



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SUMMER ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SUMMER 2025

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iNaturalist in Newton: The First 17 Years

By Jon Regosin and Greg Berkman

Editor's Note: Please see the online version of this article for the many links cited in the article below.

Did you ever wonder how many turtle species can be found in Newton? Or perhaps you are curious about ferns? Or native bees? Are we losing native plants and animals over time due to stressors such as climate change or invasive plants? Perhaps some southern birds or emerging non-native invasive species, such as the spotted lanternfly, are becoming more common.

On a personal level, an increased awareness of and appreciation for the plants and animals that call our neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces home can enrich our lives. After all, engaging with nature is increasingly recognized as important to our health and well-being. The expression “miss the forest for the trees” is a caution against missing the big picture. But sometimes, a focus on the trees (including an ability to identify tree species) is needed for a deeper understanding of the forest.

If you are interested in improving your local natural history knowledge, plant, or bumblebee identification skills, how do you get started? Not long ago, this required field guides or complex species identification keys. While these are still essential and helpful tools (e.g., *Go Botany key*), today's aspiring and expert naturalists are fortunate to have iNaturalist, a powerful tool for documenting and identifying plants, animals, and other forms of life. iNaturalist users can upload photos, and iNaturalist will generate identification suggestions using a constantly improving machine learning tool. iNaturalist also has a robust community of users, many of whom will also propose identifications for

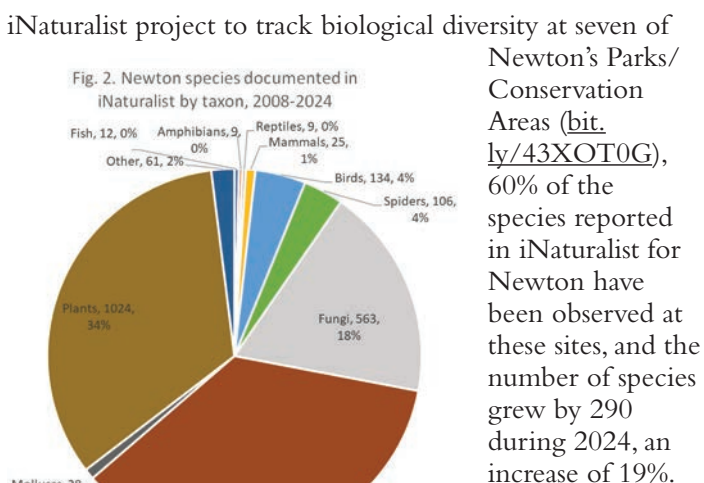
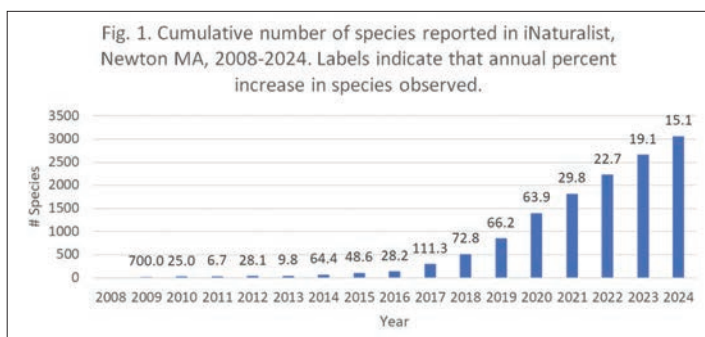
other users' observations. When 2/3 of users agree on an identification, it is considered a more reliable “research grade.” See the box on the next page for more information about how to explore Newton's biodiversity.

iNaturalist is more than just a species identification tool — it's a powerful database that enables us to track biodiversity at multiple scales and detect changes over time. For example, we can use the iNaturalist website to see all the species observed in Newton (https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=178797&view=species) or all the plants seen in Cold Spring Park (https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?project_id=cold-spring-park-newton-ma&view=species&iconic_taxa=Plantae).

iNaturalist in Newton, 2008–2024 — In 2008, iNaturalist made its debut in Newton with the reporting of one bird (Mallard) and two plants (Sassafras and Enchanter's Nightshade, both in Auburndale Park). Since that time, there has been rapid growth in the number of species reported, with a total of 3,064 unique species observed as of December 31, 2024 (Fig. 1, next page). We continue to add species at a fairly rapid rate, although the rate is slowing down. For example, in 2024, there was a 15% increase, with 401 species added.

The breakdown of species observed by taxonomic group is shown in Figure 2 (next page). Plants, insects, and fungi account for 34%, 36%, and 18% of the observed species, respectively. If we look at the Conservators'

Continued on page 2



Newton's Parks/ Conservation Areas ([bit.ly/43XOT0G](https://www.newtonconservators.org/43XOT0G)), 60% of the species reported in iNaturalist for Newton have been observed at these sites, and the number of species grew by 290 during 2024, an increase of 19%.

An iNaturalist journey with

bees — To illustrate how nature observation, aided by iNaturalist, can improve our understanding and appreciation of nature while contributing to local knowledge, I'll describe my recent experience observing bees. A few years ago, I knew very little about bees or bee identification. I began taking photos of bees (and other insects) and posting them to iNaturalist. Over time, the quality of my photos improved (all taken with a smartphone camera), and I started to occasionally net bees so that I could get even better closeup photos (most of our native bees do not sting, but be careful!). As my observations were identified in iNaturalist, my identification skills have improved significantly, and I can now identify many of the bees I observe (to species or genus). Here is a link to my Newton observations of 50 bee species, including photos: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=178797&taxon_id=630955&user_id=naturalist2073.

Through these efforts and the efforts of many other iNaturalist users, our understanding of Newton bees is increasing significantly. From 2021 to the present, the number of bee species documented in Newton has increased from 18 to 57 (https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=).

These include many beautiful organisms with fascinating life histories: for example, numerous mining bees (genus *Andrena*) that fly for brief periods in the spring and are often chased by parasitic nomad bees (genus *Nomada*); three common bumblebees that are relatively easy to distinguish in the field and 1-2 less common species; numerous leafcutter and resin bees (family *Megachilidae*) that carry pollen on hairs on their abdomens instead of on the legs like most bee species; longhorned bees that tend to specialize on sunflowers in the mid-late summer (genus *Melissodes*); and several fall bees that specialize on asters and goldenrods (e.g. Cloudy-winged and Hairy-banded Miners). We also have at least five non-native bee species that may negatively impact native pollinators, in addition to non-native honeybees. Next steps may include working with the community to survey bees in Newton pollinator gardens and other bee-related citizen science initiatives. ♦

How to Explore Biodiversity in Newton

- **Get out and explore** — A diversity of birds, insects, plants, fungi, and lichens can be found almost anywhere! Get out and observe. Consider grabbing a field guide or posting photos to iNaturalist to enhance your identification skills. Newton Conservators' website provides resources and maps to help you plan your explorations (<https://newtonconservators.org/parklist/>). The Conservators Conservation Areas and Parks Survey lets you explore the plants and animals that have been seen in Newton open spaces (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/newton-ma-conservation-areas-parks-survey>). For example, before visiting Edmands Park, you could use this resource to filter and view a list of all the birds that have been seen in the park in June.
- **Attend a Conservators' BioBlitz** — In addition to offering many guided nature walks, Newton Conservators has been offering a series of BioBlitz events each year (<https://newtonconservators.org/events/>). These are like our guided walks, but the focus is on honing our species identification skills and documenting what we find on iNaturalist. Topics have included vernal pools, plants, pollinators, and more.
- **Become an iNaturalist user** — Download the smartphone app and start making observations (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>). Focus on something of interest to you, like plants or pollinators, or post photos of whatever you see. You will be learning about nature and the many fascinating organisms that share our environment and contributing to our collective knowledge of Newton's biodiversity. Getting started tips can be found here: <https://inaturalist.freshdesk.com/en/support/solutions/folders/151000552105>.

Annual Meeting 2025

Newton Conservators' 64th annual meeting at the American Legion Post 44 in Newton began when Newton Conservators' president Alice Ingerson welcomed everyone including the sponsors and then gave a reading called "Nature and Community," a new tradition we use to introduce our monthly board meetings and webinars. In that address she observed, "Newton Conservators is grateful for the beauty and sustenance that the land provides for humans and the other creatures with whom we share this earth."



Alice Ingerson

"Our goals to preserve open space and to connect people to nature require challenging the ways in which land conservation has historically excluded some peoples from protected land."

"Newton Conservators commits to acknowledging this exclusionary history and to building active partnerships with groups who have been hurt by that history,

starting but not ending with Indigenous peoples such as the Massachusetts.

As Aldo Leopold wrote, 'When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect'."

Thank you to our generous sponsors!

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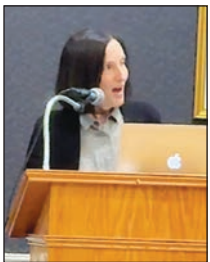
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Mayor Ruthanne Fuller



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

Alice Ingerson then recognized Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, thanking the mayor for her help saving Webster Woods, supporting the City's parks and conservation departments and staff, and her collaboration with community and non-profit groups like Newton Conservators. In Mayor Fuller's remarks she acknowledged the city councilors in

the room and in turn praised the leaders of Newton Birding, winners of the Charles Johnson Maynard Award, turned special attention to the evening's keynote speaker Greg Maslowe and his team from Newton Community Farm, and cited the extraordinary contributions of the city's senior planner Jennifer Steel.

Outgoing President's Message

At this evening's annual meeting our president Alice Ingerson, who has for five years capably served our organization as president and vice president, noted the following in her parting remarks: "Newton Conservators is an all-volunteer organization founded in 1961. To deliver our programs, which are free to the public, we depend on membership dues, on donations, and above all on our volunteers. You do not need to be an expert naturalist or ecologist to help! To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, contact us at volunteers@newtonconservators.org."

"Newton Conservators' best-known programs focus on Newton's public lands. We offer guided walks and BioBlitzes, where volunteers help to document Newton's biodiversity. We also monitor conservation restrictions on nine City-owned open spaces acquired with Community Preservation Act Funds."

"Yet we also know that nature does not recognize property lines. So increasingly our programs also cross the boundaries between public and private land. This is especially true for the two sides of land stewardship: our efforts to control invasive plants, led by incoming President Katherine Howard, and our support for native plants and pollinators, including our Pollinator Toolkit and sponsorship of Pollinator Garden Tours."

"In tonight's keynote presentation, Greg Maslowe challenged us to reconsider not only the distinction between public and private land, but also the distinction between protected land and land in active human use. Historically, conservation has often protected land mostly from people who make a living directly on the land. This exclusion started with Indigenous people but was expanded to foragers, fishers, farmers, and loggers of all cultural backgrounds."

"Yet restricting protected land in places like Newton to only recreational uses such as hiking and nature study implies using other land — mostly far from Newton — to grow the food we eat, the fibers we wear, and wood to build the homes we live in. This implication raises two questions that are fundamental for the future of land conservation: Should our stewardship of protected land continue to look mostly

Continued next page

inward, focused mostly on excluding activities and people allowed on other kinds of land? Or should we also look outward, seeing protected land partly as a laboratory for learning to interact sustainably with other kinds of land?"

Nominating Committee



Pete Gilmore

Board member Pete Gilmore presented Newton Conservators' slate of officers and directors for the coming year. Katherine Howard has replaced Alice Ingerson as president joined again by Nyssa Patten as vice president and Michael Clarke as secretary. This year we also welcomed co-treasurers David Backer and Larry Smith replacing Katherine, the previous treasurer.

The board of directors will now consist of Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Alicia Bowman, Dan Brody, Henry Finch, Maurice (Pete) Gilmore, David Green, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Susan Lyon, Ken Mallory, Jon Regosin, and Beth Wilkinson.

New President Katherine Howard



Katherine Howard

Incoming president Katherine Howard has been Treasurer for 25 years and is ready to try something new. She thanked outgoing president Alice Ingerson for her service, including getting us through Covid, running the memorable outdoor annual meeting at Mount Ida, modernizing our processes and systems, helping us understand

our mission in a new way and our DEI approach, and very importantly, organizing us in so many ways. Alice's expertise in city government, CPA, and land use issues at the local, state, and federal levels will be hard to replace. An olive wood pen made by Mike Clarke was presented to Alice as a parting gift.

Katherine acknowledged two very sad changes to our advisor community, with the passing of Eric Reenstierna, long time board member and advisor, and Don Lubin, advisor, co-author of our Almanac, and fern walk leader. They will be sorely missed. An article about Eric's life and work with Newton Conservators is included separately in this newsletter as is an article about Don Lubin.

Katherine thanked departing board members. Kim Devore, who energized our community events in her monarch queen persona, will become an advisor. Samantha Corbin,

who was both walks and volunteer coordinator, and set up important processes to engage and manage volunteers, for which we are very grateful. Also leaving the board to become advisors are two long serving board members, Ted Kuklinski and Bonnie Carter. They received special certificates of appreciation for their accomplishments, which are noted below.

Certificates of Appreciation

Ted Kuklinski



Ted Kuklinski

We thank Ted for his invaluable service as a Newton Conservators' board member for over 25 years and his strong leadership as president from 2019 to 2021; for connecting the public to the Conservators' work through his e-bulletin, walks, videos, and video editing of webinars; for serving as Newton's Monarch

King by arranging the Monarch Festival at Wellington Park, educating youngsters at community events; for collaborating to bring us the Pollinator Working Group annual tours, and modeling for us a front yard pollinator garden; for being an active member of the Newton Off Leash Area Working Group and helping to create and manage Newton's off-leash recreation areas, for leading the Charles River-North Newton section of the Christmas Bird Count for more than twenty years; for being a dedicated steward for Dolan Pond Conservation Area and sharing its beauty with the public and for serving on the board of Wellington Park; and for his leadership in the city's acquisition of 76 Webster Park, keeping two-thirds of the site as open space and creating affordable housing in the original house and two new Habitat for Humanity homes.

Bonnie Carter



Ted Kuklinski with Bonnie Carter

We appreciate Bonnie for 37 years of service as an active Newton Conservators' board member; for serving as vice president from 1993 to 1995; for serving as newsletter editor and producer from 1988 to 1998; for years of making the get-togethers held at her home to prepare Conservators' mailings, occasions of joyous camaraderie; for being our resident expert on Post Office rules for our mailings; for her assistance at our public facing events, fairs and village days; for continuing to serve Newton Conservators as an advisor.

Bonnie was also passionately active in the League of Women Voters of Newton and had served as president of that organization. Bonnie is really one of the unsung heroes of Newton Conservators working behind the scenes.

Charles Johnson Maynard Award to Newton's Bird Leaders



Left to right, Pete Gilmore, Liane Hartnett, and Alison Leary (Haynes Miller absent)

The Charles Johnson Maynard Award is presented annually to recognize efforts to improve biodiversity, habitat reclamation, and natural resource protection. Charles Johnson Maynard was a naturalist and ornithologist born in Newton in 1845 and died in 1929 and

lived close to Cheesecake Brook at 459 Crafts Street. He published over 25 books including *A Field Ornithology of The Birds of Eastern North America* and *The Warblers of New England*. He might even be considered the Roger Tory Peterson or David Sibley of his day.

Thus it seems quite appropriate that our Charles Johnson Maynard Award this year is presented to a number of our outstanding "Leaders of Newton Birding," Pete Gilmore, Liane Hartnett, Alison Leary, and Haynes Miller for their long-term dedication to organizing and leading engaging bird walks, for their valuable participation in citizen science endeavors, and for generously sharing their expertise to foster the appreciation and understanding of birds in and around Newton.

Pete Gilmore, a retired math professor from Northeastern, has been on our board for decades, as well as served on the board of the Brookline Bird Club. Liane Hartnett is an experienced birder and organizes the annual Newton Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which she took over from the late great Cris Criscitiello who lived across the street from her on Raeburn Terrace.

Alison Leary is one of our City Councilors in Newton, but you may not have known about her birding expertise, especially her leadership of our annual Mothers' Day Bird Walk.

Haynes Miller, an emeritus Professor of Mathematics at MIT, is also an expert birder and walk leader, is very prolific recording his findings on e-Bird, and often contributes photos to this newsletter.

Environmentalist of the Year



From left to right Laura Bishop, Barbara Seal, Linda Chafets, Michael Spalding (Co-President), Paul Holt (Co-President), Peter Barrer

of Newton's environment." This year's award is really "Environmentalist of the Past Two Decades," not just one year. This year the award goes to the Newton Community Farm Board, represented by Paul Holt and Michael Spalding, Co-Presidents. The award recognizes the farm for growing an institution that provides sustainable food, offers learning opportunities for children and adults, and encourages sustainable home gardening; for supporting staff devoted to sustainable food production and community engagement; for leading successful efforts to renew and expand the buildings and infrastructure that the farm needs to thrive, including solar panels that provide most of the farm's electricity.

Annual Meeting Keynote Talk Speaker Greg Maslowe



Jon Regosin

After the business meeting and awards, Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager, Newton Community Farm, gave a talk entitled "Can Farming Save Open Spaces? A Very Old Debate." In his introduction to this talk, Conservators' board member Jon Regosin noted the role of Newton Conservators in helping save Newton Community Farm. As a Newton Conservator and founding President of Newton Community Farm, Jon stressed

the word "community" in the title of the 'farm': "It serves the community. It provides locally grown produce to the community. It donates food to community members in need. It serves children and youth in our community through writing programming. It builds community around sustainable farming, sustainable farming and land use, and helps people connect to the land."

It also took a broad community effort to save and transform Newton's last working farm. "Let's talk about city government. Without the city and the Community Preservation Fund in particular, we wouldn't have been

Continued next page

able to save the farm, So, city government was essential to saving the farm. So this brings us to our second element of community strong. We need strong community organizations. So into the story comes Newton Conservators. And Newton Conservators was engaged with the landowners, the Angino family, both before and after the property came on the market.”

Jon then described the third important component: dedicated individuals — unaffiliated ones, as well as those in the community organizations and in city government. For example, in developing the farm business plan for the CPC, the interplay between these individuals and the organizations and government showed “how community actually works.”

The rest is history. As aldermen and city councilors got on board, this new nonprofit for the farm came into being. “When Greg was hired 20 years ago, none of us knew how things would turn out—he agreed to work for a brand-new non-profit on a rather small farm property. The Newton community has been truly blessed that Greg decided to make the farm and Newton his home for these 20 years... he has contributed so much in his role as farm manager. So on this 20th anniversary of Newton Community Farm, let’s take a moment to celebrate the farm and to celebrate our community’s success in saving, but not just saving, saving and transforming Newton’s last working farm.”

Greg Maslowe Profile



Greg Maslowe

Greg came to farming through his graduate work in environmental and agricultural ethics. Greg loves talking with people, young and old, about where their food comes from and how their answers and choices impact other life/lives. He feels fortunate to have found a way of life that allows him to be outside most of the time: a vocation that means he’s in the dirt, come rain or shine, throughout the growing season, participating in creating a better world; and time during the off-season to explore the mountains on skis, leading backcountry trips in the Green and White

mountains for the Boston Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He is on the board of directors of the Urban Farming Institute and on the planning committee for Eastern Massachusetts Collaborative Alliance for Farmer Training.

Annual Meeting Keynote-Can Farming Save Open Spaces? A Very Old Debate

Greg spoke about two of his favorite community farms, one in Lincoln, Massachusetts and the other in Fort Collins, Colorado, as models for “how farming, open space, and conservation can all work together to address some of the societal challenges we are all facing.” He rejected two extreme arguments that were prominent in the history of conservation—for using all public lands to meet the public’s economic needs or for setting land aside strictly as wilderness. As a third option, he advocated for using public lands that are suited for agriculture to reduce food insecurity, increase food sovereignty (by growing in each region more of the food consumed in that region), provide farmers with access to land, preserve agriculture as cultural heritage, and reduce the negative impacts of global warming.

In his closing, Greg observed “I want to just turn back to Newton Community Farm, since part of I think why I was invited here tonight was to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of the farm. These are some of the ways that we have utilized the 2.25 acres of open space that was turned over to us 20 years ago. We grow more than 45,000 pounds of produce every single year, of which \$16,000 is donated to the Newton food pantry. Every year, we provide 28,000 organically grown flower and vegetable seedlings to the community to support home gardeners. This is really the key to the idea of food sovereignty is just getting able to grow their own food. Again, we have a high school intern program that has been running for the entire 20 years, and one of the most amazing things to me is having students who come back 20 years later, and it was really the ability to work on the farm that touched them deeply and shaped their whole life.”

For a video recording of Greg’s full talk, go to Newton Conservators’ YouTube channel at bit.ly/4mXyZvG

🌿 Ken Mallory



President's Message

Hello Newton Conservators members and friends,

I'm writing to introduce myself... as the new president of Newton Conservators. After having served as treasurer for over 25 years, I was elected president at our Annual Meeting on May 8, 2025. I know many of you already, from having processed your dues and gifts for so many years and from seeing you in the community and at our events. Thank you for your loyal support that has allowed Newton Conservators to thrive for 64 years!

There are so many great things about our organization, such as our love of nature, wildlife, and Newton's open spaces, our guided walks, our educational webinars, our trail guide and almanac, our e-bulletin and newsletter, and (near and dear to my heart) our stewardship of and invasive species work in Newton's parks. We will keep doing those things people love about Newton Conservators, and if possible, we'd like to add some more things to love. What interests you? If you have a park walk, webinar topic, or a special project in mind, and especially if you would be able to get involved in it, I would like to hear your ideas. Please feel free to email me at president@newtonconservators.org.

We need interested and involved volunteers at all levels of the organization to build the capacity for continued success. The list of "help wanted" volunteer opportunities in the box below shows some specific additional help needed. If you want to get more involved, or know someone who could help us, please do get in touch.

Many thanks,

Katherine Howard
President, Newton Conservators
president@newtonconservators.org

HELP WANTED

We need involved volunteers to be a strong organization!
Please help us fill these volunteer opportunities!

Ebulletin Coordinator: Mailchimp or similar experience preferred*

Social Media Coordinator: to post content to raise awareness of Conservators' activities and environmental issues*

Membership Coordinator: Little Green Light, Mailchimp, or similar experience preferred**

Bookkeeper: accounting and/or Quicken or similar experience preferred**

Our other volunteer opportunities listed on our website — Biodiversity survey, Invasives, CR Monitoring, Outreach and Tabling, Walks assistant — are suitable for under age 18 as well as adults.

* age 18+ only

** age 18+ only; role involves a significant training period and a 2-year commitment is preferred

If you have any questions or would like to apply please contact us at volunteers@newtonconservators.org. Thank you!

Did You Miss the Webinar on Jumping Worms? You Can Watch it Online at Any Time.



Every spring and fall since September 2020, Newton Conservators has presented a free webinar series on conservation topics important to our community. Many of our speakers have allowed us to record their presentations, and those recordings are available at www.tinyurl.com/videoconservators.

In each newsletter, we plan to highlight one of these past webinar gems. This time, we focus on Annise Dobson's presentation on jumping worms from the spring of 2022: <https://youtu.be/m4gBYXtEUJY>

In Annise's enlightening webinar, she presents a distressing topic in a masterful way.

Nearly all earthworms in New England are introduced from Europe and Asia. While some species of earthworms benefit certain plant species, invasive earthworms have caused significant shifts in North American plant communities. Jumping worms are particularly destructive because they alter the structure and chemistry of the soil dramatically, leaving a grainy soil full of worm excrement (castings), and they can damage lawns, landscapes, and forest habitats. This talk presents the impacts and history of earthworms (and jumping worms in particular) and will provide information on how to identify jumping worms.

The Q&A session following Dr. Dobson's talk contains great extras, including information about the strange predators that eat jumping worms (the hammerhead worms) and tips on preventing the spread of these invasive worms.

At the time of this webinar, Dr. Dobson was a postdoctoral researcher at the Yale School of the Environment. Currently, she is the Director of Research and an Associate Research Scientist at that institution.

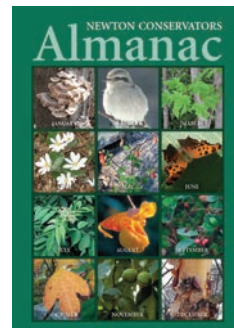
You can find information about upcoming webinars under the "Events" tab on Newton Conservators' website, where you can register for them: <https://newtonconservators.org/events/>. Our webinars are free and available to all. ♦

🌿 Beth Wilkinson and Barbara Bates

Summer's here. Get outside and explore!

Shop online at newtonconservators.org/publications/ to purchase Newton Conservators' publications. The Almanac is \$22.45, and the Trail Guide is \$10.95.


- Members receive a discount from these prices when purchasing online.
- New members receive a trail guide free with their first membership.
- Our books are also sold at Newtonville Books in Newton Center.



🌀 BioBlitz Event 2025 at Cheesecake Brook 🌀

For more information, please click on the following link to take you to the web page pictured below:

<https://www.crwa.org/events/tale-of-two-brooks-cheesecake-brook-bioblitz>



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Tale of Two Brooks: Cheesecake Brook BioBlitz

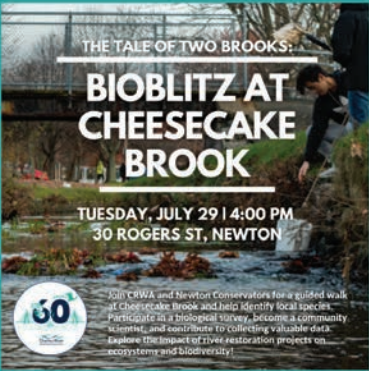
Tuesday, July 29, 2025
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

256 Albemarle Road, Newton, MA, 02460, United States (map)

In 2025, CRWA is organizing two community science environmental surveys to understand baseline conditions along Cheesecake Brook compared to the restored Fuller Brook in Wellesley.

Join CRWA staff and Newton Conservators for a guided walk along Albemarle Rd by Cheesecake Brook. You'll learn how to use iNaturalist to catalog flora and fauna, collecting vital community science data for our "BioBlitz" biological survey. Explore the impact of river restoration projects on the ecosystem and its biodiversity! Don't miss out on this fun, family-friendly event.

Explore the impact of river restoration projects on the ecosystem and its biodiversity! Don't miss out on this fun, family-friendly event.



THE TALE OF TWO BROOKS:
BIOBLITZ AT CHEESECAKE BROOK
TUESDAY, JULY 29 | 4:00 PM
30 ROGERS ST, NEWTON

Join CRWA and Newton Conservators for a guided walk at Cheesecake Brook and help identify local species. Participate in a biological survey, become a community scientist, and contribute to collecting valuable data. Explore the impact of river restoration projects on ecosystems and biodiversity!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

INATURALIST: For this event please download and create an account on [iNaturalist](#).

MEETING LOCATION: We will meet by the Harry Gath Memorial pool at 256 Albemarle Rd, Newton, MA 02460

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 64 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. Digitized photographs, maps, and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the newsletter: Barbara Bates, Greg Berkman, Katherine Howard, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, Jon Regosin, and Beth Wilkinson.

A Remembrance of Don Lubin – New England Fern Expert



Many of you may have learned a great deal about ferns from Don Lubin. We are sad to report that Don passed away on January 13, 2025, due to complications from cancer. A memorial service is planned for September 2025. Newton Conservators is grateful for his work as a volunteer walk leader and for serving on our Advisory Board for many years.

Don's knowledge of and love for ferns was remarkable, and his enthusiasm for showing them to others truly infectious, as those of you who had been on any of his field trips know. He led trips and workshops not only for the Newton Conservators but for many other groups, including the NE Wildflower Society. Don had grown ferns since 1980, done field identification since 1991, and led field trips since 1991. He had over 50 species of ferns planted in his own yard and contributed dozens of samples of uncommon New England ferns to herbaria, including the Asa Gray Herbarium at Harvard, worked on biodiversity surveys throughout eastern Massachusetts, and hosted a website on New England ferns. If you submitted a fern observation to iNaturalist in recent years, there is a good chance that Don Lubin would have helped verify it.

Don's 2020 webinar, "Ferns: More Important Than You Might Think and How to Know the Common Ones" (https://youtu.be/O_vAR_KXzMk), is a wonderful lesson on New England ferns based on his website. His short video essay, "The Importance of Ferns" (<https://youtu.be/b4LHg9vNfio>), reveals the critical role ferns played in the development of life on Earth over millions of years.

Don was twice a recipient of our Charles Johnson Maynard Award. In 2019, Don was honored for his efforts to discover and identify ferns in conservation areas throughout New England, his strong commitment to promoting biodiversity, and for the decades he has spent sharing his knowledge of ferns with all of us. In 2007, Don was an integral part of the Survey Team of the Land Management Committee of Newton Conservators, which was honored for their detailed study and documentation of the plants and animals that inhabit Newton's conservation lands. Don was also one of the co-authors of the popular *Newton Conservators Almanac*, a colorful compendium of Newton's flora and fauna throughout the seasons.

Don Lubin was born in New Jersey in 1943, attended high school in Illinois, and obtained a BS in Physics from Brandeis University in 1965. Don resided in Allston and was a man of many talents, active in the Boston Food Co-op, an avid gardener, adept at bicycle repair, a competitive volleyball player, and once won a case before the Supreme Court. Don's knowledge of ferns will be sorely missed.

— Ted Kuklinski

A Remembrance of Eric Reenstierna – Former Conservators' President



It is with deep sorrow that we report the passing of Eric Reenstierna, former president of Newton Conservators, on February 5, 2025, at the age of 76, following a courageous two-decade battle with cancer. Eric was a pivotal figure in Newton's conservation efforts, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to environmental protection. His influential leadership spanned several critical roles, including his dedicated service to Newton Conservators as president, board member, newsletter editor, and member of the land acquisition committee. Furthermore, he was a member of the Newton Conservation Commission, where he was directly involved in the regulatory and protective aspects of environmental stewardship, and of the Newton Community Preservation Committee (CPC), expertly guiding the allocation of resources for vital community preservation projects, with a particular focus on open space.

Eric's tenure on Newton Conservators' board extended from 2001 to 2011, during which he served as president from 2003 to 2005. This period was particularly critical for open space land acquisition, significantly empowered by Newton's adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) under his leadership. Leveraging his extensive experience as a commercial real estate appraiser, Eric was instrumental in leading the Conservators to act boldly in three of Newton's earliest and most significant CPA open space acquisitions. His foresight and expertise played a crucial role in the preservation of the large tract of open space at Kessler Woods, formerly owned by NStar. He was also a key figure in protecting the city's last working farm, which has since blossomed into the thriving Newton Community Farm, now celebrating its 20th anniversary. In recognition of these efforts, Eric was honored as a co-recipient of our Environmentalist of the Year Award in 2006. His invaluable expertise was further demonstrated in the city's acquisition of the 76 Webster Park property. This strategic move expanded the Dolan Conservation Area by 10% and facilitated the creation of three units of affordable housing.

A memorial service for Eric was held on February 10, 2025, at the Newton Cemetery Chapel. His full obituary, detailing his many other accomplishments, including authoring six novels, can be found at <https://www.eatonfuneralhomes.com/obituary/EricRick-Reenstierna>. Eric is survived by his wife, Anne, his children, Rhiannon and Andrew, and six grandchildren. His presence will be profoundly missed, and we remain eternally grateful for the legacy he has bequeathed to Newton through his tireless efforts in preserving open space.

— Ted Kuklinski

..... Invasives Team Update



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD
Porcelain Berry Closeup

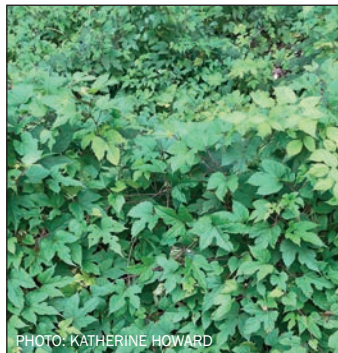


PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD
Porcelain Berry Infestation



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD
Black Swallow-wort Seed Pod



PHOTO: CAROLIN VAN DER LAAN
Black Swallow-wort Flower

Be 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.

Thank you! ♦

🌿 Katherine Howard



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 \$ _____ |

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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/.

Special Contributions:

- ☐ Trails Revolving Fund \$ _____
- ☐ Land Stewardship Fund \$ _____

To support other special purposes, please email us at 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.**





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NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

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Eastern Bluebird
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at newtonconservators.org/newsletters. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, email us at membership@newtonconservators.org.