



PROTECTING A COASTAL TREASURE: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S ENDANGERED PIPING PLOVERS

BY VICTORIA BROWN, NATURALIST

In the past two newsletters, we've explored the story of the threatened spotted turtle and the resilient history of the Virginia opossum. This quarter, we shed a spotlight on one of the smallest and most vulnerable residents of New Hampshire's coastline: the endangered piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*).

Walking along the beach in early summer, you might notice a tiny bird darting along the shoreline, almost invisible against the sand. With its pale plumage, black neck band, and bright orange legs, the piping plover is not just beautiful, it needs our help.

This bird was once common on the Atlantic coast, but piping plover

populations have been in sharp decline since the early 1900s. In New Hampshire, these birds are listed as endangered and considered federally threatened throughout their range. Unfortunately, as beach development, foot traffic, and recreational activities have increased, undisturbed shorelines that plovers depend on to nest and raise their young have diminished.

If that wasn't enough adversity, piping plovers are also long-distance migrants. After breeding along the Atlantic coast, they head south for the winter, traveling hundreds to thousands of miles. Many overwinter along the southeastern U.S. coast, the Bahamas,

and other parts of the Caribbean. These migrations expose them to habitat loss from coastal development, rising sea levels, and storm events exacerbated by climate change.

The piping plover nests right on the sand, laying its eggs in small scrapes sometimes lined with pebbles or shells, which makes these nests extremely hard to see. It's a great survival strategy until beach equipment, off-leash dogs, and predators come into the picture.

However, there are solutions being implemented. Because of important conservation work such as nest monitoring, educational signs with fencing, public outreach, and habitat management, the piping plover is making a small comeback here in New Hampshire. From just a few nesting pairs in the 1990s, our state's beaches now support a growing population each summer.

What can we do to help?

- Respect protected nesting areas: Stay outside roped-off zones and follow posted signs. These areas are critical for breeding success.
- Keep dogs off nesting beaches: Even the sweetest dog can scare a plover off its nest or accidentally step on eggs and/or chicks.
- Carry out your trash: Food waste attracts predators like gulls and foxes, which can wipe out entire broods.
- Share with others: If you see someone entering a restricted area or unknowingly disturbing a nesting site, kindly educate them. Most people want to help, they just need to know how and why.

Let's make sure that future generations can walk our shores and hear the distinctive "peep-lo" call of a piping plover skimming across the sand. These birds and all endangered species remind us that every creature has a place in the natural world, and that when we come together and choose to act, recovery is possible.

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Piping Plover, Martha's Vineyard, photo credit: Iain MacLeod

FORGING TRAILS: EVERY ANIMAL HAS A STORY

BY IAIN MACLEOD



In the past, the signage and interpretation at each of our animal exhibits has focused exclusively on the species housed in the outdoor habitats, but shied away from individualizing the animals and highlighting their stories. But, all of the animals here have a story that led them to a life in captivity. In most cases, their lives intersected negatively with humans and resulted in them being injured, orphaned or imprinted on people, making them unable to return to the wild.

These animals are now here as ambassadors of their species and we will continue to share information about the overall habitats, adaptations, populations and interrelationships, but new signage at each exhibit now highlights each animal's origin story and their name.

For decades we have had a policy of not naming our animals so as not to focus on the individuals or create the perception of them being pets. New research suggests that people have more empathy with an animal if it has a name and is seen as an individual. The Science Center recently changed its protocol around naming and formally adopted a new Captive Animal policy. Each animal now has a name that is directly linked to the geographic location where it was found.

When you visit the Science Center this fall, you will meet Belmont the Eastern Coyote. She was found in May 2013 in Belmont, New Hampshire, after her mother was killed by a car. Belmont was only ten days old when she was brought here. The new signage at her exhibit goes on to say that in NH, rehabilitating and releasing coyotes to the wild is not permitted. To thrive in the wild, coyote pups need to be taught vital survival skills like hunting, avoiding danger, and social behavior from their parents. Each new sign also offers tips on how we can help make sure other Coyotes don't end up as orphans like Belmont.



Belmont shortly after she arrived in 2013

So, what do you think is the name of your favorite Science Center animal? Perhaps their story will surprise you or make you more passionate about their protection.



Belmont as an adult Coyote

Iain MacLeod

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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. Its 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 distributed to members and contributors. Comments are welcomed at info@nhnature.org.

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TRAIL'S END BY LISA BENNETT, BOARD CHAIR



Stepping Into Stewardship

Taking over as Board Chair of the Science Center is an honor and a formidable responsibility. The role of board chair brings with it the challenge of steering this unique organization forward, recognizing evolving opportunities, complex operational landscapes and the chance to advance understanding

of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world. We are in such capable hands, and, thanks to our leadership, we continue to advance on a trajectory of excellence.

I have spent the last four years chairing the Buildings & Grounds Committee, a role I am sorry to relinquish. During my tenure, the Science Center built an Ambassador Animal Annex for our program animals, renovated the Tamworth Pavilion into a topnotch Volunteer Headquarters, upgraded old exhibit space in the Trailhead Gallery to a much-needed meeting and event space, rebuilt our Marsh Boardwalk and began

an initiative to upgrade animal enclosures along the trail. There is more to come - this winter we will begin work on a new Otter exhibit. The Science Center never sleeps; staff and volunteers propel us along a path of constant improvement. Next year we will have a chance to celebrate the Science Center with events to mark our 60th year and our Executive Director's 20th year.

When I have a quiet moment, I ask myself what I can bring to this wonderful institution, and I worry if it is enough. I reflect on the advice of my 4th grade teacher who always reminded me that you can only do the very best that you can. The best I can do is offer my passion, energy, focus, and commitment in this new role as Board Chair. I must thank all the people whose footsteps I follow, particularly our outgoing Board Chair, Sarah Brown. She has managed the board and the Science Center through a strategic planning cycle that has been successfully realized. We will miss her enthusiasm, and I thank her personally for her support and guidance.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

You may contact Lisa at lisa.v.bennett@gmail.com.

ANNUAL MEETING BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STAFF UPDATES



175 people joined us for our Annual Meeting and Kirkwood Garden Party on a beautiful evening on August 14th. A huge thank you to our sponsors:

Rossi Import, The Common Man, Junedays, Badger Peabody and Smith, Circle Dental, Belknap Landscaping Company, Lakes Region Tent and Event, The Edmund and Betsy Cabot Charitable Foundation, Your Neighbor's Flowers, Holderness Harbor, and Samyn D'Elia Architects.

At the annual meeting we awarded, Volunteer Manager, Carol Raymond, the Horizon Award – created in 1995 as a means to honor exceptional and extended service to the Science Center.

We also recognized three staff members who had reached 5-year-increment employment milestones; Blue Heron School co-directors Jordan Fitzgerald (15 years) and Jordy Gianforte (10 years) and facilities Assistant Bob Donnelly (10 years). Thank you to all of them for their service.

At the end of August we said farewell to seasonal Guided Discoveries Instructors, Hannah Lewis and Sarah Winslow, who did a great job teaching camp sessions throughout the summer. In September we welcomed Corrie Underwood back to the Blue Heron School staff. Corrie left us a couple years ago to start her family. She is replacing Ashley Jones who left us in June to have her first child.



Outgoing Board members (from left), Diane Garfield Gross, Sarah Brown, and Anne Lovett.



Incoming Board members (from left), Sam Howe, Carol Bard, and Win Shafer.



Board Officers (from left), Kevin Barrett, Carol Stone, Lisa Bennett, and Lisa Doner.



Horizon Award recipient, Carol Raymond, with Iain MacLeod, Jordan Fitzgerald, and Bob Donnelly.

NATURALIST'S CORNER: COUNTING ON SCIENCE

BY AUDREY EISENHAUER, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

What do bats, caterpillars, and hawks have in common? They are all the focus of science research that the Science Center participated in over the summer. Contributing to research projects not only enables the Science Center to add to our collective understanding of the wild species and places around us, it provides us with firsthand knowledge to share with our volunteers, members, and visitors. Read on to find out more about this work and how you can be involved!



"Granite," a wild broad-winged hawk from NH outfitted with a tiny GPS transmitter backpack. The bird is wearing a hood to keep it calm while being handled by the researchers.

the MLMP's database. The MLMP's mission is to better understand the breeding and distribution of monarch populations so that we might help them survive and thrive. This summer our milkweed plot was not inundated with monarchs by any means, but we found a few treasures, learned so much about monarchs through our observations, and always observed something magical about the natural world during our time in the Preserve. Our monarch monitoring will continue next summer. We are interested to see how next year compares to this year, and we hope more community scientists

continue to join us in our efforts to help the monarchs. All are welcome!

Counting Bats - Each summer, Volunteer Manager Carol Raymond leads several of our teen and adult volunteers in counting the bats that utilize our five bat houses as their summer maternity roost. Carol and our volunteers brave the mosquito filled evening to position themselves at just the right spot to count each and every bat as it drops out of the bat house for its nightly feeding foray. We conduct these counts twice each summer as part of the New Hampshire Fish and Game's Summer Bat Colony Count ([visit wildlife.nh.gov](http://visit.wildlife.nh.gov) and search for Bat Count for more info). This community science initiative helps provide valuable data on the status of our state's bat populations, which is especially important given the occurrence of White-nose Syndrome in New Hampshire. This summer we counted just over 700 bats utilizing our five bat houses! Do you have bats living in a barn, attic, or bat house on your property? If so, you can be a bat counter too! Visit NH Fish & Game website to learn more and be part of the count.

Counting Caterpillars - Every Monday morning over the summer, a group of intrepid butterfly aficionados, led by Connected Learning Coordinator Heidi Emmons, headed out into the Pemi-Oxbow Preserve in Plymouth to search for evidence of monarch butterflies. Along the way they observed all manner of wildlife, from deer to bobolinks, indigo buntings, frogs, toads, and countless varieties of insects, just to name a few. These community scientists, ranging in age from two years old to solidly retired, look for monarch eggs, larvae, pupae, and butterflies as part of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP), a nationwide monitoring effort that has been underway since 1997. Every week, we inspected a plot of approximately 200 milkweed plants looking for signs of monarch activity, and then entered our data into



Searching for monarch eggs and caterpillars as part of Monarch Monitoring Mondays over the summer.

Tracking Hawks - The Science Center has teamed up with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in PA (hawkmountain.org) to be a partner in their Broad-winged Hawk Project. Through our donor supported Innovative Project Fund, we have sponsored a GPS transmitter placed on an adult, wild broad-winged hawk from New Hampshire this summer. The goal of the project is to better understand the movements of these hawks on their breeding grounds in the Eastern US & Canada, during their 4,000-6,000-mile migration, and on their wintering grounds in South America. Education Director Audrey Eisenhauer, along with volunteer Sue Francesco, spent a few days in the field with Hawk Mountain biologists Rebecca McCabe and Laurie Goodrich in early July with the goal of trapping a wild broad-winged hawk in the Squam Watershed. Despite locating two active nests, one at the Science Center and one near White Oak Pond, we were unsuccessful at trapping any of the adults. Fortunately, Rebecca and Laurie were successful at trapping two adult hawks down in Southwestern New Hampshire when working with our colleagues at the Harris Center for Conservation Education. One of these NH hawks, dubbed "Granite," is now wearing the transmitter sponsored by the Science Center. We will share the adventures of this bird as fall migration begins in mid-September. Keep an eye on our social media for updates or visit Hawkmountain.org to follow along on their interactive map showing all the hawks actively transmitting data as part of this project. Thanks to all the volunteers that helped with nest searching this spring and special thanks to Sharps Lumber, the Francesco Family, and the Cocchiaro Family for letting us search for nests on your property!



KIRKWOOD GARDENS

by Emma Erler, Lead Horticulturalist and Exhibits Assistant



PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Panicle Hydrangea, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Tardiva'



Culture: Prefers organically rich, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Can be trained into a small single trunk tree, but best grown as a large, multi-stemmed shrub. Flowers occur on current season's growth, so bloom is reliable in NH regardless of winter conditions. Hardy to Zone 3

Bloom: Pyramidal, upright, white flower panicles are held at the tips of stems. Bloom extends from late July through September. Flowers gradually age to pink.

Height: 8-12 feet

'Tardiva' is a vigorous and upright variety of panicle hydrangea which is capable of growing 8-12' tall unless regularly pruned. It provides late summer bloom when few other shrubs are still flowering, and works wonderfully in mixed shrub borders as a background plant. It can also make for an attractive large accent plant. 'Tardiva' is relatively carefree and reliable in most gardens.

Kirkwood location: Lower garden near pergola.



Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Sahara'



Image: Emma Erler

Culture: This warm weather annual or short-lived perennial is easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates heat and drought and is generally avoided by deer. Easily started from seed indoors or directly sown in the garden. Dead-head for continuous bloom.

Bloom: June to September. Beautiful 3" daisy-like flowers with brown centers and petals in colors including yellow, bronze, and rose pink.

Height: 18-24 inches

Black-eyed Susan is a prairie wildflower native in much of the United States. The cultivated variety 'Sahara' is highly ornamental and a dependable bloomer. Its strong stems make it an excellent cut flower, though it is also at home in a mixed perennial or annual border.

Kirkwood location: Lower garden near old apple tree.



Image: Emma Erler

WANT MORE GARDENING TIPS FROM EMMA ERLER?

Tune in to NHPR every Saturday morning at 8:35 am for **Homegrown NH** – a new weekly segment, offering quick practical gardening tips, from native plants and pollinators to sustainable yard care.

COMMON PLANT Q & A

Q: Can invasive plants be beneficial for wildlife?

A: It is well-known that invasive plants reduce biodiversity by outcompeting native plants and animals for resources. They are better competitors because they emerge earlier in the spring, grow rapidly, and are impacted by few, if any, natural predators. When invasive plants are allowed to grow unchecked, many native plants and the wildlife species that rely upon them suffer.

However, invasive plants can provide some benefits to some species. Invasive species such as autumn olive, Asian bittersweet, and glossy buckthorn produce fruit that is readily consumed by a handful of fruit-eating bird species. In fact, planting autumn olive was once encouraged as a means of creating wildlife habitat before it was realized that the shrub has the ability to spread quickly on its own. The birds that eat the fruit of invasive plants benefit from having an abundant food source in the fall and winter, which increases their survival.

Invasive plants can also serve as a source of pollen and nectar for a variety of insect species. Many bees will readily forage on invasive plants like Japanese knotweed or spotted knapweed.

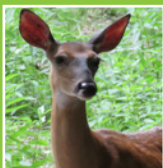
While invasive plants do benefit a few species, they are a detriment to many more. Even though some bird populations may grow in response to increased food resources, many other species suffer from habitat loss. If you are concerned that removing the invasive plants from your property will eliminate food for the wildlife in your backyard, consider replacing them with native plants. There are a tremendous number of native trees, shrubs and perennials that bloom and produce fruit late in the season, are enjoyed by wildlife, and do not take over natural areas.



Plant Spotlight and Kirkwood Gardens are sponsored by Belknap Landscape Company, Inc. belknaplandscape.com

FALL 2025 PROGRAMS & EVENTS

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT!



Mountain Lions
September 6-7



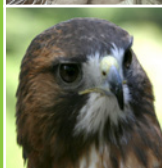
White-tailed Deer
September 13-14



Raptors
September 20-21

River Otters
September 27-28

Black Bears
October 4-5



Get to know the animals at the Science Center as we highlight a different species each weekend. Engage with staff naturalists and volunteer docents to discover the circumstance that led to each animal being in our care, learn about the enrichment of the day provided for the animals, and hear about actions you can take to help wildlife and their habitats.

Included with trail admission. Last admission is 3:30 pm

RAPTOR MIGRATION CELEBRATION

FEATURING BIRDS OF PREY PROGRAM WITH VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Saturday, September 20
10:00 am - 4:00 pm, All Ages

Fall is a season of transition and many raptors are on the move to their wintering grounds. Join us to be part of this awesome annual spectacle! Discover where our raptor species go each winter during live birds of prey programs presented throughout the day. Ride the Migration Flyway zipline at the Raptor Exhibit to



see if you can avoid the hazards and make it to your wintering grounds successfully! Test your raptor identification skills at our Discovery Table. Educators from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) will be presenting special 30-minute birds of prey programs, including a flight demonstration, with their raptor ambassadors. VINS presentations are at 11 am, 12 pm, & 1 pm and each feature a different raptor.

Included with trail admission. Last admission is 3:30 pm

DONOR & MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Saturday, October 4



A special day of gratitude for our members and donors. Enjoy fresh donuts and apple cider, exclusive savings at the gift store, Up Close to Animals programs, and a variety of activities to celebrate the season and show our thanks for your support. We hope you'll join us for this festive fall gathering!

Pre-registration required. Last trail admission is 3:30 pm

OWL-O-WEEN

Saturday, October 25



Join us for Owl-O-Ween to celebrate all things owl! Meet live owls at Up Close to Animals presentations throughout the day. See the animals along the live animal exhibit trail enjoying a variety of pumpkin treats. Come in your favorite costume. Children will receive a bag of Halloween

treats at the end of their visit to take home.

*Included with trail admission.
Last trail admission is 3:30 pm*

Sponsored by:
SERVICE CREDIT UNION
★★★★★

NEW HAMPSHIRE DAY

Sunday, October 26

New Hampshire residents may visit the live animal exhibit trail for \$8 admission thanks to our generous sponsors: **Dead River Company, New Hampshire Electric Co-op Foundation, Meredith Landing Real Estate, and Franklin Savings Bank.** Non-New Hampshire residents may purchase regular-priced admission tickets. New Hampshire residents must provide proof of residency upon admission. Enjoy Up Close to Animals presentations at the Amphitheater at 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. NHEC members admitted free with electric bill shown at admission window.

Timed advance purchase tickets are required.

Sponsored by:



Dead River Company



NEW HAMPSHIRE Electric Co-op



SQUAM LAKE CRUISES

Cruise with a Naturalist

Tuesdays & Thursdays at 3:00 pm on:

September: 2, 4, 11, 23, 25, 30, October: 7, 9

Uncover the rich natural history of Squam Lake with an experienced naturalist educator. Observe Loons and Bald Eagles and their nesting sites along with other wildlife. Learn how animals survive and adapt to their aquatic world. Gain an appreciation and deeper understanding of Squam Lake from mountain ranges to island stories to quiet spots during this memorable lake experience.



Discover Squam Cruise

Through October 13: Daily at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 3:00 pm

Enjoy Squam Lake and learn about the natural history, wildlife, culture, and people of the lake.

Squam Lake Charters

Host your own unique gathering on Squam Lake with a private cruise customized to fit your occasion. Our four canopied pontoon boats and experienced tour guides are ready to help with your special outing. Contact Erick Amero at 603-968-7194 x 110 or erick.amero@nhnature.org for reservations. \$375 per boat/per hour

All cruises require reservations at nhnature.org

HANDS-ON LEARNING FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

1st Thursday of each month, November-April

10:00 am - 11:30 am, Ages 4-6 & 7-10

Join us at this monthly series for homeschooled students to learn about the natural world through hands-on activities and investigations. We will wrap up each program with a visit with one of our live animal ambassadors.



Advance registration required. Register for one program or attend the whole series. Activities take place both indoors and outdoors. Dress to be outdoors with insulated boots, hats, gloves, jackets, and warm layers when appropriate.

Cost \$12/member child; \$15/non-member child. An adult must participate with children at no additional cost.

Some programs have limited capacities and advanced registration is required.

Full details and tickets are available on the Calendar of Events at nhnature.org.

UP CLOSE TO ANIMALS!



Join a Science Center Naturalist to meet one of our animal ambassadors!

Saturdays and Sundays through November 1st.

11:00 am and 2:00 pm at the Amphitheater

Sponsored by:

Rockyworld Deephaven Camps & Squam Boat Livery



FALL SPECIALS AT HOWLING COYOTE GIFT SHOP

After Labor Day, each week we will feature a BOGO (Buy One Get One!)

Mark your calendar for the Annual Closing Sale starting October 5th!



NATURE TOURS WITH IAIN

HEBRIDEAN ADVENTURE

May 15-28 AND June 12-25, 2026

NORTHERN ISLES ADVENTURE – SHETLAND AND ORKNEY

May 28-June 10, 2027



Photo credit: Iain MacLeod



Photo credit: Iain MacLeod

Atlantic Puffin & Gambel's Quail

Limited space is available in these sought-after excursions led by Executive Director, Iain MacLeod. Iain creates and leads these small-group tours to Scotland and New Mexico that explore the ecology and natural and cultural history of the regions. The group size (maximum of 11 guests in Scotland and 8 in New Mexico), and unhurried pace fosters new friendships, a relaxed atmosphere, and flexibility in the schedule. Learn more and download the detailed itineraries at https://nhnature.org/programs/nature_tours.php.

FROM THE HERON'S NEST



Blue Heron School had a successful summer program this year, with 15-20 children in attendance each week. Students explored the grounds of the Science Center, met animals up close and had a lot of fun with the water hose. We have been harvesting sugar snap peas, green beans and making mint tea. We made sure to care for our many tomato plants and can't wait to see what else pops up over the next several weeks. East room teacher, Alexis Plunkett, led some weeks



of camp before heading down to Cambridge, MA to finish her Montessori training at Northeast Montessori Institute. She is very busy while she awaits the arrival of her baby boy in September!

We are all so excited for the fall, when we can say that ALL of our permanent staff are Montessori trained. This is an amazing feat for a small school like ours and we are thrilled at the accomplishments of our very well-educated teachers.



Blue Heron School is a nature-based Montessori school for children ages three to six. For information please visit nhnature.org/programs or contact Blue Heron School Co-Directors Jordan Fitzgerald and Jordy Gianforte at 603-968-7036 or blueheron@nhnature.org.



ATTEND THE SCIENCE CENTER'S RAPTOR SPECTACULAR ON SEPT 20	LARCH NEEDLES TURNING YELLOW	MUSHROOM ON THE FOREST FLOOR	MIGRATING COMMON GREEN DARNER DRAGONFLIES	GO APPLE PICKING
MONARCH BUTTERFLY HEADING SOUTH	A MOSQUITO FREE EVENING	OAK LEAVES TURNING RED	FROST IN THE MORNING	CHIPMUNK BRINGING LEAVES INTO A BURROW
FALLEN LEAVES ON THE GROUND	MUSHROOM GROWING ON A TREE TRUNK	FREE SPACE	GRAY SQUIRREL GATHERING NUTS	GEESE FLYING IN A "V" FORMATION
RED SQUIRREL COLLECTING PINE CONES	MAPLE LEAF WITH RED, YELLOW, & GREEN	RIDE THE MIGRATION FLYWAY ZIPLINE AT THE SCIENCE CENTER	A DECIDUOUS TREE WITH NO LEAVES	KETTLE OF MIGRATING BROAD-WINGED HAWKS
MAKE AN APPLE PIE	YELLOW ASPEN OR BIRCH LEAVES	GOLDEN ROD AND PURPLE ASTER GROWING TOGETHER	VISIT PACK MONADNOCK RAPTOR OBSERVATORY	HUMMING-BIRDS GONE FROM YOUR FEEDER

Answers:
1. C, 2. B, 3. C

KIDS' ACTIVITY

There are many changes happening in the natural world at this time of year. Bring your Autumn Bingo card with you on your explorations in nature. Check off boxes as you see signs of the season or participate in seasonal activities. Five in a row across, down, or diagonally, is a bingo! Bring your winning Autumn Bingo card to the Science Center by November 1 to claim your prize of a Science Center bumper sticker*!

*while supplies last

PIPING PLOVER QUIZ

1. Where do piping plovers typically build their nests?

- A. In tall beach grasses
- B. On tree branches near the dunes
- C. Right on the open sand
- D. In burrows dug into the sand dunes

2. Which of the following is a common wintering location for piping plovers?

- A. Northern Canada
- B. The Bahamas
- C. The Pacific Northwest
- D. New Hampshire

3. What's one simple way beachgoers can help protect piping plovers during nesting season?

- A. Feed the birds to keep them healthy
- B. Fly kites near nesting areas to scare predators
- C. Stay out of fenced-off beach areas
- D. Build sandcastles near their nests

ANIMAL CARE

WHERE OUR BIRDS GO DURING WINTER

Brian Church, Animal Care Associate

The weather is turning cooler and will be snowy again before we know it. And many birds are preparing to move south for the winter. But, what about exhibit birds you see at the Science Center? Do they go south and then come back in the spring? No, their migration works a little differently.

Many (but not all) bird species fly south for the winter because it is too cold for them, so they travel to a fairer climate to stay warm. The migratory species at the Science Center are unable to survive such a long and difficult trip, so we bring them inside to their "Winter Quarters." These are temperature-regulated rooms where the birds are provided enrichment, substrate, perches, etc. to feel comfortable. When spring comes around, these birds return to their outdoor exhibits. Some examples of birds we bring into Winter Quarters are our Broad-winged Hawks, American Kestrels, and Black-crowned Night Herons.



Great Horned Owl

However, not all of our birds need to migrate/come inside. Rough-legged Hawks, for example, fly to the northern half of the U.S. when they go south for the winter! Our winters are considered mild for this bird that breeds in the Arctic, so our Rough-legged Hawk has no problem staying on exhibit all winter long. Other birds that stay out are our Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owl. There are several reasons why a bird species may not migrate, including: being territorial, having access to food year-round, and having the right distribution of feathers to keep themselves insulated. So, next time you're on the Live Animal Trail, take a closer look at the range of each bird species posted at the raptor exhibits. And as the seasons change, keep an eye out for what birds are present, or not, depending on the weather. The spring and fall migration seasons are some of the most impressive times to see birds of all varieties coming and going in large quantities. I hope to see you out there!

VOLUNTEER UPDATES

BY CAROL RAYMOND, VOLUNTEER MANAGER

This summer, our Facilities staff completed renovations to the new Volunteer Headquarters, a bright, accessible, and welcoming space designed to meet the needs of the Center's dedicated volunteers.

Previously, volunteers gathered in a second-floor room of the Webster Building in a space that posed accessibility challenges and separated key functions. The new headquarters represents a long-awaited improvement, now offering a fully accessible single-floor location where all volunteers can comfortably gather, prepare for shifts, and connect as a community.

Key features of the new facility include:

- **Accessibility:** Every volunteer is welcome, with barrier-free entry and layout.
- **Centralized Stations:** Volunteers can pick up materials, uniforms, and instructions from clearly designated areas all under one roof for maximum efficiency.
- **Spacious, Well-Lit Environment:** The open, airy design provides ample room for individuals and groups.
- **Kitchenette:** Volunteers may store their lunches and beverages or make coffee or tea in a dedicated kitchen area ideal for breaks and social time.
- **Teaching Space:** A modern area equipped with a Smart Board supports interactive training, orientations, and meetings.
- **Dedicated Office Areas:** A new office serves the Volunteer Manager, with additional workspace available for staff, such as the Education and Volunteer Assistant, as needed.

The new Volunteer Headquarters reflects the Science Center's deep appreciation for its volunteers, whose time



Sarah Porrazzo and Deb Doe attend the Grand Opening of the new Headquarters

and passion fuel critical education, animal care, and outreach programs. Volunteers, staff, and supporters are invited to tour the new facility on request.

Since the new year, the Science Center has welcomed 26 new volunteers to the volunteer team! Five new docents and three new First Guides were

part of the group. In addition to our roster of 212 regular volunteers, we have an additional cadre of one-time volunteers through school, business, and other groups. The support of time and skills generously donated by community members is outstanding! In 2024, volunteers donated a total of 5,900 hours. These amazing volunteers all enhance our visitors' experiences, whether it's with behind-the-scenes tasks or front-facing interactions.

One way we show our thanks to volunteers is through the annual Parsons Volunteer Recognition Dinner. The dinner is named for Natalie and Don Parsons, both of whom were long-standing volunteers. Natalie was a Volunteer Coordinator 35 years ago and started the Volunteer Recognition Dinners. She volunteered until she was 92 years old. This year, we were invited back to Camp Deerwood for the event. Chef Clarence Williams served a delicious buffet dinner following a Recognition Ceremony highlighting volunteer Greeters.

To learn more about the volunteer program, please visit the Volunteer page on our website or contact Volunteer Manager Carol Raymond at carol.raymond@nhnature.org or 603-968-7194 x 122.

FAMILY PICNIC 2025: "FRIENDS OF THE FOREST"

Thank you to our sponsors: Survival of the Fit, Squam Lakes Financial Advisors, Belknap Landscaping, Samyn D'Elia, Service Credit Union, junedays, Children's Dentistry, Lakes Region Tent and Event, Bridgewater Power, Pam and Larry Tarica, Bill and Lisa Aulet, Sarah and Win Brown,

Cathy and Rob Denious, Brendan Connolly at Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty, Hermit Woods, White Mountain Brewery, Hermit Woods Winery, Twin Barns Brewing, Holderness Harbor, Gusto's Italian Cafe



FROM THE ARCHIVES



Former Senior Naturalist Dave Erler conducting the annual hawkwatch program with Interlakes Elementary School students in the 1980's. In fall 2025, we conducted this program for the 45th consecutive year.

OPENING A WINDOW TO THE NATURAL WORLD

BY RACHEL SALIBA, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

As summer gives way to the crisp beauty of fall, we find ourselves reflecting on a season brimming with joy, discovery, and connection at Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. From lively adventures on our trails to programs that brought the wonders of wildlife up close, summer 2025 reminded us how vital our mission is, and how alive it feels when shared with so many of you.

To everyone who gave so generously this year, we offer our heartfelt thanks. Whether you contributed through our first-ever Spring Appeal, joined the statewide energy of NH Gives, attended one of our fundraising events, or supported us through business sponsorship, you are part of a growing community that believes in the value of connecting people to nature. Because of your generosity, we are already more than one-third of the way to our 2025 Annual Fund goal.

Looking ahead, there are many ways to make an impact. Memberships, monthly giving, planned gifts, business sponsorships, and volunteer opportunities all play a vital

role in helping us provide animal and environmental education for generations to come. Together, we are building a bright future for the Science Center, for our animals, and for New Hampshire's environment.

Thank you for your commitment to the Science Center!

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center is a non-profit organization with a mission to advance understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world. As a non-profit, we depend on support from our members and people like you. By making a 100% tax-deductible donation to our Nearer to Nature Fund, you're furthering our mission and helping introduce more people to the transformative power of the natural world.

Find out more at www.nhnature.org/support, or contact Rachel Saliba at rachel.saliba@nhnature.org.

New this season, donate via Venmo at @SLNSC!
Squam Lakes Natural Science Center tax ID: 02-0271824.



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TODAY!

THREE ECO-FRIENDLY IMPACTFUL GIFTS

Looking for a meaningful, eco-friendly gift that supports wildlife and environmental education? The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center offers thoughtful ways to give that inspire and make a difference, perfect for birthdays, holidays, or to honor a loved one.

1. GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

Share the joy of discovery with a gift membership. Recipients enjoy free admission, discounts, and special member events while supporting our mission to bring people nearer to nature.

2. SPONSOR A SPECIES

Delight an animal lover by sponsoring one of our live animal ambassadors in their name. Each sponsorship includes a certificate, animal photo, and fun facts, plus the knowledge that your gift helps provide expert care for native wildlife. Perfect for all ages!



3. MARSHLAND BOARDWALK PLAQUES

Honor someone special with a personalized plaque along our scenic Marsh Boardwalk. It's a lasting tribute that supports the Science Center and welcomes visitors to reflect on the natural beauty around them.



Learn more or purchase your gift at nhnature.org or contact Nicole Verspyck at 603-968-7194 x 124 or nicole.verspyck@nhnature.org

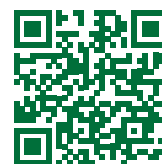
2025 BONUS MEMBER BENEFITS



As a Science Center member, you receive discounted admission all year at participating ANCA organizations.

 SEPTEMBER	 OCTOBER	 NOVEMBER	 DECEMBER
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SCAN TO RENEW OR
PURCHASE YOUR
MEMBERSHIP TODAY!



Reciprocal admission is generally good for up to two adults and two youth per visit. Be sure to take your membership card with you when you go. Check with specific organizations for hours, directions, and information.



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