

Every Bird Counts-Your Observations Matter

This year's World Migratory Bird Day 2026 recognizes the importance of community science and those individuals who participate in Backyard and Christmas Bird Counts, nest surveys, ebird (ebird.org) reports, and other forms of bird research. Environment for the Americas (<https://environmentamericas.org/>) notes "millions of observations help track migration routes, population trends, and habitat changes across the world's flyways. These contributions build the scientific foundation needed to guide conservation actions and policy decisions."

You can help, too, by participating in future counts. The next "Great Backyard Bird Count" is slated for Friday, February 13 to Monday, February 16, 2026. For more information, visit birdcount.org.



Millions of observations help track migration routes, and population trends across the world's flyways.
Above: sharp-shinned hawk. Top row: cedar waxwing, Carolina wren. Bottom row: red-bellied woodpecker, hooded merganser, spotted sandpiper.



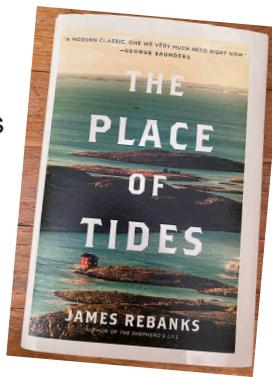
Winter Reads!

Winter is the perfect time to cozy up with a good book! Here are some suggestions by fellow nature enthusiasts for books about birds.

"The Place of Tides" by James Rebanks. This non-fiction book explores the relationship of an older woman to the offshore islands of Norway and the ancient tradition of gathering eiderdown from abandoned nests.

"The Backyard Bird Chronicles" by Amy Tan. The book is beautifully illustrated and provides a journal of birds and nature close to everyday lives.

"The Birding Dictionary" by Rosemary Mosco. Ms. Mosco is a very funny writer and creative illustrator who captures birds in a comical way.



Friends of Sessions Woods
c/o Sessions Woods WMA
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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



Are blue jays really blue?

Long winters with little sunlight can make just about anything blue but true blue pigment in nature is actually quite rare! Light can trick us when refracted or scattered. The blue feathers of a blue jay are actually caused by scattered light, creating the appearance of blue. See what happens when you hold a blue jay feather up toward the light. Now it appears gray!

Pigments in plants, such as native Virginia bluebell flowers and the blue in blueberries are actually truly a blue hue created from other pigments. It is estimated that less than 10 percent of flowering plants have blue flowers. Some frogs, fish, and sea animals can also be blue.



Lupine

L. Rogers-Castro (2)



Sessions Woods Calendar of Events

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 email friendsessionswoods@gmail.com.

March 8, 2026 (Sunday), 1:00 p.m. Vernal Pool Walk

Join Wildlife Biologist Paul Benjunas and Naturalist Laura Rogers-Castro for a hike on the Beaver Marsh Trail to the vernal pool at Sessions Woods. Learn what makes a vernal pool such a special habitat and have an opportunity to see some of the species that rely on these seasonal wetlands. Depending on the timing of early spring weather, the pool may be alive with croaking wood frogs!

The group will also stop at several other types of habitats along the way to discuss the importance of habitat management. The excursion will be approximately 2 miles roundtrip. Appropriate shoes for a gravel, woodland trail are recommended. Meet at the gazebo in the parking lot.



Wood frog in vernal pool

Evergreens in the Winter Landscape

One of the most recognizable ferns in the winter landscape is appropriately called the "Christmas" fern. Each frond of the fern consists of tiny leaflets with extensions at the base resembling little Christmas stockings.

Other visible evergreens on the forest floor are the ground pines or club mosses. Club mosses are ancient plants, related to ferns, with simple leaves. Like ferns, they reproduce by spores. Ground pines look like miniature evergreen trees.

Spotted wintergreen is a small, low-growing evergreen plant with white or light green stripes. It is also sometimes called striped wintergreen. Spotted wintergreen spreads by underground rhizomes and seeds. Traditionally, Native Americans used the wintergreen leaves in a tea to treat stomach ailments, inflammation, pain, and rheumatism.

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