



**NEWTON  
CONSERVATORS**

SUMMER ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

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## Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Plants and Animals: Endangered Species Conservation in Massachusetts

In September, 2023, to celebrate Climate Week, Governor Healy signed an executive order to advance biodiversity conservation in the Commonwealth. The governor pointed out that “our state is home to towering forests, numerous lakes and ponds, a vast network of rivers, and beautiful marshland, estuaries, and abundant ocean — that clean our air, power our economy, and serve as a home to hundreds of threatened and rare species.”

Although Massachusetts is a conservation leader and has set ambitious land protection goals in the face of climate change, we face a global biodiversity crisis today, and Massachusetts is not immune. More than 400 species are currently listed as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), including 173 animal and 259 plant species. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) tracks the status of these species and works to recover and protect them. Although state-listed species enjoy regulatory protections, they still face many threats, such as habitat loss and

fragmentation, invasive species, emerging diseases, climate change, and alteration of hydrology and other natural processes.

### Drivers of Rarity

Many of our rare species are habitat specialists, requiring very specific habitat types for at least a portion of their life cycles. Some examples of habitats that support disproportionate numbers of rare species are pine barrens, sandplain grasslands and heathlands, river floodplains, calcium-rich wetlands (confined to western MA), and bogs and other peatlands. Other important habitats for rare species include the shores of coastal plain ponds in southeastern MA and coastal beaches. Some of these habitats have been greatly altered by human activity such as damming of rivers, filling of wetlands, wildfire suppression, road construction, and coastal development.

Rarity is a matter of scale. Some species are rare and imperiled in Massachusetts but secure globally or regionally. A good example is the large-leaved goldenrod, a plant that occurs at high elevations in the Berkshires but is much more common

**MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program** (NHESP)

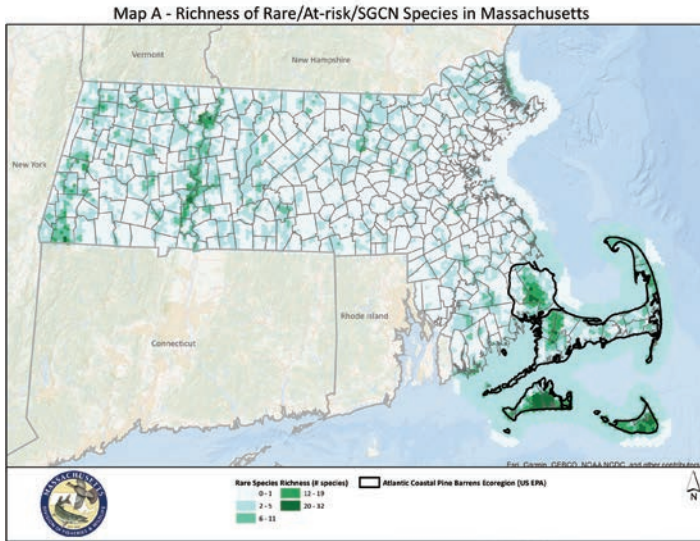
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The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program is responsible for the conservation and protection of hundreds of species that are not hunted, fished, trapped, or commercially harvested in the state, as well as the protection of the natural communities that make up their habitats. [bit.ly/3R9uwbj](https://bit.ly/3R9uwbj)

Continued on page 2

farther north. Other species found in Massachusetts are imperiled regionally or globally. Some of these species, such as the Piping Plover and Red Knot (another shorebird) are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act and MESA. Massachusetts plays a disproportionate role in the conservation of some federally listed species such as the Piping Plover (about 44% of the Atlantic Coast population breeds in MA), and a small role in the conservation of others (e.g., Bog Turtles are mostly found farther south, but do occur in the southern Berkshires).



Map A shows areas of the state with the largest numbers of rare species — rare species richness “hotspots.” Although regions throughout the state support rare species and their habitats, areas with significant concentrations of rare species comprise much of southeastern Massachusetts, including



*Beach Tiger Beetle*

species like the federal and state-listed Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle.

A relatively high proportion of the reptiles and amphibians found in Massachusetts are rare and MESA-listed. This involves 6 out of 10 native freshwater turtle species. In addition to having some specialized habitat requirements, many of these species range widely, making them vulnerable to habitat loss, fragmentation, and road mortality. For



*Blue-spotted Salamander*

considerable distances overland between wetlands to nest and is found primarily in and near the I-495 corridor. This area has experienced significant development and increasing road traffic in recent decades.



*Blanding's Turtle*

Freshwater mussels are another group with a high proportion of listed species due to human alteration of rivers and ponds and impacts of land-use changes on water quality. Spectacular wildflower species like the endangered ram's



*Showy Lady's Slipper*

head and showy lady's slippers are also vulnerable to browsing by excessively high deer populations. In some cases, it has become necessary to erect deer enclosures to protect critically endangered plant populations. Recently, steep declines in certain bee species have led to new listings. For example, the American Bumble Bee used to be widespread in Massachusetts but was listed as critically endangered in 2020 and may now be extirpated in our state.

### Rare Species in Newton

If you visit the state's online Rare Species Viewer and enter “Newton” into the map search, a list of species will appear. Almost all of these are historic and no longer believed to occur in Newton, the exception being the Blue-spotted Salamander, which was last seen in Newton in 2009. Some of these former Newton inhabitants such as the Ringed Boghaunter (a type of dragonfly) and Wood Turtle likely disappeared due to wetland loss or the ditching/piping of streams. Long's bittercress may have disappeared due to damming and disruption of tidal flows in the Charles River. Finally, several of the historic species needed the more open



Wood Turtle

landscape associated with active farming and have become rarer as forests have succeeded fields, even in rural parts of the state. Note that Massachusetts public record law contains an exemption for rare species information, and the NHESP does not release detailed site-

specific information about the locations of rare species due to risk of poaching for the pet trade or other harm.

### Conservation Successes

Over the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to work directly with colleagues to protect and restore

the habitat of many rare species, such as Bog Turtles in the Berkshires and Barrens Buckmoths in Plymouth. Although there are many challenges remaining, there have been many noteworthy successes: the establishment of a robust population of sandplain gerardia (a plant) in Crane Wildlife Management Area on Cape Cod, and the recent recolonization of the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area by the Frosted Elfin Butterfly in response to habitat restoration and increases in the population of its wild lupine host plant. Although the NHESP receives some state general fund support, the program remains dependent on grants and donations to carry out its efforts — and much work remains to be done! You can help support endangered species conservation in Massachusetts by supporting the NHESP. ♦

*— Jon Regosin*

## Annual Meeting 2024

Newton Conservators’ president Alice Ingerson began the Newton Conservators’ 63rd annual meeting at the American Legion Post 44 in Newton by welcoming everyone, including the sponsors, and turning



Nyssa Patten

the podium over to Newton Conservators’ vice president Nyssa Patten for a land acknowledgement. Land acknowledgements have become a tradition since the board’s creation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee several years ago. “We are meeting on land that the Massachusetts people have lived with and cared for over thousands of years,” Nyssa said. “We recognize that the Massachusetts never ceded this land to the ancestors of the people who now claim to own it. At our 2022 annual meeting,

Massachusetts Tribal Elder Elizabeth Solomon asked us to think about ‘how we can be in a reciprocal relationship with nature, neither using it as a resource, nor seeing it as something static to protect.’ She urged us to see this relationship as a ‘continuous flowing,’ in which ‘we give to nature as frequently and as much as we take from nature.’ We hope to build truly reciprocal relationships with nature and people of all backgrounds, including those who have been displaced or excluded from the open spaces for which we advocate.”

Although Mayor Ruthanne Fuller could not be present because of a School Committee budget meeting, Jennifer Steel, Newton’s chief environmental planner, delivered the mayor’s comments with the following observations.



Jennifer Steel

“What an amazing group of conservationists, environmentalists, advocates, and all around do-gooders from President Alice Ingerson, Vice President Nyssa Patten, and the entire all-volunteer team at the Newton Conservators. Thank you for your more than 60 years of strong advocacy and action to preserve and protect our open spaces here in Newton; you teach us how to better understand and appreciate the wonderful natural world around us

with walks, webinars, and programs. You roll your sleeves up and get your hands dirty organizing invasive pulls and conservation land cleanups. I’m thrilled that you’re recognizing tonight the new community pollinator projects as the Environmentalist of the Year. This effort is teaching us all how to transform our properties and habitats to nourish our native insects, birds, and other wildlife. The original demonstration pollinator garden that you planted at City Hall back in 2021 has brought us and our native bee populations joy ever since. And thanks, as well to our students from EcoPledge at Boston College for leaning

*Continued on page 4*

in to promote sustainability in the BC community and to helping to support our open spaces along the way. My congratulations and gratitude to all of you who are doing the work to make our city and, indeed, our world a better place to live. Thank you.”

### Nominating Committee

Bill Hagar, the Newton Conservators’ former president and former co-president presented the Newton Conservators’ slate of officers and directors for the coming year. These include Alice Ingerson as president, Nyssa Patten as vice president, Michael Clarke as secretary, Katherine Howard as treasurer, and Bill Hagar and Chris Hepburn as former co-presidents. The board of directors will consist of David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Alicia Bowman, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Kim Devore, Henry Finch, Maurice Gilmore, Daniel Green, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, Larry Smith, and Beth Wilkinson.

### Margaret Doris



Past president Ted Kuklinski announced the retirement of Margaret Doris from the Newton Conservators’ board of directors. Margaret is a writer and bioethicist with a PhD from Boston University and has lived in Newton

for over 30 years. Margaret will continue to serve Newton Conservators as a member of the advisory board. She graciously accepted her award, thanking the Conservators for the work it does.

### Alice Ingerson President’s Message



Alice Ingerson

Newton Conservators’ work of “connecting people to nature” aims to embody the land ethic formulated by Aldo Leopold, who wrote that we abuse land because “we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” Though Leopold’s *Sand County Almanac* was published in 1949, his words resonate strongly with those of Massachusetts Elder Elizabeth Solomon at our 2022 annual meeting, which we quoted earlier tonight. In the spirit of both of these conservation “elders,” Newton Conservators has expanded its traditional

focus on public land to address issues that also arise on private land and aims to make nature in Newton equally accessible to all people, regardless of how much or how little land they officially “own.” On Newton’s public lands, we continue offering free walks and supporting trail and other public access enhancements. We also hold and monitor conservation restrictions (CRs) on city land. If you’d like to join one of our annual monitoring visits, please get in touch! Our “BioBlitz” biological survey events and invasives pulls on public sites teach skills that participants can also apply in their own yards. The recent Pollinator Garden Tour we cosponsored focused on public sites but also encouraged visits to nearby private gardens. Many of our webinars have focused on supporting native plants or co-existing with wildlife in yards and neighborhoods as well as parks. We value our continuing partnerships with Newton’s many park “friends” groups such as the Crystal Lake Conservancy with city staff. We have long funded scholarships for teens to the summer Environmental Science Program, now run by Newton’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Department. But we are also eager to form new partnerships. In 2023 we gave our first-ever grant to the Newton Housing Authority. We recently updated our policies for volunteers, including those under age 18, and clarified processes for our small grants program. If you know nature lovers of any age who’d like to give of their time or whose special projects could use a little extra financial support, please encourage them to contact us.

### 2023 Newton Conservators’ Awards

#### Environmentalist of the Year



Alicia Bowman, Beth Wilkinson, Mark Feldhusen, Nyssa Patten, Andreae Downs, Ann Dorfman, Alan Noguee, and Ted Kuklinski

The Environmentalist of the Year Award, which goes to the individual or group to make the greatest contribution to the protection of Newton’s environment, was first presented in 1980. This year’s award went to the Newton Community Pollinator Project for promoting plantings that support native pollinators through public education initiatives, such as the online pollinator toolkit, demonstration gardens, the pollinator garden tour, and a winter sewing workshop. Former City Councilor Alicia Bowman was the founder of the project.

#### Director’s Award

This award is presented annually to individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the preservation of open space in Newton. The award this year



*Katherine Howard, Lauren Dadekian, Camilo Olaya-Pineda, Maddie Cook, and Kendrick Sears*

recognizes the Boston College Student Group EcoPledge for continually engaging the Boston College community in environmental sustainability matters and for years of volunteerism in caring for Newton's open spaces. As Newton Conservator treasurer Katherine Howard noted,

the award is being presented for the very impressive work of the coalition to engage and educate the Boston College community, which is about 20,000 people, in matters of sustainability and the environment. EcoPledge draws from all class years, and it has several very busy committees, activism, volunteer outreach, and events. In Newton, we've really felt the benefit and the work of these committees through activism in Webster Woods, as well as the cleanups and invasives work that they do in our parks.

### Annual Meeting Keynote Talk Speaker Michael Piantedosi

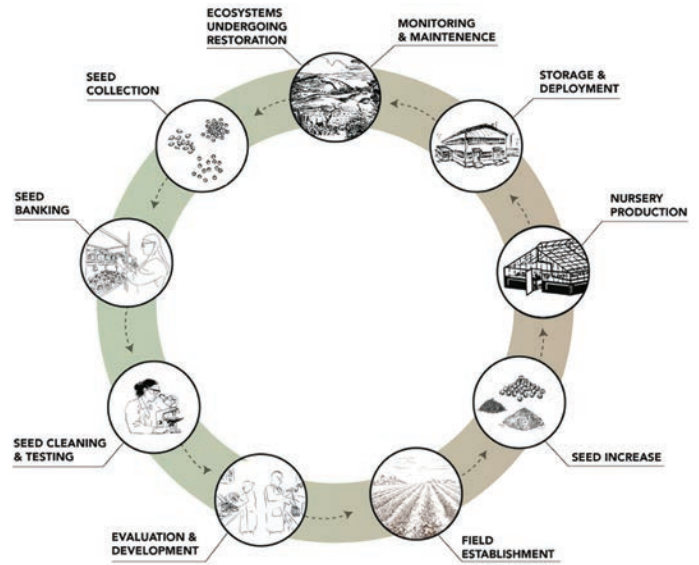


*Michael Piantedosi*

After the business meeting and awards, Michael Piantedosi, Director of Conservation at Native Plant Trust, gave a talk entitled "Seeds of Change: Promoting Plant Biodiversity in Our Community." In her introduction to this talk, Conservators' board member Beth Wilkinson noted that Michael began his career in plant biology as a researcher in cyanobacteria and freshwater plant communities at the

University of New Hampshire, where he received a degree in Plant Biology & Environmental Conservation.

He then worked in regional herbaria, in soil analysis & biogeochemistry laboratories, as horticulturalist at Museum of Science - Boston, and as a researcher in native plant horticulture with Woodman Horticultural Experiment Farm before joining the Conservation Department of Native Plant Trust in 2014 as manager of the New England Plant Conservation Program (NEPCoP), a volunteer consortium of professional botanists and ecologists who monitor rare and endangered plant populations and provide critical data to Natural Heritage bureaus in each New England state. He also managed Native Plant Trust's regional seed bank of threatened and endangered species and the use of seed in habitat restoration. In 2019, he became the Director of



*Seed banking and field establishment process. Graphic courtesy of Michael Piantedosi*

Conservation at Native Plant Trust.

Michael's talk covered broad initiatives that are moving through conservation. He said he had seen a lot of change in how folks interact with native plants all the way up to understanding about pollinators and habitat restoration and climate change. His talk, however, was about collecting and banking seeds and how seeds are crucial to preserving and propagating plant biodiversity. You can view his talk on the Conservators' YouTube channel [bit.ly/3yNTYwD](https://bit.ly/3yNTYwD). ♦

*Ken Mallory*

*Thanks very much to our friends for their generous and continuing support!*

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# Butterflies in Massachusetts

By Bill Benner, Editor, Massachusetts Butterflies, the journal of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club

“Butter-fly!” It’s one of the first long words a toddler might learn, and repeat, while they’re being read a picture book. Bright and bold, they quickly capture the child’s attention. Later, when they see one flying outdoors, they’re fascinated and delighted, and happily repeat and point: “Butter-fly! Butter-fly!”



*American Lady*

For most people, butterflies remain a lifelong source of simple pleasure, eliciting a smile and a lift of the spirit whenever they’re seen. They have a familiarity and liting flight that seems to crystallize the freedom of the outdoors into a quick, perfect moment of happiness. Their four-winged form is simple and recognizable, and this is expanded into a wide variety of sizes and a dazzling array of colors. Gardeners devote entire plantings to attracting them, both with nectar-rich flowers as well as with various food plants to nourish their caterpillars. Photographers spend a great deal of time, energy, and money capturing their exquisite details and rainbow colors. Of all insects, butterflies are undoubtedly one of the most popular and well-loved.

In Massachusetts, we have a little over 100 species of butterflies, many of which are residents, and some of which migrate or wander into our state at various times throughout the warmer months. There are more than 700 species in North America north of Mexico, so they are well-represented in the Bay State. Those that occur here can be divided into six major groups:

- The swallowtails are some of the biggest and most spectacular, such as the Black Swallowtail, a current candidate for our State Butterfly.
- Whites and sulphurs include such familiar species as the Cabbage White, that pale wisp that flies around the yard from earliest spring until the frosts of fall.
- The Lycaenid family includes the blues, like the familiar and well-loved Spring Azure, a tiny piece of shining sky that also is one of our first spring butterflies.



*Black Swallowtail*

- The biggest family in Massachusetts is the brush-footed butterflies, so named for their reduced forelegs. This catch-all family contains such well-known butterflies as the Monarch and the Painted Lady.
- The satyrids are a group of mostly brown and gray medium-sized butterflies that often prefer shaded and wooded habitats.
- And finally, there are the skippers, the Little Brown Jobs of the butterfly world. There are many species of skippers, often difficult to tell apart, but a fun challenge for a lot of butterfly enthusiasts.

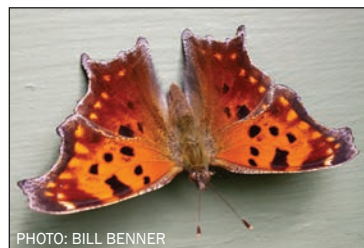


*Baltimore Checkerspot*

The best place to get a comprehensive look at all our state’s butterflies is at the website of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club (MBC), at: <https://massbutterflies.org/>. There, you can click on links that will show you every butterfly species in the state, with photos, as well as the

best times to look for them, information about gardening, etc. Other great sources of web-based information about Bay State butterflies can be found at <https://www.butterfliesofmassachusetts.net/> and <https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/identify/region/Massachusetts>.

But all is not well in the butterfly world. As with so many other native species of animals and plants, dangers to their populations and distributions may be on the rise. Climate change and habitat loss, that pair of threats to biodiversity we hear about daily, are likely the biggest problems. Pesticide use can be seriously detrimental to local populations. Introduced species, particularly pests and diseases, might also play a role.



*Eastern Comma*

As an example of how global warming is affecting our native butterflies, we can look at some research that was done using the extensive data set that the Massachusetts Butterfly Club has collected.

Since the MBC started in 1992, club members have been actively looking for butterflies throughout the season and the state. They report their sightings, including actual numbers of individuals, and the hard-working records

compiler (currently Mark Fairbrother) has been building a detailed citizen science database that now has three decades of information for each of our many species. About 10 years ago, university researchers used this data set to publish statistical analyses showing how Massachusetts butterfly populations are changing, with southern butterfly species expanding into our state over time, just as the northern ones seem to be retreating.

You can follow this link to read more about that study, including links to media responses as well as the complete scientific paper: <https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/news/new-study-massachusetts-butterflies-responding-climate-change>.



PHOTO: BILL BENNER  
*Coral Hairstreak*

### What can you do to help?

1. Create a butterfly habitat in your own back yard. As mentioned above, butterfly gardening is becoming an increasingly popular hobby, and you can make a real difference, particularly by planting larval food plants to nourish the next generation.
2. When buying plants for your garden, advocate for pesticide-free plants from your local nurseries, so that you're not harming the very creatures you are trying to help. Avoid the use of pesticides in your own lawn and garden as much as possible.
3. Join the Massachusetts Butterfly Club. There are many rewards. If you follow this link (<https://naba.org/membership/>), you can join the North American Butterfly Association, of which MBC is a state chapter, and if you are a Massachusetts resident, you will automatically become a member of the MBC as well. Then, you will receive the publications of the national organization (*American Butterflies* and *Butterfly Gardener* magazines) as well as the MBC journal, *Massachusetts Butterflies*. The club holds many field trips and butterfly counts throughout the season; they are listed on the

website (again, <https://massbutterflies.org/>), and you don't have to be a member to participate in these activities. All are welcome.

4. Sign up for the Massachusetts butterfly listserv at [massleps@googlegroups.com](mailto:massleps@googlegroups.com), and join the Massachusetts butterfly Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MassButterflyGroup/>. There, you will get daily reports throughout the season of which butterflies people are seeing, and where.
5. Take photos, not butterflies. While there is ongoing discussion about whether butterfly collecting significantly impacts populations, taking of specimens for individual collections is controversial and perhaps best left to those who will be donating the specimens to a scientific institution, where they will be permanently preserved.
6. Invest your time and energy into the groups and activities that you believe will give us the best chance of building a better tomorrow. Take a child out for a nature walk and learn more about the butterflies with them, helping to foster a love of the outdoors that might inspire them in the future. Let them help plant your butterfly garden seeds, too. Kids love watching seeds sprout and taking care of "their" plants.
7. Consider submitting your photo observations to iNaturalist through its mobile application to aid in butterfly identification and add them to its worldwide citizen science database. To gain experience with iNaturalist, consider participating in a Newton Conservators' BioBlitz (see p. 8)



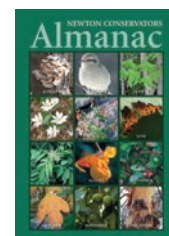
PHOTO: BILL BENNER  
*Eastern Tiger Swallowtail*

The world of nature is infinite in its variety and beauty. Butterflies are an important part of this diversity, and they hold a special place in the hearts of many of us who appreciate our great Massachusetts outdoors. **Enjoy.** ♦

## Summer's here. Enjoy the outdoors!

Shop online at [newtonconservators.org/publications/](https://newtonconservators.org/publications/) to purchase Newton Conservators' publications. The *Almanac* is \$22.45 + shipping, and the *Trail Guide* is \$10.95 + shipping.

- Members receive a discount from these prices when purchasing online.
- New members receive a trail guide free with their first membership.



# BioBlitz Events

**Editor's Intro:** These BioBlitz events are part of a larger effort by the Newton Conservators to document, and raise awareness about the great diversity of plants and animals that inhabit Newton's open spaces. At the beginning of the event, we will give a brief tutorial on the iNaturalist app, which we use to document species and as an identification aid.

## **Edmands Park BioBlitz, Sunday June 23, 3-5 PM**

Come explore the plants of Edmands Park and improve your plant identification skills. For parking, enter at North end near the old field habitat <https://maps.app.goo.gl/KaDSRYGnynNHqbra7>. Leader Zach Schein. For questions, email Jonathan Regosin: [jonathan.regosin@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.regosin@gmail.com).

## **Flowed Meadow and Auburndale Park BioBlitz, Sunday August 4, 3-5 PM**

Come explore the plants of Flowed Meadow/Auburndale Park and improve your plant identification skills. Directions and parking (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/xeqPpaZPgTvQYH3C6>). Leader Zach Schein. For questions, email Jonathan Regosin: [jonathan.regosin@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.regosin@gmail.com).

## **Crystal Lake BioBlitz, Sunday August 11, 3:30-5 PM at Levingston Cove**

Learn about the fish, insects, and other invertebrates that inhabit Crystal Lake. We will use dip nets and other techniques to capture and identify small fish and invertebrates. This child-friendly event is appropriate for adults and children accompanied by an adult. Co-sponsors Newton Conservators and Crystal Lake Conservancy. For questions, email trip leader Jonathan Regosin: [jonathan.regosin@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.regosin@gmail.com).

## **Get Involved with the Conservators - Volunteers Needed**

The Newton Conservators needs volunteers to help with various activities, including annual monitoring of the conservation restrictions we hold on City of Newton properties, pulling invasive plants, updating our inventory of plants and animals on Newton's public lands, and collecting new signups from interested Newton residents on our walks or at community events such as Village Days, the Harvest Fest, and others. You'll work alongside and be trained as needed by experienced Conservators' board members. If you're willing to volunteer for a couple hours, it would be most appreciated. To learn more about volunteer opportunities and contact us about them, go to [newtonconservators.org/volunteer/](https://newtonconservators.org/volunteer/)

Thank you.





# ..... Invasives Team Update .....



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD

*Porcelain Berry Closeup*



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD

*Porcelain Berry Infestation*

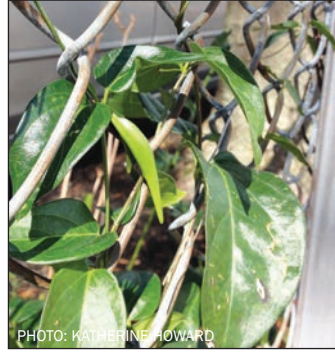


PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD

*Black Swallow-wort Seed Pod*



PHOTO: CAROLIN VAN DER LAAN

*Black Swallow-wort Flower*

**B**e on the lookout for porcelain berry, which exploded around here last year, enveloping trees, signposts and anything in between. We will work on it around Crystal Lake, Webster Woods, and Quinobequin Road. It has frilly/lacy leaves, a white pith, and later blue/pink/white berries. You can help by removing it in your neighborhoods (dig the roots or cut it, especially before it fruits), and by letting us know where you see large infestations.

Black swallow-wort (BSW) vines emerged in early May in our yards and parks. Look for it climbing up hedges, shrubs and fences, or just wallowing over itself on the ground. It reduces biodiversity and degrades our local environment, and, sadly, is fatal to monarch butterflies. It will soon be in bloom with small purple flowers, followed by large seed pods that are often hidden under the plant. When the pods dry and open, the wind will disperse the seeds on white fibers to make the infestation even worse. The BSW vine has blue-green glossy, opposite leaves, small purple flowers, and large seed pods that hang down like pea pods. (See our website for many other photos.) You can dig it up, cut it down, or just pull off the seed pods to prevent further spread. Put everything into a bag and into your trash, not into yard waste, to avoid further spread. See the invasive plant information on our website (listed under Resources), such as this link for BSW: <https://newtonconservators.org/black-swallow-wort/>

Newton Conservators conducts many work sessions in spring and fall to protect Newton's open spaces and manage invasive species. We have sessions scheduled into July (listed as Events on the website) and will add more sessions for the summer and fall. If you would like to be on the email list for notices of our group activities, please email [Invasives@newtonconservators.org](mailto:Invasives@newtonconservators.org).

Thank you! ♦

🌿 Katherine Howard

## MISSION Newton Conservators, Inc.

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.

*Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 63 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.

Editor:	Ken Mallory	617-965-1908
Design/Layout:	Suzette Barbier	617-244-0266
Production:	Bonnie Carter	617-969-0686

Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the newsletter: Bill Benner, Katherine Howard, Ken Mallory, Richard Primack, and Jon Regosin.

# Webster Woods Graffiti

By Richard B. Primack (a lifelong Newton resident and professor at Boston University)

In recent years, the Webster Woods and Hammond Pond area have been plagued by an epidemic of graffiti on rock cliffs and boulders in a dozen locations on both sides of the Hammond Pond Parkway. The graffiti has often been painted in vivid color at prominent locations, though it has also been created in less-frequented spots. Such disrespectful and unlawful activity damages the natural experience of being in the woods, as described by Jennifer Steel in the Fall 2023 issue of this newsletter.

A couple of years ago, at the invitation of the Newton Conservation Office, a group of volunteers took on and completed a project to paint over the graffiti with shades of gray paint so that they were no longer noticeable. Only a few new graffiti have appeared since then, and these have been promptly painted over.

Hopefully, these volunteer efforts to cover up the graffiti right away will lessen or even eliminate its future occurrence. ♦

## Here are some examples of graffiti before and after treatment:

Before



After



*A large graffiti of red and white lettering on a hidden rock face on the ridge above Hammond Pond; before treatment and after*

Before



After

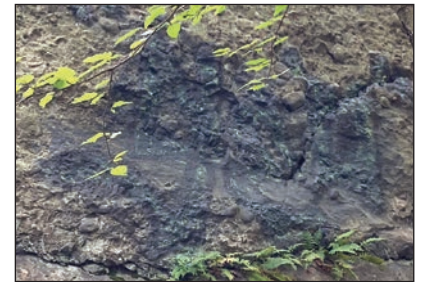


*Sunflower and lettering graffiti on a hidden rock face on the back of the ridge above Hammond Pond*

Before



After



*Bright green lettering graffiti on a high rock face was painted over using a long pole with a paintbrush tied at the end*

Before



After



*Multicolored graffiti on a rock face in the northwest section of the woods*

ALL PHOTOS BY RICHARD PRIMACK

# 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 2024 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



## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

**Count me in!** I want to help Newton Conservators preserve open spaces and connect people to nature in Newton. 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"/> Unrestricted Additional Contribution \$ _____ |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please send checks made payable to Newton Conservators to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, OR renew or join online at [newtonconservators.org/membership/](http://newtonconservators.org/membership/).

### Special Contributions:

- Trails Revolving Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Land Stewardship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To support other special purposes, please email us at [membership@newtonconservators.org](mailto:membership@newtonconservators.org)

By joining or renewing, you agree to receive our informational **emails**, which always include the option to unsubscribe.

Our **quarterly newsletter** will be sent by email only unless you check here:

- US mail only       US mail and email

- I would like to learn more about volunteering with Newton Conservators.**





NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.  
P.O. Box 590011  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

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# NEWSLETTER

*Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961*

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**Summer Tanager at Nahanton Park**  
*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, email us at [membership@newtonconservators.org](mailto:membership@newtonconservators.org).**