



Newton Conservators
E-Bulletin
 Tuesday, December 1, 2020

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

December!

It may not feel like December with the temperature of 60 degrees today but indeed "Winter is Coming!" Today is #GivingTuesday and you have probably been swamped with emails today from many worthy organizations. Hoping you give Newton Conservators a thought as well to support our open space advocacy work in Newton. Watch for our annual membership renewal letter coming soon. We are so grateful for your continued support!

If you have an interest in birds, check out a free webinar this evening at 7 pm by Peter Alden, as well as info on the annual Christmas Bird Count later this month on Dec 20. Wednesday and Thursday this week, Newton Planning Department has some interesting outreach sessions on the topic of zoning in Newton (see Events below).

If you enjoyed Barbara Bates' very popular turkey talk webinar before Thanksgiving, check out this recent [Boston Globe article](#) on our webinars by reporter Lexi Matthews.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) and now even on TikTok (follow @newtonconservators)!

Events

#GivingTuesday December 1, 2020

Help our mission of protecting and preserving open space in Newton!

#GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement, unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world that will take place this year on December 1, 2020. At a time when we are all experiencing the pandemic, generosity is what brings people of all races, faiths, and political views together across the globe. Generosity gives everyone the power to make a positive change in the lives of others and is a fundamental value anyone can act on. Newton Conservators is proud to be a part of this global celebration of giving.



As you give back to your community, we hope you will continue to support our advocacy, education, and work for our open spaces. There are many ways to give back, including renewing or gifting a membership, adding an extra donation, or sharing our work with friends.

Perhaps consider joining the Newton Conservators (or renewing at a higher level if you are already a member), or purchasing a gift membership for someone else who is passionate about open space. You can renew or join the Newton Conservators online to help us to continue this important work in 2021, our 60th Anniversary year! You may join by contributing as little as \$35 a year, but larger contributions are gratefully appreciated!

Newton Conservators is a 501c(3) charitable organization, and all membership contributions and other donations are tax deductible as provided by law, as no goods or services are provided in exchange for your gift. Did you know the recent CARES Act Expands Tax Deductions for Charitable Giving?

- If you do not itemize deductions, you may nonetheless take an “above-the-line” deduction for up to \$300 in cash gifts you make in 2020 to the Newton Conservators.
- If you do itemize, you may deduct up to the entire amount of your adjusted gross income (AGI) for cash gifts you make in 2020, without reference to the 60 percent limitation that would otherwise apply.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the CARES Act and charitable giving.

Click [HERE](#) to make your 2020 charitable gift to the Newton Conservators.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Newton Conservators or to renew your membership.

Your membership includes a subscription to the printed or online [Newton Conservators Newsletter](#) and optional 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 Walking Trails in Newton’s Park and Conservation Lands**, a handy trail guide to the conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

For existing members, we will also be mailing out our annual renewal letter in the near future.

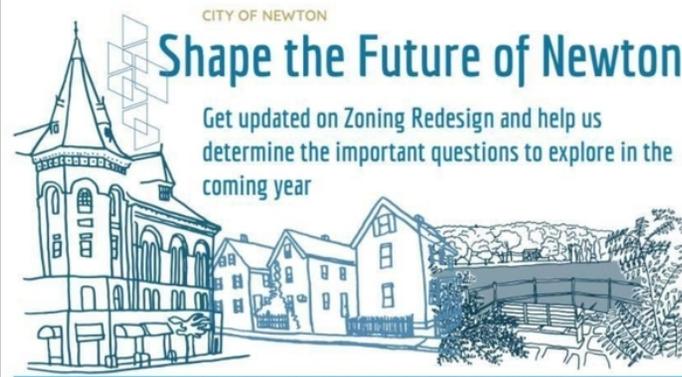
Tuesday, December 1, 7 pm
Birds and the Spread of Invasive Plant Species
Peter Alden, Naturalist / Birding Expert

As winter approaches, berries and the seeds of invasive plants have become a food source for birds. Author and naturalist Peter Alden, co-founder of the Bio Blitz, will present the mixed feelings environmentalists have to this phenomenon. We want to support declining bird populations but how to keep the new plants from taking over other native species? Peter will share stories and photos and welcomes questions. Here is a [signup link](#) if you care to join the free webinar offered by Peter, who has also spoken a number of times for the Newton Conservators in the past.



Peter has a new website, <https://www.sparkbirding.com/> with resources for beginning birders. Why Spark Birding? As the website describes: "Do you recall a time when you were first fully entranced by the outdoors? Was there a defining moment that transformed you into a passionate observer nature? This memory was a spark moment." You can read some of these birding spark stories [here](#) or [submit](#) your own for the site.

Wednesday, December 2, 7 to 9 pm
Thursday, December 3, 12 to 2 pm
Zoning Redesign Community Engagement Outreach
(from the Newton Planning Department)



CITY OF NEWTON
Shape the Future of Newton
 Get updated on Zoning Redesign and help us determine the important questions to explore in the coming year

What is zoning? Zoning law regulates how land is used across the city and shapes buildings, homes, blocks, neighborhoods and village centers.

What is Zoning Redesign? Zoning Redesign is the City of Newton's multi-year effort to update, clarify and rewrite Newton's Zoning Ordinance so that it reinforces our goals. Learn more at www.newtonma.gov/zoningredesign

Why is this important? Zoning matters for sustainability, housing, the viability of our village centers, and how our city looks and feels. We want to share with you where we are, where we're headed, and hear from you now and in 2021.

We are reaching out to invite you to community engagement events and efforts for Zoning Redesign. We are focused on (1) updating Newton community members and on (2) getting feedback on what questions the City Council should focus on in 2021.

Please join us for a forum that includes a presentation, ample time for small group discussion, and opportunities for you to tell us what questions should be explored and how to best communicate with you in the coming year. These will take place on **December 2nd from 7-9pm and December 3rd from 12-2pm EST.** [Please RSVP here.](#)

Please see additional information for these two events:

(1) Here are the Zoom links and information for the two events (these will also be posted on the Zoning Redesign website the day before):

- Wednesday, December 2, 7-9pm
 - [Zoom link](#)
 - Meeting ID: 891 4601 6653
 - Passcode: 544508
- Thursday, December 3, 12-2pm
 - [Zoom link](#)
 - Meeting ID: 857 7799 5852
 - Passcode: 169464

(2) Here are the prompts for our break-out discussion groups, in case you want to reflect on these questions ahead of time:

- What do you want to better understand about Zoning Redesign?
- Which of the Zoning Redesign goals feel most important to you? And why? (*Remember, we're planning for the next 50 years and beyond!*)
- What currently excites you the most about Zoning Redesign? Or conversely, what worries you?
- How would you like to be engaged for Zoning Redesign in 2021?

(3) Lastly, we will offer the option to break-out room attendees to answer the prompts through an interactive Google Document called a 'JAM Board,' alongside the live conversation. You can familiarize yourself with this software by [watching this YouTube tutorial](#)

RSVP, sign up for updates, and access info at www.newtonma.gov/zoningredesign. For questions or concerns, email zoningredesign@newtonma.gov.

Sunday December 20, 2020, 7:00 am - 12:00 pm
Join the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Newton

This year's annual **Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** in Newton takes place on **Sunday, December 20th** starting around 7 am. After all, the early birder gets the birds counted! This is the 121st year of the CBC and helps to measure changes in population of our avian species (and perhaps more global trends such

as climate change). Perhaps you have heard that North America has lost more than 1 in 4 birds in the last 50 years. How do we know? Partially from [the annual Christmas Bird Count!](#)



This year, due to Covid, the count will be a little different than in past years. Sadly, we will not be meeting inside as usual in Newton Highlands for a kick-off with donuts and hot beverages. Plans are being formulated as to how this Newton CBC will work. Small teams will be organized which will meet in the field at designated locations. Masks will be required and distancing will be maintained. Car travel to the birding sites for those not in the same household will be independent.

Possibly there will be a small owling team at 5 am. Otherwise, there are 4 or 5 somewhat regular birding routes in different parts of the city which will commence at 7 am. Folks will be asked to sign up ahead of time and assigned to a group with a leader and given a meeting place. Groups will be small. Leaders will likely call or email in their results to a compiler who will consolidate the Newton results and provide to the overall Greater Boston Count.

The most common question of course is “how do you know you don’t count the same bird twice?” Well you can’t know for certain but we try our best! Your questions about the count can probably be answered at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird>. If you are interested in joining the count this year, please email **Pete Gilmore** (petegilmore79@gmail.com).

To tune up your bird ID skills, check out Pete Gilmore’s video photo talk about [Fall Birds at Cold Spring Park!](#)



Newton Conservators Fall 2020 Newsletter

The most recently published issue of the [Newton Conservators Newsletter](#) is available online and contains the following items of interest:

- [Turtle Watching in Newton](#)
- [Seasonal Changes of a Vernal Pool](#)
- [2020 Fall Nature Webinars](#)
- [2020 Fall President’s Message](#)
- [Invasive Plant](#) Info



NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • FALL 2020

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Turtle Watching in Newton

Everyone seems focused on bird watching, but I like to watch turtles. And now is a great time to watch them in Newton. My "top turtle in Newton" is probably the eastern painted turtle because it is the champion basker and, like a wood frog, can freeze without dying in the cold New England winters. And it is also the most common turtle in Massachusetts, making it the easiest to watch.



Champions at basking, Eastern painted turtles are the only known turtles to have scales arranged in straight lines across their carapaces.

Painted turtles are reptiles and cold blooded. To keep their temperature warm enough, they climb onto logs and rocks to lie in the sun with their legs, neck, and head extended as far out of their shells as possible to maximize the sun's warmth on their skin. This can mean balancing on their bottom shell (called the plastron) while they bask. Painted turtles will bask for at least several hours a day and have been known to bask on the backs of logs and, more startlingly, on the backs of snapping turtles! I find this last claim to be somewhat odd since

snapping turtles often bask in the water, slightly below the surface, making them look like shadows in ponds.

In addition to painted turtles, the snapping turtle is common in Newton. You can observe both of these turtles around ponds and streams from spring until the fall weather turns cold. Late July and August can be an especially engaging time to watch since both turtles' eggs usually hatch then.



Male eastern painted turtle's middle claws on front feet are 2-3 times longer, distinguishing them from females.

How can you identify the turtle you are watching?

I look at the color of the turtle's skin and shell, plus the shape of the shell and size of the turtle. I'll describe only the two most common Newton turtles, but you can find excellent turtle "fact sheets" at:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/turtles-of-massachusetts> for all our native turtles.

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Watch for our Winter Edition coming soon this Month!

PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



We would be very grateful for your continued support by joining Newton Conservators or renewing your membership. Perhaps, consider renewing at a higher level, adding an extra donation, or purchasing a gift membership for someone else who is passionate about open space.

You can renew or join the Newton Conservators online at <https://newtonconservators.org/renewal-2020/>. A link to our annual members' renewal letter outlining last year's activities can also be found at the above link.

Donations may be made at our secure link <https://newtonconservators.123signup.com/donation/21167>. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we also accept donations for a number of affiliated local open space groups including Friends of Webster Woods, Friends of Cold Spring Park, Friends of Houghton Garden, the Riverside Trails Working Group, a Trails Fund, and others. As part of the donation process, you can specify a group in the "Comments" section of the form. Thanks so much!

Mission: The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

- E-Bulletin Editor & President Ted Kuklinski, Newton Conservators (ebulletin@newtonconservators.org)

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