

Autumn Ushers in an Air of Excitement

Fall of 2007 seems to be shaping up to one of excitement in New England. As our sports teams were heading for world championship glory, ABNC Members traveled the back roads of Quabbin enjoying several Bald Eagles and migrating waterfowl amidst the scenic fall vistas.

Former Athol resident and life long birder Steve Blanchard and his wife Sue, who were hiking the summit of Mount Watatic on October 28, discovered and photographed an adult Gray Jay. This unusual Massachusetts encounter should be taken in the context of other recent sightings including Pine Siskins at the Rich Park in Athol and reports from

the Berkshires of 2 Boreal Chickadees. We hope some of these specialties will be around for our December 15th Christmas Bird Count.

The new look of the Newsletter is possible with the skill and hard work of Kathi Duprey (October ABNC Speaker on Monarch Butterflies). This newsletter will be posted on the ABNC website where the full color version may be viewed along with active links to more images and information. As we move to more and more of an electronic age members are reminded to sign up for the e-mail event reminders. This is the best way to keep up with events of interest throughout the North Quabbin Region.

Just point your browser to www.millersriver.net/elist to sign up.

Keep the
Center Open
This Winter!
(see p.2)

In This Issue:

Keep the Center Open This Winter!	p. 2
School Programs Announcement.....	p. 3
Field (Trip) Notes: Pittsburg, NH	p. 3
Calendar of Events.....	p. 4-5
Sightings & Short Takes:	
Black Bear, Eagle Release, & More.....	p. 6
ABNC Fun Page	p. 7



Letter from the President



Dear Members and Friends,

Each fall, we ask for your membership renewal and we thank each of you, our members and friends, as well as the many foundations and businesses that have helped support the Club and the Center over the past several years.

The Center has become a cornerstone of the region's environmental community as a place to meet and share ideas and enthusiasm for a brighter future for the North Quabbin area. Collaborations with local schools will help continue the ABNC legacy for future generations.

Keep the
Center
Open This
Winter!

Escalating fuel costs (last year in excess of \$8000) for ABNC's Millers River Environmental Center make funding our work especially challenging. The political climate on the federal and state levels has made reliance on traditional support agencies difficult. Therefore, a major fundraising effort is now underway to raise funds for the Center's Utility bills and other ongoing expenses. Only through your generous support will our doors remain open this winter.

We hope that you will support our efforts by making a tax-deductible donation for the Center and renewing your ABNC membership. Use the membership form on the back page of this newsletter, or renew online at www.millersriver.net/abnc.

Sincerely,

David H. Small, ABNC president

Club Newsletter gets a Facelift!

As you've undoubtedly noticed, the ABNC Newsletter is sporting a whole new look. But that's not all... through the wonders of modern technology, reading your newsletter can be a multi-media experience!

If you're reading the PDF version of the newsletter on a computer that's connected to the internet, look for the specially-formatted text "hyperlinks"... Clicking on a link will take you to a special web page related to the story, or bring up an email window so you can RSVP or request more information. The links at the bottom of page 3, for instance, lead to audio files where you can listen to recorded bird songs.

HEADS-UP FOR MEMBERS:

The Fall 2007 edition of the newsletter will be the last one produced by commercial printing. Future newsletters will be published as a PDF, which can be emailed and downloaded from the ABNC website for printing at home. (For members without a computer or email address, a paper copy of the newsletter will be mailed at your request. Please call the Center at 978-248-9491)

Officers and Directors of the Athol Bird and Nature Club

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

Directors:
Joan Duprey, Larry Duprey,
Lula Field, Susan Heinricher,
Robert Mallet, John O'Keefe,
and Jacob Morris-Siegl

Membership Secretary:
Susan Bredesen

Executive Director: Sue Cloutier

ABNC MEETINGS
are usually held at the Center
at 7:00 p.m. on the
second Wednesday of the month.

MEMBERSHIP
Members receive email notification of meetings, programs, field trips and other events by joining our automated e-mail list. The e-mail list also serves as the primary distribution method for the ABNC Club Newsletter. For members without an email address, a paper copy of the newsletter can be mailed upon request.

Athol Agway offers a discount to members on purchases of birdseed.

Dues are used to pay for programs and speakers, manage the Center, Club projects, publications, mailings, and Club membership in conservation and research organizations. Optional donations to the Center are used to pay for additional programs and for care of the collection.



Millers River Environmental Center
100 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331
www.millersriver.net
(978) 248-9491

MREC School Programs Supported by Two State Agencies

This year, staff of the Millers River Environmental Center will be supported by both the State Department of Education and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust to work with area teachers and students as they study their local communities.

For the past five years, Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) has funded using the environmental as a way to learn the required subjects in schools in Orange, Warwick, and Athol. Our coaches have worked with teachers and students in these districts to help them connect with community resources—people, materials, and natural areas—so that what they learn in school is real in their lives.

This year, we are collaborating again with UMass, Harvard Forest, and the Athol Royalston School District to bring a new after-school program to their middle school students.

We thank these two funders, and our members and friends, for their support that enables our continuing work with the schools in our region.

Please remember the grant program of MET and when you purchase new license plates for your vehicles, pay a bit more and support the Trust through your selection of a “Preserve the Trust” plate.



**Massachusetts
Environmental
Trust**

Field (Trip) Notes



A Gray Jay on Scott's Bog Road thrilled the participants on the Club trip to Northern NH by eating crackers out of their hands. Shown is Judy McGuane feeding this notorious “camp robber” not always easy to find here. — Photo by Greg McGuane

Members of the Athol Bird and Nature Club spent the weekend of 3–6 August in the Connecticut Lakes region in far Northern New Hampshire looking for birds, including hard to find boreal species, with great success.

The group enjoyed great accommodations in a log cabin with all the conveniences of home and a great overview of the Connecticut Lakes, and a fantastic lightning and thunder show on Friday night but

otherwise sunny and mild weather during the day time.

In addition to the Jay pictured above, other Boreal species seen included the elusive Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadees, White-winged Crossbills and Pine Grosbeak, for a total of 82 bird species. Mammals included Red Fox, White Tailed Deer, Moose and—believe it or not—a Mountain Lion, clearly seen crossing Route 3 by 4 members of the party.

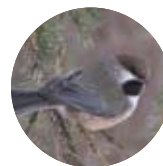
If you're reading the PDF version of this newsletter on a computer that's connected to the internet, the links below will take you to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology “All About Birds” web site which has audio recordings for these species.



[Canada Gray Jay](#)



[Black-backed Woodpecker](#)



[Boreal Chickadee](#)



[White-winged Crossbill](#)



[Pine Grosbeak](#)

Athol Bird & Nature Club

Fall/Winter 2007 Calendar

General Program Information:

- Programs and events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.
- Please call the Millers River Environmental Center (the Center) 978-248-9491 to keep informed of last minute events or calendar changes (as in case of weather cancellations).
- The Center is located at 100 Main Street in downtown Athol. Parking is behind the building, accessed off Canal Street on the west side of the building. Driving directions to the Center can be found on the MREC website.

Sunday, October 28, all day

Quabbin Reservation Exploration

Discover migrating waterfowl and song birds inside the gates of Quabbin's watershed. Meet at the Center at 8 a.m. for carpooling. Bring lunch, water, camera, binoculars and your sense of adventure. Contact Dave at 978-413-1772 or Dave@dhsml.net to pre-register. Space is limited; ABNC members have priority.

Saturday, November 3, 1-4 p.m.

Hike to Indian Cave and Steven's Swamp, Warwick

Led by local author Allen Young and naturalist Lula Field. Meet at the Warwick Public Library in the center of Warwick at 1 p.m. sharp. Hike is easy to moderate, some uphill but mostly level. Experience a pond and bog, a small cave, massive rocky outcroppings, and an unusually quiet woodland. Bring water and a snack. Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear; sneakers OK but hiking shoes preferred. Hard rain cancels. For more information call Allen at 978-249-7612.

Sunday, November 11, all day

Birding Plum Island and Vicinity

Join the search for late fall and early winter migrants, with a local meal and camaraderie at the end of the day. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Center to carpool or call the Dupreys at 978-249-4964 if you want to meet the group at 9 a.m. at Burger King on Rte. 110, Salisbury.

Sunday, November 11, 1-5 p.m.

Congenial, Convivial Creativity

Bring your knitting, watercolors, musical instruments, spinning wheels, pastels, whittling knife, felting gear, you name it, and spend an afternoon hanging out at the Center with other creative folk of the North Quabbin. Come whenever you like; leave whenever you must. There'll be coffee and water for tea, plus a boom box for sharing your favorite CDs. For more information contact Lynn Harper at 978-249-9436 or harperlynn@msn.com.

Tuesday, November 13, 8-10 a.m.

Accessible Birding

Join Joe Superchi visiting local sites. Open to birders of all abilities. Call ahead for wheelchair van access: 978-248-9491.

Wednesday, November 14, 6 p.m.

ABNC Annual Dinner Meeting "Winter Hawks: Opportunities & Challenges"

Join us at 6 p.m. for good food and at 7 p.m. for a wonderful presentation by hawk expert Paul M. Roberts, who focuses on the age-old challenge of identifying accipiters at the feeder and explores the habits of red-tailed hawks, bald eagles and rough-legged hawks. Roberts, who founded the Eastern Mass Hawk Watch, is the director of the Hawk Migration Association of North America and the president of the Northeast Hawk Watch. He occasionally teaches classes on hawks and shorebirds for Mass Audubon. Dinner reservations (\$10) are required; contact Bob Coyle (978-249-6083) by November 5. Dinner meeting will be held in "Liberty Hall" (downstairs in the Athol Town Hall - 464 Main Street). Please bring donation items for the silent auction.

Thursday, November 15, 7:00 PM

North Quabbin Garden Club Meeting

Holiday Green Workshop, with Sue Baribeau of Athol, owner of the former Ledges Greenhouse. **NOTE:** Pre-register by Nov. 8; send contact information and \$5 materials fee to NQGC, 100 Main St., Athol, MA 01331.

Friday & Saturday, November 30 – December 1

Massachusetts Snake Symposium: Snakes of the Northeast

Held at UMass, Amherst. For landowners and managers, scientists, naturalists, and educators. Details and registration info will be announced on the Center's web site, www.millersriver.net/confsnakes/index.html.

Sunday, December 9, 1–5 p.m.

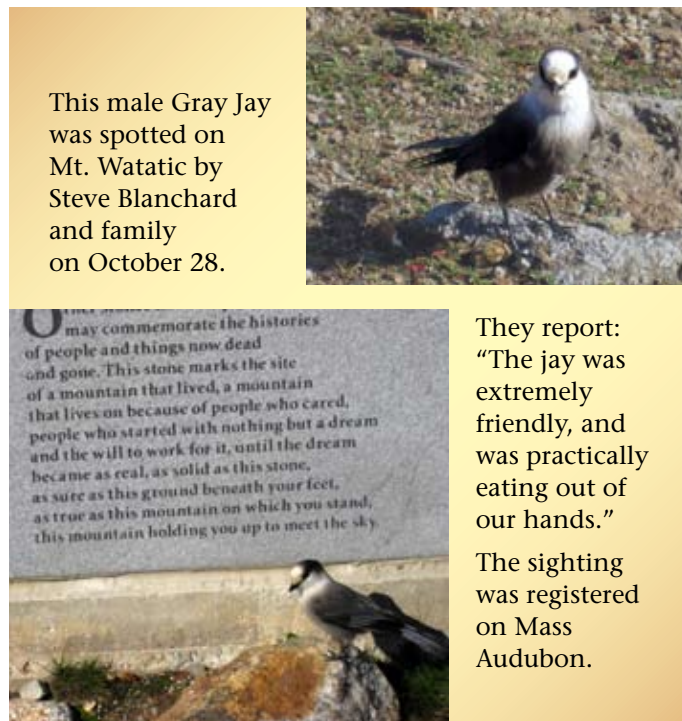
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Tuesday, December 11, 8–10 a.m.

Accessible Birding

Join Joe Superchi visiting local sites. Open to birders of all abilities. Call ahead for wheelchair van access: 978-248-9491.



This male Gray Jay was spotted on Mt. Watatic by Steve Blanchard and family on October 28.

One may commemorate the histories of people and things now dead and gone. This stone marks the site of a mountain that lived, a mountain that lives on because of people who cared, people who started with nothing but a dream and the will to work for it, until the dream became as real, as solid as this stone, as sure as this ground beneath your feet, as true as this mountain on which you stand, this mountain holding you up to meet the sky.

They report: "The jay was extremely friendly, and was practically eating out of our hands." The sighting was registered on Mass Audubon.

Thursday, December 13, 7:00 PM

North Quabbin Garden Club Meeting

Annual Meeting & Potluck, Plus Yankee Swap. This is a members-only program.

Saturday, December 15, all day

Athol Christmas Bird Count

Contact Dave Small at Dave@dhsml.net or 978-413-1772 so that teams can be set up for this annual event. Feeder watchers may call in their day's sightings to the Center's message machine (978-248-9491) anytime that day. Please leave the address where birds were observed and a return phone number in case we have additional questions. Team leaders can pick up their zone folders and meet their crews at Cinnamon's Restaurant, 491 Main St., Athol. Be prepared to leave by 7 a.m.. Those wishing to start the day with a great breakfast should arrive before 6:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 15, 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Bird Count Tally and Potluck Dinner

Everyone is invited to gather at the Center. Bring a dish to share and meet with interesting friends as we tally the day's observations. Feeder watchers may call in their day's sightings to the Center's message machine (978-248-9491) anytime before 5 p.m.. Please leave the address where birds were observed and a return phone number in case we have additional questions.

Saturday, January 5, all day

Annual New Year Seabird and Gull Excursion to Gloucester

Join us at Massachusetts' premier winter birding location. Meet at the Center at 7 a.m. or contact Mark Taylor at 413-498-4380 or birdnorth@earthlink.net to join the group at 9 a.m. at Friendly's off the Rte 128 circle in Gloucester. Bring snacks and extreme cold weather clothing!

Wednesday, February 13, 7:00 PM

Monthly ABNC Meeting

The Ecology of Musk Turtles in Massachusetts. Lori Johnson, Antioch Graduate Student.

Sightings & Short Takes



The Bald Eagle was released by Tom Ricardi, a raptor rehabilitator. The eagle was released on Mount Sugarloaf in Deerfield, MA. — Photo by Joe Superchi



A Northern Wheatear ([LISTEN](#)) was observed at the Orange Airfield in Orange MA.

— Photo by Joe Superchi

WANTED

Raffle Item Donations

Do you have something that would make a good raffle prize? Contact Larry Duprey at 978-249-4964. Income from monthly raffles helps cover club operating expenses without increasing membership fees!

This American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) was caught on infrared camera, nosing around Dave Small's yard. Black Bears are common raiders of backyard bird feeders. While they are less aggressive than other bear species, it's still best not to tangle with them!

For more information about Black Bears, visit the MassWildlife web page, "Living with Bears" at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/living/living_with_bears.htm — Photo by Dave Small



Got Gear?

The following items can be purchased online from the Millers River Environmental Center Nature Store www.millersriver.net/mrec/store

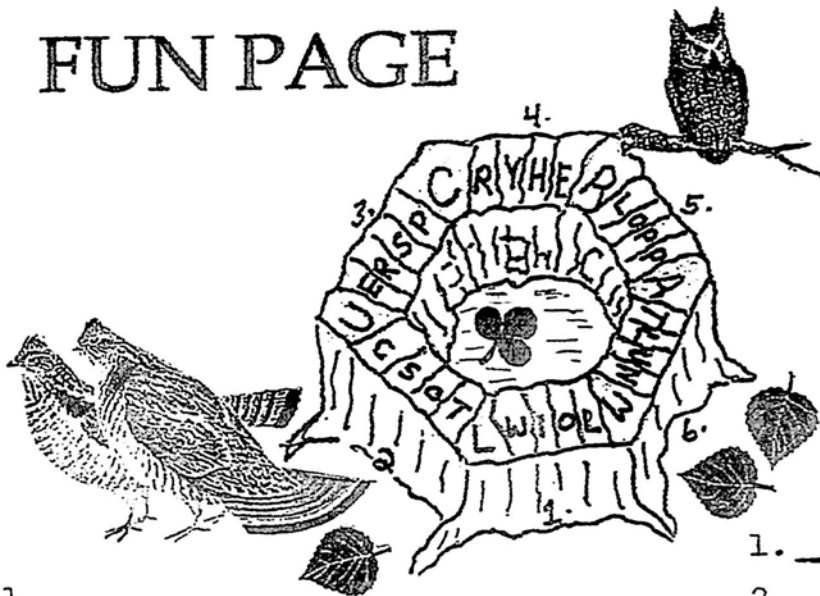
- Souvenir Pins
- MREC Caps
- MREC T-Shirts
- A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools
- A Birding Guide to Western Massachusetts Locations
- DVD Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of East N.A.
- Dragonflies and Damselflies of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Butterfly Association Guide



River Test Results Released July 2007

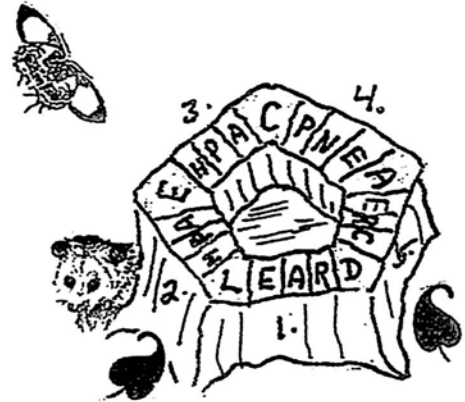
Seven of eight river sites tested by the Millers River Watershed Council (MRWC) have received a water quality score of "non-impacted," indicating a high or unimpaired level of water quality, according to biological monitoring results just released by the group. The scores are based on benthic macroinvertebrates (BMI) sampling performed by volunteers in the Fall of 2006. For more information, visit the MRWC web site at www.millersriver.net/mrwc.

ABNC FUN PAGE



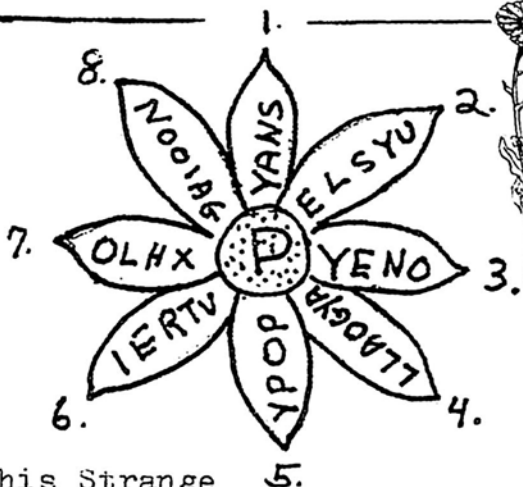
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

A partly rotted stump has the 6-lettered names of the 6 trees that were grafted together. Can you unscramble the letters to form each species? Letters at the 6 "corners" are shared with the trees on either side.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

This stump has 5-lettered names of the 5 trees that were grafted together. Unscramble the letters to form each species. Letters at the 5 "corners" are shared with the trees on either side.



This Strange Aster has 8 petals each from a different flower starting with the letter P. How many can you weed out?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |



S/2007/RBC



Athol Bird and Nature Club Membership form

This is a:

- New membership
- Renewal membership
- Former member returning

**Starred fields are required*

Membership Type:

- Student \$5.00/yr
- Individual \$10.00/yr
- Family \$15.00/yr
- Contributor**[†] \$25.00/yr
- Patron**[†] \$50.00/yr
- Benefactor**[†] \$100.00/yr

Decal Preference:

- for outside of window
- for inside of window

[†]Level of "Contributor" or higher includes free ABNC decal

Make check payable to:
Athol Bird and Nature Club

Send to:
Athol Bird and Nature Club
100 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331

Please call us
with any questions
978-248-9491

**Dues in excess of \$10.00
and all donations
are tax-deductible.**

Member Name * _____

Street or P.O. Box * _____

Town * _____ State * _____ Zip * _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Email Address * _____

This is a gift membership from _____

Send a gift card? yes no

I would like to make an additional donation to
the Millers River Environmental Center (MREC)

Amount \$ _____

Any additional comments or notes?

This membership form can also be submitted online at www.millersriver.net/abnc/abncform.html

Athol Bird and Nature Club
101 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331

