

## 2022 Officers and Directors

Chris Hepburn,  
*Co-President*

William Hagar,  
*Co-President*

Alice Ingerson,  
*Vice President*

Michael Clarke,  
*Secretary*

Katherine Howard,  
*Treasurer*

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Dan Brody

Bonnie Carter

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Maurice Gilmore

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Ken Mallory

George Mansfield

Nyssa Patten

Larry Smith

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AnnaMaria Abernathy

Margaret Albright

Lisle Baker

John Bliss

Lee Breckenridge

Lalor Burdick

Lucy Caldwell-Stair

Michael Collora

Ann Dorfman

Bart Hague

Alison Leary

William Leitch

Don Lubin

Brooks Mathewson

Eric Olson

Richard Primack

Eric Reenstierna

Jon Regosin

Patricia Robinson

Jane Sender

William Shaevel

Diane Tillotson

Willis Wang

Bruce Wenning

## Hands-On Nature for Children

For the first time this fall, Newton Conservators offered walks especially for children and their parents. Barbara Bates and Sam Corbin, board members of Newton Conservators, led the walks at two different locations: Dolan Pond and Riverside Park (by the Charles River). We played nature-themed games to train eyes for camouflaged animals. This was to demonstrate how predators catch prey and how those prey avoid the predators, and to illustrate how deer can get out of balance with their habitat. Our walks through the landscape also revealed treasures like the remains of a turtle nest, where everyone got a chance to feel the remnants of turtle eggs!

Judging by the reactions from both children and parents, everyone had lots of fun. We plan on offering more walks for families with young children again soon.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM: PHOTOS 1, 3, 4, COURTESY BARBARA BATES, PHOTOS 2, 5, SAM CORBIN

# Newton Conservators' 60th Anniversary Annual Meeting – October 27, 2021



Despite our best intentions of having a traditional annual dinner meeting since early 2020, making reservations at American Legion Post 440 and arranging a caterer for a delicious dinner, we have had to cancel in-person plans four times already due to the dogged persistence of Covid 19.

Last year, thanks to our webinar experience, we managed to have our first ever virtual annual meeting and election all via Zoom — including an awards announcement and an inspiring talk by Newton native Sam Jaffe remotely from the Caterpillar Lab in New Hampshire. After the optimism early this summer, when things were looking up, the dreaded Delta variant put us all in a Covid-induced funk once again. Our plans for a big in-person 60th Anniversary Celebration this Fall were again put on hold. We persisted this year, and once again we held our annual meeting virtually on Wednesday, October 27.

Outgoing president Ted Kuklinski welcomed the participants and voiced the acknowledgment that we are on the ancestral land of the Massachusetts and Pawtucket tribes. Ted also noted the organization's gratitude to the sponsors for the annual meeting program over the years. Newton Girl Scout Troop 3451, which provided table centerpieces in years past for our dinner meetings, surprised us with a video of the construction of a virtual centerpiece for our meeting.

The treasurer's and audit committee reports on 2020 were sent in advance to meeting registrants and are available on our website ("About Us/Board of Directors"). Special thanks were given to the committee members and especially to treasurer Katherine Howard. The organization's assets increased in 2020 due to strong donations and growth in the investment value, and membership increased as well as more folks discovered the value of our outdoor spaces and attended some of our free programs.



Ted Kuklinski provided a summary of organization's activity over the past year, reporting on the change in leadership, the grants program, the efforts on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ), and on our recent awards given out the previous month. He also provided updates of our land management, conservation restrictions, invasive removal, and land stewardship endeavors. Our public outreach continues through our recently modernized website, our walks and webinars series, the newsletter, e-bulletins, and social media. We also have vibrant liaisons with friends' groups, the Riverside Greenway project, the Pollinator Working Group, and the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.



Nominating committee chair, Pete Gilmore, presented the slate of officers and directors. The slate was elected unanimously with one abstention. Taking over the reins as co-presidents were two experienced Conservators, last year's VP, Chris Hepburn, along with Bill Hagar (a former president). Alice Ingerson, a new board member this past year, assumed the vice presidency



while Katherine Howard and Mike Clarke continue as treasurer and secretary respectively. New to our board this year

was Samantha Corbin. AnnaMaria Abernathy and Diane Tillotson joined our Advisory Board this year.





Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, one of the recipients of our most recent Environmentalist of the Year Award, remarked on the contributions the Newton Conservators has made over the last six decades, particularly focusing on the recent acquisition of Webster Woods.



The board of directors of Newton Conservators bestowed its first ever Lifetime Achievement Award upon AnnaMaria Abernathy for her decades of invaluable work in preserving and maintaining open space in Newton. AnnaMaria was a member of the board from the late 1960s through 2021, President from 1984 to 1986, and served as secretary from 2003 through 2020, and received our Environmentalist of the Year Award in 1993.

During her first two decades on the board, AnnaMaria was instrumental in preserving 13 acres of what had been the historic Norumbega Park, now the Norumbega Park Conservation Area in Auburndale. Everyone who enjoys our parks and conservation areas across Newton owes a debt of gratitude to AnnaMaria for her work to preserve them.

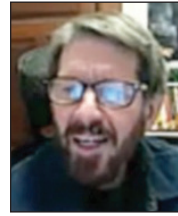
Various longtime members of the Conservators recounted episodes in the organization's history with which they were most familiar in "A 60 Year Retrospective," beginning appropriately with AnnaMaria Abernathy. She reviewed the time when booming development and institutional expansion caused a group of people concerned for the city's remaining parks and wildlife habitats to form the Newton Conservators in 1961 to preserve open space. She noted that she was fortunate to learn from other women of that time such as Helen Heyn, Thelma Fleischman, and Jean Husher. In later years, she cited the importance of leaders such as Sarah Barnett, John Bliss, Bart Hague, Peter Kastner, and Lisle Baker.



*Environmental Science Program*

She commented on the early successes of the Conservators including Norumbega Park and part of the Webster Conservation Area, and remarked on the establishment of Ordway Park, the Conservators role in the creation of the conservation areas at Kennard, Houghton Garden, Dolan

Pond, and Sawmill Brook, as well as the establishment of the Environmental Science Program (ESP).



David Backer related the later history of the ESP noting that the Conservators played a major role in keeping this summer program running for over 50 years — developing the next generation of environmentalists. He shared an engaging video where participants in the program related how important the ESP was in their lives.



Judy Hepburn described the evolution of our popular trail guide publication from its inception in 1981 to the current spiral bound version produced by Judy, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Stair, complete with info on each parcel along with well thought-out maps showing trails and other features.

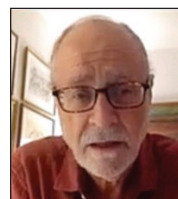
Mike Clarke provided some of the history of the

Conservators in the

1980s and 1990s when Flowed Meadow and Nahanton Park were established, and a grants

program started. Mike introduced the Conservators'

role in passing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) that enabled the city to purchase land adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area and partner with Habitat for Humanity and the Newton Housing Authority to create several units of affordable housing. Mike noted that during Beth Schroeder's tenure we published our beautiful and useful Almanac.



Doug Dickson explained the role of the Conservators in renovating Weeks Field by coordinating with neighborhood and soccer interests. This type of coalition building of housing, historic, and recreation interests, with leadership from

*Continued on page 4*

Jim Broderick, helped bring about the passage of the CPA in Newton by a narrow margin in a once in a lifetime opportunity. The early adoption allowed a doubling of CPA funds due to a high match percentage early on. There were great open space opportunities to use CPA for such projects as Kessler Woods and Angino Farm, which otherwise may have been lost. The role of the Conservators in holding CRs was institutionalized by the legal requirement of CRs on CPA acquired property. Dickson remarked on the importance of looking back over the past 60 years and taking stock, taking pride in the past and continuing the good work going forward.



Jane Sender then told of her experience as president, during which time we also finalized the conservation restriction on the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, thanks to a collaboration with City Councilor Lisle Baker. She also noted that we took on our first conservation restriction on a private property, the

Wilson family's beautiful, wooded lot with a public access path through the property — a complicated process that the Conservators helped expedite. Saving even small open space areas in places like Newton can be crucial for wildlife.



Beth Wilkinson pointed out our important legal role in holding and monitoring conservation restrictions (CRs) for the city on portions of the Crystal Lake shoreline including #20 Rogers St. next to the Crystal Lake bath house, Elgin Street, the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course,

Newton Community Farm, 30 Wabasso St. (next to Purgatory Cove), Webster Park (adjacent to Dolan Pond), and the Waban Hill Reservoir at Heartbreak Hill Park. Chris Hepburn has made sure our CR monitoring procedures are in place and followed.

Beth noted the importance of our website ([newtonconservators.org](http://newtonconservators.org)), which was established in the 1990s, as an invaluable resource for Newton

that has been enormously improved upon since. Our printed newsletter has been increasingly important for sharing our work with members and the community. In 2015, we began a collaboration with the Riverside Greenway Working Group, which has been supported by the Solomon Foundation and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) grants. The work is ongoing, with many more exciting connections to be reestablished as part of the redevelopment of the Riverside area. Rehabilitation of the Pony Truss Bridge was done in 2013, and the Pony Truss Trail was completed just this past year.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

*Pollinator Garden at Newton City Hall*

to establish a pollinator demonstration garden at city hall.

Beth noted that our invasive plants program, led by Katherine Howard, both educates the public about invasives and removes or manages invasives in our city's open spaces. A grant from Newton

Conservators was used



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

*Bare pond in Webster Woods*

Our most major accomplishment in the past few years was our work with the city to preserve the 17-acre portion of Webster Woods that was owned by Boston College and was at risk of being developed. Beth described the whole community

working together to preserve the land through a wonderful and inspiring process that took more than four years, ending in December 2019. Walks, signage, articles, and even buttons with a salamander mascot all helped raise awareness. She

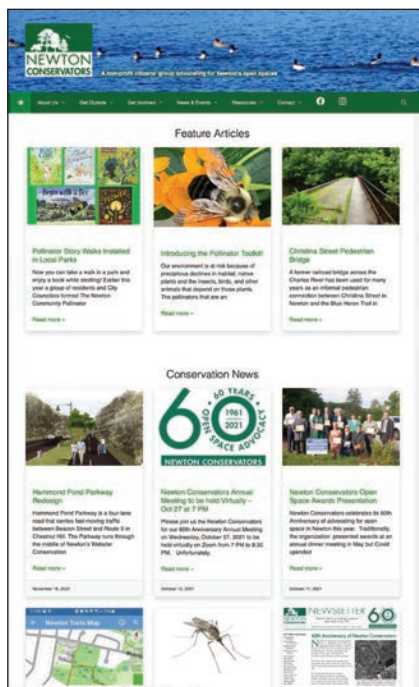
credited this success to the involvement of many organizations (Conservators, Friends of Webster Woods), the City (Mayor Fuller, Councilors, Planning, Legal, CPC, Working Groups), and ordinary citizens.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

*Invasive plant pullers at Dolan Pond*

Incoming Co-President, Chris Hepburn, discussed how the Newton Conservators' 60 years of accomplishment has made a





difference in Newton and the ways in which we will continue to preserve and protect its open space through our many outreach programs including the newsletter, website, social media, walks, talks, webinars, and our grants program to fund environmentally oriented projects. We will continue to hold and monitor CRs for the city including those for CPA land acquisitions, which require CRs, as well as strive for CRs on all Newton parks and conservation land. In the next year or so we expect to produce a new trails and maps booklet for park and conservation land.



### Conservation Restriction (CR) Monitoring



- In Process (CPA Acquisitions)
  - Kessler Woods
  - Webster Woods
- City
  - Crystal Lake
  - Elgin Street Conservation Land
  - Newton Community Farm
  - Newton Commonwealth Golf Course
  - Rogers Street (#20)
  - Waban Hill Reservoir – Heartbreak Hill Park
  - Wabasso Street (#3)
  - Webster Park (near Dolan Pond)
- Newton Conservators
  - Awtrey Dell
  - Dexter Woods – Prospect Park
  - Ordway Park
- Private
  - Bracebridge Road (Wilson Conservation Land)

Co-president Bill Hagar thanked our membership for its past support and asked for their contributions to continue

and for them to consider volunteering for our various action groups. In this way we hope to continue our mission for another 60 years and beyond. He adjourned the official meeting, but many participants stayed around to continue the discussion on Zoom informally.

Please take heart for the future! With Covid hopefully waning, with kids getting vaccinated, folks masking up more, and more people getting first shots and boosters, local society may achieve some degree of herd immunity. We may then be able to have a true traditional celebration back at Post 440 on May 4, 2022, where we can celebrate our 60 years face to face.



While new open space in Newton is becoming harder to come by, Newton Conservators will be on the alert so that when we look back in another 10, 20, 50, or 60 years, we will continue to have made a difference! ♦

✍ Ted Kuklinski and Michael J. Clarke, *(with thanks to Dan Brody)*



## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

**YES, count me in! I want to be a nature steward and help Newton Conservators protect and preserve the natural areas in our community.**

**Please renew/accept my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Directors' Circle | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Membership          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron            | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Membership      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student Membership         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sustaining Member  | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution \$_____ |

**Want to make an even bigger impact?  
Help us support these special funds:**

Woodcock Meadow \$\_\_\_\_\_ Trails Fund \$\_\_\_\_\_

Ordway Endowment Fund \$\_\_\_\_\_

Land Stewardship Areas \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

(Dexter Rd., Bracebridge Rd.) \$\_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_

Memberships run for the calendar year. All new members receive *Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands*.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to volunteer!  
Please email me.

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. and send to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, or visit [newtonconservators.org/membership/](http://newtonconservators.org/membership/) to renew or join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at [president@NewtonConservators.org](mailto:president@NewtonConservators.org).

# History of Newton Parks, Playgrounds & Recreation:

## Part 3. The Commission and The Superintendent

**Editor's Note:** This is the third in a series of articles by board member Michael J. Clarke about Newton parks, playgrounds & recreation. The extensive references and a list of Newton parks and playgrounds prior to 1912 are available on the Newton Conservators' website <https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters>.

**P**layground Commission.<sup>1</sup> As the playground movement gained momentum nationally around the turn of the 20th century, the demand for active recreation facilities grew. Consequently, the Playground Commission was established on April 2, 1912, when Mayor Charles E. Hatfield appointed the following members: William D. Brewer, Chairman, Mrs. George H. Wilkins, Albert P. Carter, William F. Garcelon, and Charles F. Johnson, Jr. They appropriated \$5000 to be expended by the Playground Commission to supervise the public playground of the city.<sup>2</sup>

At their fifth meeting in May 1912, the Playground Commission offered Mr. Ernst Hermann, the head supervisor of the Cambridge playgrounds, the position of supervisor at a salary of \$1,200 per annum. Mr. Hermann was to give his whole summer and such time during the rest of the year as might be necessary for the prosecution of the work.<sup>3</sup> At their next meeting the commission voted to pay \$300 per annum each toward the salaries of three submasters employed by the school committee, who would devote their time outside of school hours to playground work.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Hermann, who visited the playgrounds on a motorcycle provided by the city,<sup>5</sup> developed a plan for supervising the playgrounds during the summer<sup>6</sup> and appointed staff for the fall.<sup>7</sup>

The following playgrounds were transferred from the Forestry Department to the new Playground Commission: Newton Center, Newton Lower Falls, Newton Upper Falls, Stearns School, Newton Highlands, Cabot Park, Boyd Park, Allison Park, Auburndale Playground, Islington Park, Waban, and West Newton Common.<sup>8-9</sup> Subsequently, the playground at Thompsonville<sup>10</sup> (Bowen) was added, followed by those at Eden Avenue,<sup>11</sup> Farlow Park, Burr School, and Peirce School. Mr. Hermann's plan for supervision of the playgrounds provided that most playgrounds were staffed daily with both male and female supervisors.<sup>12</sup> The Forestry Department continued to maintain the playgrounds under a budget and instructions approved by the Playground Commission.<sup>13</sup>

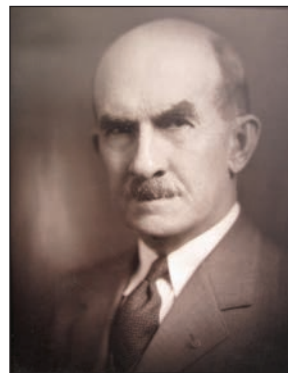
While the Superintendent of Playgrounds assembled the budget, the commission revised and submitted it to the mayor. The Chair of the Commission carefully monitored the expenses and in 1915, the Superintendent

of Playgrounds was instructed to provide all commission members with copies of the monthly financial and billing statements.<sup>14</sup> The commission interacted directly with the mayor and aldermen on budgets regarding the playgrounds.<sup>14</sup> However, the hiring and firing of staff and the programs at the playgrounds were left to Mr. Hermann.<sup>15</sup>

**Ernst Hermann — Superintendent of Playgrounds:**  
The entry on Ernst Hermann in *Pioneers in Public Recreation* contains the following:

Ernst Hermann, more than any of the other pioneers in recreation, personified the influence of Germany upon the new movement, for he brought from that country a background in the fields of health, physical education, and recreation. A man of tremendous energy, he pioneered in industrial recreation and in physical and mental rehabilitation before becoming one of the first administrators of a playground system. The recreation system he developed in Newton was outstanding for the beauty and utility of its areas. Few teachers of recreation and physical education have exerted a more profound influence over a larger number of students. No one who had the opportunity to know and work with him could forget Ernst Hermann, with his bushy, eyebrows, piercing black eyes, positive ideas, and vast fund of knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

Ernst Hermann was born in Brunswick, Germany in 1869. His father, August Hermann, was a founding leader of the



German playground movement and is credited with introducing rugby, cricket, and baseball to Germany.<sup>17-18</sup> In 1893 Ernst immigrated to America and attended the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, which in 1909 became Wellesley College's Department of Physical Education.<sup>16, 19-20</sup> He began at the State Hospital at Foxboro, Massachusetts, where he introduced practices and methods

in physical and mental rehabilitation that were widely adopted by other institutions.<sup>16</sup>

In 1902 Hermann became the recreation director for the Thomas G. Plant Company, said to be the world's largest shoe factory, in Jamaica Plain, where he supervised the health, welfare, and recreation opportunities for 5,000 male employees. From his industrial experiences he came to believe that "the playground in its broadest conception is the only practical means of counteracting the monotonous drudgery of factory life."<sup>16, 19</sup>

Hermann also worked with school systems in Massachusetts and was quoted as saying, "Recesses should be held as often as time can be spared for them."<sup>21</sup> In 1909 he became an assistant director of Physical Training and Athletics for the city of Boston, which included supervising playgrounds. In 1911, he added Cambridge to his athletics and playground responsibilities. The following year he became the Superintendent of Playgrounds for Newton and the City Director of Physical Education for Somerville.<sup>16, 19</sup>

During the early part of the twentieth century, most areas intended for recreation were designed as "landscape parks" and afforded little opportunity to engage in vigorous games and sports. Hermann was determined to help communities secure recreation areas that would not only be attractive in appearance but would also enable a wide range of activities for children and adults.<sup>16</sup> As a recreation planner and playground administrator, Hermann promoted the acquisition of playgrounds, which he called "an oasis in the desert of the modern city." He viewed a playground without grass, shrubs, trees, and flowers as not a real playground for children.



*Highlands Playground*

National Recreation Association, included vine covered trellises, wooden boundary fences, strategic shrubs and trees, grassy areas, and a roofed sandbox and shelter.<sup>16, 22-23</sup> Hermann<sup>16</sup>, together with Mayor Edwin O. Childs<sup>24</sup>, felt that "A playground properly located, properly designed and laid out, properly maintained and properly supervised, is the greatest real estate asset a city has."

His vision and success in Massachusetts led to the National Recreation Association naming him the chairman of their Recreation and City Planning Committee in 1922. He said,

"Let us have plenty of space, plenty of structures resembling the structures of the old-fashioned farms and yards, plenty



*Boathouse at Allison Playground  
(now Forte Park)*

of apparatus for the training of the whole muscular system, plenty of tools for working the earth and the wood, which have always been our best 'brain builder'."<sup>16, 19</sup>

Hermann perfected the maintenance of ice skating

rinks<sup>25</sup> and designed an ice hockey rink, which allowed for easier ice cleaning and surface handling. He believed that recreation leaders should ascertain what children liked to do and then assist them in their play and that "a 'cut-and-dried' program would cause playground attendance to fall off."<sup>16, 19</sup>



In 1906, Hermann began teaching a gymnasium class for faculty members at Harvard University, which he taught often until he retired in 1940 at the age of 71. Among the other courses he taught were: The Philosophy and Psychology of Play; Organization, Construction, and Equipment of Playgrounds; and Leisure Guidance. In 1926, he taught in the graduate program at the National Recreation School of the Playground and Recreation Association of America in New York, which trained recreation executives through the Department of Agriculture's Extension Service.<sup>16, 19</sup>

In 1916, he began teaching Swedish gymnastics and games at the Sargent School of Physical Education for Girls. Thirteen years later, when the school became a part of Boston University, he became the director of the new Department of Physical Education. As the program expanded to a four-year degree, he became the dean of the department.<sup>26-27</sup> He was also the director of the girls' summer camp, which the Sargent School and then Boston University offered in New Hampshire.<sup>16</sup> ♦

Michael J. Clarke



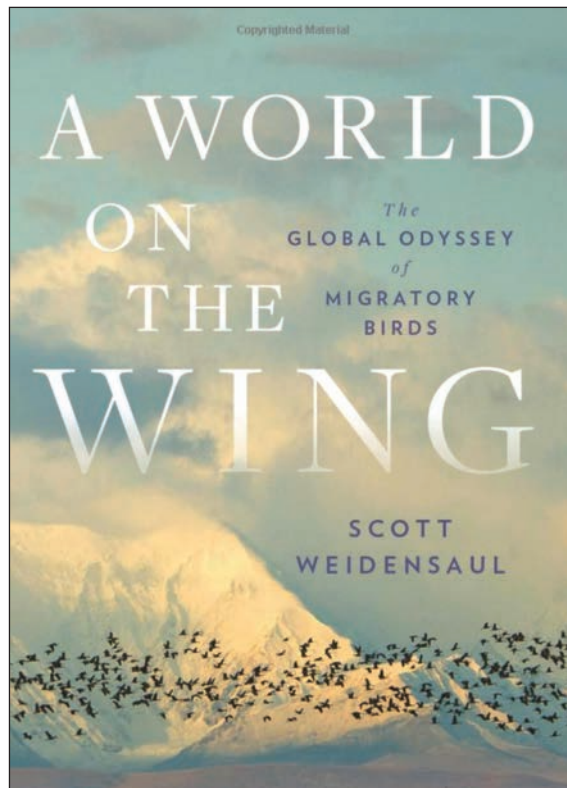
# A World on the Wing, Scott Weidensaul

Scott Weidensaul's latest book focuses on the migration of birds. He is an engaging writer who has worked with many different ornithologists around the world. Using the latest knowledge about the routes and timing of migrations using tiny geolocating devices, he describes the incredible physiological changes that birds must undergo to survive. A few examples from his book indicate the scale of the problems facing whole species of birds and, ultimately, us.

Snowy Owls that visit us each winter are in decline, and the reason is global warming. The Arctic is warming faster than anywhere else in the world, and that affects lemmings, the main food these owls feed to their growing young. In years with fewer lemmings, the owls curtail the number of eggs they lay, or stop nesting entirely. Lemmings live on a "boom and bust" cycle of about four years. Because warmer winters provide less cover for the lemmings, they do not fare well. The big irruptions of Snowy Owls that we see in Massachusetts are due to the increase in first-year birds, resulting from a boom in lemmings the previous summer.

In 1994, on the Scandinavian Peninsula, the lemming population crashed for two decades while Snowy Owls and Arctic foxes largely disappeared. The same thing happened on Greenland in 1998 and remains so today. In the Russian Far East, the lemmings have shifted to an eight-year cycle, and the owls breed less there. On a positive but temporary note, in the eastern Canadian Arctic winters are more severe, and the owls are doing well. The long-term forecast for this region, however, is that the warming trend will catch up there as well.

Another amazing migratory bird is the Bar-tailed Godwit. This is a tall wading shorebird the size of a pigeon. They breed in Alaska and fly non-stop over the Pacific Ocean



for 7,200 miles to New Zealand for the winter. This takes eight or nine days of uninterrupted flight with no food, and they sleep by using only one hemisphere of their brains at a time. This requires navigational skills far beyond human comprehension. On their return flight in the spring, they stop on the wide tidal flats of the Yellow Sea on the northern coast of China,.

Global warming is beginning to erase tidal flats and coastal marshes around the world, including here in Massachusetts. There continues to be human development along the Yellow Sea area including big seawalls to protect the developments from the rising seas. Under natural circumstances, these flats and our coastal marshes would shift inland, but seawalls will prevent this. We humans will then have to live with consequences

of the absence of these natural coastal buffer zones. The creatures that depend on those zones will become extinct or move. But move where?

Closer to home is the Northeast Motus Collaboration. This refers to a system of tracking stations with a radio receiver that picks up the signal from a tiny transmitter weighing, in some cases, a fraction of a gram. These transmitters are on hummingbirds, monarch butterflies, and some dragonflies as well as on many larger animals. They all transmit on the same frequency.

The idea to put up such a system came from a Canadian organization, Birds Canada. The idea has spread. Weidensaul's team erected 20 of these stations, one about every 30 miles, from near

Philadelphia to Lake Erie, diagonally across the state of Pennsylvania. His team has also put more of them up in New England.

Scientists are tracking many different birds and animals; each station picks up the signal from any of these tagged animals



Lemming



and stores the data for retrieval. If you google “Motus” <https://motus.org/> you get the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, a program of Birds Canada. On their web site there is a map with little spots of light where the tracking stations are located. There are four in the greater Boston area, and a lot of them in the northeastern United States. You can even download data from these stations, as the data is open to everyone.

In chapter four of the book, Weidensaul describes the usefulness of eBird, a free citizen science smartphone app. Observers can locate their position with the app and then record how many species they have seen. The data has shown that large cities are migration hotspots, and that many birds are attracted to the lights of our cities.

Related to this topic, and in connection with the Newton Conservators’ invasive pulls, we have this quote from the book: “There may be a lesson and a silver lining, in this news. The lesson is that urban land conservation may be far more important for migratory birds than anyone has ever realized — not just protecting land from development but improving and restoring urban parks (many of which are overrun with exotic invasive plants of limited value to birds, and which are managed more for aesthetics and human recreation instead of wildlife). In terms of producing the maximum value to birds in the greatest need, restoring habitat in a fairly small urban park may be more important than setting aside a significantly larger tract of land in some more distant area.”

He refers to birds in the greatest need here. The book outlines the enormous stresses that migrating birds are under. The stopover points along a migration route are key to restoring the fat reserves that birds need to continue and to survive the trip.

There are various stories of renewal and hope in the book. An example took place in the Central Valley of California. There, the agriculture of the rice fields requires farmers to flood the fields each fall to help clear the stubble from the previous year. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) knew that wading birds had historically used the wetlands in the Central Valley as a migration stopover in huge numbers. Agriculture had stopped this.

Buying back the land was prohibitively expensive. Using eBird data and knowing that the shorebirds were using the Central Valley wetlands for a few weeks, the TNC held a “reverse auction” in which farmers were paid to allow the TNC to flood their rice fields with less water so that the shorebirds could handle the habitat. The program has been a big success and more of these kinds of successes are described in the book.

This book is a fantastic read for anyone interested in the science connected to migration, but it does not read like a novel. Parts of the book are dense with the research methods, the involved scientists’ work, and the dangers some of them face in the field. The book’s valuable message shows that the global plummeting numbers of birds is a warning. The science is already in place to paint a clear picture for us; as a species, we either listen and act, or, as a species, we will pay. ♦

*A World on The Wing*, Scott Weidensaul, W.W. Norton & Company, 2021.

✿ Pete Gilmore

## MISSION

### Newton Conservators, Inc.

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

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

*The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 60 years ago in June 1961.*

**The Newton Conservators’ Newsletter®** is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the second Friday of the month before the issue is published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to [articles@newtonconservators.org](mailto:articles@newtonconservators.org). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Ted Kuklinski, Michael J. Clarke, Alice Ingerson, and Pete Gilmore.

# Recent Events on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice in Land Conservation

In 2020, with support from the full board, several Newton Conservators' board members formed a "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice" team (DEIJ). This team has been working to review our organization's mission, values, and goals, which include making our open spaces and organization open and welcoming to all. Here are some resources from two recent events the team attended:



## Advancing Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion for Land Trusts

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, September- October 2021

Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna (<https://starluna.net/>) led this three-part learning collaborative. To encourage putting the workshops' lessons into action, each organization was asked to send at least two representatives. The Conservators' DEIJ team worked together on the homework assignments and is now discussing concrete goals and actions for the board to consider.

### Topics covered included:

- the intersecting histories of land conservation and racial injustice
- the implications for land conservation of systemic displacement and residential segregation
- identifying historically excluded and oppressed populations within or near each organization's service area
- reviewing how each organization's structures, policies, and programs may foster exclusion and inequity, and how to change that

A more complete list of topics is available from the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's website: <https://massland.org/programs/workshops>.

### Diversifying Your Nonprofit Board

Sponsored by the Charles River Chamber of Commerce, September 29, 2021

One key takeaway from this panel discussion was that building a diverse board requires more than appointing new board members: it also requires building authentic, everyday working relationships with diverse communities. The panelists included staff and board members of color affiliated with Boston-area diversity consulting firms, the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, and Newton's own New Art Center.

Links to additional details and resources from these two events are available on the Newton Conservators' website's "News" page: <https://newtonconservators.org/news/> ♦

✍ Alice Ingerson



# Support the Newton Conservators through your IRA

.....

Individuals 70½ and older can make a tax-free gift to the Newton Conservators directly from their IRA. Please consider a gift to the Conservators from your 2021 IRA distributions. The benefits to you include the reduction in income subject to tax, even if you don't itemize, and the amount donated counts toward the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). The benefits to the Conservators are immense and allow for us to continue to help preserve open space in Newton. Ask your IRA holder for a simple transfer letter or form. The Newton Conservators is a recognized 501(c)(3) organization.

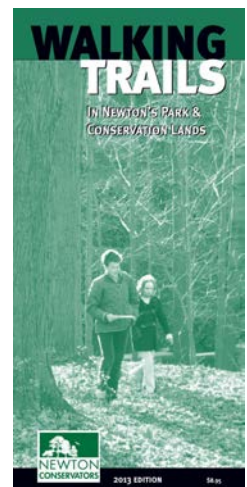
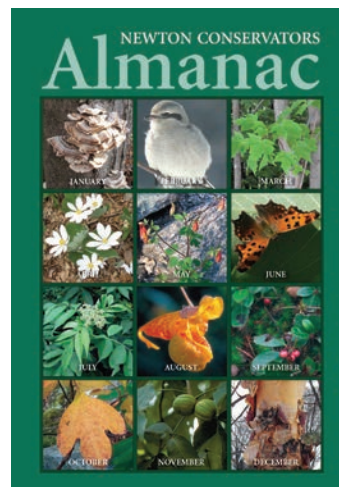
— Thank you.

Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton, MA 02459

## Winter's coming. Enjoy the Beauty!

*Shop online at [newtonconservators.org/publications/](https://newtonconservators.org/publications/) to purchase Newton Conservators' publications. The Almanac is \$19.95 + shipping, and the Trail Guide is \$8.95 + shipping.*

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WINTER ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

*Newton's land trust working to preserve  
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**American Redstart**  
*photo by Haynes Miller*

**Go Green!** ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at [newtonconservators.org/newsletters](https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters). To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at [newtonconservators.org/membership](https://newtonconservators.org/membership)