attention that there have been a highly unusual number of sightings of *Phoenicopterus ruber* (Greater Flamingo) within the confines of Newton, particularly in the vicinity of Prince Road on West Newton Hill (off Chestnut Steet near the All Newton Music School). We have heard reports of whole flocks in some cases (e.g., near the home of artist Jill Hunter) and one or two individual birds in others. Recently some of these magnificent creatures appear to have dispersed from the initial West Newton sighting areas to the headquarters of the Newton Housing Authority at 82 Union Street in Newton Highlands (which also serves as affordable housing particularly for handicapped residents).

Our research indicates that this unusual pink bird had only once before been observed in Newton in the Auburndale section on May 23, 1965. In fact until the recent spate of sightings, such wild Flamingos have not been seen in Massachusetts since 1967, a gap of some 36 years! (Source: Birds of Massachusetts, Weit and Peterson, 1993). The arrival of the flamingos in Newton Highlands was celebrated with a welcoming ceremony by the residents of the Hyde Apartments on Tuesday, May 27 which received extensive coverage in local media.

\* Hall's Pond Brookline - May Day May Day

Fred Bouchard, prolific writer and Brookline birder gave this account of some great birding days around May 13 at Hall's Pond in Brookline (which is his home birding special place). Sometimes there are days when the winds and weather conditions line up to produce an especially good fall-out of migrating birds. Here's an example from Fred's log (5/13/03) which he described as the "Best morning in years at Hall's Pond"

Double-crested Cormorant (18, flock over)  
Great Blue Heron (5/12)  
BC Night-heron  
Canada Goose ("nesters")  
Mallard (2 pair)  
American Kestrel  
RT Hawk  
Spotted Sandpiper (5/12)  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Greater black-backed Gull  
Common Crow  
Tree Swallow  
Chimney Swift  
Flicker (pair, plus?)  
Downy Woody  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Warbling Vireo  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2)  
Catbird (6)  
Blackburnian Warbler (5/12)

Northern Waterthrush (2, 1 in tree)  
Yellow Warbler (5)  
Northern Parula (4)  
Nashville Warbler (5)  
Black and White Warbler (10)  
Black-throated Green Warbler (m)  
Black-throated Blue Warbler (f)  
Chestnut-sided Warbler (4)  
Magnolia Warbler (7)  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler (12+)  
American Redstart (f)  
Common Yellowthroat (6m, 1f)  
Ovenbird (6)Canada Warbler  
Least Flycatcher (5/12)  
Great Crested Flycatcher  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Scarlet Tanager (f)  
Red-breasted Grosbeak (2m, 1f)  
Baltimore Oriole (m, f)  
Wood Thrush (heard)  
Swainson's Thrush  
Veery (2)  
Savannah Sparrow (5/12)  
Song Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow (12)  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
White Crowned Sparrow (5/12)  
American Goldfinch (6)  
Well over 50 species when we include usuals: HOFI, TUTI, BCCD, NOCA, MODO, AMRO, RODO, BJAY, RWBB, GRAC.

Now that's a good day! You can visit Fred's website at [www.fredbouchard.com](http://www.fredbouchard.com), or email at [fbouchard@juno.com](mailto:fbouchard@juno.com) or phone 617-566-3765. Fred writes about nature ([www.virtualbirder.com](http://www.virtualbirder.com)) and other areas and teaches Music Journalism at Berklee College of Music. Can you guess the additional birds from the four letter codes (e.g. HOFI = House Finch)? We'd love to hear from you with nature reports from YOUR special places.

\*\*\* Mosquito Message - EcoAlert from American P.I.E. - 5/23/03

Scientists studying the potential impact of a warming planet on human health warn about the insidious spread of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue, yellow fever, cholera, hantavirus, and encephalitis. Mosquitoes carrying tropical disease organisms are making their way northward. Ross Gelspan, author of "The Heat is On" (Addison-Wesley, 1997), reported that if the U.N.-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's projected level of warming is realized, "the epidemic potential of the mosquito population in the tropical regions would double. In the temperate climates - home to the United States - it would increase a hundredfold."

The 1999 outbreak of West Nile virus in New York City proved to be a harbinger of insect borne diseases previously unseen in most regions of the United States. As of the end of mosquito season 2002, West Nile virus had reached 42 states and the District of Columbia. Viruses require a host in which to live and crows, having had little time to develop any immunity in the New World, have a low resistance to West Nile virus carried by infected mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes spread viruses from one host to another. When people think of mosquito control,

broadcast spraying often comes to mind. This 'solution' is questionable for public health and environmentally irresponsible for non-target species. Most broadcast spraying is applied to densely populated areas where mosquito populations are low to begin with. Such spraying presents health hazards for children, people whose health is already compromised, and individuals with sensitivities to synthetic chemicals. Broadcast spraying of insecticides also kills many economically valuable insects such as honeybees, praying mantids, ladybugs and attractive species such as butterflies.

Mosquitoes, too, are a component of biodiversity and an integral part of the food chain. Life forms that feed on mosquitoes include a long list of familiar and less familiar amphibians, fish, birds and insects; controlling the geographic range and size of populations of mosquitoes is a matter of considerable public concern.

Not generally recognized is the fact that individuals, families and communities can implement non-toxic mosquito prevention programs - right in their own backyards - by surveying, monitoring and cleaning typical breeding sites. These sites - containing standing water - can include birdbaths, clogged roof gutters, old tires, wading pools, dripping outdoor faucets, street gutters, over-irrigated lawns, wheelbarrows and more. Help broadcast this message by choosing ecologically sound pest controls

These Eco Alerts are provided by:

American P.I.E.  
Public Information on the Environment  
P.O. Box 676  
Northfield, MN 55057-0676  
Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724  
E-mail: [Info@AmericanPIE.org](mailto:Info@AmericanPIE.org)

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You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands", a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton. This outstanding new publication replaces our previous paper map guides and was put together with the tremendous effort of Judy Hepburn, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Caldwell-Stair. It is priced at \$7.95 (free with membership) and should be showing up soon in local bookstores. It fits nicely in your back pocket and will be a terrific

companion to introducing you to places in Newton you never knew existed.

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\*\*\*\*\*  
Newton Conservators Nature Notes - Friday, June 13, 2003  
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\* Welcome

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\* Fathers Day Regional Aqueduct Mountain / Cross Over Bike Tour through Newton, Needham, Wellesley - Sunday, June 15, 2 pm,

Hey bikers! Join in on this event, brought back by popular demand. The aqueduct system is of growing community interest and provides an opportunity for more accessible open space to develop a network of walkways and bike trails. Explore with us the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts trails and plant life. The tour travels through parts of Newton, Needham and Wellesley. This trip is an off road trip and will be a leisurely tour but at times a strenuous experience. This 1 ½ to 2-hour ride is recommended for ages 12 and up, and an adult must accompany all minors. Riders are required to wear bike helmets and to use bikes able to travel off road. The aim is to have a good time, not the fastest time. The tour runs behind backyards and through established paths and rarely visited pinewoods, meadows and steep hills. Meet in front of Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station. The trip was very popular last year and may be limited depending upon response and interested riders are advised to call ahead. Our leader will be local architect and Newton Conservators board member Henry Finch (617-964- 4488).

\* Flowed Meadow Meeting - Sunday, June 15, 2 pm

For those interested in Flowed Meadow, a meeting is scheduled there on Sunday afternoon at 2 pm on Lexington Street across from the Burr School field. This was rescheduled from an earlier planned meeting this morning due to possible rain. Anatol Zukerman, in conjunction with the Newton Conservators, is looking to form a group of those interested in the Flowed Meadow

Conservation Area. Please call (617-527-1501) or email him at [a-zukerman@attbi.com](mailto:a-zukerman@attbi.com) if you are interested.

Matthew Gray of Boy Scout Troop 355 is doing his Eagle project at Flowed Meadow in Auburndale. It involves installing new bridges (actually partly recycled from the old bog bridges at Dolan Pond), installing bluebird houses, and trail signs. Site work is scheduled to take place on the morning of Saturday, June 14 at Flowed Meadow meeting at the Cove parking lot at around 9 am.

\* Lower Falls Walking Tour - Saturday, June 14, 10:30 am

The Newton History Museum, formerly the Jackson Homestead, 527 Washington St. will present a Newton Lower Falls Walking Tour on Saturday, June 14 at 10:30 a.m. Newton Lower Falls began its development as a village in 1704 when John Hubbard and Caleb Church built a dam along the Charles River to generate power for their ironworks. Lower Falls resident Tori Zissman will lead this tour. Participants should meet at St. Mary's Church. Parking is available in front of the Church along Concord Street. Free. For more information, log on to [www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson).

\* Franklin Park Zoo Fair - Saturday, June 14, 12-5

For a family-friendly way to kick off summer this year head to Franklin Park Zoo's ZooFair on June 14, 2003. From 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. enjoy multicultural entertainment by both adult and youth performers including African drumming and dance, traditional Chinese dance, and musicians performing songs about Boston especially for younger children. Visit with the animals while enjoying free samples from several on-site vendors, then enjoy face painters, clowns, and stilt walkers throughout the Zoo. WCVB-TV5, ZooFair's media sponsor, will be on hand to host the day's festivities. For more information about ZooFair please visit [www.zoonewengland.org](http://www.zoonewengland.org). Thanks to Margaret Albright for passing this info along.

\* Land's Sake Strawberry Fest, Saturday, June 21st, 10-2

Land's Sake Farm in nearby Weston will once again kick off the new growing season with its annual Strawberry Fest, to be held Saturday June 21st from 10AM to 2 PM, with a rain date of Sunday the 22nd. In spite of the long winter and wet spring, pick-your-own organic strawberries are expected to be plentiful. The public is welcome to the farm, located at the intersection of Newton and Wellesley Streets in Weston. Parking is opposite the farm entrance at the Field School.

Weston's educational farm and forest non-profit organization, Land's Sake has been celebrating spring with a festival every spring since they started cultivating the town's "40-acre field" at Case Corner 15 years ago. The event is free for members, and non-members pay \$2 for adults and \$1 for kids over 5. Those who would like to join the organization on the day of the event will be admitted free. There will be live music, hayrides, face painting, barbeque, mint lemonade, strawberry shortcake, and of course strawberry picking as long as the ripe ones last. Families can stroll across the field to visit the herd of alpacas brought in for the day from the Berkshires.

Land's Sake has always welcomed the energies of young people from Weston and surrounding communities who are interested in learning organic gardening skills, environmental stewardship and forest management. This year, a new self-guiding agricultural trail, with hand-made signs, has been built around the farm as an Eagle Scout project.

Strawberry season usually continues into the first week of July, and Land's Sake will be open for



picking every day after the Fest, from 10-6. For more information about the festival, about the summer "Greenpower" program, or in case of bad weather, the Land's Sake website is [www.landssake.org](http://www.landssake.org) . For more info please contact Nina Danforth, 617-626-1365 or Steve Cyr, 781-893-1162.

#### \* CPA Matters

This month we will find out more about the city's plans relative to Kessler Woods and their partnership in developing a bid to \*NStar with the upcoming deadline for bids set by \*NStar.

There was a public hearing on the joint proposal of the Newton Conservators, Newton Conservation Commission, and Newton Housing Authority (NHA) for acquisition of the property at 76 Webster Park, West Newton from the estate of Irene Forte. The hearing was before the Community Preservation Committee and there was much public input. Ultimately, after some discussion, the committee voted to recommend the proposal. It was suggested that the NHA make a good faith effort to meet with the neighborhood to try to work out something that would be more accepted by the immediate neighbors. Next the proposal will be considered by aldermanic committees.

#### \* Other Notes

Our sincere condolences to longtime birders and Newton Conservator activists, Deborah and Frank Howard on the loss of their grandson, William Bullard O'Brien, in a tragic bike accident on Commonwealth Avenue last Tuesday. Visiting hours will be held in the Blackington, Conroy & Hayes Funeral Home, 1479 Washington St. (Rte. 16) West Newton, Friday, June 13 from 2-4 & 6-9 PM. Friends & relatives are invited to a Funeral Mass in St. Bernard's Church, West Newton on Saturday Morning at 11 AM.

We had a nice dedicated turnout for our Biodiversity Day event at Edmands Park last Saturday. Henry Finch was terrific at helping to identify numerous of the wildflowers we found. A birding highlight was the discovery of a Red-eyed Vireo nest near the trail.

Last Sunday's walk at Houghton Garden walk led by Nancy Avery was well attended. Such a beautiful job has been done there and the accessible path was even navigable by wheelchair. If you have not been there recently or ever, seek it out - its well worth the trip.

A casual walk on the new Dolan Pond boardwalk on Tuesday resulted in sightings of a Scarlet Tanager, a pair of Wood Ducks, and a Green Heron. The chorus of American Toads can still be heard on occasion.

To those who are curious, the recent Flamingo sightings were of the plastic birds mostly placed by artist Jill Hunter of Prince Street on West Newton Hill. Bev Droz, president of the Green Decade, sent along this note relative to the flamingos: "This interests me because my grandfather, who loved and visited FL on an annual basis, brought a few flamingo artifacts back to his Auburndale home during the early 1960's. They included the fake flamingos which adorned his lawn around his birdbath, as well as the outside front (screen/glass) door which had a graceful metal-cast flamingo standing upright as the subject matter of the door..... quite unusual. The lawn ornaments garnered conversation because local residents had no understanding of what kind of bird it was! ... The flamingos are gone now (of course) but the loving memories live on...."

#### \* Friends of Nahanton Park

Friends of Nahanton Park held their meeting last Tuesday at City Hall chaired by Duane Hillis

(617-699-8050 or [dhillis@rcn.com](mailto:dhillis@rcn.com)). There was a lot of discussion about the garden area and need to keep it neat. Garden areas in other towns were described as well. They also discussed a possible CPA application which could include a gardening shed and fence around the garden area. If you are interested in Nahanton Park or garden there, you should belong to Friends of Nahanton Park. Contact Duane as describe above.

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\* Land's Sake Strawberry Fest Postponed until Saturday, June 28th, 10-2

The Land's Sake Strawberry Fest mentioned in our last newsletter had had to be put off for one week because the berries aren't ripening fast in this cool and rainy weather. It is not scheduled for Saturday, June 28th, 10-2 with a raindate the following day, Sunday, June 29th. For more information, see [www.landsake.org](http://www.landsake.org).

Land's Sake Farm in nearby Weston will once again kick off the new growing season with its annual Strawberry Fest, to be held Saturday June 28 from 10AM to 2 PM, with a rain date of Sunday the 29nd. In spite of the long winter and wet spring, pick-your-own organic strawberries are expected to be plentiful. The public is welcome to the farm, located at the intersection of Newton and Wellesley Streets in Weston. Parking is opposite the farm entrance at the Field School.

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\* CPA Matters

Today at 5 pm is when the sealed bids on the Kessler Woods project are opened by NStar. This weeks Tab reported a city contribution of \$5M to the bid for this key property. We will find out shortly more about the city's plans relative to Kessler Woods and their partnership in developing a bid to \*NStar. Apparently there is some degree of opposition to the City's portion of the bid from the Newton Taxpayers Association. If the City's bid is accepted, consider letting

your aldermen know that you feel this is a worthwhile expenditure for a key parcel and its open space potential.

The joint proposal of the Newton Conservators, Newton Conservation Commission, and Newton Housing Authority (NHA) for acquisition of the property at 76 Webster Park, West Newton will be considered on Monday evening (June 23) at 7 pm in Room 222 of City Hall by the aldermanic CPA Ad Hoc Committee and the Finance Committee. The community housing portion of the the proposal was revised to consist of a Newton Housing Authority unit and a Habitat for Humanity owner occupied small duplex. The Green Decade coalition has expressed interest in the project as well. The CPC will present the proposal which they passed recently to the aldermanic committees. The public may attend but public testimony will not be taken. The Finance Committee consists of (in ward order), Robert Gerst, Alan Ciccone, Richard Bullwinkle, John Stewart, Paul Coletti, Ken Parker, Sydra Schnipper, and R. Lipof. The Aldermanic Ad Hoc Committee on Community Preservation consists of (in ward order) Carleton Merrill, Steve Linsky, Richard Bullwinkle, Amy Mah Sangiolo, Brian Yates, Susan Basham, Lisle Baker, and Cheryl Lappin. The full memorandum describing the findings of the Community Preservation Committee can be found on the web at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/CPCMemo.pdf>. The original proposal can be found at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/WebsterPkCPA.pdf> if you wish to make your views known.

The following quote from Henry David Thoreau was recently found in the state manual on conservation restrictions: "What are the natural features which make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things, though at a considerable expense; for such things educate far more than any hired teachers or preachers, or any at present recognized system of school education."

\* Environmental Science Program Still Has Openings!

The Environmental Science Program serves kids entering grades 7-10 during the month of July. This worthy, student-run program is now in its 35th year!!! They still have openings for students interested in nature or outdoor oriented activity. The Envi-Sci Program is sponsored by the Newton Conservation Commission. The program has openings for those interested in a month-long outdoor adventure of hiking, biking, canoeing and tidepooling that culminates in a three-day backpacking expedition up Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. If you are interested, pick up a brochure at the City Hall Planning Office or inquire of Joan Yospin, [Joan\\_Yospin@newton.mec.edu](mailto:Joan_Yospin@newton.mec.edu) whose daughter Sarina is one of the student leaders. Do it as soon as possible if it sounds good for someone you know!

\* Flowed Meadow Bridges Installed

Check out the new bridges at Flowed Meadow installed by Boy Scout Troop 355 last Saturday. No longer will one have to traverse old doors or narrow scrap wood boards to traverse the streams there. This is part of the Eagle project of Matthew Gray. You may notice some interesting new bluebird houses around the area as well. Some trail sign work is scheduled for the near future.

Students, scouts, or others looking for community service projects might consider doing something at one of the Newton's Conservation areas. Over the past several years, a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects have been done at various conservation areas in Newton. These have included bluebird and wood duck houses, trail and parking construction, and signage. If interested please contact Newton's Environmental Planner, Martha Aherin Horn (mailto: [mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us), Newton Planning Department 617-796-1120).

\* Nature Photography Exhibit in Watertown, July 7

Carole Berney ([csberney@rcn.com](mailto:csberney@rcn.com)) can often be found along the banks of the Charles River near Watertown Square taking pictures. She will be having an exhibit of her work opening on July 7 in Watertown. Details will be forthcoming in our next issue. Carole is also working on a wildflower guide for the area which should be very useful as well for us naturephiles. Stay tuned!

\* Coyotes in Newton

There seem to be a new spate of coyote sightings recently in Newton. A recent letter by Donna Davis to the Newton Tab expressed concern over the daytime boldness of a coyote on her property and concern for children's safety. When informed of these concerns, Martha Horn, Senior Environmental Planner in Newton advised as follows regarding coyotes that seem to have a lack of fear of humans: "Best to keep cats, small dogs and children out of harm's way by keeping them inside or watching the children very carefully when they're out. These animals are protected unless they are actually so aggressive that a person is in danger -- Animal Control (617-796-2109) is the place to call. Their regular number has an answering machine, so emergency calls when an animal is attacking or menacing should be to 911 and the dispatcher will radio the Animal Control Officer."

Below is some other background information on coyotes provided by the state:

<http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfwcoy.htm>

<http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfwpdf/dfwcoy.pdf> (poster)

You may also wish to check out the following website on a BC study of urban coyotes:

<http://www2.bc.edu/~wayjo/mainpage.html>

#### Natural History Information

Historical background and range of coyotes in Massachusetts: Coyotes originally moved into the central and western regions of Massachusetts in the 1950s, and they have been in the Eastern sections and Cape Cod since the 1970s. This canid species is now well established statewide. Coyotes are often seen individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The area a coyote uses may vary from 4 to 30 square miles.

Description: Coyotes are the size of a medium-size dog, but with longer, thicker fur. Coyotes have a long, bushy, black-tipped tail that is usually carried pointed down. Their snout is long and slender, and their ears are pointed and erect. The pelts of coyotes in Massachusetts range from grayish-black to blondes, light tan, dark tan, or even all black. Females weigh 33-40 lbs and males are slightly larger (34-47 lbs). Coyotes can attain weights of 50-60 lbs. Because of their thick fur, weights of coyotes can easily be over-estimated.

Food: Coyotes are opportunistic feeders and their primary foods include small rodents, rabbits, deer, birds, snakes, frogs, and insects. They will also eat fruits, berries, vegetables, garbage, and pet food left outdoors. In some areas they prey upon unprotected pets, including house cats, and have been known to attack domestic dogs. Because coyotes utilize so many different food sources, they have adapted to and live in a variety of habitats including urban and heavily populated areas.

Habits: Coyotes are usually shy and elusive. Male and female Coyotes pair up, establish a territory, and breed in February or March; 4 to 8 pups are born in April or May. Activity is variable;

they can be active night or day, and sightings at dawn or dusk are common. They remain active all year-round and do not hibernate.

Coyotes are an important natural resource in Massachusetts. They are classified as a furbearer species, for which an established harvest season and management program exists. If you are experiencing problems with, or have any questions regarding coyotes, contact the nearest MassWildlife District Office.

### Preventing Conflicts With Coyotes

Coyotes are currently well established throughout the state from the Berkshires to Cape Cod. They thrive in suburban and urban areas close to people. Coyotes eat many different foods, including small animals, fruits, vegetables, garbage, and pet food. Remember everything a coyote does is related to a potential meal. Here are a few suggestions to make your property less attractive to coyotes.

**Secure your garbage!** Coyotes will raid open trash materials and compost piles. Secure your garbage in tough plastic containers with tight fitting lids and keep in secure buildings when possible. Take out trash the morning pick up is scheduled, not the previous night. Keep compost piles in containers designed to contain but vent the material.

**Don't feed or try to pet coyotes! Keep wild things wild!** Feeding, whether direct or indirect, can cause coyotes to act tame and over time may lead to bold behavior. Coyotes that rely on natural food items remain wild and wary of humans.

**Keep your pets safe!** Although free roaming pets are more likely to be killed by automobiles than by wild animals, coyotes do view cats and small dogs as potential food and larger dogs as competition. For the safety of your pets, keep them restrained at all times.

**Keep bird feeder areas clean!** Use feeders designed to keep seed off the ground as the seed attracts many small mammals coyotes prey upon. Remove feeders if coyotes are regularly seen around your yard.

**Feed pets indoors!** Outdoor feeding attracts many wild animals to your door!

**Close off crawl spaces under porches and sheds!** Coyotes use such areas for resting and raising young.

**Don't let coyotes intimidate you!** Don't hesitate to scare or threaten coyotes with loud noises, bright lights, or water.

**Cut back brushy edges in your yard!** These areas provide cover for coyotes and their prey.

**Protect livestock and produce!** Coyotes will prey upon livestock. Techniques, such as fencing, will protect livestock from predation. Clear fallen fruit from around fruit trees.

**Educate your neighbors!** Pass this information along since your efforts will be futile if neighbors are providing food or shelter for coyotes.

### \* Lady Slippers

The following is from Conservators member and professor, Richard Primack: "One of the joys of spring in Newton is the beautiful display of pink lady's slipper orchids in woodland conservation areas. This a truly exquisite species, with a large, pouched-shaped flowers produced on long

stalks between pairs of oval leaves. These orchids were rare in Newton during the 1960s, but noticeably increased in abundance during the 1970s and 1980s. At their peak during the mid-1980s, there were several thousand flowering plants in the Hammond Woods area, especially west of the Hammond Pond Parkway. From the late 1980s until recently, the number of orchids in Newton has declined precipitously, so only occasional plants were seen. Plants might have declined in abundance due a maturing of the forest or possibly soil changes associated with acid rain and air pollution. This year, however, lady's slipper orchids appear to be increasing again in the Hammond Woods. In one thicket near the Chestnut Hill Mall, I found several hundred flowering plants, many of large size. The relatively sudden appearance of this new population suggests that the plants might have been mature individuals; during the past decade these plants might have remained dormant but alive below ground, nurtured by the symbiotic fungus that is intertwined with their roots. If the population continues to increase in coming years, Newton residents hiking along forested trails may again see spectacular arrays of this special orchid."

\* Gardens for Next Year's Garden Tour?

What do 800 people do on a rainy Saturday? Last Saturday, we found the answer. They toured 20 magnificent gardens as part of the Newton Pride Committee Garden Tour held June 7. "We were pleasantly surprised by the huge turnout given the rainy weather but were told 'it was a perfect day to view the splendid colors and beauty of the gardens,'" said Steve Aronson, president of the Newton Pride Committee. "In fact, it was such a resounding success that we have been urged to 'do it again' next year." Frank Avruch remarked that "we were amazed that having lived in Newton for more than 40 years, we were able to see for the first time the many hidden and diverse gardens that exist in our 'garden city', and were so please to meet our Newton neighbors who were willing to show off their gardens. They took such great pride in their work and it was so evident."

Please submit the name, address and telephone number of a garden you feel should be considered as part of the Second Annual Newton Pride Garden Tour and send it to The Newton Pride Committee, 70 Crescent St., Newton, MA 02466 or call 617 796-1540 with the information. Each garden will be visited by the committee for possible inclusion next year.

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If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.

You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands", a handy trail guide to the conservation and open

space recreation opportunities in Newton. This outstanding new publication replaces our previous paper map guides and was put together with the tremendous effort of Judy Hepburn, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Caldwell-Stair. It is priced at \$7.95 (free with membership) and should be showing up soon in local bookstores. It fits nicely in your back pocket and will be a terrific companion to introducing you to places in Newton you never knew existed.

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Newton Conservators Nature Notes - Friday, June 20, 2003  
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\* Welcome

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\* Flowed Meadow Meeting Tonight (7/16/03) at 6 pm

You are invited to visit Flowed Meadow in West Newton/Auburndale for education, inspiration, brain-storming and fun. A meeting will be held this evening (7/16/03) to discuss such topics as the main entrance from Lexington Street, an observation platform on top of the dump, or a boat launch at Wabasso Street. The meeting place will be at the Rumford Avenue Recycling Depot at 6 pm. Rumford Avenue is off Lexington Street and is opposite River Street to the east.

\* Carole Smith Berney Nature Photography Exhibit in Watertown, July - September

Watertown Photographer Carole Smith Berney ([csberney@rcn.com](mailto:csberney@rcn.com)) can often be found along the banks of the Charles River near Watertown Square taking pictures. Her new exhibit of Color Photography, "Wet and Wild: Charles River Animals", is currently being shown in the gallery at Boston Biomedical Research Institute, 64 Grove St., Watertown, MA 02472, 617-658-7700. The Institute is in the building directly behind the Tufts Health Care - the art deco--building on Mt. Auburn St. in Watertown. Parking is available behind the Institute building.



The exhibit runs from July 7 to September 12, 2003 and gallery hours are Mon.--Fri., 8:30--5 pm. The entrance is in the rear of the building. There will be a reception on Wed., July 23, 2003, 5:30 - 7:30 pm. It is open to the public. Please RSVP to Ginny Sullivan at 617-658-7711. There will also a slideshow/lecture on Sept. 9, 2003 -- Fall Exploring Science Slideshow/Lecture at the Institute: "Watertown on the Charles: Urban Biodiversity" which features the river photography of Carole Smith Berney.

\* Newton photographer exhibits at the Boston Public Library

"Stories in Stone," a photography exhibit, will be held at the Boston Public Library, Boston Room, 700 Boylston St., from Aug. 4-28 with an opening reception on Thursday, Aug. 7, from 6-8 p.m. It features photographer Betsy Fuchs and text by Jean Husher, both of Newton. For information, call Betsy Fuchs at 617-332-6363 or e-mail [betsyfuchs@aol.com](mailto:betsyfuchs@aol.com) or call the BPL at 617-536-5400.

When the Earth came into being billions of years ago, it began telling the story of its ever-changing formation through its rocks. The rocks were created by volcanic explosions of lava and stones from its interior, and through the erosion of these by water washing the debris into the seas. There, the pressure of the water and more debris added eon after eon created sedimentary rock that then was pushed high above the seas. This has been a fascinating and never-ending story, one that continues even today.

\* Pets, Vets and Paws at Newton History Museum at Jackson Homestead

In conjunction with the exhibit designed especially for children, "Four-Legged Newton," the following family programs are scheduled at the Newton History Museum:

Dog Days of Summer - Wednesday, Aug. 6, 10 a.m. Visit the Four-Legged Newton exhibit through puppets, stories, and play. Participants will then meet at the Newtonville Bread & Circus for a kitchen tour and make large dog bone-shaped cookies. Pre-paid reservations required and space is limited. Admission: \$5 per person. Appropriate for pre-schoolers and up. An adult must accompany participants.

Put Your Best Paw Forward - Saturday, Aug. 9, 2 p.m. Join our canine guests for a grooming demonstration and general dog care how-tos. Stephanie Kodis of Mt. Ida College's Canine Studies Program, will demonstrate dog care responsibilities including coat brushing, nail clipping, teeth brushing, and ear cleaning. Admission: \$5, NHS members, \$2.

Museum viewing is included in program admission. Appropriate for all ages. The Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead, 527 Washington St., is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 2-5 p.m. Call 617-796-1450 or visit [www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson). Funded in part the Massachusetts Cultural Commission, a state agency.

\* Webster Park CPA Proposal Approved

The joint proposal of the Newton Conservators, Newton Conservation Commission, and Newton Housing Authority (NHA) for acquisition of the property at 76 Webster Park, West Newton from the estate of Irene Forte, was unanimously approved by the Board of Aldermen on Monday evening (July 14). This 1.15 acre property is directly adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area, which has been termed a "hidden jewel of Newton". The joint proposal of the Newton Conservators, the Newton Conservation Commission, and the Newton Housing Authority addresses open space preservation (adding 10% land area to the existing Dolan Pond Conservation Area) and community housing (with an NHA rehab of the existing house with 10%

Ordinance funds and Newton's first Habitat for Humanity project as a duplex addition ). It also partly addresses historical preservation in saving a structure within the Webster Park Historic District (with endorsement by the Newton Historical Society). The proposal had been previously evaluated and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, the CPA Ad Hoc Committee, and the Finance Committee.

This topic was the subject of an article entitled "Board votes to buy Webster Street land", by Andrew Lightman in today's Newton Tab (7/16/03) at [http://www.townonline.com/newton/news/local\\_regional/new\\_newnecpa07152003.htm](http://www.townonline.com/newton/news/local_regional/new_newnecpa07152003.htm). The property is actually on the street called Webster Park (not Webster Street) as the headline implies. The Tab article incorrectly states the following "approximately 30 percent of the land will be preserved for public use, providing a public access to Dolan Pond. About 300,000 square feet of open space will remain on-site." In reality, what was agreed to by the Community Preservation Committee was that at least two thirds (approximately 34K sq ft) of the approximately 50K sq ft property will be kept as open space. The remaining one third or less (about 16K sq ft) would be used to preserve the existing historic district house and create a Habitat for Humanity duplex addition.

76 Webster Park is located in West Newton off Webster Street. Webster Street is parallel to and one block north of Washington Street in West Newton Center. Webster Street starts at Waltham Street (at NCSC, near CVS) and going west it crosses Cherry Street, Elm Street, and Oak Avenue going towards Auburndale. Continue on Webster Street past Oak Ave. and make a right onto the street called Webster Park. The Forte' property at 76 Webster Park is the last one on the right at the end of the loop (gray house). Street parking is available.

\* New England Alternative Transportation Festival This Weekend in Brookline!

Check out New England's largest Alternative Transportation Festival at the Larz Andersen Museum of Transportation in Brookline July 18 & 19th. There will be a large lawn show with a full range of electric, hybrid, fuel cell, liquid natural gas, vegetable oil, solar and other types of vehicles from a full range of manufacturers. Attendees can get \$500 discount on Prius. There will be activities for kids, plus panels on a full range of alternative transportation topics with leading thinkers and plenty of chance to participate in workshops and collaborative learning.

All fuel efficient vehicles including bikes, segways, rollerblades, motorized scooters are included. There will be prizes awarded for best in class in a number of categories as well as interesting talks exploring transportation and vehicle choices of the future, explorations of what different towns are doing in terms of fleet conversion, workshops on fuel conversion, art cars, Segway rides, and much more. Larz Anderson Museum of Transportation 15 Newton St, Brookline, MA Info: <http://www.mot.org/Info/directions.html>. For information on the event or to enter a vehicle please call Alison Sander at 617-868-1582 or check out the web site at [www.AltWheels.org](http://www.AltWheels.org) <<http://www.AltWheels.org>> .

The above information comes from the Brookline counterpart of the Newton Conservators. The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance is a nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization formed in 1987 by a group of concerned citizens to preserve, protect and enhance the open spaces of Brookline, Massachusetts. Since that time, they have grown to be an alliance of 40 neighborhood associations and community groups working to care for Brookline's neighborhood parks, sanctuaries, street trees, playing fields and green spaces. One can contact them at Brookline GreenSpace Alliance, 40 Webster Place, Brookline MA 02445, 617-277-4777, [bgasa@world.std.com](mailto:bgasa@world.std.com), [www.brooklinegreenspace.org](http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org).

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Newton Conservators Nature Notes - Friday, September 19, 2003  
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\* Sunday, September 21, 3-5 pm, Houghton Garden Grand Re-Opening  
(Walk #17 Conservators Guide)

Around the turn-of-the-century Martha Houghton surrounded her Chestnut Hill Spanish Mission-style home with a naturalistic garden featuring a tranquil pond, waterfall rock formation, and an alpine rock garden. Now owned by the City of Newton, the garden has recently undergone a major restoration with funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. The original plan can still be discerned as you stroll its azalea and rhododendron-bordered paths. The Newton Conservators are invited to the re-opening of Houghton Gardens, this Sunday afternoon, September 21 from 3 to 5 pm. Mayor Cohen will preside at a ribbon cutting at 4:00 p.m. This invitation comes from Nancy Avery, a member of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club who has taken an active role in restoration for the garden and received a special award at this year's annual dinner of the Newton Conservators. The entrance location is on Suffolk Road (the left side, as you drive in from Hammond Street). Please call 617-964-1137 for more information.

\* Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series - 2003

Below are the walks in the Fall Walk Series of the Newton Conservators. The walks are free and open to the public. They are organized by Peter Kastner. Please call 617-244-6094 for more information. Consider contacting Peter if you would like to lead a walk in the spring.

\* Sunday September 21-2:00 pm  
The Aqueducts - Newton's Linear Open Space

These annual walks of Newton's two aqueducts have become a favorite walk and Newton and the MWRA continue to plan their future as a more accessible open space for walkers and bicyclists. Explore with us the Sudbury & Cochituate Aqueducts, which run behind backyards and through rarely visited pinewoods and meadows. Meet in the parking lot of the Waban MBTA Station. Trip Leader: Henry Finch 617-964-4488

\* Sunday September 28-2:00 pm  
Charles River Lake District Walk

This walk is an opportunity to view the expansive waters of the Lake District along with intimate trails and the historical Waltham Watch Factory. The trip goes through varied terrain and walkers should wear comfortable shoes and long pants. The program starts at the Auburndale playground and travels along Ware's Cove to the MDC Forest Grove to the Waltham Watch Factory and continues along the north side of the Charles River through Waltham and Weston. The loop is completed by going through Norumbega Park and Lyons Field. Meet at the sandy beach at Ware's Cove near the children's playground equipment at 2:00 PM. Leader Peter Kastner- 617-244-6094

\* Sunday October 5, 2003 2:00 pm  
Kennard Park (Walk #18 Conservators Guide)

A walk along the trails of the Kennard properties, where a 32-acre post-agricultural forest has grown up on 19th century farmland that became an early 20th century gentleman's estate and finally a Newton park, adjacent to Brookline's Lost Pond properties. Explore South Meadow Brook, the mixed and conifer woodlands with colonial stone walls, a red maple swamp with century-old trees, and a sensitive fern marsh. Meet at the main entrance, 246 Dudley Road. Trip leader Larry Burdick, 617-584-4633.

\*Sunday October 12, 8:00 am  
Nahanton Park - Fall Bird Migration

The mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows adjacent to the Charles River makes Nahanton a wonderful place to see the fall bird migration. Enter the park at the Winchester Street entrance in order to reach the upper parking area located a short way down the road on the left opposite an open field. This entrance is off Winchester Street between the Charles River Country Club golf course and the Jewish Community Center. Please gather at the upper parking area at 8:00 a.m. Call Cris Criscitiello, an experienced birder. (phone - 617-244-6397) Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as established enthusiasts are welcome!

\* Saturday October 18 2:00 pm  
CPA Forte Property and Dolan Pond Conservation Area (Walk #4 Conservators Guide)

The Dolan Pond Conservation Area will be improved due to additional CPA funds that have secured the adjacent Forte property. This area has just been renovated under a federally funded Community Development Block Grant with new nature overlooks, steps, information kiosks, handicapped parking, accessible stabilized soil pathways and even a boardwalk through this wetland habitat. While only eight acres in size, it contains four vernal pools and a great diversity of plant, animal, and bird life. Join Ted Kuklinski to see this wonderful area and how the recent CPA funding will be used to improve this conservation area and add needed housing. The Walk starts at the Webster Park entrance. The street called Webster Park is off Webster Street, three blocks west of Cherry Street in West Newton. Wheelchairs welcome! Contact Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222, [dolanpond@aol.com](mailto:dolanpond@aol.com), <http://www.dolanpond.org>).

\* Sunday October 26, 2003 2:00 pm  
Newton Cemetery

Created in the 19th century naturalistic style pioneered by Mr. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Newton Cemetery is beautifully landscaped. Call Peter Kastner (244-6094) for information about the walk to view the variety of specimen trees that have been planted there. Meet by the administrative building just inside the main entrance on Walnut Street.

\* Sunday -November 2, 2:00 pm  
Kessler Woods- Impact of New CPA funding (Walk #20 Conservator Guide)

Explore the impact that recent CPA funding to acquire the NSTAR land for open space and housing will have upon the Kessler trail and Saw Brook area. Explore how this new plan will be integrated into the existing trails, wooded upland and wetland areas. The woods are an excellent area for bird watching, nature studies and has dramatic puddingstone and rock out cropping. Call John Regosin, 244-0736, for information. He led a similar walk last spring when plans were being developed to save the NSTAR area. This time he will review with you the impact the city's successful bid will have upon this area. He will bring maps and aerial photographs and would discuss Kessler Nstar acquisition. Meet at the Saw Mill Brook parking area at the corner of Vine.

\* Newton Conservators Fall Lecture 2003 - November 17, 2003, 7 pm  
Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library  
Land Protection: Now or Never.....Forever  
Mass Audubon's New Land Protection Strategy

Across the Commonwealth, unprecedented rates of development are resulting in accelerated habitat loss and fragmentation. In much of the state, the "window of opportunity" to make a

meaningful difference in the conserved landscape is only 10 -15 years. In order to meet this challenge and effectively advance its mission of Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts, Mass Audubon has recently completed a new Land Protection Strategy to guide its future land protection efforts. The foundation of this plan is a new Geographic Information System data layer that will allow Mass Audubon to be focused, selective and proactive in its land protection work.

Bob Wilber, the Director of Land Protection for Mass Audubon (will present a lecture at 7 pm on Monday evening, November 17 at the Druker Auditorium of the Newton Free Library (330 Homer Street). Come learn more about how Mass Audubon ([www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org)), the largest conservation organization in New England, is working to Protect the Nature of Massachusetts and how you can help. Bob began his career in 1983 with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's Land Acquisition & Protection Program, where he worked until 1996, serving as director for the last seven years with that state agency. He served for three years in a similar capacity with the Massachusetts Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, prior to joining the Audubon staff in July of 2000. Bob is a lifelong Massachusetts resident, and resides in Stow with his family, where he is a current member of the town's Conservation Trust and Open Space and Community Preservation Committees. During his 20 year career in land conservation, Bob has been directly involved in the permanent protection of more than 25,000 acres in Massachusetts.

This free lecture is co-sponsored by the Newton Free Library, ([www.ci.newton.ma.us/library/](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/library/), 617-796-1360) and the Newton Conservators, [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org), Newton's own organization that promotes the protection and preservation of open space. Bob Wilber's lecture is the sixth in our twice yearly, Newton Conservators Lecture Series, which features renowned experts in areas related to the open space mission of the Conservators. As part of their educational outreach, the programs are free and open to the public. Many thanks are due to Beth Purcell, Publicity Director of the Newton Free Library, for her assistance in cosponsoring and promoting the lecture series over the past three years. Membership information for Mass Audubon and the Newton Conservators will be available at the lecture. Copies of our new Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands will be available for purchase as well, a great holiday gift for your conservation minded friends! For further information on this event, please contact the Conservators coordinator for this event, Anne Pearson ([amp1243@rcn.com](mailto:amp1243@rcn.com)).

#### \* About the Newton Conservators

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization that promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> or contact us at 617-969-6222 or the address below.

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.

You will also receive a copy of the Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails

in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands", a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton. This outstanding new publication replaces our previous paper map guides and was put together with the tremendous effort of Judy Hepburn, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Caldwell-Stair. It is priced at \$7.95 (free with membership) and should be showing up soon in local bookstores. It fits nicely in your back pocket and will be a terrific companion to introducing you to places in Newton you never knew existed.

\* About Newton Nature Notes

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Conservators Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to <mailto:dolanpond@aol.com> or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). Newton Conservators Nature Notes is automatically sent to members of the Newton Conservators who provide their email addresses as one of the membership benefits. You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic newsletter to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel might be interested in the information contained herein.