

May 2022

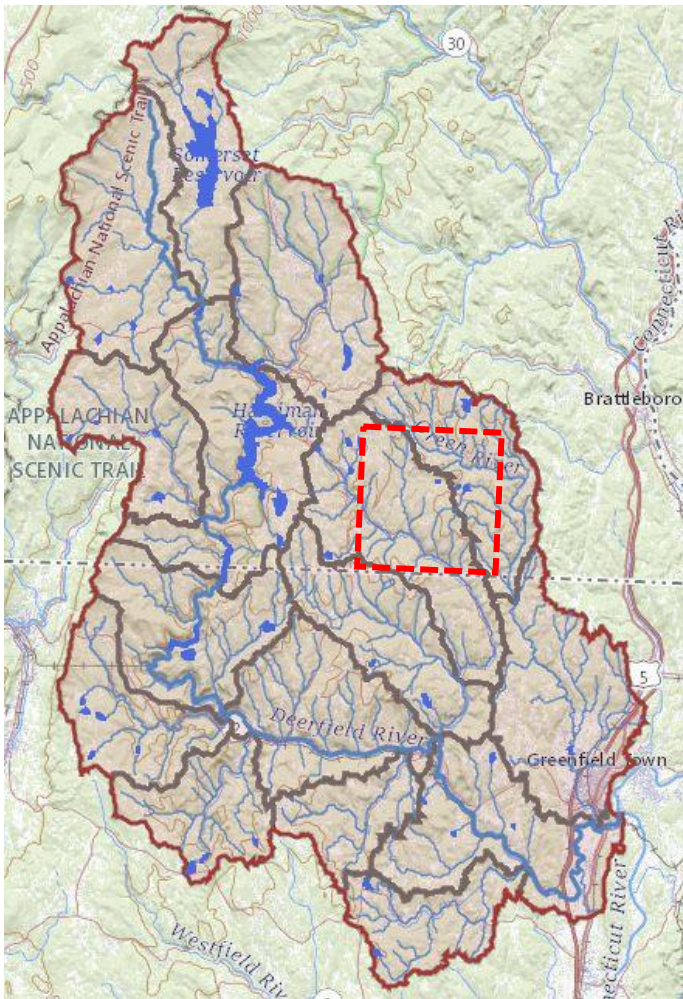
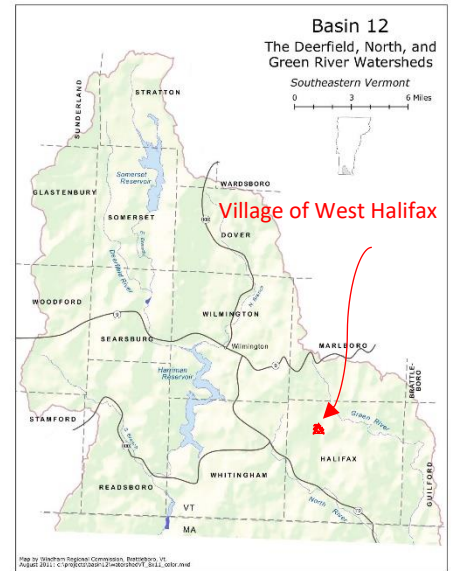
HALIFAX NEWS

GIFTS OF WATER

Laurel Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

Several streams run within the 25,000-acre square of land making up the Town of Halifax. If you check the Deerfield River Watershed map below, a red dotted-line shows the approximate location of the town. This not-quite square of land on the Vermont-Massachusetts border contains 70 miles of roads, and uncounted streams. I found the road mileage on the VTrans site*, but no summary of the combined lengths of all the named and unnamed creeks in Halifax. There's a project for someone!

Small creeks drain the land from northwest to southeast, angling down to Green River in the northeastern quadrant, to Branch Brook centrally, and to East Branch North River in the southwestern quadrant. The Green River Watershed is a sub-watershed of the Deerfield River Watershed. Branch contributes to Deerfield in another sub-watershed, as shown by the heavy brown lines in the watershed map.



Branch Brook travels through the village of West Halifax, incorporating Sperry Brook to join East Branch North River, itself draining Ryder Pond and Gates Pond via Jacksonville Pond. East Branch North River picks up Randall Brook, Stowe Brook, and other tributaries before flowing out of Vermont into Massachusetts. There it joins with the West Branch North River in Griswoldville, MA, to become the North River. Three miles south, the North River flows into the Deerfield, a 76-mile-long tributary to the Connecticut which discharges into Long Island Sound.

The Green River originates in Marlboro just northwest of the headwaters of Branch Brook, but their waters do not mingle until the Green discharges into the Deerfield in Greenfield, MA, just before its Connecticut River junction.

The Deerfield River is itself a Vermont-sourced river, draining the Sherman Reservoir in Readsboro and before that the Harriman Reservoir in Whitingham/Wilmington, the Searsburg Reservoir (Bennington County), and the Somerset Reservoir (Windham County).

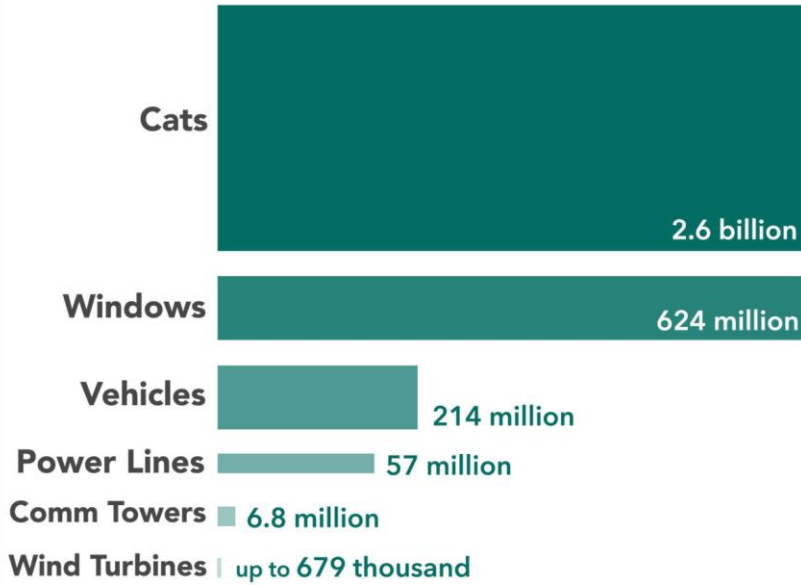
The woods of Halifax slope down toward these rivers and flow to the sea. In the process they provide a shady environment friendly to mushrooms, lady slippers, trout lilies, trillium, ferns, trees, salamanders, frogs, birds,

deer, and other creatures. A bountiful ecosystem in a tiny square of the world.

*http://vtransmaps.vermont.gov/Maps/Publications/MileageCertificates/ArchivedMileageCertificates/Windham_Co/HALIFAX/HALIFAX_MILEAGECERT_2006_C_OCR.PDF

What's Killing North America's Birds?

Per-year estimates of mortality. Source: Loss et al. 2015



Repeat the ladder, soap, and scribbling routine. Next location they tried was the back shed off the barn. Then the back door. Eventually everything was covered in soap scribbles. I went home. A few days later they were no longer at the windows. I hope they are nesting.

Estimates of annual bird deaths from specific human-related causes (other than habitat loss) in the United States and Canada identify:

- (1) cats [2.6 billion bird deaths],
- (2) windows [624 million],
- (3) vehicles [214 million],
- (4) power lines [57 million],
- (5) communication towers [6.8 million], and
- (6) wind turbines [<1 million].

Source: [Loss, Will, & Marra, 2015, https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-ecolsys-112414-054133](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-ecolsys-112414-054133).

Meanwhile my neighbor deep in the woods, Bill Oglesby, went out to investigate some very agitated chipmunks. They were up a tree instead of playing around on the stone wall, as was their habit. A flash identified the troublemaker: an ermine! Bill got several pictures of the little rascal in his warm-weather grey coat.



BIRD NEWS: IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER NOT EXTINCT AFTER ALL. The largest North American woodpecker, the ivory-billed, was declared extinct last year after 8 decades of unsubstantiated sightings. This year a team of scientists led by Steve Latta, the director of conservation at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh, concluded a 3-year study and declared the bird not extinct in a preprint published in *BioRxiv* (<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.04.06.487399v1>). The Guardian newspaper reported that “Latta himself saw the bird fly upwards in front of him, showing the distinctive white edges to its wings. ‘It flew up at an angle and I watched it for about six to eight seconds, which was fairly long for an ivory-billed woodpecker,’ he said.” <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/13/ivory-bill-woodpecker-not-extinct-researchers-say> The ivory-billed woodpecker is thought to persist



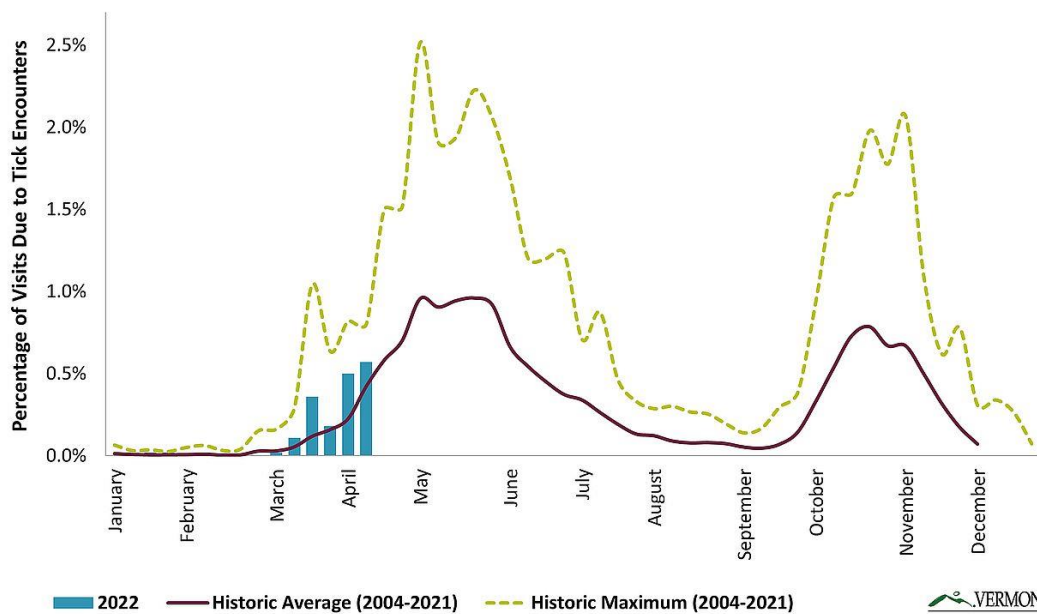
April: Venus on the left, Saturn above Mars on the right.
May: look for Venus & Jupiter rising ahead of the sun.

in southeastern Texas and Louisiana. It is larger than the pileated at 20 inches in length with a 30-inch wingspan.

TICKS—THEY'RE BACK. The black-legged tick is one of 15 tick species in Vermont but the one associated with 99% of tick-borne diseases. May and June are the 2 months when Emergency Departments see tick-related visits. Spring ticks cause an uptick in cases of Lyme's disease and anaplasmosis, two of several tick-borne diseases, none of which you want. Protect yourself with repellents containing DEET or picaridin (20% concentration, not less). Pull socks or boots over your pants cuffs to cover your ankles. Clothes can be treated in advance with permethrin, but you have to let it dry for several hours or it won't do you any good. Permethrin does not repel prevent ticks from landing on you (like DEET and picaridin); it makes the ticks jump off after they land. <https://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/tickborne-diseases/information-ticks-vermont>

Vermont Emergency Room & Urgent Care Visits for Human Tick Encounters

Tick Encounter = any visit due to tick-related issues such as a recent tick bite or a request for tick removal



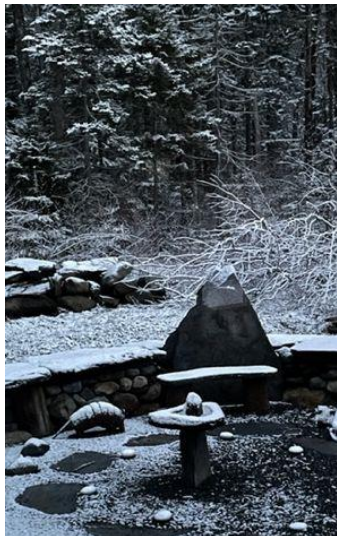
AVIAN FLU. The H5N1 strain of influenza that infects and kills birds is spreading across the US rapidly. Wild birds and poultry are equally at risk. Already 24 million US poultry birds have been killed by the flu or by intention to limit the spread. Bald eagles have tested positive in Vermont.

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends limiting exposure between flocks, keeping domestic flocks away from wild birds, raising domestic birds indoors if possible, removing wild bird feeders, and washing your hands/gloves and boots regularly to protect your flock. You can help by alerting the department (fwinformation@vermont.gov or 802.828.1000) if you observe any of the following:

- Any hawks or owls found sick or dead
- Any loons or eagles found sick or dead
- Crows, jays, or ravens: 5 or more found sick or dead in the same location
- Songbirds: 5 or more found sick or dead birds in the same visual area
- Terns: more than 2 found sick or dead
- Waterfowl: any ducks, geese or swans found sick or dead in the same area within 1-2 days
- Wild turkeys: 3 or more found sick or dead

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/wildlife-diseases/avian-influenza-wildlife-health-bulletin>, and <https://www.vpr.org/vpr-news/2022-04-12/avian-flu-has-been-detected-in-vermont-heres-how-to-protect-your-flock>

Newsletter
P O Box 27
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Snow April 20th



Andrea Rand recently completed this quilt, "My Favorite Things" – gardening, birds, and vernal ponds.

Halifax News

MAY 2022

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