

CONSERVATION AND THE WOOD DUCK

by Victoria Brown

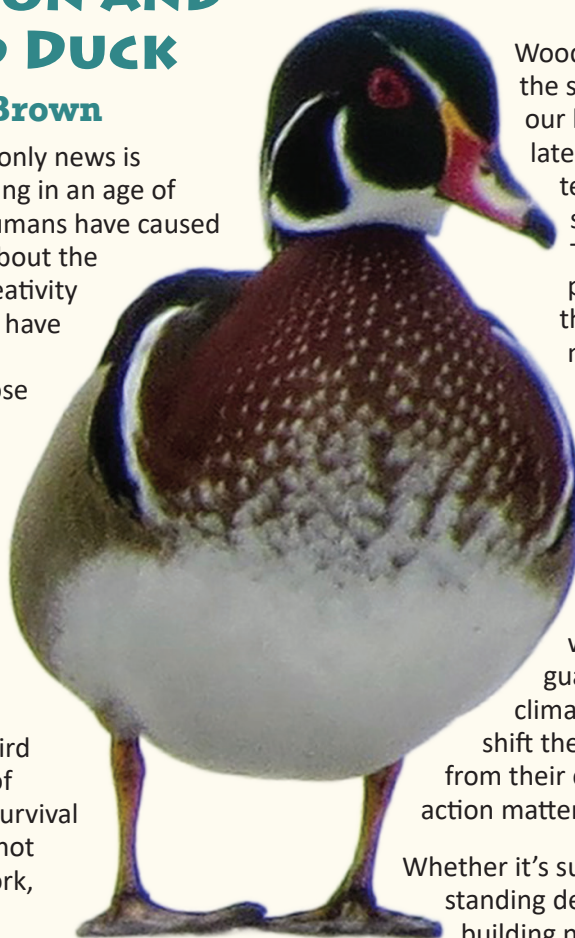
Sometimes it seems that the only news is bad news - we talk about living in an age of extinction and how we as humans have caused so much destruction. But what about the intelligence of humans? Their creativity and their empathy? It is true, we have made plenty of mistakes, but we must remember we can right those wrongs. Here is a real-world example:

Not long ago, there was a waterfowl species that was disappearing from our forests and wetlands. Now, it's one of conservation's quieter success stories. This waterfowl species is the Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*), a brilliantly colored, tree-nesting bird that once teetered on the edge of extinction in North America. Its survival and resurgence are a testament not only to targeted conservation work, but to what's possible when we choose to act before it's too late.

At the turn of the 20th century, Wood Ducks were in steep decline largely due to unregulated hunting and habitat loss. Their nesting sites—tree cavities near wetlands—were disappearing quickly, along with the bottomland forests they rely on. For a species that doesn't create its own nest but depends on finding the right hollow in the right tree, this was a crisis.

Thankfully, the story didn't end there. After enacting legal protections like the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934, and the widespread use of nest boxes by conservationists and private landowners alike, the Wood Duck rebounded. Today, it's considered a species of low conservation concern; a victory we don't always celebrate loudly enough.

Yet recovery is just one chapter in a much larger ecological narrative. Seasonal migration plays a critical role in the



Wood Duck, *Aix sponsa*
photo: Iain Macleod

Wood Duck's life cycle and in ensuring the species' long-term survival. Most of our local Wood Ducks migrate south by late fall, seeking open water and milder temperatures, but their troubles don't stop when they leave our borders. The same threats such as habitat loss, pollution, and human disturbance follow them throughout their range, which means our role in their conservation doesn't end when the snow begins to fall.

And maybe that's the bigger idea worth carrying into the spring: Conservation doesn't only mean protecting what's rare—it also means protecting what's common. A healthy wood duck population today doesn't guarantee one tomorrow, especially as climate change and land use continue to shift the balance. But if we've learned anything from their comeback, it's that early and consistent action matters.

Whether it's supporting wetland preservation, leaving standing dead trees in place when possible, or building nest boxes, the things we do now—before species are in crisis—can shape the conservation success stories of the future.

As we await the seasonal return of our migratory birds to New Hampshire, let the Wood Duck remind us that some stories deserve our attention before they become urgent. While we humans have made and will continue to make mistakes, we should never lose hope in our ability to learn from them and make things right.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Forging Trails	2
From our Board	3
Science Center Beginnings	4
Kirkwood Gardens	5
Programs & Events / Volunteer Updates	6-7
Hérons Nest / Hidden Stories	8
From Lakes to Otters	10
Membership / Quiz	10
Opening a Window	11

FORGING TRAILS:

A Reflection by Iain MacLeod



2026 marks my 20th year as Executive Director. I think this column will be the 79th in my time here. I looked back at the first column I wrote in September 2006. It was about migrating shorebirds and my finding of a tiny dead Sanderling on a beach on the Cape. It carried a leg band with a contact address in Brazil. At the time I was unable to find out details

on when it had been banded and exactly where. By chance, in 2020, I made a connection with a researcher in Brazil who was able to confirm that it was banded in November 2003 on a beach on the far eastern tip of Brazil. This tiny little sandpiper would have traveled thousands of miles each year from there (its wintering area) to its breeding grounds in the arctic tundra of northern Canada, stopping off to feed on beaches along the way.



Sanderling, *Calidris alba* photo: Iain MacLeod

Looking back through those articles was a fun trip down memory lane. Some are about other bird encounters or other wildlife topics, but many highlight Science Center milestones of the last two decades – new exhibits, the opening of Blue Heron School, tributes to staff, board members and donors, special projects. There certainly hasn't been a shortage of things to write about.

2026 of course is also the 60th year of the Science Center (see page 4 for historic piece about our founding), so I'm honored to be included in the larger 60th celebration. Looking back on my 20 years has certainly made me think about my legacy and what comes next.

One tangible step we have taken is to focus on growing our endowment and establishing a fund to endow the Executive Director position into perpetuity. I am incredibly honored that the board decided to name the fund the MacLeod Leadership Endowment and thrilled to report that the fund was established with a lead gift of \$2 million! Three more donors have already each pledged \$250,000, so we are already more than half way to our overall goal of \$4.5 million. I cannot express adequately my appreciation for the generosity, leadership and vision of those donors. My legacy is now perpetually intertwined with their outstanding legacies.

Iain MacLeod, Executive Director
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SQUAM LAKES NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

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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.

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FROM OUR BOARD Lisa Bennett, Board Chair



When the Science Center first opened its doors, my six siblings and I loved to visit and learn about animals in their natural environment. Packed into a car, we would arrive at the entrance on Route 3 at the Holderness Inn, ready for the adventures ahead. In those early days, the first animals

we encountered were at the Beaver and Fisher Exhibit, followed by the snakes on Snake Island. We walked through Deer Knoll and continued on to visit Bert and Bertha Bear at the Bear Facts Exhibit. Crossing over the stream in multiple spots, the trail guided us through Bobcat Den and Raccoon Hollow. At that time, the Science Center also featured a Blacksmith Shop, Forestry Exhibit, Steam Powered Sawmill, and Sap House to highlight the natural resources of the region and the traditional trades that depended on them. The Gephart and Davison Trails led to Mt. Fayal, where a breathtaking view overlooked Squam Lake.

Under the leadership of dedicated executive directors and trustees, the campus has evolved into what it is today: a cherished educational family attraction that still reflects its original purpose as “a unique interdisciplinary supplementary center for education whose aim is to clarify, challenge, and to stimulate the thinking and imagination of people of all ages in the New Hampshire region...with a respect for the natural forces and resources of the area.” That vision, articulated in a memorandum from W. Mead to prospective members of the Broad Advisory Group of the Squam Lakes Science Center on December 27, 1966, continues to guide our work.

This year, we are proud to celebrate 60 years of growth and success. I have been working with fellow trustees and staff to plan a special 60th Anniversary celebration and events throughout the season. We hope you will join us on the trails, at our programs, and at our anniversary festivities to enjoy all of the wonderful experiences we have planned—and to help us launch the Science Center into its next 60 years.

Contact Lisa at lisa.v.bennett@gmail.com

CELEBRATE 60 YEARS OF DISCOVERY WITH A BIOBLITZ

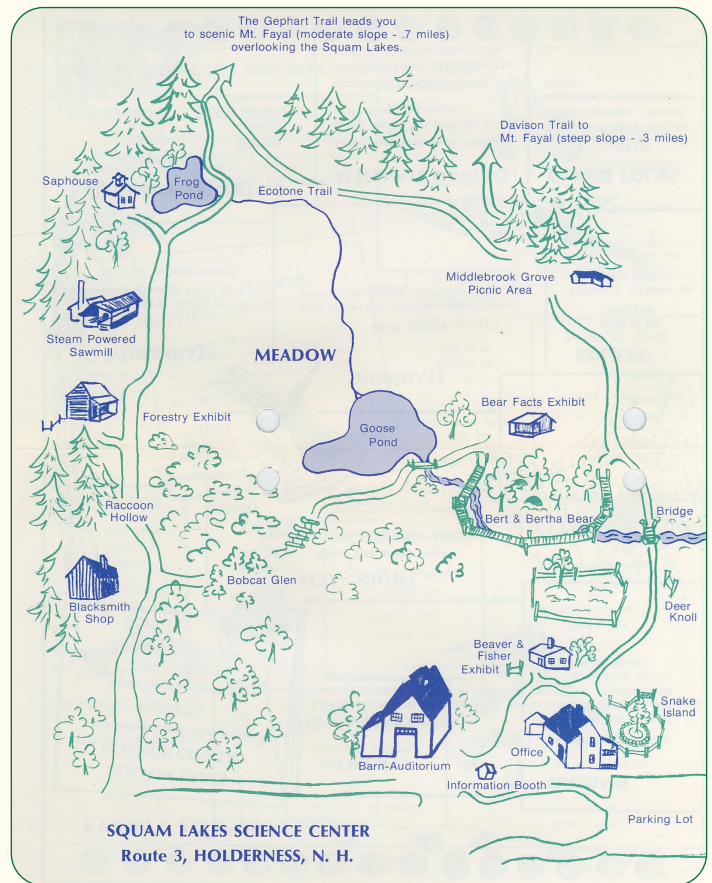
In celebration of our 60th anniversary, we invite you to take part in a month-long BioBlitz this August—a collaborative effort to document the biodiversity across our conserved campus. With two hundred acres of forests, fields, and wetlands to explore, the Science Center’s property depends on many eyes, ears, and curious minds to help uncover and record the plants, animals, fungi, and insects that call this place home.

Using the **iNaturalist** platform, visitors of all ages can help catalog the living organisms that make this landscape thrive.

Throughout the four-week BioBlitz, participants can join **biweekly guided walks led by subject-matter experts** on birds, insects, amphibians, fungi, flowers, shrubs, invasive species, and more. These walks offer opportunities to learn directly from scientists and naturalists while contributing meaningful community science data that supports biodiversity research and conservation.

The BioBlitz concludes with a celebratory ice cream social, where participants will explore their collective results, celebrate standout contributions (such as most species or taxa observed), and honor 60 years of discovery, conservation, and connection to the natural world. Keep an eye on our website for more details coming soon!

Questions? Contact Connected Learning Coordinator Heidi Emmons at Heidi.emmons@nhnature.org.



Map of the Science Center in 1975



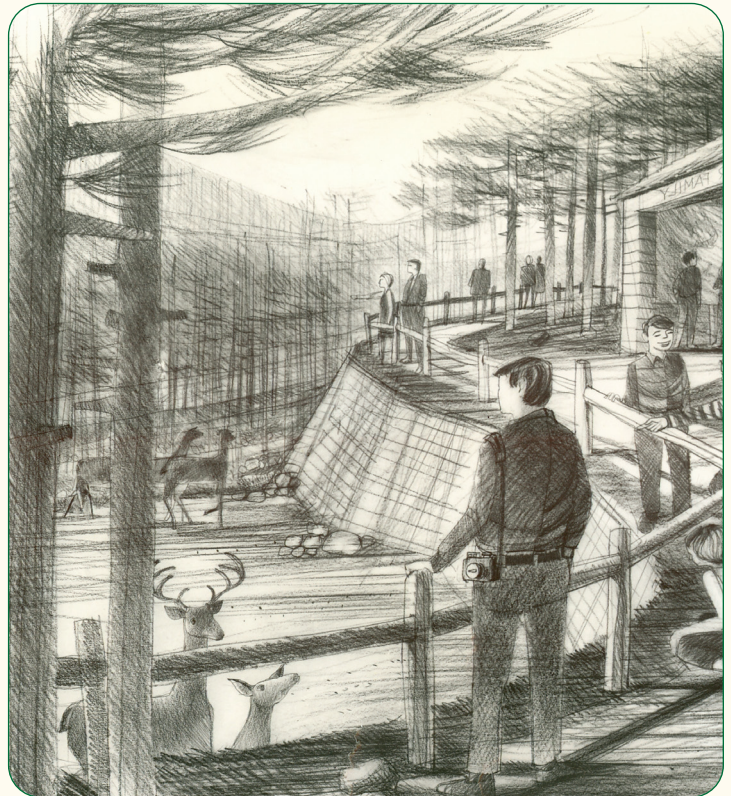
THE SCIENCE CENTER BEGINNINGS

Iain MacLeod, Executive Director

The idea for the Science Center began with a meeting of Holderness residents in 1965. United by an appreciation of the area's beauty and a desire to preserve it, the founders thought a science center would attract visitors while also protecting the area's natural assets. The original planning committee consisted of William Barnes, then President of the Squam Lakes Conservation Trust, Davis Thurber, then President of the Squam Lakes Association, Bradford Washburn, Director of the Boston Museum of Science, Peter Hodges, planning director for the future center, and Margaret Armstrong Howe, who acted as secretary. An article in the Plymouth Record from November 25, 1965, describes a meeting of the Holderness Chamber of Commerce at which Brad Washburn made an informal presentation on "...the possibilities of building in Holderness a museum of natural history." Chamber member James McCarthy stated that "... such a program was needed for Holderness as well as the entire area and would be a credit to the town ... for the betterment of Holderness, economically and civically." By August of 1966, 180 acres of property and several buildings were purchased with money donated by Frank Webster and other local residents, and the Science Center was incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization called Squam Lakes Science Center. Later additions brought the property to its current size of just over 200 acres.

Gilbert "Gib" Merrill was hired as the first Executive Director in 1967. A federal Title III grant funded the earliest educational programs featuring live animals for audiences of school children. The original mission was broad: 1) to be a museum of natural, scientific, cultural, and historical subjects; 2) to educate school children and others in the fundamentals of natural science; 3) to serve as a training center for environmental education; and 4) to be a natural sciences resource center. The circa 1904 Holderness Inn – a grand three-story hotel on Route 3 – housed the whole operation.

On July 1, 1969, the Science Center opened for its first summer season, offering lectures in the "auditorium" in the Red Barn next to the Holderness Inn. Attractions on the property included two trails on Mt. Fayal, and several live animal exhibits, including the Small Mammal Hut, Snake Island, Bird and Reptile Hut, Deer Knoll, Goose Pond, Bobcat Glen, and Frog Pond Hut, as well as three exhibits showing the early life of New Hampshire settlers: a Blacksmith Shop, Sap House, and Steam-operated Sawmill. Admission was \$1.25 for adults and 75 cents for juniors.



Early conceptual drawing of the Science Center

NATURE TOURS WITH IAIN

NEW MEXICO – LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

November 4-14, 2026

SCOTLAND'S EAST COAST - A TOUR OF
ABERDEENSHIRE, ANGUS, PERTH & KINROSS, FIFE
AND STIRLING

May 16-29, 2027

NORTHERN ISLES ADVENTURE – SHETLAND AND
ORKNEY

May 28-June 10, 2027



Photo credit: Iain MacLeod

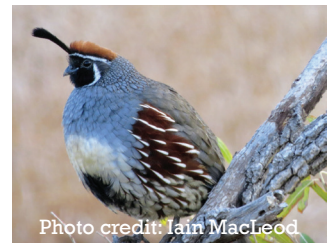


Photo credit: Iain MacLeod

Atlantic Puffin and Gambel's Quail

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.



KIRKWOOD GARDENS

Emma Erler, Lead Horticulturalist and Exhibits Assistant



COMMON PLANT Q & A

When should I divide my perennials?

A: Some gardeners make a point of dividing their perennials every three to five years. Others wait to divide until their plants are producing fewer blooms or developing dead centers. How much time should elapse before division depends entirely on the plant being grown and the growing conditions where it has been planted. For example, full-sun perennials grown in sunny locations with consistently moist soils and plenty of nutrients may need to be divided every few years. The same plants grown under less than ideal conditions will grow more slowly and need to be divided much less often.

When it has been determined that it is time to divide a perennial plant, it is important to do it at the right time of year. Many gardening guides suggest dividing spring flowering perennials in the fall and fall flowering perennials in the spring. While some perennials do respond better to being divided at a certain time of year, in practice, they can be divided at either end of the season. Spring and fall are the best times to divide because the weather is typically cool and wet, reducing plant water loss and stress after being transplanted. Perennials can be divided in the summer months as well, but it will take longer for them to become established,

This newsletter is generously underwritten by:



and their bloom may be reduced for a longer period while they recover. If summer division cannot be avoided, wait to do so until after they have finished flowering, and wait for a cloudy, wind-less day.

Many New Hampshire gardeners prefer to divide all their perennials in the spring. A good argument for this is that plants that are divided in the fall may not have time for their roots to become established before winter. This makes perennials prone to heaving out of the soil with freeze and thaw cycles, damaging roots and crowns. If you decide to divide in the fall, aim to do so at least eight weeks before the ground freezes.



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

PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Red Trillium, *Trillium erectum*

Culture: Easily grown in rich, moist, acidic, well-drained soils in partial to full shade. Must receive ample sunlight in early spring during its growing and flowering season. Plants are long-lived but can be very slow to establish. Spreads gradually to form clumps. Hardy in Zone 4.



Bloom: Single, nodding flowers with three dark maroon petals. Blooms occur from late April to May.

Height: 8-24 inches

This beautiful New Hampshire native wildflower is a great addition to wild shade gardens and naturalized areas with consistent moisture. Best planted amongst other perennials, as plants will usually dieback by late summer. Does not transplant well, so do not collect from the wild! Always choose nursery grown plants.

Kirkwood location: Upper garden on the driveway side.

Dwarf Crested Iris, *Iris cristata*

Culture: Adaptable to many garden conditions, but prefers organically rich, moist, well-drained soils in part shade. Somewhat drought tolerant once established. Will spread quickly by creeping rhizomes. Hardy in Zone 3.



Bloom: Pale blue iris flowers held on short stems. Relatively brief bloom period from early to mid-May.

Height: 6-8 inches

Dwarf Crested Iris is native to woodlands of the Southeast and Midwest. It will rapidly form a groundcover in optimal conditions, and it is an excellent addition to partially shaded areas of woodland or rock gardens. Attractive to bees and hummingbirds.

Kirkwood location: Slope along the parking area.

STAY UPDATED!



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&



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GUIDED DISCOVERIES CAMPS

The mission of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center is to advance understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world. Guided Discoveries Camp programs seek to further advance this mission by **fostering curiosity, building connections with nature, and inspiring conservation-minded decisions in children through outdoor exploration, learning, and fun.** The Science Center's live animal exhibit trail, forested campus, and Up Close to Animals programs makes our camp programs unique and impactful.

During our 9 weeks of summer camp, children, aged 5 up to 13, get the opportunity to explore outdoors in a safe, supportive environment where they can develop an appreciation for the natural world, as well as build confidence and create new friendships. Weekly themes cover topics such as animal adaptations, the skills required of an animal keeper, the power of pollinators, wildlife conservation, how to hike responsibly, and so much more! We also continue to invite outside instructors to come in and guide our campers in the fine arts of clay sculpting, painting and drawing.

Our brand-new New Hampshire School Break Vacation Camps (offered in February and April), for children aged 7 to 10, are even more thematically focused; how does the natural world around us change in the winter and the spring? These camps also give campers a glimpse at what the science center looks like when it is closed to the public, and gives them the opportunity to enjoy the live-animal exhibit trail all to themselves.



With these camp programs, the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center continues to be a place where children can experience the joys of nature, and learn at the same time.

Find camp details and schedules at nhnature.org.

NEW! SPRING INTO FUN!

APRIL VACATION WEEK CAMP

Join us for some spring fun during the week of April 27! Visit nhnature.org for dates, ages, details, and registration.

VOLUNTEER UPDATES

CAROL RAYMOND, VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Volunteering at the Science Center presents opportunities to learn something new and meet interesting people while sharing your talents and skills.

Ways you can Volunteer!

- Train to be a Docent (18+) or First Guide (14-17): Interpret animal exhibits and exchange knowledge and stories with visitors on and off-site.
- Exhibits and Maintenance
- Wood Lot Crew
- Invasive Species removal

New this year!

- Bioblitz Greeter (12+): Assist visitors with the use of iNaturalist mobile app.
- Counselor in Training (CIT) (14-17): Assist with Guided Discoveries Camps.

All volunteers are trained for their specific program. *No experience necessary!* For more information and a Volunteer Application form, visit the Volunteer Page on our website, nhnature.org, or contact Volunteer Manager, Carol Raymond, at carol.raymond@nhnature.org, 603-968-7194 x 122.



2026 SPRING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Programs have limited capacities and advanced registration is required.
Full details and tickets are available on the Calendar of Events at nhnature.org.

MARCH 7 & 15

WILD WINTER WALKS

Ages 6 and up, 10:00 to 11:30 am or 12:00-2:30 pm

What do the animals at the Science Center do when winter arrives? Bundle up and find out! Join one of our naturalists for a guided walk along the live animal exhibit trail to see our animal ambassadors sporting their winter coats. Discover the remarkable strategies these animals use to stay warm, find food, and survive the season. It's a wild winter adventure you won't want to miss!

Cost: \$15/member; \$18/non-member. A registered adult must accompany children. This program is all outdoors; dress in warm layers with snow boots, hats, and gloves.

APRIL 2

HANDS-ON LEARNING FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

Ages 4 to 6: How Plants & Animals Respond to Seasons

10:00 to 11:30 am or 12:30-2:00 pm

Ages 7 to 10: Exploring Life Cycles

10:00 to 11:30 am

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

MAY 9

NEW HAMPSHIRE DAY

All Ages, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

New Hampshire residents may visit the live animal exhibit trail for \$10 admission. Non-New Hampshire residents may purchase regular-priced admission tickets. New Hampshire residents must provide proof of residency upon admission.

Up Close to Animals presentations at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 3:00 pm.

Advanced purchased tickets are required. Your timed entry tickets allow you to check in any time during the one-hour admission window.

APRIL 1

WOODCOCK WATCH: DANCE OF THE TIMBERDOODLE

Ages 8 and up, 7:00 - 8:00 pm, rain date: April 2

Every spring, the American Woodcock performs a wonderful courtship display over the fields and woodland edges of New Hampshire. They start at dusk with their rasping calls, then head for the skies on whistling wings. Then comes the downward zig zag aerial flight accompanied by the strangest combination of whistles and chirps. Join Executive Director Iain MacLeod for an evening of woodcock watching and learn about this fascinating little bird.

Program participants will meet at a location in Meredith, NH, provided upon registration. Cost: \$12 members/\$15 nonmembers

APRIL 14

SCIENCE PUB: BE LAKE SMART

Adults, Doors open 5:00 pm, Presentation at 6:00 pm, Walters Basin in Holderness

by Pollyanna Fisher, Squam Lakes Association Campaign and Conservation Strategist

Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

Registration opens on March 3 at: <https://www.squamslandtrust.org/events>

MAY 1

LIVE ANIMAL TRAIL OPENING DAY!

All Ages, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, Last entry at 3:30 pm

Be first of the season to greet our animals during New Hampshire Spring Break! They can't wait to see you! Get tickets at the admissions window.

Up Close to Animals presentations at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm





FROM THE HERON'S NEST

Blue Heron School has had a great start to the year, enjoying ample time outside in our beloved Pine Grove and exploring the grounds with the naturalists. We have been studying animal families, the seasons, learning to track and identify scat, and practicing camouflaging ourselves for the perfect games of hide and seek. Ms. Alexis was out on maternity leave and we were all so happy when she returned after the holiday break. We have been enjoying having both Alexis' and Corrie's babies at school. The children love to entertain them and to show them the ropes around BHS.

We have 10 children graduating from BHS in the spring and 19 new families enrolling for next fall; the biggest incoming crew we have had in many years! Sadly, we will bid adieu to long time employee and BHS Co-Director Jordy Gianforte as she starts her own Montessori school much closer to her home. Upon her departure, Jordan Fitzgerald will take over as the sole director and a new associate teacher, Amy will start in the fall. The summer program is full and will be led by Dylan Parker. We are excited about the rest of the year and so thankful for all of the amazing parent involvement we have had this year, both at family days and in volunteering in the classroom.



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.

KIDS' ACTIVITY



HIDDEN STORIES

SPRING

WORD SEARCH

A	Y	D	N	I	W	I	W	S	B	B	R	W	Q	S
R	X	S	C	O	L	O	R	F	U	L	J	W	U	E
M	E	L	T	D	J	S	U	O	T	N	O	K	F	E
Q	N	E	D	R	A	G	K	B	T	E	X	O	I	D
I	P	F	N	H	P	S	L	V	E	X	E	Z	M	S
D	C	C	U	I	H	M	W	A	R	M	L	U	F	M
Y	E	U	T	K	H	T	P	S	F	E	S	L	L	X
E	J	S	U	G	U	S	P	V	L	O	O	M	A	E
B	E	E	V	R	L	N	N	S	Y	W	C	H	T	W
N	K	W	E	A	F	P	J	U	E	X	P	A	E	H
G	O	T	Q	I	R	J	P	R	S	Z	R	P	B	C
S	P	R	I	N	G	M	S	C	E	G	R	H	R	T
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V	S	T	O	R	M	B	X	M	J	H	G	U	M	H

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| STORM | GARDEN | SEEDS | FLOWERS |
| BLOOM | MELT | SPRING | RAIN |
| HATCH | MIGRATE | SUNSHINE | WINDY |
| BUTTERFLY | NEST | WARM | COLORFUL |

HAPPY SPRING!

Although not often thought of as a sign of spring, our trail cameras have captured images and video of moose the most during this season than other seasons over the past nine years that we've been monitoring the wildlife on our property. To learn more of what the cameras have discovered take a look at Squam Lakes Natural Science Center You Tube Channel, @nhnature!



ANIMAL CARE: FROM LAKES TO OTTERS

Brian Church, Animal Care Associate

Every February, the Science Center is generously donated a large quantity of fish from the annual Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby. This event brings the community together as crowds gather to participate in fishing contests, and it also serves as a charitable event with proceeds supporting local organizations. Additionally, participants and organizers choose to donate many of the fish they catch to the Science Center rather than keep them. This year, we are excited to share that we received an especially abundant donation—more than eight hundred fish, including chain pickerel, lake trout, rainbow trout, cusk, brown bullhead, and yellow perch. A rough estimate of the total weight is approximately 1,500 pounds, or about 680 kilograms.

The derby also advances important conservation work on New Hampshire's lakes. As John A. Viar, Large Lakes Fisheries Biologist at New Hampshire Fish and Game, explains, "The 'Turn In and Win' special Lake Winnepesaukee lake trout cull division exceeded all expectations. The goal, along with recently adjusted state fishing regulations, is simply to reduce the number of lake trout, particularly in this size range (15-22 inches). They have become overabundant and currently exhibit very poor body

condition (lack of forage). In essence, these efforts help to balance the predator/prey relationship within the lake." By participating in this effort and directing donated fish to the Science Center, the derby helps both lake health and the animals in our care.



1,500 lbs of fish from Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby

Once the fish arrive from Meredith, they are cut into large chunks, bagged, and frozen. This supply will provide a year's worth of food for some of our animals, especially our otters and eagles. This partnership is an incredible opportunity for the Science Center, as it provides fresh, local, minimally processed food that closely resembles what these animals would encounter in the wild, complementing their specialized exhibits and daily enrichment.

The Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby is just one of many charitable partnerships for which the Science Center is deeply grateful. Through the generosity of organizations throughout the Lakes Region and beyond, the Science Center receives funding, food, volunteer help, and more to support our mission and care for our animal ambassadors. We look forward to recognizing more of these supporters in future newsletters. In the meantime, we extend a heartfelt thank you to the Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby for their continued support.

2026 LAKE CRUISE SCHEDULES

CRUISE TYPE	DATE	11:00 AM	1:00 PM	3:00 PM
Bald Eagle Adventure	5/19-6/9			Tuesdays
Discover Squam Cruise	5/16-6/30		Daily	
	7/1-7/14	Daily	Daily	Sun, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat
	7/15-8/18	Daily	Daily	Sun, Tue, Sat
	8/22-9/15	Daily	Daily	Sun, Mon, Tue, Fri, Sat
	9/18-10/12	Daily	Daily	Daily
Cruise With a Naturalist	7/15-9/17			Wed, Thu
Loon Cruise	6/22-8/21			Mon, Fri



Cruise descriptions and registration at nhnature.org
 All cruises require reservations.
 Schedule subject to change.

STAY UPDATED!



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&



@NHNATURE

MEMBERSHIP

NEW THIS YEAR!

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS!
Offer your employees a benefit that will bring them joy, connection and wonder!
Contact Nicole Verspyck (see below)

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS: EVERYDAY VALUE AND LASTING IMPACT

A membership at Squam Lakes Natural Science Center is an invitation to explore New Hampshire's natural world and to support the mission that brings awe and wonder to visitors.

Everyday Value

Your membership pays for itself in just a few visits. With unlimited admission throughout the season, members can enjoy the trails, exhibits, and programs again and again—without worrying about daily admission.

Impact Behind the Scenes

Membership support helps provide daily care and feeding for the animals, maintain trails and exhibits, and fund hands-on educational programs for schools, families, and children. Every membership helps sustain the Science Center's mission.

Beyond Squam

As a Science Center member, you receive reciprocal admission and discounted entry at participating nature and science centers throughout the region—extending your membership benefits well beyond Squam Lakes.

Learn more or join today! Visit nhnature.org or contact:
Nicole Verspyck at 603-968-7194 x124,
or nicole.verspyck@nhnature.org.

2026 RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIPS

APRIL



AUGUST



MAY



SEPTEMBER



JUNE



OCTOBER



JULY



NOVEMBER



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.

Science Center members receive discounted admission at over 140 organizations across the United States! Learn more at natcrt.org!



SEEKING MEMBERSHIP?



SCAN FOR
NEW MEMBERS
OR RENEWALS



SCAN TO GIVE
THE GIFT OF
MEMBERSHIP

SPRING



Activity Answer Key

WOOD DUCK QUIZ

- What was one of the main reasons wood ducks were in decline at the turn of the 20th century?
 - Climate change
 - Invasive predators
 - Habitat loss and unregulated hunting
 - Poor nesting habits
- Why are nest boxes important for wood duck conservation?
 - They help keep ducks warm in winter
 - They prevent predation by larger birds
 - They replace natural tree cavities lost to deforestation
 - They monitor population growth
- Why is it important to continue conservation efforts even for species like the wood duck that have rebounded?
 - Their migration makes them harder to track
 - Common species today can become rare tomorrow
 - They are still on the endangered species list
 - Predators are returning to their habitats
- What overall message does the article leave us with about conservation?
 - Mistakes in conservation are irreversible
 - Only rare species are worth protecting
 - Hope and early action can lead to success
 - Conservation is mostly out of individual hands

Answers: 1.C, 2.C, 3.B, 4.C

OPENING A WINDOW TO THE NATURAL WORLD

Rachel Saliba, Development Director



NEARER TO NATURE ANNUAL FUND

As a non-profit, the Science Center must raise more than half a million dollars every year to fund our educational programs, keep our animals safe and healthy, and maintain our trails and buildings. And every year, donors have stepped up and responded to our requests for support. We are grateful to everyone who donated in 2025 and helped us surpass our goal of raising \$585,000. This includes donors who rounded up at the cash register in Howling Coyote, to the Grand Assembly of NH Order of Rainbow Girls, whose members volunteered and ran a fundraiser to support our animals, to the anonymous donor who donated \$100,000 because they like to donate to “causes which help New Hampshire.”

Our supporters donate for many reasons. Here are a few more from some of our most loyal donors:

“The Science Center provides families and especially young children the opportunity to experience nature first hand. The natural world is available even to the youngest children and this can influence their comfort in nature and their respect for nature. My favorite memory is the opening of the Blue Heron Preschool and seeing groups of little people out playing in all weather. There is nothing like building a stick fort or stomping through puddles.”

“I support the Science Center because (as a former scientist), I am deeply committed to its educational programs, and in particular to its environmental education mission. My grandsons love the Science Center, and each year they focus on a different exhibit or activity as they get older.”

We hope you'll consider joining the almost 650 donors from last year and help us reach our goal of raising \$625,000 for the Nearer to Nature Annual Fund in 2026. You can donate online at www.nhnature.org/support or send a check made payable to SLNSC at PO Box 173, Holderness, NH 03245. Squam Lakes Natural Science Center tax ID: 02-0271824.



SCAN TO DONATE TODAY!

SAVE THE DATE! JULY 16

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF NATURE ~ PAELLA BARN BASH

Join us for dinner, dancing and celebrating at the Willoughby Ridge Barn. Watch your inbox for details!



Celebrate a loved one or a special event by dedicating a bench along the Gephart Live Animal Exhibit Trail at the Science Center! Your dedication supports the mission of the Science Center when you make a tax-deductible contribution of \$5,000 over one to two years.

For more information please visit our website nature.org or contact Rachel Saliba at 603-968-7194 x126 or rachel.saliba@nhnature.org

SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 10 - 19

CHARITABLE GAMING AT REVO CASINO IN CONWAY

Revo raised and donated \$22,127 in 2025! This year, a portion of earnings raised between June 10 - 19 will benefit the Science Center.

NATURALIST'S LEGACY SOCIETY



We were recently honored to receive bequests from two generous members of the Naturalist's Legacy Society who included the Science Center in their estate plans. Their donations will enable us to significantly improve our visitor experience including replacing our entrance sign and revamping our website.

You can join the other 121 members of the Naturalist's Legacy Society by including Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in your estate planning and help us to fulfill our mission for generations to come. Please reach out to Rachel Saliba (see above) for more information.

STAY UPDATED!



@NHWILDLIFE



&



@NHNATURE

11



SQUAM LAKES NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

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SAVE THE DATES For Our 60th Season!

- May 1 **Trail Opening Day!**
 - May 9 **New Hampshire Day (Spring)**
 - June 24 **Member Solstice**
 - July 16 **60th Anniversary Party**
 - July 22 **Movie Night**
 - Aug. 3 - 28 **Bioblitz**
 - Aug. 6 **Annual Meeting & Cocktails**
 - Aug. 12 **Animal Birthday Bash**
 - Sept. 19 **Raptor Migration Celebration**
 - Sept. 26 **Donor & Member Recognition**
 - Oct. 3 **Grandparents Day**
 - Oct. 24 **Howl-O-Ween**
 - Nov. 1 **New Hampshire Day (Fall)**
- To see our calendar of events, visit nhnature.org!

JOY • CONNECTION • WONDER

This newsletter is generously underwritten by:

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