



Athol Bird and Nature Club

Winter-Spring '05 Newsletter

Volume 41, Number 2

President's Letter

Winter weather and the sounds of sleigh-bells were the back drop to the annual Christmas bird count on December 18. Many folks have been asking: "Where are the birds?" We can now say "Probably not in Massachusetts!" Maybe those birds know something! The total of 60 species and 8,816 individual birds is down by 1,500 from recent years and reports from other counts around the state are similar. Let's hope that the winter is a favorable one for birds here and in their wintering grounds to the south. Then we can have a fresh start in the spring.

On the good news front, I want to thank everyone for the positive response to our first Annual Appeal to help the Millers River Environmental Center. More than \$5,000 has been donated so far and this has been bolstered by grants from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation including a \$5,000 general operation grant and an additional matching grant for \$5,000 which we must match with additional fund raising efforts after the December 1st announcement of the program. Any additional contributions will go toward this match and will be greatly appreciated.

As the year draws to a close, I want to thank all of the trip leaders and volunteers for their efforts in 2004. Members of the Club possess incredible knowledge of our natural history and combine that with a willingness to share with others has propelled the Club to be one of the State's leading organizations. Jeff Johnstone organized an ad hoc group of birders to plan a variety of events in the coming year so watch the newsletter for more bird oriented events and extended trips to Cape Cod and the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. We will continue to be a leader in insect related events as well and announcing more programs and special events with Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary and other exclusive destinations as spring approaches.

Dave Small

Officers and Directors of the Athol Bird and Nature Club

President: Dave Small **Vice President:** James Mallet **Treasurer:** Robert Coyle

Membership Secretary: Susan Bredesen **Office Manager:** Lisa M. Divoll

Directors: David Caldwell, Barbara Coyle, Lula Field, Susan Heinricher, Rick Magee, Robert Mallet, Kathy Morris, Jacob Morris-Siegel, John O'Keefe **Directors Emeritus:** Jane O'Regan, Laurencia Rousell

Millers River Environmental Center

Executive Director: Sue Cloutier

100 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331 WEB: www.millersriver.net PHONE: (978) 248-9491

Adventures in the Field

42nd Athol "Christmas Bird Count" Report

The Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is sponsored by the Athol Bird and Nature Club and the Millers River Environmental Center. Teams covering a 15 mile diameter circle centered in Athol recorded a total of 8,817 individual birds of 60 species. The Athol count is just one of almost two thousand similar counts organized by the National Audubon Society and held throughout North and South America.

Nippy 7 degree temperatures did not deter the early morning Owls. But a lack of mast such as acorns and cones of pine and hemlock may be responsible for low numbers of mice and other prey species and hence a low number of owls. Birders only found 1 Saw-whet Owl down from a high of 22 just a few years ago. Two new species not previously seen on the Athol CBC were recorded: Jeff Johnstone and Bruce Kanash found a Common Yellowthroat near White Pond in South Athol while Joe and Theresa Superchi relocated a Vesper Sparrow first observed two weeks ago at the Superchi Farm on Mountain View Road. Cold temperatures, freezing small ponds and streams, and a general lack of winter finches combined for slightly lower than normal individual birds and total number of species.



Midwinter Eagle Count (taken from the MassWildlife News)

MassWildlife will be participating in the nationwide Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey January 1 - 15, 2005. A target date, of January 7, will be used for a concentrated survey of major rivers, lakes, reservoirs and the coast by MassWildlife personnel and volunteers across the state (bad weather will postpone it to the 14th). Eagle sightings during the count period are welcomed and may be reported in writing to "Eagle Survey", MassWildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581 or via email to mass.wildlife@state.ma.us. Contact Dr. Tom French, (508) 792-7270 *163.



The Salamanders' Big Night

On December 1st, a group of Club members joined others at Harvard Forest to hear Betsy Colburn's presentation on vernal pools. After the talk, an inspired group decided to form a telephone and email chain to alert each other to the right conditions for the spring salamander migration here in north central Mass. If you want to be notified of these conditions or wish to join a North Quabbin expedition on a potential Big Night, please leave a message at the Center (978) 248-9491 or email abnc@millersriver.net and we will get back to with details. Copies of Betsy's new vernal pool book are available in the Nature Store at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, MA.



ABNC 2005 Winter/Spring Events

Most club programs and events are free and open to the public.
Events with other collaborating organizations are also listed below.
Reasonable accommodations available upon request.

*For information on program additions, changes due to weather, or to register;
call (978) 248-9491, visit our web site www.millersriver.net, or email abnc@millersriver.net*

January 1, Saturday, 8 AM - Leaders Choice Local Birding

Jacob Morris-Segal will lead this listers delight as we kick off the 2005 birding season. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

January 4, Tuesday, 5 PM - Teachers and Coaches Gathering

Join us for a pot luck supper and discussion of community based studies. Teachers and Coaches are asked to bring student work, projects, and issues to discuss. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. For further information, call (978) 248-9491 or email sue@millersriver.net. (Other scheduled dates are: Feb 1, March 1, April 5, May 3)

January 7, Friday, 5:30 PM - Neighbors Night Pot Luck

Join Club members and others as we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and view short slide presentations by members. Open to the public. Bring a dish to share. For further information call the Millers River Environmental Center at (978) 248-9491 and leave a message.

January 8, Saturday, 7 AM - Birding Cape Ann and Vicinity

Join Veteran trip leader Mark Taylor on this exploration of the ocean habitats. Meet 7 AM. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, or at 9 AM at the Friendly's off route 128 rotary in Gloucester.

January 8, Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM - AMC North Quabbin Outdoor Expo

Vendors of outdoor equipment, snacks and lunch available, and outdoor organizations will have materials for sale and on display at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Free workshops and general admission.

January 9 & 16, Sundays, 2 PM to 5 PM - Millers River Skins

Join Dave Small and Lynn Harper for a casual session keying out odonate skins found in the Millers River Watershed. Bring your mystery exuviae and we'll puzzle over them together! Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Note: Some scopes and light sources will be available, but feel free to bring your own.

January 11, Tuesday, 6 PM to 7 PM - Watershed Meeting

Come learn about environmental issues facing the watershed and you can volunteer to steward a section of a stream near your home. This is a public meeting held monthly at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, alternating afternoons (1 PM to 3 PM) and evenings.

January 12, Wednesday, 7 PM - Monthly ABNC Meeting: Adventures in Peru

Through his stories and slides, Rick Magee will transport us to Peru, a land of warmth and wonder. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

January 14, Friday, 7 PM - Owls with Bill Fregeau

Join our premier local owl expert in search of wintering owls. Limited participation and pre-registration is required. Contact the Millers River Environmental Center at (978) 248-9491 or abnc@millersriver.net.

January 22 & 23, Sat., 9 AM to 9 PM & Sun., 9 AM to 4 PM - Wilderness First Aid and CPR

Training in emergency care in rural, wilderness, or extended care settings for all outdoor people, groups and their leaders. Certification course taught by SOLO - Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities.

COST: \$180, two day program, for Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and CPR \$145 for WFA only. Deposit: \$50 deposit due by January 8th. For details, contact: Kemper Carlsen at (978) 544-3223 or guides@northquabbinwoods.org. Held at the Center, 100 Main, Athol.

January 26, Wednesday, 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM - Accessible Birding Walks

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, to carpool to nearby birding spots. Call (978) 248-9491 and leave a message to ask for further information.

February 1, Tuesday, 5:30 PM - Teachers and Coaches Gathering

Join us for a pot luck supper and discussion of community based studies. Teachers and Coaches are asked to bring student work, projects, and issues to discuss. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

For further information, call (978) 248-9491 or email sue@millersriver.net

February 5th , Saturday 7 AM - Birding Plum Island and Vicinity

Join Mark Taylor for this exploration of one of the country's premier birding hotspots. Meet 7 AM at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, or 8:30 AM at Burger King route 110 Amesbury.

February 9, Wednesday, 7 PM - Monthly ABNC Meeting: Tracking the Wily Coyote

Through his slide program, David Brown will show us the evidence to look for when out in the Quabbin region that reveals the presence of the coyote, red fox, gray fox and others. Discover how "eco-tracking" allows us to use evidence left behind to learn about the lives of these wild animals. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

February 11th, Friday 7 PM - Owls with Bill Fregeau

Join our premier local owl expert in search of wintering owls. Limited participation and pre-registration is required [contact Center 978-248-9491](mailto:contact.Center.978-248-9491) abnc@millersriver.net

February 19 and 20, Saturday & Sunday - Overnight Cape Cod Weekend

Join Joan and Larry Duprey for this weekend escape from the snow-fields of Central Mass. For reservations and more information contact the Dupreys at (978) 249-4964

February 23, Wednesday, 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM - Accessible Birding Walks

Meet at the Center to carpool to nearby birding spots. Call (978) 248-9491 and leave a message to ask for further information.

March 1, Tuesday, 5:30 PM - Teachers and Coaches Gathering

Join us for a pot luck supper and discussion of community based studies. Teachers and Coaches are asked to bring student work, projects, and issues to discuss. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

For further information, call 978-248-9491 or email sue@millersriver.net

March 9, Wednesday, 7 PM - Monthly ABNC Meeting: Upland Habitat Management

Jill Liske Clark of the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife early successional reclamation program will update us on the management plans for Cass meadow. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

March 20, Sunday, 8 AM - Local Waterfowl

Join Jeff Johnstone for this half-day trip. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

March 26, Saturday, 8 AM - Local Waterfowl

Join Jacob Morris-Segal for this half-day trip. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

March 30, Wednesday, 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM - Accessible Birding Walks

Meet at the Center to carpool to nearby birding spots. Call (978) 248-9491 and leave a message to ask for further information.

April 3, Sunday, 7 AM - Birding Plum Island and Vicinity

Join Joan and Larry Duprey in search of early spring migrant birds at one of Northeast's hottest birding destinations. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol at 7 AM or 8:30AM at the Burger King, Route 110 in Amesbury.

April 5, Tuesday, 5:30 PM - Teachers and Coaches Gathering

Join us for a pot luck supper and discussion of community based studies. Teachers and Coaches are asked to bring student work, projects, and issues to discuss. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. For further information, call (978) 248-9491 or email sue@millersriver.net

April 9, Saturday, 9 AM - Vernal Pool Field Trip

Join Lynn Harper on this half day excursion to a nearby vernal pool. Learn about the animals that live in the pools, how to certify a vernal pool, and regulations to help protect them. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

April 13, Wednesday, 7 PM - Monthly ABNC Meeting: The Singing Life of Birds

Don Kroodsma will explain how to listen like you've never listened before. Don's interest in birds and listening to their vocalizations motivated him to write a book on the subject. At this meeting he will introduce us to his techniques. Held at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

April 15, Friday, 6:30 PM - Woodcock watch

Join Bruce Scherer for this annual fun evening. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, at 6:30 PM to carpool to the viewing site.

April 16, Saturday, *Save the Date*: Time TBA - Lep Conference

The Club is hosting a day-long conference on Butterflies of the Region. Special topics will include (among others), the history of Lep studies, current research questions, and conservation issues. Co-sponsored by Mass Butterfly Club and Athol Bird and Nature Club. Details to follow regarding registration and fee. Volunteer assistance needed, please contact Sue Cloutier at abnc@millersriver.net.

April 29, May 6, 13, 20, & 27, Fridays 7 AM - Early morning Migrants with Jeff Johnstone

Join Jeff on these popular walks in the local area. Stay as long as you can and leave before your Boss gets nervous. The first hour will be wheelchair accessible. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

May 3, Tuesday, 5:30 PM - Teachers and Coaches Gathering

Join us for a pot luck supper and discussion of community based studies. Teachers and Coaches are asked to bring student work, projects, and issues to discuss. Meet at the Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. For further information, call (978) 248-9491 or email sue@millersriver.net

May 8, Saturday, 5 AM (sharp) - Birding Mount Auburn Cemetery

Join Joan and Larry Duprey for this wonderful excursion to historic Mount Auburn. Leaving from the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol or meet at 6:30 AM inside the main gate at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

May 11, Wednesday, 7 PM - Monthly ABNC Meeting

Fish Passage in the Northeast: Old Problems, New Solutions - Restoration of migratory fish in the Northeastern US has been ongoing since the Industrial Revolution, when numerous dams and other barriers were built that blocked movements and access to spawning areas. Dr. Haro, aquatic ecologist, will describe the impacts of these barriers, focusing on some fish that have previously received little attention, including lamprey, American eels, and sturgeon. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

May 14, Saturday, 6 AM - Annual Northfield Bird Trip with Bob Coyle

Join Bob on this 41st running of this annual event. 6 AM - Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, or 8:30 AM at the Northfield Country Club.

June 10, 11, & 12, Fri. thru Sun. Overnight - Breeding Warblers and Boreal Forest Birds

Visit New Hampshire's Connecticut Lakes with Bob Mallet and Jeff Johnstone. For details and reservations, please contact Bob (978) 249-2828 or Jeff (978) 249-9052.

June 25, Saturday, 8 AM - Dragonflies at Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge in Longmeadow, MA

Join Lynn Harper for this day-long adventure into the heart of the southern Connecticut River valley in MA. Bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet 8:00 AM at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, MA. Or contact Lynn at (978) 249-9436 or HarperLynn@msn.com for a meeting place at the refuge.

July 17, Sunday - North Quabbin Garden Tour

Get your tickets early from the Center for this once a year opportunity to view many of the spectacular gardens growing in this region. Details to follow.

July 23, Saturday, 8 AM - Mystery Odonate trip to Southern Vermont

Join Lynn Harper, Dave Small and Vermont's Mike Blust for a search for new county records, new state records, or any odes at all, for that matter, in Southern Vermont. Bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet 8 AM at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, MA. Or contact Lynn at (978) 249-9436 or HarperLynn@msn.com for an alternate meeting location near our first stop.

September 3, Saturday, 9:30 AM - Dragonflies: Late season Specialties in Millers River

Join Dave Small and bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet 9:30 at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

September 10, Saturday, 8 AM - Dragonflies: Odes of the Ashuelot River in Southern NH

Look for late season Odes with Lynn Harper and Earle Baldwin on this day-long excursion to our neighboring watershed. Bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. For additional information, please contact Lynn at: HarperLynn@msn.com.

ABC FUN PAGE

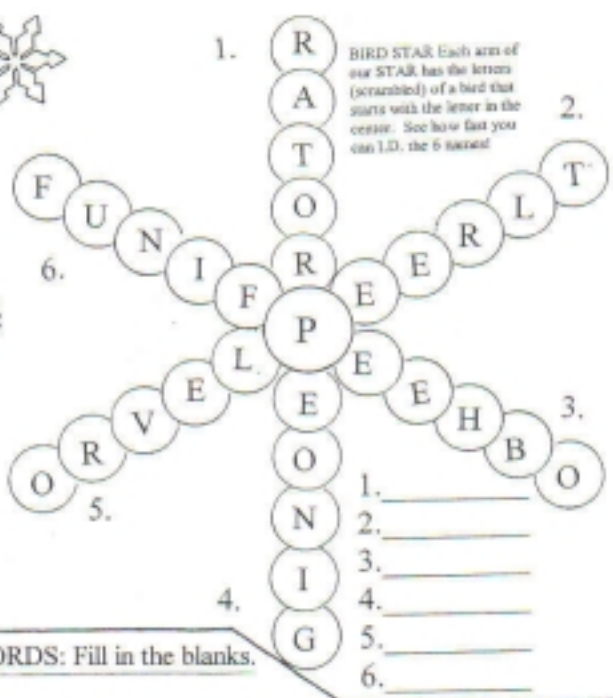
FIND +25 WEATHER TERMS BELOW (THEY MAY BE HORIZONTAL, VERTICAL, DIAGONAL, FOR OR BACKWARD).

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NATURE WORDS: Fill in the blanks.

1. Swamp Tree
 2. Frisky Mammal
 3. Volcanic Product
 4. Wading Bird Family
 5. Blue Mineral
 6. Mammal/Flower
 7. Striped Rodent
 8. Calcareous Mineral
 9. Circumpolar Group
 10. Fall Flower
 11. 1st Mag. Star
 12. Handsome Duck
 13. Igneous Rock
 14. Flowering Herb*
 15. Beautiful Tree*
 16. Distant Planet
 17. Perching Bird Family
 18. Green Mineral
 19. Raptor Group
 20. Yellow Flower
 21. Gallinaceous Group
 22. Scottish Flower
- *Two word answer



BIRD STAR Each arm of our STAR has the letters (scrambled) of a bird that starts with the letter in the center. See how fast you can find the 6 names!

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RBC
 12/12
 2004



We're on the Web!
www.millersriver.net

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Fax: 978-248-2020

Phone: 978-248-9491

Athol, MA 01331

100 Main Street

Athol Bird & Nature Club

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2005 Annual Appeal Challenge Grant

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation has offered the Club a \$5,000 matching challenge grant. Donations to our Annual Appeal will be matched through the Foundation's Worcester Credit Union Fund once we receive \$5,000 in new donations given in support of the operations of the Millers River Environmental Center.

Please consider a donation at this time to the Millers River Environmental Center so that we can meet this challenge.

Also, please check the address label on this newsletter and if you have not yet renewed your Club membership, you may include your dues with your donation. Individual membership is \$10 and family memberships are \$15.

Please cut along dotted line.

Checks should be made payable to: ***Athol Bird and Nature Club.***

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Town: _____

MREC Donation: \$ _____

State & Zip+4: _____

ABNC Membership: \$ _____

All donations in excess of \$10.00 are tax-deductible

Please mail checks to: Athol Bird and Nature Club
Millers River Environmental Center
100 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331



ABNC membership year is from September through August.