

New News on Migrating Monarchs

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is proposing to designate the monarch butterfly as a threatened species, one step below endangered, as federal scientists believe the population is on the decline. If the proposed rule is finalized, it would afford protection to the butterfly from certain situations, including development and agriculture methods.

The USFWS believes the move to be necessary due to climate change, logging in overwintering habitat, grassland decline, and chemicals applied to plants and insects. Protecting the monarch under the Endangered Species Act would probably require large landowners to work with the federal government before doing any development that could significantly harm the monarch's habitat.



Feedback on the proposal is being accepted until March 12 with plans to finalize the decision by the end of 2025. It is unclear what the new administration will mean to the proposal as federal scientists found a drop in the populations years ago, but it was determined that other species should take priority. Stay tuned!

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Conserving Copperheads!

Students at Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) have been conducting research on copperhead snakes. These long-lived predators are heavily impacted by people in a variety of ways, including urbanization, road-building, and agriculture. Copperheads are found in central Connecticut but are not commonly seen. The research sponsored by WCSU, in cooperation with DEEP and Quinn Ecological, LLC, is seeking to determine and prevent declines in the population. Andrew Powers, a graduate student at the university, is studying the effects of urbanization on copperheads in Connecticut. Other aspects of the study include determining how they respond to drought conditions, how many young they are having, their diet, and the affect of movement on the snakes. If snakes are captured, they are fitted with a tag to monitor their movements. Hopefully, the reseach will help us better understand these remarkable snakes.



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*To enhance and encourage
the public use and awareness
of Sessions Woods*



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The Friends of Sessions Woods was established as an all-volunteer organization in 1998 to facilitate projects and programs that enhance the value of Sessions Woods.

Ask a Naturalist

Winter Bird Feeding & Bears

It is often said that putting up a bird feeder is like placing a welcome mat out for black bears. This can be true in bear country! The enjoyment of watching birds is worth the risk for many homeowners. Certain steps can be taken to minimize the likelihood of a black bear visitor.



Although black bears can be active at any time of the day, removing feeders at night may help in some situations. Also, feeding birds only during the coldest days of winter and not allowing spilt seed to pile up underneath feeders is recommended. If a bear does access your feeder, remove it immediately and cease feeding for the season. Be sure to remove feeders altogether when the weather warms during late winter/early spring.

Welcome New Student & Board Members!

The Friends of Sessions Woods would like to welcome retired teacher Vince Jenetta and Bristol students Jase Koczur and Shane Scanlon to the FOSW Board! The new volunteers will help support the work and educational efforts at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center and Wildlife Management Area.

Sessions Woods Nature Calendar

The Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center's Public Program Series is a cooperative venture between the CT DEEP Wildlife Division and the Friends of Sessions Woods. For more information, please call Jenna (860-424-3017).

Wednesday, January 1, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. First Day Hike

Join Jan Gatzuras for the first hike of the year at Sessions Woods! Jan will lead participants on a 4-mile, mildly strenuous hike over varied terrain. The hike will be on a combination of Blue-blazed and mountain bike trails, all within beautiful Sessions Woods. Meet at the parking lot near the gazebo. Appropriate shoes, water, and a snack are highly recommended. Event will be cancelled due to icy conditions or heavy rain/snow. If in doubt, call Jan (860-212-6067) before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the hike.



Sunday, March 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Vernal Pool Hike

Join DEEP Biologist Paul Benjunas for a hike to the vernal pool at Sessions Woods. Paul will provide an introduction to the animals found in these special woodland wetlands, along with answering the question "What is a vernal pool?" The hike is approximately 2 miles up and back with the program lasting 2 hours. Please dress for the weather and wear appropriate shoes. Meet at the Gazebo in the parking lot of the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center.



Wood frog



Spotted salamander

What's that tiny bird flitting about the bushes?

If the bird is really small and has either a yellow or red patch on the head, it is likely one of the kinglets! Golden- or ruby-crowned kinglets are very active songbirds with rounded bodies, short wings, and skinny tails. They are smaller than a chickadee. In winter, kinglets search for insects or spiders hidden in evergreen needles, on bark, or among twigs on trees and shrubs. They also eat a small amount of seeds and fruit. Breeding location for kinglets is up north in the conifers so enjoy the birds use of winter habitat while you can!



Above: Ruby-crowned kinglet,
Left: Golden-crowned kinglet.

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Memberships run annually from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. Each membership receives *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine.

For new members only: Memberships received during the months of January to June are effective through June 30 of the following year.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We gratefully accept your contributions. Fees and contributions are fully tax deductible. My check for \$_____ is enclosed. Please send your check, made payable to Friends of Sessions Woods, to:

Friends of Sessions Woods
PO Box 1550
Burlington CT 06013-1550