



SKY DANCERS

By Margaret Gillespie, Illustration by Cheryl Johnson

It's like magic! When the season approaches, we cannot wait for spring to burst forth. I'm sure we all have our list of special signs telling us the season of new life has arrived. Here is a new one perhaps, or maybe an old favorite, but in any case, an unusual sign of spring. This sign alerts us at dusk or dawn with a nasal, buzzing "peent" sound coming from a farm field or old pasture. We may have to stop in our tracks to listen, but it's unmistakable – the woodcock have returned for another year! Let's delve more deeply into how woodcock live and find out exactly what is going on during their remarkable spring ritual.

The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is grouped with shorebirds of eastern North America, related to sandpipers, curlews, and snipes. Paradoxically, its habitat is fields and forests rather than beaches, shores, and salt marshes. Incredibly camouflaged, woodcock have a cryptic brown pattern, much like dead leaves on the forest floor. They remain immobile, keeping track of approaching danger with large eyes located near the top of their heads, which give them close to 360-degree vision. By flushing at the last moment with a twitter of wings, woodcock startle would-be predators. Sometimes woodcock are said to have an



upside-down brain, with eyes on top while ears and coordinating cerebellum are below! Perhaps the most incongruous feature of this bird is its bill – 2.5 to 2.75 inches long or more – placed on a small, 8-ounce, 8- to 10-inch-long body. This probing bill is there for a reason – up to 90 percent of the woodcock's diet is earthworms, and these birds can consume their own weight in food each day! Using its sensitive, flexible bill tip, a woodcock detects earthworms in soft soil and then opens only the end of its beak to grab the prey.

So, what is the spring woodcock mystery? New England's woodcock population winter in the southern states, returning in early spring, even when patches of snow remain on the ground. Several males assemble in a meadow or similar clearing and perform a dusk and dawn ritual "dance" to attract mates. In the beginning, the woodcock bobs its head and struts in a small space, periodically making a "peent" sound. Where does the sound come from? In an essay, *Rite of Spring*, Robert Winkler describes how a woodcock "throws back his head and vibrates his tongue producing an odd buzz." "Peent" calls vary in volume to our listening ears because the bird is covering all the bases by projecting in different directions. Then he is in the air, a sky dancer, slanting up to circle at around

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FORGING TRAILS

Like all non-profit organizations (ALL businesses for that matter), we are watching the news about, and monitoring the effects of, the downturn in the economy. As an institution that relies – for a major part of our income – on the patronage of fee paying visitors, we felt the effects of last year's high summer gas prices through lower than expected trail visitors and lake cruise participants. We ended the summer significantly behind budget and feeling a little nervous about where we might end the year. Since September our endowment and restricted fund investments have plummeted.

However, thanks to the outstanding support of our loyal and generous donors, we finished the year with an amazingly successful Annual Fund appeal which helped us to exceed our contributions budget for the year and end the fiscal year with a small (less than 1 percent) budget deficit. I count myself truly fortunate to lead an organization

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FORGING TRAILS *continued from page 1*

that garners such steadfast support. Thank you to everyone who made us part of your annual giving.

2009 is likely to be a challenging year, but I am encouraged greatly by the strength of our organization. Our business model is strong, our volunteers are committed, our Board is rock solid, and our staff is talented, resourceful, and creative – all keys to success in challenging times.

Undaunted by the ever-bleak outlook, we head into 2009 optimistic and energized with fresh ideas and new twists to make your visit exciting and enlightening. A very active committee led by Education Program Director Amy Yeakel is busy planning to host the annual conference of the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) in August. This annual gathering of 175+ senior nature center staff from across the country is an opportunity for us to showcase our wonderful center. *The Granite State Summit* takes place from August 26-29 with pre- and post-summit field trips on the 25th and 30th. I look forward to welcoming our peers to Squam.

Please continue to spread the good word about the Science Center. Encourage your friends and neighbors to visit, give a gift trail pass or a gift membership, volunteer your time, shop at the Howling Coyote online or onsite, encourage your school to take a field trip, and while you're at it, pray for the rain to stay away in July and the gas prices to not go through the roof in August.

Thank you all for your enthusiastic and passionate support in 2008 and 2009.

Forging Trails is written by Executive Director Iain MacLeod.

You may contact Iain at 603-968-7194 x 23 or iain.macleod@nhnature.org.

NEWSBRIEFS

◆ On New Year's Eve staff gathered for a farewell luncheon in honor of Ida Gould, who resigned to pursue a new opportunity at the Common Man Restaurants where she now works with honorary trustee Maurice Lafreniere. During her nine years as Office Manager Ida handled many aspects of daily operations, including computer systems, website, cruise scheduling and reservations, as well as countless other administrative duties. Among her many accomplishments, Ida steered the organization's technological capacity as we grew from a small operation with five computers and one dial-up connection to a sophisticated network of three servers, 31 office computers, and six classroom computers and projectors. Ida will certainly be missed; we wish her well in her new endeavor.

◆ We are pleased to welcome Tom Klein, our former Lake Cruise Manager, as Operations Manager. This new position merges the responsibilities of Office Manager and Lake Cruise Manager. Tom's background includes



**Tom Klein,
New Operations
Manager**

operating his own business providing training and in-home technical services to personal computer users. Previously he worked for several large institutions in a variety of technical support and administrative roles. Tom is a certified Network Administrator and has a BA in Business from New England College.

◆ Thanks to our loyal and generous supporters, the 2009 Annual Fund campaign surpassed our budget's goal of \$260,000, raising a total of \$263,929 from 545 donors!

◆ The Kestrel Project – a new school-based education project started in 2008, which uses metal mail boxes as nesting boxes for American Kestrels – has received grant funding for a second year. We are grateful to the Jane B. Cook 1983 Charitable Trust for its continuing support. Last year this project involved 24 schools throughout the state, reaching more than 1,000 students.

◆ In 2008, 366 volunteers contributed more than 7,355 hours in many areas of operations. More than 18,300 school children and teachers, from all across the state, largely Grades K-8, attended a program or visited in 2008, while 39,444 public visitors toured the trails, and an additional 16,504 participated in programs, cruises, and courses.



SQUAM LAKES NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

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e-mail: info@nhnature.org
web site: www.nhnature.org

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center is a non-profit educational institution incorporated in 1966 as a charitable organization under statutes of the State of New Hampshire with its principal place of business in Holderness. Our mission is to advance understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world.

Tracks & Trails is a regular publication of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center sent to all members. Comments about the newsletter are welcomed by newsletter editor Janet Robertson at 603-968-7194 x 12 or janet.robertson@nhnature.org.

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MEMBER PROFILE**JANICE AND TODD ELGIN***By Laura Dentel**Tell us a bit about your background.*

We both grew up in south-central Pennsylvania and spent most of our lives there. I am a registered nurse and work in the operating room at Spear Memorial Hospital in Plymouth. Todd is a retired dentist. We met back in 1983 in Reading, Pennsylvania at the hospital where I worked in intensive care and where Todd was a resident.

How long have you lived in the Lakes Region?

Ever since we were married, we vacationed in the New Hampshire Lakes Region and have always loved the area. It has always been our goal to eventually live here. When Todd retired in 2002, we found an old cottage in Holderness, restored it, and moved here on a year-round basis in 2004.

When was your first visit to the Science Center? What about it inspired you to become more involved?

Our first visit to the Science Center was shortly after we moved here. We both believe very strongly in protecting our natural environment and trying to live in ecological harmony. We also believe that the best way of instilling these values in a society is through environmental education of our children in a fun, interactive, hands-on fashion. The Science Center does an amazing job at this. In addition, all of the staff and volunteers are exceptionally committed and friendly.

Todd, we know that you have great taste in wine because you help pick our selections for the Annual Gala. Do you have a few recommendations to share?

My favorite wines are French, but I enjoy wines from most areas of the world. A few wine recommendations that are good values and fairly easy to find in New Hampshire are: Whites - Cono Sur Sauvignon Blanc (Chile) and Novellum Chardonnay (France). Reds - Klinker Brick Zinfandel (California) or Concha y Toro Marques de Casa Cabernet Sauvignon (Chile).

Tell us about your hobbies and interests.

I love to cook, kayak, feed the birds, and to go for nature walks with our dog, Gus. I volunteer at the Science Center, mentor for the Circle Program, and am involved with the Friends of the Holderness Library. Todd enjoys hiking, collecting wine, and fly fishing for trout and salmon. He is on the Holderness Planning Board and is the Town Treasurer.

NEWSBRIEFS*Continued from page 3*

- ◆ The 'Green Team' – a staff committee that promotes all things green – reports we have progressively lowered electricity use by 2,000 KW between 2006 and 2007 and by another 5,000 KW between 2007 and 2008! This is due to increases in staff awareness, using more efficient lighting, and replacing equipment with energy efficient models.
- ◆ Do you want to compost your food and yard waste but need some incentive to get started? Through collaboration with the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (www.nrra.net) we will sell backyard composters (you pay \$40 for an 80-gallon bin of recycled plastic – a \$100 retail value) and kitchen scrap pails (you pay \$8 for a two-gallon plastic pail with a hinged lid and carry handle – a \$10 retail value). Order by April 3 to pick up here on Clean Up Day, April 25. Contact Janet Robertson at 603-968-7194 x 12 or janet.robertson@nhnature.org to purchase. For more information, see www.nhnature.org/Calendar/clean_up_day.html.
- ◆ Do you have cell phones you don't use? Donate them! We have partnered with ECO-CELL, to collect and recycle used cell phones, batteries, and accessories. For more information, visit www.eco-cell.org. A collection box is conveniently located at the Welcome Center office.

- ◆ New Hampshire Day is Saturday, May 2, and celebrates the season opening; trail admission is \$3 for each New Hampshire resident on this special day.
- ◆ Kirkwood Café and Squam Lakes Artisans Gallery return this year to the historic Holderness Inn next to Kirkwood Gardens. Squam Lakes Artisans, a gallery specializing in unique and locally crafted New Hampshire gifts, opens in late May. The gallery features a variety of arts and crafts by juried artists. Kirkwood Café, opening on June 27, serves snacks, sandwiches, and beverages. See www.nhnature.org for details.
- ◆ Don't miss this year's annual Kirkwood Gardens Day on Saturday, June 13. Garden volunteers are soliciting used or new garden-related "treasures" for the sale. Contact Brenda Erler at 603-968-7194 x 43 or brenda.erler@nhnature.org to donate or volunteer.
- ◆ Do we have your email address? To receive announcements of upcoming events and programs, send us an email with "Here is my email address" in the subject line to info@nhnature.org. Include your name or business/organization name in the text message box. For your protection, just as we don't share our mailing list, we do not sell or rent your information to others. You may also opt out any time you choose.

- ◆ We accidentally misspelled the name of Admissions and Gift Shop Associate Kirsten Pickel, in the Winter 2008 *Tracks & Trails* Staff Profile. Our apologies, Kirsten!

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TO NATURE**

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**SQUAM LAKES
NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER**



SUMMER ELECTRIC EXPERIMENT

By Eric D'Aleo

This summer we will conduct an electrical experiment. "What does electricity have to do with the natural world," you might ask? Well, besides lightning during thunder storms and electrical impulses traveling through the bodies of animals and humans allowing us to move and carry out our daily life functions, electricity is important to what you encounter when you visit the Science Center. From the pumps running the waterfall at the bear exhibit, to the interactive map showing you an otter's range, to the lights allowing you to see in the exhibit buildings, electricity is an important resource for us. As part of our 'greening' initiative, this summer the Science Center will experiment with reducing electricity use on the Gephart Exhibit Trail while still maintaining a quality experience for our visitors.

We will try different lighting options at the Bobcat Exhibit to determine the most efficient use of electricity. By monitoring electrical use in each situation, we can determine if using incandescent lights and motion detectors are as effective as using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) on their own. We're even hoping to test LED lights (light emitting diodes), which are much more efficient (and more costly) than CFLs and can also be used with motion detectors. So, bear with us as we explore the solutions for exhibit trail lighting and let us know if you see a difference.

HELP SUPPORT THE SCIENCE CENTER BY USING

GOODSEARCH.COM

What if you could help Squam Lakes Natural Science Center raise money each time you searched the internet?

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

Just go to **www.goodsearch.com** and enter Squam Lakes Natural Science Center as the charity you want to support.
And, be sure to spread the word!

NATURALIST'S CORNER

CABIN FEVER! CATCH IT!

By Eric D'Aleo

I thoroughly enjoy each season of the year in New Hampshire, even mud season, but for one reason or another it seems that spring gets a stronger hold on me than the other seasons. It might be due to the longer days and warmer temperatures, or the first signs of life and renewal in the early buds and returning migrants. But regardless of what it is, I find myself itching with anticipation to get outside for more than just a few hours at a time, which is all that is possible in winter. Cabin fever will have tightened its hold on me, so that eventually I'll take a walk in the rain across snow and mud covered fields, into cool, damp woodlands, ending at an abandoned beaver pond covered with a wet mixture of slush and ice or the nearby Baker River flowing at its springtime high level.

When my children were younger they would often pull on their "puddle boots," sweaters, hats, and rain jackets to go tramping with me. Even now, as teenagers, they will sometimes accompany me to bring back news of what's happening outside. Sometimes the news is dramatic, such as the time when my daughter and I went out in March to look for male woodcocks doing their aerial displays to attract females. After standing in the field for 30 minutes and slowly moving closer during each flight, we finally ended with a bird flying 10 feet above our heads as it landed another 50 feet away to begin its display again. Occasionally the news is less striking, but just as important, such as when my son found the first earthworms of the year coming out of the ground onto the driveway, with snow still in the yard and a cold evening forecast ahead. Concerned they would be run over by the car or freeze on the driveway, he carefully moved them out of harm's way and on to the grass. Other times the news and explanation might be more comical such as when my children and I went out into the woods to see if any wood frog eggs had recently been laid in a vernal pool. When we realized that there were many clusters, we decided to try to count them. In the process we ended up moving some egg clusters from exceptionally shallow water to a better location in a vernal pool where they would have less of a chance of drying out as the spring progressed. However, the leaves on the bottom masked the true depth of the pools, and we returned home with boots filled with water and soaked feet.

So as you chafe at the confines of winter, keep your eyes open and your ears listening for each small indication of spring's imminent arrival. Look for the budding of the willows, listen for the sounds of the spring peepers, and watch for the ever expanding variety of birds coming to your feeder and backyard. They are the signs that let you know spring is coming and days of exploration lie ahead!

GARDENER'S NOTEBOOK



GARDENS AREN'T JUST FOR DAYTIME!

By Brenda Erler

Many of us love to garden, but between long work days, evening commitments, and weekend activities, it can be hard to find the time to relax and enjoy what we've created. Brightly colored flowers, butterflies, and visiting birds are wonderful treats during the day, but consider stretching your garden observations into the nighttime hours by attracting some of the wide variety of native moths.

Moths have a bad reputation from the very small number that invade our food supplies and eat holes in our woollens. Many are small, brown, and dull, and unlovable to some humans, but many others display beautiful colors, patterns, and behaviors. Consider that of the 11,000 Lepidoptera species found in North America, only 756 are butterflies. Fortunately for us, that leaves a vast number of moths to attract, observe, and appreciate.

Moths go through the same stages of metamorphosis as butterflies – egg, caterpillar, pupae, and adult. Not all moths are nocturnal, but because most are, the adults tend to have feathery or plumed antennae (as opposed to the threadlike antennae of butterflies), which more easily pick up scents of food plants and female moths (if you happen to be a male moth). A good moth garden will contain plants with white or pale blossoms more readily visible in low light as well as plants with fragrant blossoms attractive to both moths and humans. Many of the most enticing moth blossoms have long tubular throats perfectly designed for the moth's lengthy proboscis

and tongue. As moths fly from flower to flower sipping nectar, they also serve as valuable pollinators.

Some of the loveliest (and easiest to spot) moth pollinators are the hawk or sphinx moths. Many sphinx moths have brightly colored bands, spots, or stripes on streamlined bodies. They are rapid fliers and may be seen hovering, hummingbird-like, as they visit blossoms. If

you're fortunate, you might even spot a giant silk moth visiting your garden. This group includes Cecropia, Polyphemus, and Promethea moths, as well as the beautiful Luna. Silk moth adults have no mouth parts, however, and thus live only long enough to mate and lay eggs, usually a matter of days. To lure these moths to your garden, be sure to include plants attractive to their caterpillars.

So, plant some moth-attracting plants next to your patio or deck, pull up a chair on a moonlit night, arm yourself with a flashlight, and see what comes to visit.

NECTAR PLANTS

Ipomoea alba – moon vine

Lonicera sp. – Honeysuckle

Mirabilis jalapa – Four O'Clocks

Nicotiana glauca – flowering tobacco

Oenothera sp. – Evening Primrose

Petunia x hybrida

Syringa – lilac

Phlox sp. – white varieties

Saponaria officinalis – Bouncing Bet

CATERPILLAR PLANTS

Maple, Birch, Oak, Wild Cherry,

Willow, Basswood, Spicebush,

Dogwood, Blueberries, Sassafras

GREENING AND BROWNING OF SLNSC

By Eric D'Aleo

As the natural world bursts forth with new life this spring, we plan to add to the abundance of nutrients available to plant life as a new composting facility comes into production. What began as an observation of how much animal bedding (shredded paper and wood shavings) went to the landfill finished with a decision to reduce our waste and try to compost it here instead. These materials are difficult to compost due to the high amounts of carbon and low amounts of nitrogen. This winter the facilities staff cleared an area behind the Webster Building and constructed four large wooden bins (each eight feet deep, six feet wide, and four feet tall), which can hold the used animal bedding generated in a year. We will start composting when the snow melts.

Our goal is to compost these materials in alternating brown and green layers. The brown layers, high in carbon, will consist of wood shavings, while the green layers, high in nitrogen, will be from grass clippings and animal manure as well as food scraps from the kitchen and animal room. We will also add extra nitrogen, using coffee grounds from local shops that sell those morning cups of java commuters pick up on their way to work. There are other challenges we'll face in fine tuning our composting, such as maintaining correct moisture, temperature, and oxygen in the pile, but we'll learn from our experiences as we move toward producing our first bin of fresh compost. Who knows, maybe the vibrant colors you see in the gardens and woods in the future will be due to the greening and browning of SLNSC.

If you're interested in composting on your own, you can purchase a compost bin and kitchen scrap pail now. The Science Center is partnering with Northeast

Resource Recovery Association (www.nrra.net) to sell backyard composters (you pay \$40 for an 80-gallon bin of recycled plastic – a \$100 retail value) and kitchen scrap pails (you pay \$8 for a two-gallon plastic pail with a hinged lid and carry handle – a \$10 retail value). Order by April 3 and pick them up here on Clean Up Day, April 25. Contact Janet Robertson at 603-968-7194 x 12 or janet.robertson@nhnature.org to purchase. For more information, see www.nhnature.org.





NATURAL ADVENTURES




NEW!
CELEBRATE NIGHT
Saturday, March 21
6:00-9:00 p.m.
All ages
 Venture out for a night of wonderful family fun to shake off the winter blues and welcome spring. Choose from several activities including storytelling around a campfire, night sky watch (weather permitting), night hikes, and "Creatures of the Night" live animal program. Forget about March cabin fever and come join the fun!
Cost: \$8/member; \$11/non-member

HERE AND BACK AGAIN –
ORIENTEERING WORKSHOP
Wednesday, April 21
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Ages 12+
 Have you ever wondered if you could walk through a forest without a trail, relying only on a map, a compass, and your own observational skills? Traverse through the forests in the Squam area walking "off trail" as we travel from one location to another. We will take bearings, plot our course, and use natural landmarks to orient ourselves, as well as stop to note interesting natural history features along the way as we celebrate Earth Day. Children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.
Cost: \$14/member; \$18/non-member

WILD ABOUT TREES
Friday, April 24
9:30-11:00 a.m.
All ages
 Celebrate Arbor Day at the Science Center! Join us to learn about the amazing trees around us – how they work and who needs them. We'll plant trees too, in celebration of this special day.
Cost: \$7/member; \$9/non-member

ON GUARD! HOW PLANTS
AND ANIMALS DEFEND
THEMSELVES
Tuesday, April 28
1:00-2:30 p.m.
Ages 6+
 Plants and animals have different, yet sometimes similar, ways of protecting themselves. Come and join Naturalist Beth Moore for exploration and fun activities to discover the armor and weapons of the natural world.
Cost: \$7/member; \$9/non-member

WISE ABOUT COYOTES
Thursday, April 30
10:00-11:30 a.m.
Ages 6+
 Are "wily coyotes" really that clever? Why do they howl and where do they live? The eastern coyote is a relative newcomer to New Hampshire, so we will explore some of the mysteries surrounding them. Join us to become wise about coyotes through activities, story-telling, a wild snack, and a visit with our new one-year-old coyote.
Cost: \$7/member; \$9/non-member

SALAMANDER SEARCH
Friday, May 8
4:00-5:30 p.m.
Ages 4+
 Salamanders comprise only 10 percent of all species of amphibians, but 12 of 22 species of New Hampshire amphibians are salamanders. Unlike frogs and toads, salamanders can't be readily identified by vocalizations. The only way to know they are present is to find them where they live. Join us as we attempt to find at least three species of salamanders on Science Center grounds. We will look under logs, rocks, and in the water – so be prepared to get your hands dirty and your feet wet!
Cost: \$7/member; \$9/non-member

THE LATEST THREAT TO
NEW HAMPSHIRE'S LAKES –
BIOTOXINS
Tuesday, June 2
7:00 p.m.
Adults
 James Haney, PhD, professor and chair of the Zoology Department at the University of New Hampshire, will explain his research, including the ecology and management of lakes, lake food webs, and biotoxins. Dr. Haney received his PhD from the University of Toronto.
Cost: no charge to attend

ANNUAL BREEDING
BIRD CENSUS
Saturday, June 6
6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.
Ages 10+
 The Science Center's annual breeding bird population census has been a tradition for nearly 30 years. Join Senior Naturalist Dave Erlar and learn to identify some of the area's resident birds. Early risers meet us at 6:00 a.m. to help scan the skies or join us at 8:00 a.m. to complete the census. No reservations required.
Cost: No charge/member; \$4/ non-member

DISCOVER YOUR
WORLD SERIES
Wednesdays
June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2
9:30-10:30 a.m.
Ages 3 and under
 It's important to introduce children to the world around them as soon as possible. You can foster your child's own "natural curiosity" and sense of wonder as we visit a different natural community each month. These special times you spend with your child will build a foundation for a lifetime of enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world. Adult **MUST** accompany child at no additional cost.
Cost: \$5/member child; \$7/non-member child



HOMESCHOOL
PROGRAM
EARTH CYCLES
March 12 and April 9
10:00-11:30 a.m.
Age groups 2-4, 4-6, and 7-10
 Series topics align with the New Hampshire Science Framework and include rocks, weather, seasons, and water. One adult **MUST** attend with children for free. Each additional adult pays child fee.
Cost \$9/member child; \$11/non-member child.



*Reservations and advance payment required unless otherwise stated.
 Programs are subject to cancellation if minimum enrollment is not met.*

SCIENCE CENTER LAKE CRUISES

EXPLORE SQUAM

Daily at 1:00 p.m. · May 23 – June 12
Daily at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m.
June 13 – October 18

NATURE OF THE LAKES

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4:00 p.m.
July 1 – October 15

Reserve our canopied pontoon boats for your Church Island wedding, or charter a private cruise.

Contact Operations Manager
Tom Klein at 603-968-7194 x 10 or
tom.klein@nhnature.org for reservations.

SIGNS OF SPRING QUIZ

- Which of these wildflowers does NOT bloom in spring?
A. Jack-in-the-Pulpit
B. Pink Lady's Slipper
C. New England Aster
D. Wood Anemone
- Generally the first frog call to be heard in New Hampshire in spring is the _____, which sounds like ducks quacking.
- The "dance" of the woodcock is actually a display put on by the _____ for the purpose of _____.
- The buds now bursting into spring leaves were actually formed in
A. Spring 2008
B. Summer 2008
C. Fall 2008
D. Winter 2009
- What is the name of the wetland formed in the spring mainly from snowmelt, which provides vital spots for frogs and salamanders to lay their eggs?

ANSWERS TO QUIZ:
1. C. 2. v Wood frog 3. males, attracting mates
4. A. 5. Vernal pool

Would you like to join us as a volunteer?



FIRST GUIDES YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

FOR TEENS 14 - 17

Training starts July 2009

Sign up by contacting Volunteer Coordinator
Carol Raymond at 603-968-7194 x 22
or carol.raymond@nhnature.org

DOCENT TRAINING

Saturday, May 9 ■ 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, May 13 ■ 3:00-7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 16 ■ 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Docents are volunteers trained to speak with visitors about the Science Center and its programs and animals. Visitors may encounter docents on the trail showing a live animal or prop, feeding river otters as part of our animal enrichment program, hosting hands-on discovery tables off site, and at outreach programs assisting staff naturalists. No prior training is required to enroll; docents must be 18 years old. For more information or to request an application, contact Volunteer Coordinator Carol Raymond at 603-968-7194 x 22 or carol.raymond@nhnature.org.



SPECIAL EVENTS



Kirkwood Gardens Day

**Saturday
June 13, 2009**

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Gain inspiration
from Kirkwood Gardens
while searching for
beautiful additions to your own!**

- ✿ Fine perennials from a prestigious New England nursery
- ✿ Silent Auction of desirable plants and garden-related items
- ✿ Plants from knowledgeable local gardeners
- ✿ Drinks, sandwiches, and baked goods available
- ✿ Garden collectibles and treasures
- ✿ Expert opinions and advice
- ✿ Exceptional vendors, including:
Canterbury Herbs
South African handmade table linens
Earth Jewelry by Lois Stratton
Wooden bowls by Robin Dustin
Bird Carvings by John Harris

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CLEAN UP DAY
Saturday, April 25
SEE AD ON BACK PAGE

New Hampshire Day
Saturday, May 2

\$3 Admission for New Hampshire residents

Save the Date
ANIMAL ENRICHMENT DAY
Wednesday, July 15

**ANNUAL MEETING
AND SUMMER GALA**
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

NATURE TOURS

Potential trips in the planning stage include:

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks
- September 2009
grizzlies, bison, wolves, geysers

Raptors of Scotland - October 4-11, 2009
Iain is attending a major raptor research conference in Scotland in October and has created a post-conference trip itinerary open to conference goers and Science Center members

Wildlife of New Mexico - November 2009
sandhill cranes, roadrunners, prairie dogs

Let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in either of these trips. Contact Iain at iain.macleod@nhnature.org for more details.



NATURE TOURS

LED BY IAIN MACLEOD



WILDLIFE OF SCOTLAND – HEBRIDES AND HIGHLANDS

June 4-17, 2009

Join me for a trip to his Hebridean homeland in search of birds, beasties, history, and culture. This very personal tour of Iain's favorite Scottish haunts will give one and all a flavor of Caledonian heritage and natural history. Iain has chosen hotels with exceptional Highland hospitality, charm and comfort, outstanding cuisine, and spectacular settings.

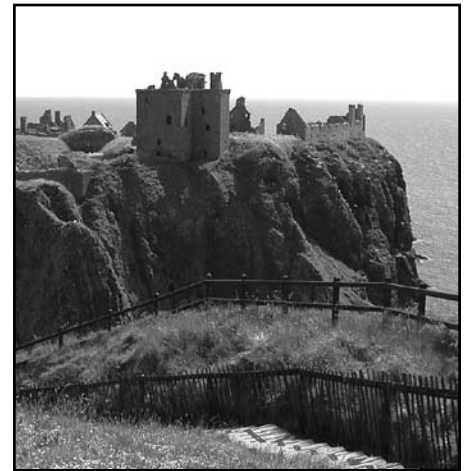
Hebridean natural history highlights will include Red-throated Loons, Golden Eagles, Short-eared Owls, Hen Harriers, and Red Deer on the barren moors, and Corncrakes, Lapwings, Oystercatchers, and Corn Buntings nesting in the profusion of wild flowers on the rich Machair farmland. We'll see Grey Seals, Otters, and Grey Herons that inhabit the salty bays and sea lochs. Along the way, we'll visit ancient stone circles and spectacular white sand beaches.

In the Highlands we'll explore the ancient pine forests known as the Great Wood of Caledon where we'll look for Crested Tits, Crossbills, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, and Red Squirrels (the native Scottish squirrel with a very different reputation than ours).

Visits to castles, ruins, and other cultural antiquities are scattered throughout the trip. Iain might arrange a special dusk viewing of badgers (of *Wind in the Willows* fame).

Another highlight is the sight, sound, and smell of tens of thousands of breeding seabirds – including puffins – on the huge sea cliffs of the Aberdeenshire coast. The trip will wrap up in historic Edinburgh with its famous castle, royal mile, and beautiful gardens.

This will be a trip to remember and likely the last time that Iain will do this itinerary for several years.



Group size limited to nine.

Cost: \$5,200 per person.

All-inclusive cost includes hotel accommodations and all meals, round-trip airfare from Boston to Glasgow, van transportation in Scotland, and admission fees to nature reserves and other destinations listed on the itinerary.

A NORTH COUNTRY WEEKEND AT THE BALSAMS

Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12, 2009



Cost: \$550 per person

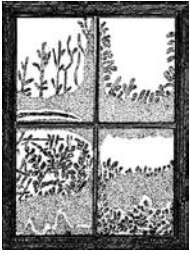
Includes van transportation, pontoon boat ticket, lunch on Saturday and Sunday, Saturday dinner, Sunday breakfast, overnight accommodations, and leader fees. Does not include purchase of alcohol with meals or hotel gratuities.

Join me for a weekend of spectacular wildlife viewing, beautiful scenery, and luxurious accommodations.

We'll depart from the Science Center in Holderness at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday in a 15-passenger van and travel north to Errol. We'll board a pontoon boat near the Errol Dam at noon for a tour of the Androscoggin River and Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge to see nesting Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and Common Loons. We'll float along the edge of New Hampshire's largest freshwater marsh and look and listen for Marsh Wren and American Bitterns. A picnic lunch will be served on the boat. Later in the afternoon we will head to the Balsams' Grand Resort in Dixville Notch and check in. You are welcome to use all of the hotel amenities before we convene for dinner – a truly delightful culinary experience. After dinner we will head out in the van to view Moose as they emerge from the woods to eat roadside mud in the twilight.

Sunday will start with an optional early morning bird walk at 7:00 a.m. around the grounds of the Balsams. After a huge breakfast, we will spend the morning exploring the woods and ponds of the North Country – bird highlights might include Black-backed Woodpeckers and Boreal Chickadee, as well as a huge variety of northern forest warblers. We will return to the Balsams at noon for an amazing Sunday lunch. After lunch we will check out and depart by 2:00 p.m. returning to the Science Center by 5:00 p.m.

For more information on these trips, visit www.nhnature.org/nature_tours.html or e-mail Iain at iain.macleod@nhnature.org for details or to book your place on the trip.



OPENING A WINDOW TO THE NATURAL WORLD

More than ever, nonprofit organizations, like Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, rely on strong financial assistance from people like you to continue our work. You can make a lasting contribution to environmental education by remembering Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in your will. A simple charitable bequest is anything you leave from your estate to a nonprofit organization, such as the Science Center, through your will. Most people leave an estate when they die – property, money, personal belongings – even if they do not have a great deal of wealth.

To leave a charitable bequest in your will, use direct language naming Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and the assets you wish to give. For cash gifts, this may be a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your assets. Also, a bequest may be added to an existing will thorough an amendment (codicil).

Here is sample bequest wording: I give to Squam Lakes Natural Science Center the sum of \$ ___ or ___ percentage of my estate for its unrestricted use.

Please consider making a contribution to Squam Lakes Natural Science Center from your estate through a bequest. Thank you.

Opening a Window to the Natural World is written by Development and Communications Director Janet Robertson. You may contact Janet at 603-968-7194 x 12 or janet.robertson@nhnature.org.

We are grateful for these memorial and honorary gifts received from October 1 through December 31, 2008:

*In memory of Dr. and Mrs. L. Betts Copenhaver
Col. (Ret) and Mrs. Rich Barrere*

*In memory of Donald Parsons
Nancy Parsons and James McDermott
Natalie Parsons
Susan Parsons*

*In memory of Greg Smith
Ann and Richard Chalmers
Barbara and Ronald Geigle
James Talcott Fund of the New York Community Trust
Gail Smith and Frances Chalmers*

*In honor of Dick and Sammie Wakefield
Julie Broussard*

*In honor of Judith C. Webster's birthday
Nancy and Bill Dailey*

SKY DANCERS *continued from page 1*

300 feet where he makes an increasingly intense twittering sound with his wings. The trick to making this sound is movement of air through the bird's first three wing primary feathers, which are thinner and shorter than the rest. When loud vocal chirping is added to the mix, the woodcock is ready for descent and spirals down in a flurry of twitters and chirps. Near the ground, the sounds stop as the woodcock glides quietly back to his dancing ground. "Peent" is heard again and the cycle continues until dark definitely sets in, morning dawns, or a female waiting on the edge of the field picks her partner. Females nest in the forest nearby, laying about four eggs in a dip beside a log or hidden by debris. Meanwhile the males skip the domestic chores and keep dancing!

Will the dance go on? Woodcock numbers have been declining to the point where action is being taken to assist them. Although these birds are legally hunted, habitat is the crucial dynamic and where the most current conservation efforts are focused. With a need for fields and clearings as courtship sites, young forests nearby for nesting spots, and relatively young, wet alder areas for earthworm foraging, woodcock can use some help from human friends. Cutting trees in patches or strips encourages new openings and young growth, making life easier for woodcock, grouse, and other species needing more sunlight.

Spring is just around the corner. Why not set a goal of being a "wall-flower" at a dance – a woodcock dance that is! Find a local field to observe at dusk and wait for your ears to tell you that the main performers have arrived. Borrow a child or two or take some of your own. Share the magic!

WISH LIST

Small, airtight, woodstove with glass doors

Silverware

2-quart plastic pots for garden plants

"Garden treasures" such as lawn and garden tools, ornaments, and accessories

Large coolers

Frequent flyer miles

Baby strollers

Electric kettle

Coffee maker

TRAIL'S END

As you know from reading Iain Macleod's piece "Forging Trails" on the front page of this Spring 2009 edition of *Tracks & Trails*, your response to the Annual Fund was truly heartwarming. We depend on the Annual Fund for about a quarter of our yearly revenue. Special Events (primarily the Gala) and Memberships (which some of you, primarily those who contribute at the higher levels or add a substantial extra to your dues, view as part of your contribution to the Annual Fund) add another 15 percent. So we depend on you – dear readers – for some 40 percent of our yearly income. Thank you for your enthusiastic and generous support

So, how can we keep up our momentum in 2009? As Iain points out, we have all the right ingredients – wonderful volunteers, talented staff, dedicated board, and a sound business strategy, as those of you who have read "Forging New Trails" can attest. What more can we do? Well, think about why so many of us support the Science Center:

- There's something for every age group and every interest, from a great summer program for kids to informative and entertaining lake cruises for all; it's fun, safe, a marvelous family activity.
- You see critters up close – bears, mountain lions, fisher, owls – animals you don't see every day.
- The location is awesome, by a beautiful, unspoiled lake, with facilities that are superbly laid out.
- It's outdoors – "No Child Left Inside."

These are just some thoughts on why the Science Center deserves your support. What are yours? How can we amaze the ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators) when they visit us in August – and make them jealous? Any suggestions you have can be shared with any of the staff when you visit or communicated directly to me. But, above all, thank you for your enduring, passionate, and loyal support. Keep it up in 2009.

*Trail's End is written by Peter M. Wood, Chairman of the SLNSC Board of Trustees.
You may contact Peter at 603-968-7194 x 27 or peter.wood@nhnature.org.*



Sponsor a Species

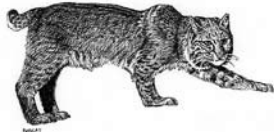
Sponsor a Species is an educational experience. Once you have chosen a species and submitted the form, you will receive a certificate, information about your species, a natural history word game, and a photo postcard. You will also be satisfied knowing that you are helping the Science Center teach its visitors about wildlife. **Your name will be listed on a poster in the Trailhead Gallery from May 1- November 1.**

Yes I want to Sponsor A Species!

Name _____ Phone _____
 Mail Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email _____
 Name to be listed in Trailhead Gallery: _____

Select the species you would like to sponsor for this season for \$50 each. All gifts are tax deductible.

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Bear | <input type="checkbox"/> Saw-whet Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> Beaver | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Deer | <input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Lion | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Otter | <input type="checkbox"/> Red Fox | <input type="checkbox"/> Striped Skunk | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl |



Enclosed please find a check in the amount of: _____ This is a Gift for: _____
 MC/Visa/Amex/Discover # _____ Exp. Date _____ Address _____
 Print name as it appears on the card _____
 Signature _____
 Send certificate to me
 Send certificate to recipient

CLEAN UP DAY

Saturday, April 25
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



Help prepare the trails and grounds for opening day and wake up Kirkwood Gardens. Wear old clothes and work shoes suitable for working outdoors. Extra leaf rakes, metal rakes, and work gloves are helpful too. A complimentary picnic lunch will be provided at noon. Groups welcome.

**Contact Volunteer Coordinator
 Carol Raymond to sign up
 at 603-968-7194 x 22 or
 carol.raymond@nhnature.org**

This year the Science Center is partnering with the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (www.nrra.net) to sell backyard composters (you pay \$40 for an 80-gallon bin of recycled plastic – a \$100 retail value) and kitchen scrap pails (you pay \$8 for a two-gallon plastic pail with a hinged lid and carry handle – a \$10 retail value). You can pick up your order here on Clean Up Day. Contact Janet Robertson at 603-968-7194 x 12 or janet.robertson@nhnature.org to purchase.

**For more information, see
www.nhnature.org/Calendar/clean_up_day.html**



THE HOWLING COYOTE GIFT SHOP

AT SQUAM LAKES NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

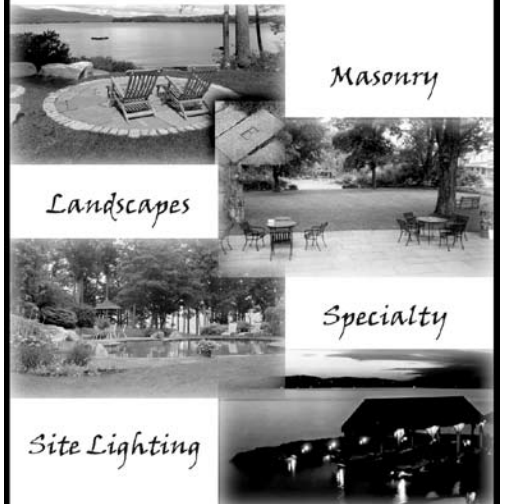
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