



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

WINTER ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • WINTER 2025-2026

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Our Changing Flora

By Richard Primack, Professor of Plant Ecology at Boston University and a lifelong Newton resident

Fifty-four years ago, as a college junior, I discovered that plants had names, and I wanted to learn the names of all the plants that grew in Newton's Webster Woods. I found a few rattlesnake plantain orchids growing along a forest road, and over the decades to come, I marveled at the exquisite beauty of their distinctive, white-veined leaves and rejoiced when they flowered. Then one year they were gone, never to return. I felt that I had lost a friend. In the early 1970s, I talked with an older person from Chestnut Hill. She told me that anemone and hepatica plants used to be common in the Webster Woods until they disappeared due to over-collecting for flower displays. I never saw a single one of those.

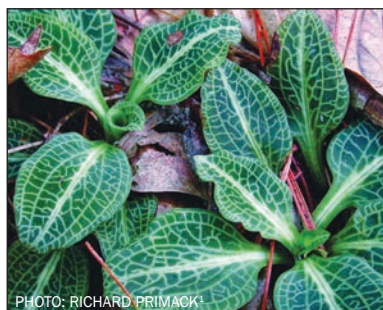


PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK
Rattlesnake plantain orchid

firewood. Rock walls in our woodlands still reflect the settlers' influence. Changes to the landscape continued as Newton shifted from a farming community to a residential suburb with roads and railroad lines. And our habitats continue to see growth in deer abundance, new diseases and pests, and a rapidly warming climate.

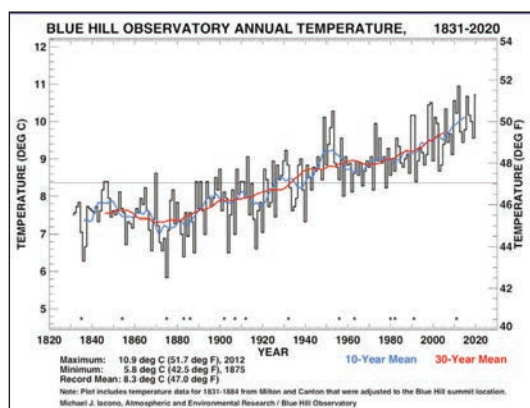
Even as organizations like Newton Conservators work to protect open spaces for wildlife and the community, can the plants and animals of Newton, such as the rattlesnake plantain, be protected in the face of all this change?

Documenting changes in the abundance of plants

New England has an exceptionally rich tradition of botanical research. Over the last 200 years, researchers and amateur naturalists have documented the floras of many towns and protected areas in the region, including Needham, Concord, Worcester County, and the Middlesex Fells in Massachusetts. No other region of the United States comes close to this level of botanical inventorying.

Today, botanists can match these historical floras with current surveys of plants growing in the same place to determine how our forests, fields, and wetlands have changed over time and if the protected areas have maintained their plant life. These comparisons show that:

- Many native wildflower species are



The New England flora has been strongly affected by human activity for centuries and now increasingly by climate change. Chart courtesy of Richard Primack²

Newton has changed dramatically since European settlers arrived in the area 400 years ago. Settlers cleared forests for farming and pastures and cut trees in wood lots for

Continued on page 2

declining in abundance and even going locally extinct (though often still found elsewhere in New England).

- The species most vulnerable to local extinction are those that were already rare.
- Non-native species from other continents represent an increasing proportion of plants in the region.



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK
A rare purple fringed orchid from Concord

Concord, Massachusetts, provides a particularly stark example. Around 27% of the native plant species known to grow in Concord from about 1850 to 1950 are now locally extinct. This loss is concentrated in certain plant groups, including orchids and lilies. In contrast, the proportion of non-native plants has doubled, from 20% to 40% of the flora. This loss of species occurred even though around one-third of Concord's land is protected, and another one-quarter remains undeveloped.

We see these same changes happening in the Webster Woods. Over the past half-century, many rare wildflowers, such as Canadian lousewort and rattlesnake plantain, have disappeared from the woods. Non-native species have arrived, some of which, like purple loosestrife and garlic mustard, have become invasive, displacing native plants.



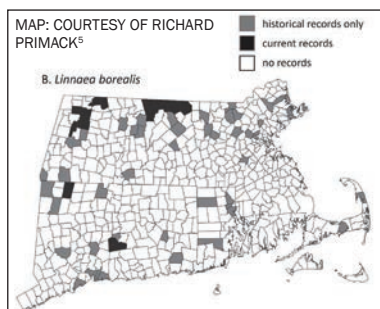
PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK
Invasive purple loosestrife

What is causing these changes?



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK
Twin flower, a cold loving northern species that has declined

Many of the changes in the region's landscapes—the forest clearing and suburban development—destroyed or fragmented habitat for native plants. Development in New England and elsewhere in the country polluted our air and water, harming some native plants. Grazing by overabundant deer and infections by new pests and diseases have also contributed to changes in plants in our region. In addition, cold-loving northern species are declining more rapidly than more warm-loving

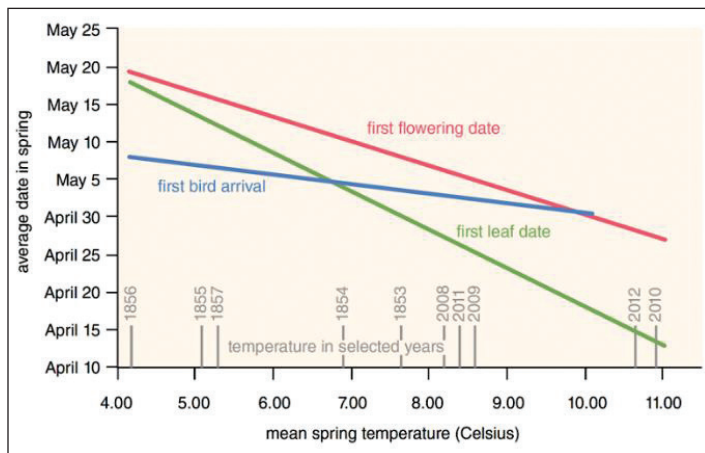


MAP: COURTESY OF RICHARD PRIMACK
Map showing Twin flower declining at the southern edge of its range

southern species, a clear indication of the effects of climate change.

Changes in timing

In addition to changes in abundance, plants are also altering the timing of their spring activity, a phenomenon botanists call “phenology.” Like changes in abundance, researchers can investigate shifts in plant phenology by comparing historical records of flowering times and other spring activities with current observations. Yet again, Massachusetts has an abundance of historical documents. From 1851 to 1858, Henry David Thoreau observed the first flowering times of hundreds of plant species and the first leaf-out times of dozens of trees and shrubs in Concord, Massachusetts. Starting in 2003, my students and I repeated Thoreau's observations. We found that plants in Concord are now flowering and leafing about 10 days earlier than in Thoreau's time in response to warming temperatures.



Tree leafing times are highly responsive to spring temperature (green), while bird arriving times in spring are much less responsive (blue). Wildflower flowering times are intermediate (red). Chart courtesy of Richard Primack⁶

Thoreau also recorded the arrival times of migratory birds, and later ornithologists and birders in Concord have repeated his observations. Like with plants, birds in Concord are responding to climate change, though not as strongly. Ecologists are investigating whether birds may now be mismatched with the plants and insects that provide food and habitat along their migrations and during their nesting seasons—birds may be arriving too late for the food and habitat conditions they historically relied on. Mismatches like these may contribute to declining populations of certain bird species.

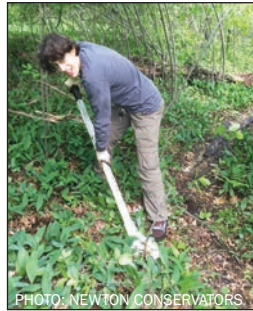


PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK
High bush blueberry bushes are now flowering earlier

What you can do to help

There are things everyone can do to help with this situation:

- Keep a journal of natural history and phenology observations from around your house, neighborhood, or favorite conservation area.
- Share your observations of phenology and species occurrences with citizen science networks such as *eBird*, *iNaturalist*, and the USA National Phenology Network. Researchers investigating changes in plants and animals around the world rely on data from these organizations.
- Join an advocacy group and encourage government agencies and community organizations to take action to address climate change and the loss of biodiversity.



Newton Conservators organizes invasive pulls to remove Japanese knotweed and other invasives

- Change how you personally live and encourage the local government to reduce its use of fossil fuels, protect native habitats, and adopt other sustainable practices.

Conclusion

Over the past century, protecting natural habitats, as carried out by Newton Conservators, the Newton government, and other organizations, has proved to be the best overall conservation strategy. Now, abundant evidence shows that climate change and other landscape changes are already impacting natural systems, even in protected areas, and contributing to the decline and local extinction of well-known wildflowers, trees, and shrubs. The protection of conservation areas has slowed the loss of native species like the rattlesnake plantain I saw in my youth but has not stopped it. To stem further losses, we must not only preserve native habitats: we must also work to slow or stop further climate change. For graphic sources see last page. ♦

Could Bugging be the New Birding? (Part 2)

Editor's Note: This article is the second of two parts, with the first in the Fall 2025 newsletter.



Henshaw Haven front yard pollinator garden

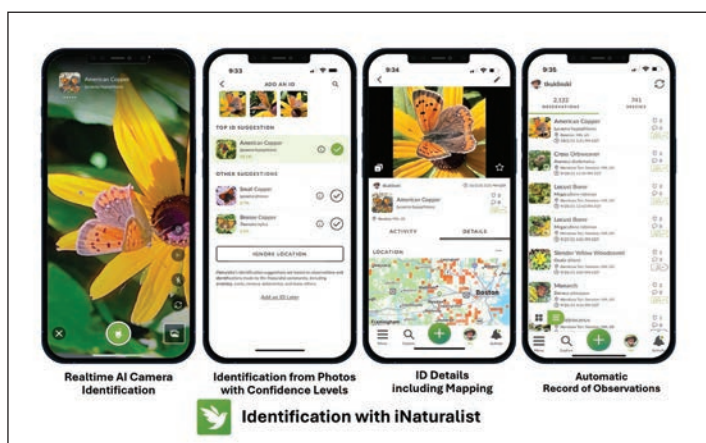
In Part 1 of this article, we discussed the similarities between birding and bugging, how native plants are important for both, and some helpful hints and techniques for taking good photos of bugs, especially with your smartphone.

The great thing about bugging is that you don't need to be an entomologist to identify bugs. For birding, numerous

phone applications, such as *Merlin*¹, have been developed to aid identification by characteristics, photos, or sounds, or to keep records of sightings using apps such as *eBird*². Fortunately, similar free resources are also available for bugging!

Perhaps the most effective aid for bug ID is the amazing *iNaturalist* application³. *iNaturalist* works not only for bugs

Continued next page



but also for birds — and, in fact, for any living thing! In April 2025, a newer version was released for the iPhone, with an Android version with the same user interface to follow at some point. The latest version includes a feature that lets you point your camera and instantly identify subjects as you pan — excellent for a quick check of a bug, bird, or plant ID. *iNaturalist* not only assists with identification, but also can add your observations to a worldwide database and maintains a record of every observation submitted. *iNaturalist* does have a simpler companion app for casual users called *Seek*⁴ that does ID only without a database submission component. Some smartphone photo apps now even automatically suggest the photo's subject. An additional helpful ID resource is the *BugGuide* website⁵, which accepts bug photos. As with printed field guides for birds, there are many bugging field guides available, for example, a New England guide⁶ or one for North America⁷.

iNaturalist identifications rely primarily on the photos you submit. The great advantage of smartphone photos is that they contain not only the image but also the time and location where the picture was taken. Although you can take photos within the *iNaturalist* app, for optimal results, it is usually better to capture pictures of your bug using your standard smartphone “camera” application and deal with ID later. I typically take photos of a bug and later review them to select the best ones, considering lighting, focus, and viewing angle. Using the built-in editor in your phone’s “photo” app, you can easily crop the pictures and improve contrast, brightness, and sharpness before importing them into the *iNaturalist* application. The app allows you to submit multiple photos, which provides more info for a definitive ID; it is helpful for your first selection to be your most representative example, appropriately cropped.

The app will utilize its AI capability to display a TOP ID SUGGESTION followed by a list of OTHER SUGGESTIONS, each with a relative numerical probability. You can easily compare its possible choices to your own

photo. By clicking on the info icon for a candidate selection, you can view additional images in various life cycle stages, a text description, a map displaying other observations for that bug worldwide, and more. It’s always interesting to zoom the map into your current observation to see if there were other nearby sightings. It was surprising to discover how many times a particular bug from our garden was the first reported observation in Newton.

You can accept one of *iNaturalist*’s suggestions or, if not certain, you can select the main genus ID or simply enter your own more general category. If you submit a bug observation, other *iNaturalist* users can weigh in on the ID to confirm your suggestion or propose an alternative. When there is sufficient consensus, your observation achieves “Research” level, meaning that it could be used by scientists in their studies or projects.

You can be a citizen scientist and contribute to the worldwide database on insects by reporting your observations on *iNaturalist* — arguably the largest global citizen science project. Recently, a researcher on ground-nesting bees contacted me, interested in more details and video of an unusual bee I had submitted while on a picnic at a state park. In the past, some of my garden mystery bees were identified via *iNaturalist* by Heather Holm, author of an excellent bee guide⁸.

In preparation for the inaugural Newton Community Pollinator Garden Tour in September 2023, I looked through the *iNaturalist* observations from our garden and decided to create a poster of the bugs that were observed — because a pollinator garden needs pollinators in addition to plants! It was truly surprising to find more than enough species to fill the 96 grid spots on the poster, which has since become a staple at our Newton Conservators’ booth at various fairs and festivals, probably due to folks’ fascination with bugs.

Over the past few garden seasons, I have encountered some truly interesting bugs. Here are a few of my favorites:

- **Zabulon Skipper (*Lon zabulon*)** — This is a small and very active butterfly that most folks have probably never heard of. When it lands on a plant, it appears more 3D-like, in contrast to most butterflies, which overlap their wings and fold up flat. The males are a rich brown color with yellow highlights. At times, I’ve seen up to three at once in our garden. Keep an eye out for this and other beautiful “skippers” in yours!

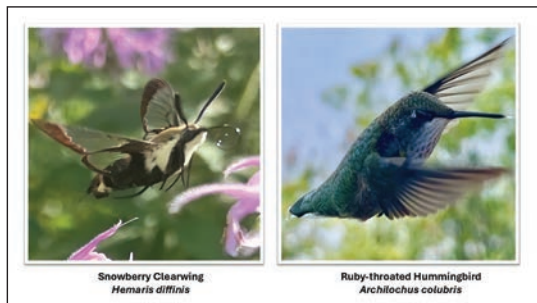


• **Bi-colored Striped Sweat Bee (*Agapostemon virescens*)** —

These small native “bee-uties” are the gems of the bee world in our garden, often found on false sunflowers. They are named sweat bees because they are thought to be attracted to perspiration to lick the salt. It is their shiny emerald-green upper bodies that draw your eye as they diligently pack copious amounts of pollen onto their legs.



• **Snowberry Clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*)** — When the bee balm is in bloom, these beautiful daytime moths come to visit. Their “clearwing” name comes from the fact that their wings have transparent windows. However, it is their uncanny resemblance to hummingbird behavior that really captures your attention. Unlike most moths whose wings



flutter more like butterflies, the wings on these moths flap quite rapidly, have a small tail,

and feed by hovering from blossom to blossom, just like a hummingbird. Because of this, they are a little more challenging to photograph. I often take a video and then try to extract individual frames to use. Several other varieties of hummingbird-like moths have visited the garden in recent years as well — not to mention actual ruby-throated hummingbirds, which are also officially considered pollinators!

• **Red-banded Leafhopper (*Graphocephala coccinea*)** —

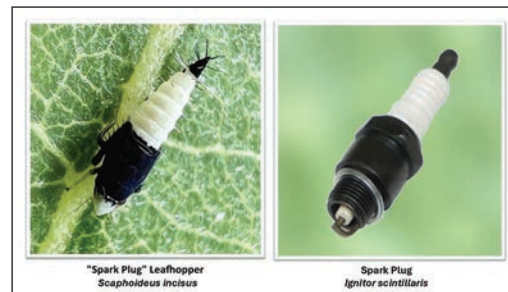
One of the prettiest and most colorful bugs found in our garden has been this leafhopper, a slim, tiny insect jumper that you may not even notice. They seem to love hanging out on common milkweed leaves. Their red, blue, green, and yellow coloration is so festive that it earned this insect its alternative name — the candy-striped leafhopper! As a member of the “sharpshooter” family, perhaps their most interesting characteristic is the ability to shoot honeydew droplets out of their rear end. The first time I saw this, it looked like a little flashbulb going off. But under close



observation, a tiny sphere of excess honeydew forms and can be flung in different directions at very high speed — quite a trick! Apparently, ants and other insects appreciate this special treat.

• **“Spark Plug Leafhopper” (*Scaphoideus incisus*)** — This is another small leafhopper whose nymph form bears an uncanny resemblance to an automotive spark plug. There is no official common name for this insect — just its Latin nomenclature. It was a little difficult to figure out which end was which with this critter. When I first encountered one on our common milkweed leaves and submitted

it to *iNaturalist*, it was a long time before someone else identified it; mine



was one of the first observations in New England. Subsequently, another was found locally on a swamp milkweed leaf at Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Such unusual creatures may abound in Newton, but there are not enough curious observers yet!

Bugs suffer from not being as cute as birds to many, except maybe for butterflies or ladybugs. In fact, it seems humans have a history of trying to kill off as many bugs as possible, directly with pesticides and bug zappers, or indirectly by draining swamps, creating grass lawns, and over lighting our night environments. Insect populations have precipitously declined in recent decades, a phenomenon termed “Insect Armageddon”^{9,10}, which ultimately would not bode well for human survival. Doug Tallamy’s video, *Restoring Insects*¹¹ is recommended viewing for background on bugs’ importance and concrete steps we can take.

Taking up bugging can be a small step to raising awareness and appreciation of those creatures with which we share the planet. With over a million known insect species, compared to around 11,000 known types of birds, there is a lot to discover for the amateur citizen scientist — you might even find a bug thought extinct or even a new species! Hopefully, you will be inspired to give bugging a try — and avoid not knowing what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone! ♦

✍ Ted Kuklinski

Please see references for this article on pg. 6

Henshaw Haven Garden Visitors



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WINTER 2026 GUIDED WALK

Register for the walk at <https://newtonconservators.org/events>. The trip leader will contact participants about any event changes.

Sunday, January 11, from 11-12:30 pm

BARE TREES & NAKED SHRUBS: WOODY PLANT ID AT KENNARD PARK



PHOTO: SUSAN LYON

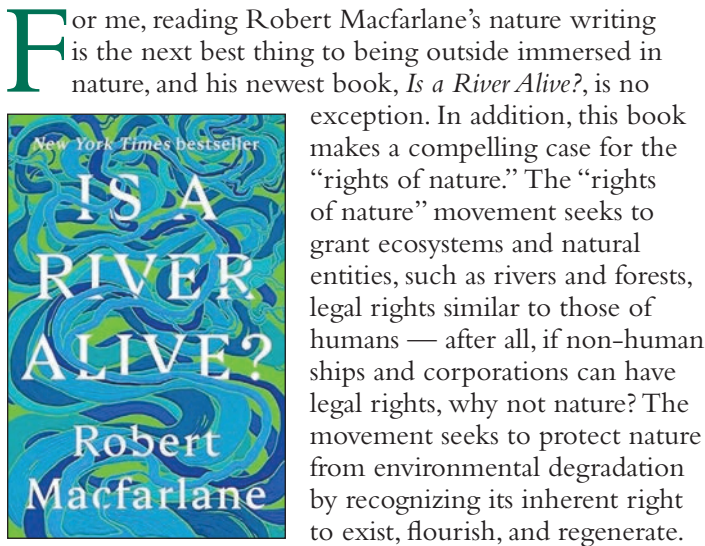
Jeff Adams

Join area naturalist Jeff Adams in this winter walk in Newton's Kennard Park as he identifies trees and shrubs without their telltale leaves. Discover how to identify plants by their branching patterns, bark, buds, galls, and any persistent fruits that remain after the end of autumn. Jeff will also look at winter weeds — hardy non-woody plants that stand up tall even through the colder months — and share a trove of natural history and folklore about various plants. Jeff has led walks for a variety of area organizations, including the Friends of the Fells, Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, and Newton Conservators. Dress for an extended time in wintry weather and wear sturdy shoes. Kennard Park's terrain is uneven and, in some places, hilly. Meet at the parking lot off Dudley Road. Enrollment is limited to 20 people. Rain date: Sunday, January 18, 11 am – 12:30 pm.

Trip Leader: Jeff Adams (781-866-8311) (jeffreyradams@verizon.net)

Book Review:

Is a River Alive? By Robert Macfarlane, 2025



For me, reading Robert Macfarlane's nature writing is the next best thing to being outside immersed in nature, and his newest book, *Is a River Alive?*, is no exception. In addition, this book makes a compelling case for the "rights of nature." The "rights of nature" movement seeks to grant ecosystems and natural entities, such as rivers and forests, legal rights similar to those of humans — after all, if non-human ships and corporations can have legal rights, why not nature? The movement seeks to protect nature from environmental degradation by recognizing its inherent right to exist, flourish, and regenerate.

It advocates for a shift in legal and cultural relationships with the environment, moving from one of exploitation to one of stewardship and protection based on the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature that Indigenous Peoples' worldviews recognize as the interconnectedness of all life.

Macfarlane's book, however, does not seek to convince by reason alone. It uses physical, mental, and emotional experiences to explore the idea. It is the quality of Macfarlane's prose that makes his exploration of the question of aliveness so persuasive. His ability to write in a poetic way and with great immediacy about his own and others' encounters with nature helps us break the common "nature is a machine" metaphor we hold and expand our senses and imagination. It is a compelling, exciting, and thought-provoking read.

It is also a stunningly beautiful recreation of encounters with three river systems, each leaving us with a strangely hopeful outlook:

- the Los Cedros Cloud Forest, a watershed feeding the Rio Los Cedros in Ecuador;
- three waterways in Chennai (the Adyar and Cooum Rivers and the Buckingham Canal), a "dead" river system and a sea turtle nesting beach on the east coast of India;
- the Mutehekau Shipu, a wild river also known as the Magpie River, about 600 miles northeast of Montreal, that is threatened by Hydro Quebec dams.

Part of what makes Macfarlane's prose so compelling is his use of the present tense and real dialogue to enliven his experiences and those of the various people whom



Falls on the Ellis River in NH

he encounters on his explorations. Also, his astute descriptions of the people he meets and their interactions can be funny, suspenseful, tragic, inspiring, and hopeful.

You might be forgiven for asking how a dead river system in India could possibly be a hopeful exploration. It is Macfarlane's dialogue and experiences with Yuvan Aves, a teacher, naturalist, writer, and water activist, that turn you around. He asks Yuvan what his *dæmon** is and learns Yuvan has three:

- "I would choose three, not one. First, the millipede. The millipede is a recaster of meaning and matter, you know. It turns the shit of life into something valuable; takes it in, absorbs its harm, transforms it."¹
- "Oh, my second is the mongoose! Here in Chennai, and across India's cities, the mongoose is thriving in the cracks of human life. Like your red fox, it's a space invader. It finds ways to adapt ... It's my *dæmon* of reimagination, you could say."²
- "Oh, my third is the banyan tree... It has to me a deep-mind-likeness, as well as a long-livedness... the far vision contains the near, and the banyan helps me to see both distances. ... I like that it exists between notions of "good" or "evil", making a nonsense of both. And I like anything that undoes binaries!"³

Another experience illustrates Macfarlane's ability to capture the senses that scientists generally don't recognize. It involves Giuliana Furci, a quadrilingual mycologist, author of two monumental field guides to Chilean fungi, and the scientific lead on his Ecuadorian cloud forest trip. Cosmo Sheldrake, the sound recorder on their expedition, recounts how she veers off the course in the dead of night to discover a new species of fungus. She could not see these fungi from the road — instead, she describes using "a fuzz in the field" that she senses to lead her directly to the new species:

"I didn't see the mushrooms, exactly,' says Giuliana when I ask her about it. 'I heard them. If you know how to listen, fungi just ... tell you where they are.' She shrugs.



Ellis River in NH

‘I’ll get this feeling that there’s a fungus around. I feel, no, I know, that there’s something — no, somebody — who wants to see me. You get a call-out from them.’”⁴

Macfarlane’s illumination of his and Cosmo’s first-hand experiences watching her “sense” new species she cannot see confirms that there are senses we don’t yet understand. Denigrating these senses because we currently lack tools to measure them and cannot construct mechanistic models of them really limits our understanding of the world in which we live.

Ecuador is the first country to enshrine the rights of nature in its constitution. Mcfarlane’s account of this event and the people involved moved me deeply. His account of kayaking the untamed Mutehekau Shipu in Canada at flood stage was suspenseful and totally mind-boggling. Both narratives explore Indigenous People’s world views and illuminate the need for our wider public to gain better access to these perspectives, which are new to the majority of our US population. The perspective of respect for species other than ourselves has always been a hallmark of Indigenous Peoples. This respect doesn’t mean you can’t eat plants or kill animals to eat them — it simply means you must use plants and animals with respect and reciprocity. We must care for them rather than exploit them.

I urge all readers who love nature and respect it to spend some time with this deeply moving book. I highly recommend listening to the audio version since Macfarlane reads it, and his voice expands the poetry of his language. However, reading a hard copy will no doubt give the same experience to others.

— Barbara Bates

I’d love to hear your reactions — you can contact me at BLBates@newtonconservators.org

*NOTE: In Jungian psychology, a daemon is an inner, guiding spirit or force that is deeply connected to one’s life purpose and creativity. In ancient Greek philosophy, it refers to a guiding spirit or lesser deity, not to be confused with a “demon” or evil spirit. ♦

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Did You Miss the Webinar “Coexisting with Coyotes in Suburban Communities”?

You Can Watch it Online at Any Time.



Since September 2020, Newton Conservators has presented a free webinar series on conservation topics that are important for our community. Many of our speakers have allowed us to record their presentations, and you can watch them on our YouTube page.

In each newsletter, we plan to highlight one of these past webinar gems. This time we focus on Dr. Dave Wattles informative presentation on **“Coexisting with Coyotes in Suburban Communities”** from April of 2024: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aweDzpfYzDE>.

Eastern coyotes are found in nearly every town and city in Massachusetts and they can thrive close to humans in a variety of habitats. Dr. Wattles presents excellent information about the behavior of coyotes, how coyotes came to be part of our neighborhoods over the decades, how they have adapted to our communities, and how to discourage them from coexisting too closely with us. What is the main takeaway—other than what beautiful creatures they are? That the best way to coexist well with coyotes is not to provide food for them, intentionally or unintentionally. And to supervise our pets.

Dave Wattles has been studying and working with large mammals in Massachusetts since 2006, when he began collaring and studying moose for his graduate work at UMass Amherst. He has 15 years of experience conducting black bear research and has been the Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) since 2016.

Information about upcoming webinars can be found 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

Enjoy Nature... with webinars from early December through mid-March

Each online program will begin at 7 pm and last approximately one hour. You may register for the programs using the links below or by going to the event listing at newtonconservators.org. You will receive an email confirmation after you have registered.



Thursday, Dec. 4 ... Welcome to the Dark Side: Discovering Moths

Join naturalist Dave Small for an introduction to attracting and watching moths in your backyard. Discover the native plants you can introduce to your landscape to attract a wide variety of butterflies and moths. Learn how to use lights and bait to attract moths for viewing and get a glimpse of some of the moths you might encounter on a warm summer evening.

Dave is the Director of Conservation, leading a team of land protection specialists in fulfilling the mission of Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust in protecting our open spaces. Dave retired in 2013 after 35 years with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where he served as Assistant Regional Director at the DCR Quabbin Reservoir. His dedication to conservation and natural history continues as he leads a team tasked with protecting the landscapes he loves.

Sign up: <https://shorturl.at/8keDR>



Thursday, March 5, 2026 ... Vernal Pools and Their Special Ecology

Seasonal ponds, known as vernal pools, are full of life and can be found throughout our area. Newton has several, including Bare Pond in Webster Woods. Join Newton Conservators' Barbara Bates to discover how these pools form, their unique ecology and the life stories of the invertebrates and amphibians who inhabit these pools. See fairy shrimp, salamanders, wood frogs and many more.

Barbara is a teacher, naturalist, and Newton Conservators' board member.

Sign up: <https://shorturl.at/MGhZd>

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, Katherine Howard, Ted Kuklinski, Susan Lyon, Richard Primack, and Beth Wilkinson.

Invasives Update



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Oriental bittersweet

Newton Conservators' invasives team continues occasional field work over the winter, which is a good time to remove bittersweet vines and tackle woody shrubs. We also will use this time to review our activities and plan for future efforts. If you'd like to help and be added to our invasives e-mail list, please let us know via e-mail to invasives@newtonconservators.org ♦

👉 HELP WANTED 👉

We need involved volunteers to be a strong organization!

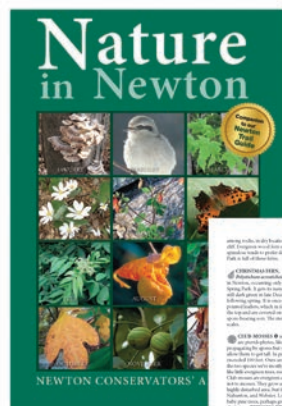
Please help us fill our volunteer positions, including Membership Coordinator and Bookkeeper, which are for age 18+ and require some relevant experience.

Our other volunteer activities — Biodiversity survey, Invasives, CR Monitoring, Outreach and Tabling, Walks assistant — are suitable for all ages.

Visit newtonconservators.org/volunteer, or email volunteers@newtonconservators.org. Thank you!

Nature in Newton — 2nd edition of our Almanac

What are you doing next year?



Spend 12 months getting to know Newton's parks with Newton Conservators' *Nature in Newton*

Nature in Newton is organized by month with "quick-to-locate" seasonal color bands.

Each entry displays the common name, scientific name and a group graphic with description and local field notes.



Native representatives of conifers and deciduous trees, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns, butterflies and birds are some of the monthly entries you will find in this book.

Beautiful color photographs of some of the flora and fauna you are likely to find in Newton.

Nature in Newton © 2025, the 2nd edition of Newton Conservators' *Almanac* (originally published in 2009), will be available just in time for holiday gift giving this year.

Nature in Newton is a wire-bound field guide to the plants and animals we routinely encounter in Newton. As an "almanac," it is organized by the season in which we are likely to notice these plants and animals. It was written and updated by members of our board of directors, all volunteers, and uses mostly their own photographs.

Nature in Newton, 2nd edition, includes updated scientific nomenclature, references, and some improved photos for better identification. This second edition is dedicated in memory of two of the original authors, Cris Criscitiello and Don Lubin.

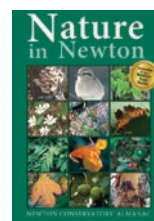
Order your copy today!

Purchase *Nature in Newton* online at newtonconservators.org/Resources or at Newtonville Books in Newton Center.

Winter's Here. Take a Walk in the Woods!

Shop online at newtonconservators.org/publications/ to purchase our books. The *Almanac* is \$23.45, and the current *Trail Guide* is \$10.95. See pg. 11 about our upcoming new *Guide*.

- 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.



Support Newton Conservators through your IRA

.....

Individuals 70½ and older can make a tax-free gift to Newton Conservators directly from their IRA. The benefits to you include the reduction in taxable income, 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.

Newton Conservators is a recognized 501(c)(3) organization.

Thanks!

Renewal Season is Underway... with a Trail Guide Twist!

Perhaps you've seen our annual appeal message — it's time to renew membership for 2026.

You can use the form below, or renew online at newtonconservators.org/membership.



New this year: Our new *Trail Guide* will be available soon in 2026. Fully revised, GIS-synced, and with a fold-out map of 9 long walks — the new guide is bigger, better, and more useful than ever.

Renewing members at the Sustainer (\$75) level and higher will receive the new guide (a \$23 value) as a thank-you gift. New members will also receive the *Trail Guide* as a thank-you gift. The new guides will be mailed to those eligible as soon as they are available in 2026.



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.

Circled renewal levels receive the new Trail Guide (a \$23 value) when available in 2026.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ \$250 Directors' Circle | ☐ \$50 Family Membership |
| ☐ \$125 Patron | ☐ \$35 Individual Membership |
| ☐ \$100 Donor | ☐ \$15 Student Membership |
| ☐ \$75 Sustaining Member | ☐ Unrestricted Additional Contribution \$ _____ |

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

Memberships run for the calendar year. **New members at all levels will receive the current Walking Trails immediately and then the new Trail Guide when available in 2026.**

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.**

Our Changing Flora References

1. Source Virginia Native Plant Society
2. Source Blue Hills Observatory
3. "Gardening Know How" website and the photo credit is: Dmitry Potashkin
4. Source US Forest Service, Ariele Tal
5. Northeastern Naturalist, Berlin and Spind, 2022
6. Chart courtesy of the Blue Hills Observatory



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NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

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Graphic courtesy of vecteezy.com



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Sparrow Wars
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.