



“The Mattabesec Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is committed to environmental leadership and education for the benefit of the community and the earth’s biodiversity.”

From Alison Guinness, MAS President

## Threat to National Parks, Monuments, and Forests

America the beautiful—maybe not. The current government has endangered National Parks, Monuments, and Forests with reductions, encroachments, and total elimination threatening our environmental and cultural heritage. Ecologists, archaeologists, and Native Americans have been stunned and very concerned. Threats include cutting of giant sequoias, uranium mining outside Grand Canyon NP, and

legislation (H.R.3990) that would make the designation of new monuments nearly impossible. Many of our most important and well-known parks began as monuments, but some remain monuments, such as Devils Tower and Giant Sequoia. Two of the latest, designated by Pres. Obama, are in New England. The US led the way in the protection of special places. Let’s not return to the dark ages of destruction and apathy.

## MBTA (Migratory Bird Treaty Act)

Just as the New York Historical Society launched an exhibit marking the creation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, the government is threatening its very existence. *Feathers: Fashion and the Fight for Wildlife*, examines the circumstances that inspired early environmentalists—many of them women—to champion the protection of endangered birds. Administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the MBTA prohibits the hunting, killing, trading, and shipping of migratory birds. It also regulated the nation’s commercial plume trade, which decimated many American bird species to the point of near extinction. The act also covers the possession of eggs and nests.

Historically, the MBTA has given businesses incentive to choose bird-friendly practices and penalized them when they fail to take reasonable care, for example, after 2010’s Deepwater Horizon disaster, when BP

faced record fines for the million-plus birds it killed.

**Now, catering to the interests of the oil and gas industries, the administration has gutted it. Now companies that kill birds get barely a slap on the wrist.**

Their free pass ends with Audubon and you. A coalition of national environmental groups, including the National Audubon Society, the American Bird Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, National Wildlife Federation, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, filed litigation, *National Audubon Society v. Department of the Interior*, in the Southern District of New York challenging the Trump Administration’s move to eliminate longstanding protections for waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds under the MBTA.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/audubon-lawsuit-seeks-restore-protections-migratory-birds>

## Protection of Connecticut Public Lands

The Connecticut legislature has finally acted to protect Connecticut public lands with the passing of Senate Joint Resolution No. 35 (SJ 35), an amendment to the state constitution to protect real property held or controlled by the state. This amendment would end such debacles as the Haddam Land Swap proposal. The amendment will be on the ballot in this

year’s election in Nov. Be sure to vote yes to protect public land—your land.

*Sec. 19. (a) The general assembly shall not enact any legislation requiring a state agency to sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any real property or interest in real property that is under the custody or*

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## Upcoming Field Trip:

October 13 (Saturday 8:00 a.m.)

### **Sparrow Crawl**


Join Larry Cyrulik in visiting an old field on Long Hill Road, Middletown Nature Gardens (off Randolph Road), and Guida Farm nature preserve. Five species of sparrows may be noted, including the elusive White-crowned sparrow shown here, as well as other fall migrants. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Lawn Ave. and High St. Call Larry for info 860-342-4785 or 860-635-1880. 



## Introducing Boots & Bark


### *A podcast series from* **CFPA**



Boots & Bark is the podcast of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA), a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting forests, parks, and trails for future generations through connecting people to the land. This podcast features special people who are making a difference in conservation and outdoor recreation for Connecticut, and we plan on producing 12 episodes each year. There are three episodes currently published and feature: Tom Wessels, noted author and conservationist; Rob Klee, Commissioner CT DEEP; and Ben Cosgrove, this year's New England Trail Artist in Residence. You can find the episodes on iTunes (search Boots & Bark) or visit [www.ctwoodlands.org/podcasts](http://www.ctwoodlands.org/podcasts) 

## A Change of Tide

Rounding the trailing edges of the chocolate-colored  
Mudflats at the tip of the island...  
Gnarled roots of the drowned phragmites exposed  
Like the unkempt hairs sprouting from the nostrils  
Of an old donkey...  
The canoe buffeted by the wind pushing straight into  
The bow... the rapidly moving waters of the river  
Slapping at the gunnels...  
Mouths clenched, pulling hard at the paddles  
The two set to tacking towards the opposite shore...  
The long, lean outline of the yellow, sandy banks  
Like the tightly closed lips of someone disaffected...  
And the waves, those stubborn apostrophes,  
Pushing against the bow, against the efforts  
Of the paddlers...

Turning with the curvature of the land...  
A rich man's mansion, oblivious to the struggle  
Hunches haughtily upon a bluff...  
A dock with black, spindly legs projects outward  
Towards a moored motorcraft  
Swinging helplessly at its mooring...  
The tea-dark waters brusquely slap at the spindly legs...  
An entire river is being sucked out to sea by the moon...  
The canoe struggles; a moment's lapse in concentration  
Pushes it reeling backwards...  
The one at the bow digs furiously, exasperation rising...  
The moon careers obliviously through space  
A pock-marked wizard with a magic wand...  
Into a sheltered cove, the wind at the bow slowly defeated...  
In the shallows the algae-green sandy bottom  
Rises up like a slimy hand  
And firmly grasps the canoe's hull...  
Exhausted, the two disembark  
And pull their craft ashore...  
From the top of a skeletal ash comes  
The rebuking chirps of an Osprey...  
"You, who would challenge the change of tide  
Denying the inevitable, that is your curse  
Your human hubris..."  
And the tide fell, as it has done for millennium... 

#### MAS Officers:

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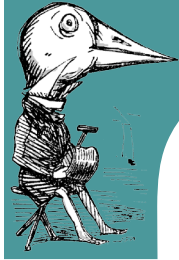
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# Protection of Connecticut Public Lands *Continued from front page*

control of such agency to any person or entity other than another state agency unless a committee of the general assembly has held a public hearing regarding such sale, transfer or disposition of such property or interest and the act of the general assembly requiring such sale, transfer

or disposition of real property or interest in real property is limited in subject matter to provisions concerning such sale, transfer or disposition. 

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/ACT/ra/pdf/2018RA-00001-R005J-00035-RA.pdf>



## AUDUBON MEMBERS' CORNER *(Feel free to send us contributions to this column)*

*From Alberta Mirer, MAS Member*

### The Difficult Traveling Life of Neotropical Songbirds

Migration is a perilous time for songbirds. They must reach their breeding ground in time to claim the best territory, while avoiding all kinds of danger along the way.

That's why it's advantageous for neotropical songbirds to migrate at night to avoid predators like hawks. But night flying does have its risks. There are collisions with light towers, cell towers, wind turbines, windows, high-rise and glass buildings, and bad weather. Fog and mist reduce visibility, making navigation difficult or impossible. And then, there are rest stops in unfamiliar places, with free-roaming cats. Forest edges are especially dangerous for songbirds. Roads and other development create opportunities for predators such as cowbirds, raccoons, and parasites.

Not only is quality habitat important on breeding and wintering grounds, but also safe stopover sites are imperative.

*Connecticut Wildlife, May, June 2016*

### From the Ocean Deep

More than 50% of deep-ocean animals use light to holler and flirt and fight. They carry glowing torches atop their heads. They vomit brightness. They smear light on their enemies. Scientists believe that bioluminescence is always a means of influencing other animals, a signal fire in the

deep. The message must be important enough to outweigh the risks of revealing one's location, even though some use light as a means of camouflage.

The chemistry behind the glow, shared by many bioluminescent creatures, involves an enzyme called luciferase which adds oxygen to a compound called luciferin, shedding a photon of visible light – a bit like what happens when you snap a glow stick.

Bioluminescence is the most common and most eloquent language on earth. It's informing fields from biomedicine, modern warfare, to deep-sea exploration.

Light Fantastic, Edith Widder, Famed ocean explorer, Ocean Research and Conservation Assn. (ORCA), whose mission is to monitor coastal pollution.

*Smithsonian, March 2013*

### Animals Are Amazing

Male elephant seals can accurately recognize specific rivals' voices to determine whether to challenge another bull, or avoid confrontation during the breeding season.

Wood frogs in Alaska produce glucose (a sugar) that helps keep their cells alive even during freeze-thaw cycles. The frogs had a higher survival rate than previously recorded for the species.

A single fox squirrel gathers between 3,000 and 10,000 nuts every year. Researchers using GPS devices have discovered that they sort and store nuts by "chunking"—keeping separate collections of each species.

*National Wildlife, February-March 2018*

### Extreme Birds: the World's Most Extraordinary and Bizarre Birds


*by Dominic Couzens*

#### Hoatzin (South America)—Biggest Belly:

The bellies on this bird can be so big that when bending down from a low branch to take a sip of water, they have been known to topple over and fall in and splash calamitously. The hoatzin is one the few birds to specialize in eating leaves, which can constitute up to 82% of its entire intake. Because leaves are difficult to digest, this bird must rely on microbes to do the work for them. Microbes work best in a large gut where the flow of matter is not too fast. For the

hoatzin, digestion takes place in the crop and esophagus, which is similar to the system in sheep, cows and kangaroos.

#### Southern Screamer—(South America) Oddest Skin:

If you were to reach out and touch a screamer's leg, you would hear a distinct crackling sound caused by a complicated system of small air sacs separating the outer skin from the rest of the body. It's thought that these air sacs play a part in insulating the bird. 

*More Member's Corner on next page*





From Alberta Mirer, MAS Member

## Pest Control

Many years ago I attended a lecture about birds. I don't remember the name of the man who gave it, or the title. He had been employed on different occasions to deal with problem birds, such as crows at airports and gulls on or near beaches. He concluded that the pest control business was the best business to be in, because no matter what you did, the pest species would destroy its own habitat and have to move on, with the pest control people getting the credit.

In studying gulls, he found that the species that preferred nesting in grassy areas would pull up the grass around its nest and soon the area had no grass and the birds would no longer nest there. The species of gull that preferred sand and rocks would nest so tightly together that their droppings would fertilize the soil and pretty soon grass was growing and they would no longer nest there either. During the winter, crows roost communally and move to a new roost site within three to five years no matter what was done to encourage them to move sooner.

This theory of pest species destroying their own habitat was easy for me to see with termites and carpenter ants. Once the wood is destroyed, the ants need to move on to another piece of wood. Over the years I came to realize that the species that does the most damage to its own habitat is "Homo sapiens."

We are doing what other pest species do. It's just that our destruction capabilities are much greater. We remove the forests that provide us with clean air and then replace them with parking lots and cars that pollute the air we breathe and the water we drink. The difference is that there is no place for us to move. If it's not easy for us to live in the Arctic or Antarctic, where water and oxygen are available, why do we think we could move to the moon or mars? We need to stop abusing nature, if we want future generations to continue to live on this planet.

Alberta Mirer

(Letters to the Editor,

Journal Inquirer, Manchester, CT—3/6/03)

Reminder from Larry Cyrulik

## Purchase Migratory Bird Conservation Stamps and Protect Our Cherished Wildlife Habitat!

Migratory Bird Conservation Stamp dollars deliver results for wildlife and habitat! Connecticut stamps can be purchased for \$17 each wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold: participating town clerks, participating retail agents, DEEP License and Revenue (79 Elm Street in Hartford), and through the online Sportsmen's Licensing System. Upon request, stamps can be sent through the mail.

Federal Duck Stamps are sold at many sporting goods stores and other retail locations—both large and small—that sell sporting and recreation equipment. You can also buy them at many national wildlife refuges, and online through Amplex. As an added convenience, especially for hunters, the E-Stamp program allows you to buy a Duck Stamp online and instantly obtain a printable receipt good for 45 days, within which time a physical Duck Stamp is mailed to you.



## Earth Day Fair

On April 20, 2018, Alison Guinness and Luella Landis represented MAS at an Earth Day fair which was held at the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine in Farmington. Attendees expressed interest in birding, MAS field trips and programs, and in the Carlson Sanctuary, and Alison and Luella enjoyed learning about the activities of other environmental groups which were represented, as well.

Luella Landis



MAS President Alison Guinness with Earth Day fair attendee at the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine in Farmington



# New Sign Coming for Helen Carlson Wildlife Sanctuary

Our new sign is in the works. This sign is being built by Fossil Graphics. Our sign will be in full color, and will be 4 feet wide by 6 feet high, mounted on side pillars.

The color should last for many years without fading. It claims to be vandal-resistant. Of course, on the image you see here, the text too small to read, but it will be easily read on the new large sign.

The top beige box holds a short history of the Sanctuary and its evolution from cranberry bog to beaver pond, with a history of the platform.

The center box has a summary and captioned photos of some of the most-frequently-seen species at the bog: birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, plants, and mammals.

The bottom box gives information and history about the resident beavers.

There is a new map showing current trails, as well as private land and state forest land. (New map is derived from a Google Earth aerial view.)

Below the map is a QR code for cell users to access a more extensive species list on our website (page still to be completed). That page will also contain external links to more extensive species-ID websites. The URL to our new page (and website) is also listed on the sign.

Credit is given to Audubon Connecticut for their support of this signage.



## Mattabeseck Audubon Society

Our Mission: The Mattabeseck Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is committed to environmental leadership and education for the benefit of the community and the earth's biodiversity.

# Helen Carlson Wildlife Sanctuary

**... a nature preserve consisting of a variety of habitats, including an ever-changing wetland that was once a unique cranberry bog**

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### The Ever-changing Sanctuary

**History** — The Helen Carlson Wildlife Sanctuary began as a post-glacial bog that included the Large Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) that likely were harvested by Native Americans and later by European settlers. The site was developed for market production and expanded in the 20th century using plants moved from the wild area to 4 new plots near the road. Ditches were excavated to funnel water into and out of the plots. This complex water control system flooded the cranberry plants in the winter to protect them from freezing and then drained the water by lowering the dam during the growing season.

**Cranberry Harvest** — Unlike the flooded commercial cranberry sites at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, the cranberries here were dry harvested, using a wooden box with metal tines acting like fingers that combed through the plants to collect the berries for sale.

**Preservation** — Helen Carlson purchased the cranberry bog to protect the site and donated it to Mattabeseck Audubon Society (MAS) in 1976. Students from Long Lane School created a nature trail and boardwalk that opened in 1978.

**Evolution** — For about 20 years, MAS maintained the nature trail and boardwalk and followed a plan to nurture the cranberry plots by regular flooding and draining, mowing, and periodic sanding to rejuvenate plant production—a routine similar to that of the days of commercial production.

A family of beavers arrived around 2000, raising the water level and changing the ecosystem that had supported cranberries and other acid-loving plants. The beavers took advantage of the bog's berms and sluice-way to maintain the continuous high water that would create the open water environment they need to survive.

**Viewing Platform** — As a way to provide access, MAS connected with Wesleyan University art professor Elijah Hogue to create a state-of-the-art observation platform in 2008, but the ever-increasing water level has drowned the access path.




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### Biodiversity at the Sanctuary

The Helen Carlson Sanctuary—part of an Important Bird Area (IBA), the Moshomac Forest Block—consists of several Biomes (habitat types): acidic bog, red maple swamp, and oak/hickory upland forest. These biomes provide a biological corridor between adjacent protected areas and support a complex Biodiversity (richness of animal, plant, and insect species). An important place in our state for the globally-threatened **Wood Thrush**, this IBA also supports **Whip-poor-will**, a state species of special concern. In Spring, listen for **Red-winged Blackbirds** calling as they establish their territories. Look for the secretive **Wood Ducks** paddling among the clumps of **Button Bush**. **Great Blue Herons** wade in the shallows seeking prey; the **Spring Peepers**, **Wood Frogs** (they quack), **Green Frogs**, and **Bullfrogs** that float among **Fragrant Water Lilies**, **Water-shield**, and **Water Smartweed**.

**Tree Swallows**, high in the air stream, swoop low over the water, chasing **Damselflies** and **Dragonflies**. With penetrating eyes, **Red-tailed**, **Red-shouldered**, and **Sharp-shinned Hawks** cruise above, seeking a meal of **Gray Squirrel** or **Chipmunk**. While **Turkey Vultures**, riding wind currents to save energy, scent for carion.

**Painted Turtles** climb onto mounds of **Tussock Sedge** to bask in the sun, perhaps sharing space with a **Northern Watersnake**. **Water Striders** glide along taking advantage of the water's surface tension.


Beneath the water, you may see **Isopods** scrambling on the bottom, and **Northern Caddisfly Larvae** that are encased in defensive shields of twigs. **Backswimmers** and **Water Boatmen** soar through the water accompanied by **Predaceous Diving Beetles**. The eggs of **Wood Frogs** and **Spotted Salamanders** cling to twigs, having been deposited there on a mild, rainy evening in mid-March.

At the edges of the bog, along the berms stacked up by the **Beavers**, you may find the remnants of a once numerous population of **Round-leaf Sundew**, an insect-eating plant, as well as rare orchids, **Rose Pogonia** and **Callipogon**. In early Spring, you may also find **Blue Flag**.

In the surrounding uplands, you may see and hear many species of birds, including the **Wood Thrush**, with its "o-lay" call, the **Veery's** descending trill (as if whistling through a tube), and the **Black-and-white Warbler**—its vocalization reminds one of an old, squeaky wheel.

You may also see a **White Tail Deer** browsing the understorey, its fawn nearby, or see a flash of gray as a **Coyote** stalks in the shadows.

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### Beavers

The beaver (*Castor canadensis*) is uniquely adapted to its watery second only to humans in the creation of habitat. Beavers at the sanctuary have been known to stop the flow of water in 15 minutes.


When first arriving in an area, they build a dam to hold back the water to a sufficient depth to build a lodge of sticks, logs, and mud. Then, they chew into the lodge making several entrances and living space. The water level must be maintained so that the entrance is deep enough under water to keep from being frozen in winter. Otherwise, they can't go in and out to feed. Food branches are stored under water near the lodge. While beavers have food preferences, they will eat almost any type of vegetation.

Baby beavers, kits, are born in the spring. Young beavers stay with their parents until their second year when they are forced to leave home to mate and start another colony.





This project is supported by Audubon Connecticut.

Lastly, a big thank you will be due to the Portland Public Works Department, who will be installing the sign at the Sanctuary for us.  Pat Rasch



# Field Trip Reports

## Wildflower Walk, April 21, 2018

.....*many are called but few are chosen...*

These rocks, these stones this ragged, bony earth. A popular pathway for dog handlers and eager, hearty denizens with rappelling apparel slung over their backs. On they tread, some looking down at hand held devices, others determined, conversing in tense anticipation; most others just daydreaming of an assignation later in the day.

The two naturalists, however, seemed welcomed by the earth and the pine copse with knobby knees and feet protruding the uneven path beside the grey and chilly waters of the reservoir. Like some abandoned animal in a shelter cage the landscape rose up to greet them with an ingenuous wag of the tail and eyes transformed from enervated blankness into eager, gratefully bright stars.

The lingering chill of winter, reluctant to abdicate its crown to spring royalty, had spitefully rubbed its suppressive hand over the understory. Yellow dog-toothed violets stood in uncrowned monocultures, their spotted basal leaves self evident but their flowers unwilling to blossom. Winter snowdrifts had decapitated the branches of the tall white pines

and smothered the forest floor with them. Trillium bravely emerged from beneath the litter but were not willing to show their purple nodding heads even in the third week of April.

Arriving beside the foot of the talus rubble tumbling down from the basalt heights the



Dutchman's Breeches

botanists spied Dutchman's breeches. Some of these feathery plants were showing their pantaloons, much like shy virgins putting their underclothes out on the line.

Further exploration revealed Rue-anemone, unwilling to let the dawdling winter season spoil their debut. A few Bloodroot presented themselves, coyly exposing their white flowers between fans of green petals.

Crunching over loose rubble by the water's edge searching for Spring beauty, Hepatica or Ginger. Hepatica alone did not disappoint: Pink and white flowers abundantly flourished.

The cliff scalers picked their way along the boulders high above the path, excitedly calculating foot holds, hand holds. A mother with two boys chattered past. The earth vocalized: how many springs do you have left in your tenure?

Loose stones like agates made the feet slide backwards. Poking between the rock ledges, more Hepatica, Early saxifrage not yet in bloom (how late you are in spite of your nomenclature). Then a glorious field of Pennsylvania sedge at the top of a rise dappled with more Hepatica and Rue-anemone. The lachrymose basalt path extruded tears to demonstrate its important water-bearing characteristic.

Now rise, rise to the peak of Lamentation Mountain. A swath of greenery began to fill in the gaps between highways and suburbs below. Few flowering plants were discerned though, and the naturalists descended, promising subsequent visitations to an ephemeral paradise.

**2 participants, 9 species wildflowers, 1 shrub (spicebush)**



Round-leaved Hepatica

## Dave Titus Memorial Warbler Walk, May 5, 2018

The national dialogue being thus – vituperative and discursive – from the executive branch of government downwards, it should be no surprise that the lowest common denominator would also inevitably infect the world of ornithology. The following is an excerpt from a press conference held after a bird watching field trip.

**Field trip leader (glumly):** Afternoon. Notice I didn't say good. Nothing's good anymore.

**First questioner:** Can you tell me a little about the trip?

**Leader:** I don't like the tone of your voice. Next!

**Second questioner (puzzled):** I was going to ask the same thing.

**Leader:** All right, if you're going to be so nosy. We went

up the side of the railroad tracks and back through the woods along the river. O.K.?

**First questioner:** May I ask...

**Leader:** No you may not. Your face looks like it was punched in by a woodpecker. Next!

**Third questioner:** Well, what was the habitat like and were there many warblers scattered about?

**Leader:** Boy, you're a loser. Never been outside? Rocks and sticks and trees and stuff. And the warblers, were they hiding? Colluding to confuse everyone? If that's what you want to believe, go ahead and write it down. Don't ever expect to be called upon again. Next!

*Continued on page 5*

# Field Trip Reports

*continued from page 4*

**Fourth questioner:** It was supposed to be a warbler walk. Did you see any neotropicals?

**Leader:** No, we saw golf balls flying. What did you think we saw? And what's the matter with you? You look like a pretzel.

**Fourth questioner:** My hands. I have arthritis.

**Leader:** Quit whining. Next!

**First questioner:** May I...

**Leader:** You again? No you may not! Look, you people are wasting my time. Let me spell it out. We walked around a bit. We pish-pished. A couple of birds showed their feathery little faces, the rest squeaked from their hiding places and made our lives miserable. Somebody talked about their breakfast. There was no intentional obstruction of science. Everyone was happy it wasn't raining.



O.K.? End of press conference. Now you can all go back to your rag publications and lie about all I've said. Fini.

***6 conspirators, 8 fake warbler species, 42 species total, subpoenaed but holding out for pardons.***

## CT River Mussel Hunt, June 2, 2018

At long last, Spring, and the risen sun eyed the earth with paternal good cheer. The canoe had to be hoisted over dead, wind-blown trees clustered at water's edge. A push through the chocolate ooze of lowering tide, and the two "musselers" paddled upstream in less than a foot of water. Tall trees along the shore shaded the surface; the water appeared opaque, difficult to spy any bivalves along the bottom. It was decided to cross over to Haddam Island.

Drifting close to the lip of the island, peering down into the murky between-tide depths... shell fragments began to appear. It was if the mussels, if they had been on land, were chewed up by a lawn mower. Otters often feed on mussels; were they the raiders of the watery realm?

Around the channel-side of the island an expanse of sand and mud flat was exposed as the tide continued to fall. Pulling over, the canoeists inquisitively waded in the shallows and traversed the grey, moist flats. More broken shells but no live denizens. Mussels prefer a certain type of substrate. Too much muck is not conducive to their lifestyle, as they must plod along on their thick, rubbery feet. A bit of coarse sand is best.

Rounding the island, they headed back towards the shallows, with the sun climbing and the temperature rising. Gazing down into clear water, inches deep, it was decided to hitch up to a large tree snag and begin


sloshing about in a serendipitous search for mussels.

The falling tide flowed rapidly over a grainy, pebbled substrate that was perfect habitat. Several live species were quickly discovered channeling through the sand like ante-diluvian submarines extracting their food source through strainers in their intake valves.

The "musselers" plodded against the current unsteadily, avoiding the deeper holes in the river bed. The mussels' zig-zag burrowings were etched like wrinkles on an old patriarch's face. A silent world within a world, as grains of sand and bits of leaf litter passed over the mussel's algae-painted and pebble-scuffed shells.

The canoeists continued to pick up and identify animals by naire, beak, and hinge. The sun began to wrinkle its sweating brow and furrowed clouds dimmed its eye. The water slackened, the river held its breath, then exhaled briefly before an inexorable sucking back of the tide. A thump sounding from the southeast intimated a storm, chasing the canoe to the safety of shore.

Sitting in the shade of a huge silver maple the "musselers" tallied the day's discovery of these keystone species so vital to river ecology:

***Elliptio, Eastern Pond Mussel, Tidewater Mucket, Eastern Lampmussel, Eastern Floater, Alewife Floater, Triangle Floater—2 participants*** 



LC



# Mattabeseck/Franklin Academy Bluebird Box Project

In May, MAS provided wood for bluebird boxes to Franklin Academy seniors for their Capstone Project. Thirty-seven bluebird boxes were constructed by the students and a bluebird trail was made on the campus. Alberta and Rob Mirer and Doreen Jezek visited the campus shortly after the boxes were made. Alberta presented a brief talk on bird identification. This was followed by a brief bird walk where we observed the bluebird boxes. As of the end of June, all boxes had birds

nesting with 3 of the boxes confirmed with bluebirds.

On June 29th, Doreen Jezek briefly talked to the Franklin Academy's Summer Sojourn Community Service class about bluebird and bluebird trails. The class has placed 5 boxes at Gillette's Castle State Park with the plan being to place a total of 10 boxes there. 🌿



The deadline for items to be included in the Fall/Winter issue is September 26, 2018. We expect subscribers to receive their copies about October 20. Please send items to Pat Rasch, 24 Elm Road, Cromwell, CT 06416, or email to <[pat\\_rasch@comcast.net](mailto:pat_rasch@comcast.net)>

The Board of Directors will meet at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at deKoven House, 27 Washington Street, Middletown.

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