



Athol Bird and Nature Club

Fall-Winter 2005-2006 Newsletter

Volume 42, Number 1

President's Letter

Fall is fast approaching and a new season for the Athol Bird and Nature Club and the Millers River Environmental Center begins. As you look at our full calendar of events, we all send special thanks to each of the trip leaders and speakers who have agreed to again share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the natural world with the rest of us. It looks like a promising season ahead.

I wish to welcome the North Quabbin Garden Club (NQGC) as the newest group to join the Center. I am excited by their list of speakers who will help educate participants on the intricacies of gardening. We welcome the NQGC's support us by working to beautify the landscaping at the Center and we know their work will add beauty to many corners of our region. Check www.millersriver.net for event updates.

ABNC is still actively connecting with area schools, adding Athol and Royalston elementary schools to the program. Many of us who trace our natural history routes to a outstanding teachers feel this is one of the most important programs the club supports.

On a final note ABNC is actively engaged in several projects documenting our biodiversity. A survey of ponds in the Worcester Plateau Ecoregion conducted by Matt Hickler PhD and colleagues from UMass is beginning its second year as is the Statewide Survey of specific Odonates. "Operation Rubyspot" is again searching for the lovely American Rubyspot damselfly and have added 3 state listed dragonflies to our search. Check www.rubyspot.net for details and updates.

So check the website often, sign up for ABNC e-mail notifications, and check the local papers for updates so you can get out and join us in the field.

Dave Small
Athol, Ma

Officers and Directors of the Athol Bird & Nature Club

President: Dave Small **Vice President:** James Mallet **Treasurer:** Robert Coyle
Directors: David Caldwell, Barbara Coyle, Lula Field, Susan Heinricher, Rick Magee, Robert Mallet, Jacob Morris-Siegel
Membership Secretary: Susan Bredesen **Executive Director:** Sue Cloutier

Millers River Environmental Center
100 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331 WEB: www.mrec-athol.org PHONE: (978) 248-9491

ABNC and the Center Fall-Winter Events 2005-2006

Most Club events and programs are free and open to the public. Some events with other collaborating organizations are also listed below. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request. For information on program additions, changes due to weather or to register for most of our programs, call 978-248-9491, visit our website at www.millersriver.net or email abnc@millersriver.net

Sept. 2 at 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Bird Walks** [Fridays through Oct 7]

Join us on these bird walks with Jeff Johnstone for an early morning search for fall migrants. Meet at Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

Sept. 3 Saturday at 9:30 am: **Dragonflies of the Millers River**

Join Dave Small looking for late season specialties in Millers River and bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet at Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 9 at 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Birdwalks with Jeff Johnstone.**

Meet at Millers River Environmental Center for an early morning search for fall migrants.

Sept. 9 Friday at 7:30 am: **Hawkwatch on Mt Watatic *Raindate Sept 10***

Join Rachael Scherer on this special hawkwatch opportunity. Bring food for lunch and water. Be prepared for a moderate to strenuous hour long hike to the spotting site. Meet at 7:30am at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 10 Saturday at 8:00 am: **Odes of the Ashuelot River**

Look for late season Odes with Lynn Harper and Earle Baldwin on this day-long excursion to our neighboring watershed, the Ashuelot River in Southern NH. Bring your lunch, your net, your sense of adventure, and prepare to get wet. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center. For more information call Lynn at (978) 249-9436.

Sept. 11 Sunday at 7:00 am: **Plum Island Birding for Migrants**

Join Joan and Larry Duprey on this trip leaving the Millers River Environmental Center at

Sept. 13 Tuesday from 3:00 - 5:00 pm: **Teachers' Photography Course**

This new course continues from 3-5 pm on Tuesdays- Sept 27, Oct 4, and 11. Join other teachers from the North Quabbin to learn how to integrate digital photography into your work with students this year. Discover elements of capturing images, processing them, and using them for documentation of student learning. This course, held at the Millers River Environmental Center, is run by Mark Dannenhauer in collaboration with our EIC teachers and coaches. **Registration Required.** Please contact abnc@millersriver.net if you are interested in this course.

Sept. 14 Wednesday at 7:00 pm: **ABNC Monthly meeting- Archaeology of Wales, Alaska**
Ethan Forbes, local teacher and a researcher with scientists in Alaska during the summer, will give us a look at his 3rd field season of excavation, as well as a few shots of rare birds, animals, and the culture of Wales, Alaska. Flowers from the tundra as well as select "bones" found will be highlighted in this engaging presentation. Free and open to the public. We welcome new members.

Sept. 15 Thursday at 7:00 pm: **Sculpture in the Garden**

This is a free program offered by the North Quabbin Garden Club that will explore the use of both formal pieces and found art in the garden and ideas on how to create your own. Presented by sculptor and gardener Thomas Kellner of Royalston. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 16 at 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Birdwalks**

Join Jeff Johnstone for this early morning search for fall migrants.
Meet at Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 17 and 18 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm: **Garlic and Arts Festival**

Join us at our table for a turn telling others about ABNC programs. For more information and for directions check this website; www.garlicandarts.org. Please call us and leave a message at the Center if you can volunteer at our table 978-248-9491.

Sept. 18 Sunday at 7:00 am: **INLAND SHOREBIRDS AND OTHER FALL MIGRANTS**

Join Mark Taylor on this field trip to the East Meadows in Northampton in search of American Golden Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, and other shorebirds migrating through the river valley. Stops in Hatfield and Hadley will be added, time permitting, to make a full loop of the region. Other possible target species to include Connecticut Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Dickcissel, and all the more regular migrating passerines. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center parking lot. Bring wet weather footwear and pack a lunch.

Sept. 18 Sunday 10:00 am: **Fall Mushroom Foray**

Noah Siegel will lead this mushroom foray for ABNC and the Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited. Bring small brown paper bags for collecting, a hand lens and field guide if you have them. Meet at the parking lot on top of Tully Lake dam.

Sept. 20 Tuesday from 8:00 - 10:00 am: **Accessible Birding**

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center to carpool or share bus transportation. Wheelchair accessible, please call and leave a message to reserve space 978-248-9491.

Sept. 23 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Birdwalks**

Join Jeff Johnstone for an early morning search for fall migrants.
Meet at Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 24 Saturday at 8:30 am: **Local Geology with Bob Coyle**

Find all those nearby sites that tell us about the foundations of the North Quabbin landscape. Bob will fill you in on all the details of our geologic past. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Sept. 27 Tuesday at 6:00 pm: **Millers River Watershed Team - Monthly Meeting**

Millers River Watershed Team will continue monthly meeting on the 4th Tuesday, once again alternating day and evening meetings: to be followed by a 1 pm meeting on

Oct. 25th and 6 pm on November 22nd. On Sept. 27, volunteer water monitors and others will report on water monitoring and other recent activities. Plus updates on upcoming programs and events. Meet at Millers River Environmental Center.

Call 978-248-9491 or email council@millersriver.net for info.

Sept. 30 at 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Birdwalks**

Join Jeff Johnstone at the Center for an early morning search for fall migrants .

Oct. 1 Saturday at 9:30 am: **9th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup:**

The Millers River Watershed Council is coordinating the cleanup of the upper stretches of Templeton. Take Route 2 to Exit 20 (Baldwinville Road), go North on Baldwinville Road. The Kitchen Garden is on the left less than ¼ mile from the highway. Be ready to get dirty and bring normal cleanup gear. People wishing to carpool from Athol should meet at the Millers River Environmental Center—we will depart from the Center at 9 am. Call 978-248-9491 or email council@millersriver.net for more information.

Oct. 4 Tuesday 5:30 pm: **Teachers and Coaches Gathering**

This event is held the first Tuesday of each month during the school year. We welcome teachers, and others who work in schools, to join us in discussions of community based at the Millers River Environmental Center. stu

Oct. 7 at 7:00 am: **Friday Morning Birdwalks**

Join Jeff Johnstone for an early morning search for fall migrants.

Meet at Millers River Environmental Center.

Oct. 8 Saturday from 9:00 am to noon: **Cass Meadow Invasive Plant Volunteer Work Party**

Join MDFW Biologist Jill Liske-Clark who will lead volunteers in a work party to pull Buckthorn from a sensitive portion of Cass Meadow. In conjunction with the restoration of Athol's premier Floodplain Meadow scheduled this fall, volunteers will hand pull invasive species on a small portion of the area within Town's Drinking Water well field. This area is also habitat for protected rare wildlife and in need of the personal touch. Bring work gloves, Clippers, and a sense of fun and teamwork.

Meet at the entrance to Cass Meadow Wildlife Management Area at the corner of Pinedale and Pequoig Avenue in Athol.

Oct. 11 Tuesday from 8:00 - 10:00 am: **Accessible Birding**

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center to carpool or share bus transportation.

Wheelchair accessible, please call and leave a message to reserve space 978-248-9491.

Oct. 12 Wednesday at 7:00 pm: **ABNC Meeting-Spring and Summer in the Smoky Mountains**

Noah Siegel will treat us to a trip to the Great Smoky Mountains. After five visits in the last four years, three times in the summer and early fall for mushrooms and two times in the spring for wildflowers, Noah has captured images for this presentation that will please any viewer. Some highlights are of wildflowers, salamanders, fungi, big trees,

Oct. 15 Saturday at 7:00 am: Bolton Flats Field Trip

Join Joan and Larry Duprey to explore the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge and Bolton Flats. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Oct. 20 Thursday at 7:00 pm: Plants for Winter Interest

This is a free program offered by the North Quabbin Garden Club that will examine both slides and actual plants that enliven the winter garden and provide benefit to wildlife. Presented by Diane Bennett of Maple Hill Nursery and Greenhouses, West Swanzey, NH. This meeting will be held at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Oct. 26 Wednesday at 7:00 pm: Millers River Watershed Council's Annual Meeting

Join the directors and members of the Council for an enjoyable evening at the Millers River Environmental Center. Members will vote for 2006 officers, watch a special presentation about the watershed, and refreshments will be served. Come meet other watershed advocates. For info call 978-248-9491 or email council@millersriver.net

Oct. 27 Thursday from 6:30 - 9:30 pm: Celebrate the North Quabbin with AMC

AMC invites the public to attend their pot luck supper for all interested in the environment. This evening will include a presentation that celebrates the North Quabbin's natural resources. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center. Contact Don Flye for additional information 978-724-3318.

Nov. 1 Tuesday at 5:30 pm: Teachers and Coaches Gathering

We welcome teachers, and others who work in schools, to join us in discussions of community based studies. Please bring your project ideas, examples of past work, and food to share during this pot-luck supper meeting. For more information, email us at: abnc@millersriver.net

Nov. 8 Tuesday from 8:00 - 10:00 am: Accessible Birding

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center to carpool or share bus transportation. Wheelchair accessible, please call and leave a message to reserve space 978-248-9491.

Nov. 9 Wednesday at 6 pm: ABNC Annual Meeting: Tom Tynning on Snakes of New England

Join us as we celebrate another year of exciting programs and field trips. The supper and 7 pm presentation by expert naturalist, author and teacher, Tom Tynning, will be held at the Community Church of North Orange and Tully. Please bring an item for our silent auction fundraiser. Cost for the supper is \$12. Please call Bob Coyle to reserve for the supper 978-249-6083.

Nov. 17 Thursday at 7:00 pm: Native Stars of the Fall Garden

This is a free program offered by the North Quabbin Garden Club that highlights native plants with appeal in the fall garden by virtue of their late bloom, berries or foliage. Presented by Christine Beckert Long, a graduate of the New England Wild Flower Society's native plant program. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center.

Dec. 6 Tuesday at 5:30 pm: Teachers and Coaches Gathering

We welcome teachers, and others who work in schools, to join us in discussions of community based studies. Please bring your project ideas, examples of past work, and food to share during this pot-luck supper meeting. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center. For more information, email us at: abnc@millersriver.net

Dec. 13 Tuesday from 1:00 - 3:00 pm: Accessible Birding

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center to carpool or share bus transportation. Wheelchair accessible, please call and leave a message to reserve space 978-248-9491.

Dec. 15 Thursday at 7:00 pm: Natural Decorative Holiday Swags

This is a workshop offered by the North Quabbin Garden Club. Attendees will make a festive, fragrant swag of leaves, fruit, cinnamon, wool, beads and bells. Pre-registration is required (e-mail the club at gardens@millersriver.net); a \$4 materials fee will be collected at the door. Meet at Millers River Env. Center.

Dec. 17 Saturday All Day: Christmas Bird Count

Please contact Dave Small [Dave@dhsml.net or 978-249-2094] so that he can set up teams for this event.

We send a special thank you to the following volunteers

Thank you – Greg Mcguane, Joe Superchi, and Gerhard Epke - for helping during open hours, taking the lead on facilities maintenance and organization, successful grant writing, and greeting visitors.

And thanks also goes to Kathy Morris for getting us started on the organization of our extensive library that members, friends and grants have given to the Club and the Center.

Please join in and be part of the fun as we continue to grow our programs. We are looking for further assistance in the following areas:

We need work crews for two projects. Most materials will be provided. Please contact Dave Small [dave@dhsml.net] or leave a message at the Center [978-248-9491] if you can assist us.

1. A crew to help us this fall as we re-build the handicap access ramp to the Millers River Environmental Center. We need folks who have hammers, nails and screws as well as skills and enthusiasm.
2. A crew to repaint the community meeting room and hallways this fall. Paint will be provided, but we need hands to do the painting and prep work.
3. Additional volunteers to assist us during open hours on small office tasks and to greet visitors on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 2 pm.

4. Volunteers at the Garlic Festival to be at our table on Saturday and Sunday, September 17 and 18.