

IPSWICH RIVER MEANDERINGS MAY 2008

Welcome to the May 2008 issue of *Ipswich River Meanderings*, the e-newsletter of Mass Audubon's Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary. Spring temperatures are upon us, and with each day we are slowly seeing the emergence of tree flowers and the return of colorful and dynamic migrating songbirds. Imagine the long flight they have already accomplished to reach Massachusetts, and after an overnight or a few days of insect-eating and rest, many will be off again. The cherry trees along Bradstreet Lane are in bloom along with the star magnolias...but hurry, as their petals are slowly dropping. I've just returned from co-leading a four-day Finger Lakes trip with 13 participants who enjoyed this beautiful region of small farms, lakes, waterfalls, and wineries. We visited Braddock Bay on Lake Ontario, a spring hawk migration hotspot, and watched continuous kettles of broad-winged hawks passing over. Our nest box monitors report that two boxes contain bluebird eggs, the first laid on April 23, and a possible third nest is developing. Check the bluebird report on the front porch for updates. And by this weekend, look for our new sanctuary orientation panels that will replace the entrance path kiosk. Read the article in the recent Mass Audubon *Connections* North Shore insert for details, but suffice it to say that we are quite pleased with the colorful panels with descriptions and photos of the sanctuary and Mass Audubon's work across the state. Our Bird-a-thon birding team is coming together, and on May 16 we will spread out into many different habitats to find the most bird species in 24 hours. Even more important is the fundraising aspect of Bird-a-thon, and you can assist by making a pledge to support our team or by actively gathering pledges to support the sanctuary team. Every dollar helps us maintain our education and conservation programs and this is an important fundraiser for the sanctuary. If you can assist with gathering pledges (ask family, friends, colleagues), please e-mail me at cdecker@massaudubon.org. I welcome your involvement.

~ Carol Decker, Sanctuary Director

Please Help Spread Our News! Do you have a friend who might be interested in receiving our e-newsletter? Please forward this newsletter on to them. **Friends of Friends of Ipswich River:** [Click here](#) to subscribe!

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All programs require advance registration. You may register by phone using MasterCard, VISA, or Discover. Click on program titles in color for complete descriptions. If you'd like more information on programs, please contact us at 978-887-9264 or ipswichriver@massaudubon.org.

1. NATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY—THE NIGHT SKY OF SPRING: Saturday, May 10 / 7:30-9:30 pm

Celebrate National Astronomy Day with the North Shore Amateur Astronomy Club. Join us for a PowerPoint presentation and discussion of spring constellations, and then go outside to view the spring night sky with club members through their amazing telescopes (weather permitting). For adults, and for families with children 6 years and older. FEE: \$5 per person.

2. BIRD-A-THON IS COMING MAY 16

Bird-a-thon is Mass Audubon's friendly competition among sanctuaries for the highest statewide count of birds, and an opportunity for us to raise money to support our education and conservation programs. You can help by pledging a certain amount of money for each bird species recorded by our team during the 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 pm on Friday, May 16 and ending at 6:00 pm on Saturday, May 17. We are still looking for birders to join our team! To learn how you can participate or to receive a pledge form, please call our office. [Click here](#) to donate or pledge online or to print out a pledge form.

3. SAVE THE DATE—AUDUBON NATURE FESTIVAL IS SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 10:00 am-4:00 pm

Mark your calendars now and save Sunday, June 1 for our 11th Annual Audubon Nature Festival! Marcia Wilson of Eyes on Owls returns with her fantastic presentations featuring live owls. Among the many other activities: a "Herp" Tent featuring local reptiles and amphibians, Insect Zoo, Butterfly Tent, henna, face-painting, lots of children's activities, crafter demonstrations, food, our renowned baked goods homemade by our Ipswich River volunteers, nature walks, native plant sale, guided tours of our backyard bird habitat and butterfly gardens, exhibits on composting and planting to attract wildlife. *New this year:* Irish Celtic music, exhibits and activities on solar power, sustainability, going green, and lots more! Our raffle returns again this year with lots of enticing offerings. Admission is still \$12 per car (print out the coupon below to get in for only \$10). And see our volunteer section below for all kinds of ways you can join the fun! The festival runs rain or shine. We will have a complete schedule posted on our website a week or two before the event:

www.massaudubon.org/ipswichriver.

CLIP THIS COUPON!

Save \$2 off the \$12 per car admission
11TH ANNUAL AUDUBON NATURE FESTIVAL
SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary

4. MAY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Spring Birdsong for Beginners: Saturday, May 3 / 8:00-11:30 am

Learn how to "bird" with your ears first, and then your eyes. There are only a few spaces left in this class, so call today. FEE: \$16 members, \$19 nonmembers.

Spring Migrants at Mount Auburn Cemetery: Friday, May 9 / 7:00-10:00 am

Join Carol Decker and Wayne Petersen for a walk through this beautiful historic cemetery in Cambridge during the height of spring migration. Travel with us in a van from Ipswich River, or meet us there (directions will be sent). FEE: \$16 members, \$19 nonmembers.

Manchester Woods Warbler Walk: Saturday, May 10 / 8:00-11:00 am

Join Carol Decker and Jim Brown for a walk through this beautiful woodland, searching out the colorful wood-warblers during the peak of migration. We'll listen and identify birdsong, discuss behavior, and how to spot these jewels of the forest as they flit among the leaves. Travel with us in a van from Ipswich River, or meet us there (directions will be sent). FEE: \$10 members, \$12 nonmembers.

Warbler Workshop: Sunday, May 11 / 6:00-10:00 am

Don't miss this annual "rite of spring". Learn to identify spring warblers by sight, sound, and habitats during the height of spring migration. Bring binoculars (or borrow a pair from us) and a field guide to birds. FEE: \$15 members, \$18 nonmembers.

Evening Paddle for Rails: Wednesday, May 14 / 6:00-8:00 pm

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to canoe Bunker Meadows for close-up observation of wily wetland birds such as Virginia rail, sora, pied-billed grebe, and more. Basic instruction and all equipment provided. FEE: \$15 members, \$17 nonmembers.

Sick-Day Warblers: Thursday, May 22 / 8:00 am-3:00 pm

Looking for the perfect excuse to take a day off in spring? Join Scott Santino and Warren Tatro for a trip down to Wompatuck State Park in Hingham, known for its variety of migrating songbirds including such rarities as cerulean, worm-eating, and hooded warblers. Learn to identify spring migrants by song and field marks. Van transportation from Ipswich River provided. FEE: \$36 members, \$43 nonmembers.

Birding Eastern Point: Friday, May 23 / 8:00-11:30 am

Join Carol Decker and Jim Brown for a morning bird walk at this coastal sanctuary that boasts a variety of habitats from rocky coast to woodland, field, and freshwater pond. It's a site that can contain a surprising mix of species, since birds migrating across the Atlantic Ocean land here to rest and feed before traveling onward. Travel with us in a van from Ipswich River, or meet us there (directions will be sent). FEE: \$10 members, \$12 nonmembers.

Evening Paddle for Bitterns: Wednesday, May 28 / 6:00-8:00 pm

The rails program was so popular last year, we decided to add this program to look for bitterns! Canoe Hassocky Meadow, a beautiful beaver-enhanced wetland in the heart of the sanctuary, as we search for American and least bitterns along with rails, ducks, vireos, and more. Basic instruction and all equipment provided. FEE: \$15 members, \$17 nonmembers.

Canoeing for Beginners: Saturday, May 31 / 9:00 am-noon

Learn (or brush up on) basic paddling strokes that will allow you to easily control your canoe. We'll practice on land and in the backwaters and then take a leisurely paddle on the Ipswich River. Youths 12-18 years old are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Limited to 12 so sign up soon! FEE: \$21 members, \$25 nonmembers.

5. MAY PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Saturday Explorations—Wonderful Wings: Saturday, May 17 / 1:00-2:30 pm

For families with children 5 years and older. Spring is in full swing, and our flying friends are in a frenzy! Join us for an afternoon of fun as we learn about the different ways creatures can use their wings. We'll look at birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects. FEE: members: \$7/adults, \$6/children; nonmembers: \$9/adults, \$7/children.

Wonder Walk: Camouflage—Hidden in Plain Sight: Sunday, May 18 / 1:00-2:30 pm

For families with children 3 years and older. Did you know that nature plays its own game of hide-and-seek? Some animals use color, shape, pattern, or texture to blend in, which allows them to be able to defend themselves from predators or to sneak up on prey! Learn about some amazing animal disguises and take a short walk to see how many hidden creatures we can find. FEE: members: \$7/adults, \$6/children; nonmembers: \$9/adults, \$7/children.

6. DAY CAMP UPDATE

We offer a variety of day camp programs for children ages 4-14 at the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary in Topsfield; Salt Marsh Camp for children ages 7-10 at Essex County Greenbelt Association's Cox Reservation in Essex; and programs for children ages 5-10 at the Shore Lea Nature Center in Marblehead. Theme-based programs such as Buggy Good Time, Animal Architects, Herpetology Time, and Creating Art in Nature (to name just a few) encourage children to explore their passion for the natural world. Programs for youths ages 12-14 include river ecology, canoe, and kayak adventures. These exciting programs are certain to provide your child with a fun, educational camp experience. Please call us if you need a day camp brochure or if you have any questions about our day camp programs, or [click here](#) to download our brochure.

7. NATURAL HISTORY TRIPS

Our natural history weekend tours offer unparalleled opportunities for unique natural history experiences in small group settings, appropriate for the beginning naturalist as well as the more advanced. Birders, photographers, and all-around nature enthusiasts can all find something to capture their interest on these excursions. Please call our office to request more information or itineraries for these trips.

Puffins and Peatlands: Thursday, July 17 to Sunday, July 20

Only two spaces left! Join Carol Decker and John Galluzzo to explore the unique ecology of Down East Maine, including boreal forests, raised bogs, and an offshore seabird nesting colony. The trip includes a visit to Machias Seal Island for up-close looks at puffins, razorbills, Arctic terns, and more, with fantastic photographic opportunities. We will also explore Campobello Island, Quoddy Head Light, Cobscook Bay, and more. FEE: \$595 members, \$645 nonmembers.

Block Island Birding Weekend: Friday, September 12 to Sunday, September 14

A gift from the glaciers, Block Island is located approximately 12 miles off the Rhode Island coast. It offers a resting and feeding place for migrating shorebirds and ocean birds, and forms a natural trap for land birds that have wandered out over the ocean during their southward migration. Join Carol Decker and John Galluzzo of South Shore Sanctuaries for this new (to Ipswich River) trip. We only have a few spaces left, so call now! FEE: \$430 members, \$490 nonmembers.

Monhegan Island Fall Weekend: Friday, September 26 to Sunday, September 28

Carol Decker and Bob Speare once again team up to lead this annual trip that is a sell-out every year. Join them for an unforgettable weekend of birding and naturalizing on this rockbound island 10 miles off the coast of Maine. This is THE place to be for exciting views of the fall migration. FEE: \$440 members, \$498 nonmembers.

Birding the Delmarva Peninsula: Thursday, December 4 to Sunday, December 7

Join IRWS naturalist Scott Santino and Strickland Wheelock from Drumlin Farm on this trip to the Delmarva Peninsula, a region that encompasses parts of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia and is home to several famous preserves: Blackwater, Bombay Hook, Prime Hook, and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuges, Henlopen State Park, and Assateague National Seashore. The variety of habitats allows us to bird coastal areas, nearby woodlands, and open fields for shorebirds, raptors, and southern specialties. The trip includes a private tour to remote areas of Chincoteague, home to the famous wild ponies. Begins and ends in Baltimore. FEE: \$650 members, \$700 nonmembers.

8. NEW SCOUT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

We have lots of exciting new offerings for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts this spring. After-school programs have expanded to four days a week, Tuesday through Friday, and we now offer weekend programs. Also new this spring: evening programs, canoeing, and overnights. Programs can be booked through June 15. For more information on scout programs or to request a brochure, call Angela Walsh at 978-887-9264, ext. 7703. [Click here](#) to download a Girl Scout or Boy Scout program brochure from our website.

9. BIRTHDAY PARTIES

The sanctuary offers birthday party programs from September to June for children ages 4-12. Themes include: Habitat Hike, Pond Dipping, Backyard Birds, Animal Tracking, Insects & Spiders, Life Under Rocks & Logs, Owls, and Beavers. Parties include a 1.25-hour natural history program with an Ipswich River instructor, and time for your party afterwards. Call us at 978-887-9264 for more information and to book your party.

10. HELP WANTED: DAY CAMP STAFF

We still have a few openings on our day camp staff for experienced instructors. We offer competitive salaries and training at Mass Audubon's Day Camp Field School. Please contact us for a list of current openings.

11. VOLUNTEERS: GARDENERS, FACE-PAINTERS, AND MORE NEEDED FOR AUDUBON NATURE FESTIVAL (Sunday, June 1 / 10:00 am-4:00 pm)

Volunteers are needed for all aspects of this event, including publicity, admissions, parking, children's activities, baking, food serving, setup/takedown, assisting with storytelling, the insect zoo, making wooden cutouts, and much more. For some specific needs, please read on. To join the fun, contact our volunteer coordinator, Sue Baeslack, at 978-887-9264 ext. 7707 or sbaeslack@massaudubon.org.

Gardeners: If you are a gardener who would be willing to divide and donate some of your plants for our plant sale for the festival, please contact Sue Baeslack for a list of plants we are looking for.

Face-Painters: We are in need of a least 3 people who can help with face-painting. If this is one of your talents, please let us know!

Bakers: We need your irresistible home-made baked goodies to sell at the festival. We are looking for things like brownies, bars, cupcakes, cookies....contact Sue for a signup form today!

12. CAMPING, CANOES, & CABIN RENTALS

The sanctuary offers several rental opportunities for Mass Audubon members only. The Innermost House cabin sleeps 4 and can be reserved for \$30 per night, year-round. Perkins Island is open for camping beginning May 1. Please call for information on reserving the cabin or campsites. Canoes will also be available for rental beginning May 1. Canoes are first-come, first-served, but they are sometimes in use for programs, so feel free to call ahead to check on availability.

13. IN OUR BOOK & GIFT SHOP

New in our shop: *Enjoying Cardinals More*, the newest addition to the Birdwatcher's Digest Backyard Booklet Series; two new titles for beginners or those who want to brush up on their bird identification skills: *National Geographic's Birding Essentials*, and *Finding Your Wings: A Workbook for Beginning Bird Watchers*, a new Peterson Field Guide. 'Tis the season when...being able to identify birdsong puts you giant steps ahead in knowing what birds are around to be on the lookout for. We stock a variety of birdsong CD's, as well as books with photos and text that include CD's as part of the package: *Know Your Bird Sounds, Vols. I & II*; Lang Elliott's *The Songs of Wild Birds*; *Bird Sounds—How and Why Birds Sing, Call, Chatter, and Screech*, by Barry Kent McKay; Donald Kroodsmas's *The Singing Life of Birds*, and more. Stop in on your next visit to the sanctuary. We are located inside the sanctuary office/visitor center.

14. JOIN THE FLOCK—HALF-PRICE OFFER FOR NEW MEMBERS

Help protect the nature of Massachusetts by becoming a Mass Audubon member. From now through June 30, NEW family memberships are only \$29 (regular price: \$58). Members receive the Mass Audubon publications *Sanctuary Magazine* and *Connections*, plus our program catalogs. Members also get free admission to 45 Mass Audubon sanctuaries and discounts on programs, day camp, and gift shop purchases. If you join through Ipswich River, a large portion of your membership dues directly supports the sanctuary's educational and ecological programs. For more information, please call us at 978-887-9264.

15. THE FINE PRINT

You received this newsletter because we believe you subscribed. If this is in error, or if you no longer wish to receive this publication, please email us at: ipswichriver@massaudubon.org and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line. We will remove your name immediately from our list. We have listed the email addresses as a "blind copy" to protect your privacy. We will not share your email address with anyone else.

Mass Audubon
Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
87 Perkins Row / Topsfield MA 01983-1999
Ph: 978.887.9264 FAX: 978.887.0875
Email: ipswichriver@massaudubon.org
Visit us on the web: www.massaudubon.org/ipswichriver
Mass Audubon
Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts