

June 2022

HALIFAX NEWS

BIRDS!

Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

May brought final visits to vernal pools, our last snow flurries, and spring migratory songbirds! For the fifth time, Eric Slayton led a birdbanding project up on Hogback Mountain. The first season was May 2020 when he initiated the outdoor project to give people a valuable and safe activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. May and September are migration months and therefore our bird-banding seasons. As a certified bird-bander, Eric proposed the project and received a Federal Bird Banding and Marking Permit to conduct it from the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory (<https://www.usgs.gov/labs/bird-banding-laboratory>).



Four days a week throughout May, Eric and a handful of volunteers have opened a dozen mist nets then checked on them every 20-30 minutes, walking a loop trail up Mt Olga, across a bit of the Fire Tower Trail, and down through the woods to visit each net each time. Finding a bird in a net, someone would call “bird!” while another volunteer shook out a linen drawstring bag—inside out for bird safety—so Eric could painstakingly remove the bird from the fine netting and put it in the bag. The volunteers get to carry the birds once Eric has tied the bag closed. They also put a numbered clothes pin on the bag to identify the net in which the bird was caught. Back at the banding station, pictured above, Eric (left) measures the

bird’s wing chord (length from the leading edge or wrist of the wing to the tip of the longest primary feather), blows on the feathers of its belly to see whether fat is stored and whether a brood patch or cloacal protuberance is present, and studies details of the feathers to determine sex. Birds that have similar coloring on males and females may be undetermined as to sex. Dimorphous species, such as the black-throated blue warbler, tend to be easier to sex (see small pics of male and female black-throated blue warblers). Eric holds the bird up for us to take photographs then drops the bird gently into a PVC tube length to weigh it. Finally, he gently passes the bird to a volunteer for release. All these parameters are

recorded in his logbook by a data recorder (my role this time) for uploading later to the USGS site. There, these data become part of a publicly available global database on banded birds.



Photo at right: Christa

“the Bird Whisperer” Hunter patiently waits for a Swainson’s Thrush to take off from her left hand while listening to Eric talk about the cinnamon-colored bird—a Veery—he’s holding.





Grey Catbird and Chestnut-Sided Warbler are pictured above. Shown below are a male Indigo Bunting, a Blue-Headed Vireo, a Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (not one we band! Eric just sets them free).



Birds are a beautiful and valuable part of our world. They scratch up soil, aerating it to the benefit of plants and tiny creatures. They add fertilizer and the occasional seed. Shorebirds carry nutrients from the sea to the land. Birds pollinate flowers including many fruit trees. And they eat insects—swallows consume 100s of flying insects per night, many birds eat farmland pests, and owls suppress rodent populations that may eat crops or carry ticks. Vultures clean up dead animals and convert them to fertilizer.

We in North America have lost billions of birds in the past 50 years—one quarter of our birds [<https://www.audubon.org/news/north-america-has-lost-more-1-4-birds-last-50-years-new-study-says>]. One of the biggest culprits under our personal control is the housecat. Keep your cat indoors. It doesn't need to eat wild rodents to be healthy—those transmit worms and toxoplasmosis anyway. Societally, we need to protect habitat from clearing and development and reduce pesticide use.

Birdbanding creates a record of what birds are where. As their numbers fade, these data may become both more useful in making projections and harder to come by.

Photo at right: A pair of yellow-bellied sapsuckers who chased each other right into a net.

Photo below: a Magnolia Warbler.



TOWN NEWS

LARRY CROSIER MEMORIAL, SATURDAY, JUNE 4. We will gather to remember Larry on Saturday, June 4th from 2 PM to 4 PM in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Light refreshments will be served.

CEMETERY WALK, SATURDAY, JUNE 11. Join us for a Cemetery walk on Saturday, June 11 at 10:00 am. Meet at the Community Hall, 20 Brook Road. **Rain or Shine!** Wear good walking shoes and bring water and bug spray. We plan to view West Halifax Cemetery, Halifax Center Cemetery, Pennell Hill Cemetery, ending in Niles Cemetery. Discussion will include what needs to be done to the cemeteries to clean them up, what needs to be improved, and where the money has been spent. We will talk about stone restoration and the repairs that need to be done. Some stones are smashed and irreparable and in need of being replaced. If you would like to join us on this walking/driving tour of these 4 cemeteries, please come! You will gain a good understanding of the condition of the Halifax Cemeteries and why we need more support financially. And we are always looking for volunteers. Contact Andrea Rand 802-368-7157 Leave a message and phone number on answering machine if no one picks up.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE DAY, SATURDAY, JUNE 18. The Halifax Historical Society and Halifax Community Club are jointly sponsoring a fundraiser on Saturday, June 18, at 1:30 pm.

SENIOR MEAL – FRIDAY, JUNE 17 The June meal is on June 17 at the Community Hall located at 20 Brook Road in West Halifax. We serve at noon. The menu is: baked chicken drumsticks, potato, vegetable, roll and dessert. All seniors are welcome. Please give Joan a call at 802-368-7733 so she knows you are coming. A donation of \$3 for the food is requested but not required.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS.

NO BURNING!!

IT'S TOO HOT & DRY.

5/4: one person responded to a call of a lady very upset because she thought she had Covid. Deerfield Valley rescue checked her out; she was fine.

5/9: two responded to a call where a man had smashed his hand.

5/10: 16 men and several mutual aid companies fought a **brush fire**.

5/10: Wilmington Fire Department put out a small **brush fire** in Halifax because they were 'covering' our station as all our department were at the first brush fire.

5/11: four Halifax men and some Colrain, MA men returned to the **brush fire** location to put out some hotspots.

5/11: seven men responded to Cow Path 40 in Marlboro to help with a **brush fire**.

5/11: two men went to Wilmington station to 'cover' their station.

5/11: some men responded to a medical call for a man down; it was not a good ending.

5/11: two men responded to Cow Path 40 again but were turned back en route.

5/11: 15 men and three trucks responded to a **brush fire** again.

5/12: men responded to a **fire** in Readsboro.

5/12: two men again responded to Readsboro

5/12: seven men responded to a **brush fire** call on their return from Readsboro.

5/12: nine men responded to a call on Wheeler Road.

5/13: two trucks and seven men responded to a call on Route 9 in Marlboro

5/23: two men responded to a call on Route 112 for a lift assist.

SORROW

I am very sad to report the passing of Lawrence “Larry” Eugene Crosier on May 11, age 79. Artist David Brewster, a neighbor of Larry’s in Halifax Center, sent the commemorative sketch shown below: “Dearest Larry Crosier, Our Beloved Man of Halifax Center—Iconic and Humble Steward!” Larry was born in Halifax on October 19, 1942, to Paul & Margaret (Hill) Crosier. He worked for the Halifax Highway Department, delivered mail with his wife Vera along the Jacksonville Stage route, repaired automobiles, and took care of mowing and plowing in Halifax Center. Our hearts go out to his family and many friends. Donations may be made to the Cael Scholarship Fund (Halifax Town Clerk/Treasurer, P O Box 127, W. Halifax VT 05358) or Senior Solutions Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont (38 Pleasant St, Springfield VT 05156). A memorial gathering will be held on June 4th from 2 PM to 4 PM in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax VT. Hope to see you there.



Newsletter
P O Box 27
West Halifax VT 05358



Joan Courser holds a Black-capped Chickadee

Halifax News

JUNE 2022



Goslings with their parents on
Addisons' pond

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NEWSLETTER STORIES - Send your
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LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or Joan
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