



SUMMIT VIEW

The Newsletter of the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus

Spring 2024

STARLIGHT NAVIGATORS: Northern & Southern Flying Squirrels

Flying squirrels are the cutest little critters most people never see. They're nocturnal, so they have out-sized pupils which capture moonlight and starlight. Their flat tails help "flying" trajectory and well-padded feet cushion impact when they land. They have been recorded emitting high frequency and ultrasonic vocalizations, possibly to transfer information to other squirrels for such things like night time predator avoidance.

Additionally, this magical creature glows pink in ultra-violet light!

There are about 50 species of flying squirrels in the world. Statewide in Maine we have two species: the Northern (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) about 10 inches long from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail; and Southern (*Glaucomys volans*) about 7-10 inches in length).



mycorrhizae. Mycorrhizae (literally: fungus root) are fungi that have an essential symbiotic relationship with trees. The fungi spores remain viable through the digestive system and are widely distributed via scat where they will germinate and form new fungal colonies. They like to eat nuts, tree bark and sap, snails, slugs, eggs, berries, flowers, and likely visit bird feeders for seeds and suet.

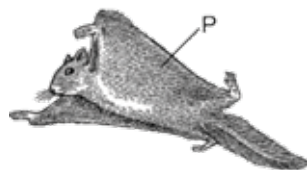
The Northern flying squirrel mates once a

year and has babies between mid-April to mid-June. The Southern flying squirrel mates twice per year and gives birth between mid-February and mid-May, then mid-July and mid-September.



C.J. Wong, a PhD student at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, is gathering much needed information about our flying squirrel populations as the "New England Flying Squirrel Network" (NEFSN). The Friends of Mount Agamenticus have chosen to participate in their citizen science program by installing a flying squirrel box in the conservation area.

Flying Squirrels have extra-long whiskers that guide them in the darkness so they don't crash into trees and branches as they glide several hundred feet at 20-30 mph. Yes, they glide, not fly. They're equipped with flaps of skin from wrists to ankles called "Patagia", and ankles to tail – the Uropatagia. They can even make 90° and 180° turns in mid-air to escape predators like owls. Up-turned cartilage at the tips of their wrists help stabilize and decrease drag while they're "in flight". *Please watch (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7DbGI36AWA>)*



Flying squirrels are omnivorous (eats plants and animal matter) with favorite food being "truffles", or the underground fruiting bodies of



Northern Flying Squirrel distribution

What is NEFSN?

NEFSN stands for the New England Flying Squirrel Network and its main focus is to study the northern and southern flying squirrels that reside in the New England area. We are looking into how forest fragmentation is impacting these species and whether or

not it has an effect on their populations in New England. The project was started by C.J. Wong, a Ph.D. student at the University of New Hampshire, and her advisor, Dr. Rebecca Rowe.

There is also a citizen science nest box project that is a part of this research where New England residents are asked to put up a nest box and check it monthly while recording information. This is our strongest source of information about how the flying squirrel populations are doing so every bit of data we can get from all participants is crucial.

FMI: sites.google.com/view/nefsn

Red Maple, a Tree for all Seasons - David Tibbetts

According to the US Department of Agriculture, the red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is the most abundant tree in North America. It has a native range that covers the entire eastern half of North America, from Texas through Florida and north into Canada.

There are many benefits the red maple has to offer. About half of the New England maple producers tap red maple trees to make maple syrup. With abundant flowers in the spring, red maples provide a primary nectar source for early pollinators such as native cellophane bees and mining bees. Their winged seeds (samaras) that form and disperse in late spring are high in protein and a good food source for many birds, squirrels, mice, and rabbits. Hundreds of species of caterpillars have been recorded browsing on red maple leaves, providing an abundant food source for nesting birds to feed their young. Throughout the winter, birds will forage for insects and larvae hiding in crevasses of the red maples' bark. Known for its brilliant fall foliage, it is a popular tree species for landscaping as it is fast growing, will grow in most soil and water conditions, and is disease resistant.



On the Summit, looking northeast towards Wells.

Denise Johnson

Red Maples and Native Pollinators

One of the most recognizable native trees, the Red Maple is also an important source of food for pollinators and provides both pollen and nectar for our native bees. Maine is home to over 270 species of native bees including bumblebees, leafcutter and mason bees, plasterer and cellophane bees, miner and sand bees.

Moths are pollinators too, with most being mainly active at night of course. They play a vital role in food webs and are an important nutrition source for songbirds, mammals, and other insects.

Several native moth species also use the leaves of Red Maples to lay their eggs, in particular the Rosy Maple Moth, while the emerging caterpillars of these and other species will feed on the leaves. This activity rarely harms healthy trees and the leaves will usually re-grow.

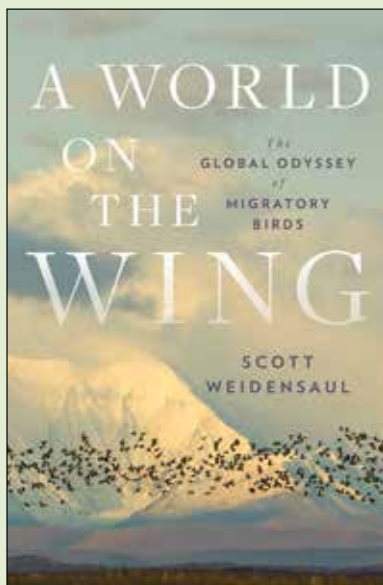
For more information, visit links below:

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Bulletin #7153, Understanding Native Bees, the Great Pollinators: Enhancing Their Habitat in Maine, <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/7153e/>
Xerces Society, Gardening for Moths, [https://xerces.org/blog/gardening-for-moths#:~:text=Common%20wisdom%20has%20it%20that,evening%20primrose%20\(Oenothera%20biennis\).](https://xerces.org/blog/gardening-for-moths#:~:text=Common%20wisdom%20has%20it%20that,evening%20primrose%20(Oenothera%20biennis).)

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Planting for Pollinators in Early Spring, <https://www.maine gardens.org/blog/planting-for-pollinators-in-the-early-spring/>

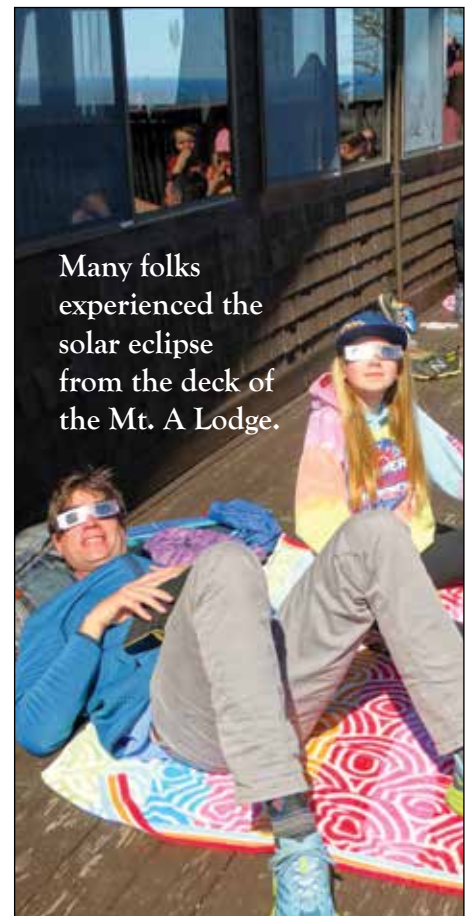


Book Review - Mike Modern



When I sat down with **A WORLD ON THE WING: the Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds** by Scott Weidensaul to review it for this write-up, despite having read it twice before, I was immediately drawn into the story telling and exquisite writing style. This book contains not only the most recent information about global bird migration, but also the newest, emerging technology that will allow for evermore detailed and comprehensive studies of this amazing phenomenon of these living descendants of the theropod. Also, it is so well and smoothly written

that I find it impossible to put it down, no matter where I begin. If you are interested in cutting edge research, if you have an avid or even just a passing interest in the fascinating world of birds and migration, or if you would like a fine example of captivating nature writing at its best, this should be an excellent read.



Many folks experienced the solar eclipse from the deck of the Mt. A Lodge.

Summit Visitors & the April 8, 2024 Solar Eclipse

The totality of the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024 was visible from 6 Mexican states, 15 states of the USA and 6 Canadian Provinces. Approximately 44 million people live in that path of totality and another 652 million could have experienced a partial eclipse (according to Wikipedia).

Out of these millions of eclipse viewers, the summit of Mount Agamenticus hosted an infinitesimally small population of them (see the accompanying photographs courtesy of Denise Johnson); however, our little “bonsai mountain” was nearly overwhelmed by the amount of visitors.

First, all the parking lots filled up, then later arrivals created their own parking spaces including the tops of the late season snowbanks. Fortunately, the crowd was well behaved and seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

It is unlikely that the summit will ever have to plan for a crowd of this size again and as the photographs demonstrate, there is limited space available for so many visitors at the same time, but it is good to know that we could successfully host such a major event.



Save the Date: Upcoming Events & Programs at Mount Agamenticus!

Wednesdays through June 5 | 7 AM | Spring Birding Walks with Mt. A neighbor Frank Dehler | Frank is a Maine Master Naturalist and longtime bird bander for Massachusetts Audubon.

Meet at Base Lot. Ages 10+. No dogs, please. This drop-in program is free with Admission Fee (also covered by Town of York Parking Permit and Mount Agamenticus Season Pass), limited to 15 people max. Bring your own binoculars. Walks will involve easy hiking up to the summit and last 75-90 minutes.

Saturday & Sunday, May 25 & 26 | 12-4 PM | Learning Lodge opens for the season Memorial Day weekend!

Saturday, June 1 | 9 AM-12:30 PM | Volunteer Community Work Day: Boardwalk Construction | Email: bjankowski@yorkmaine.org to register.

Thursday, June 27 | 5:30-7 PM | Nature's Nightshift with the Center for Wildlife

Saturday, June 29 | 9 AM-12 PM | Ring Trail Hike and Nature Journal

Full Program details and information about registration available at Agamenticus.org.



Ignoring your dog's excrement **will** affect local water treatment

So scoop your poop
As you stroll the loop
And let's keep a clean environment



Scan this QR Code to “like”
Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region
on Facebook!



Newsletter written and designed by the Friends of Mt. A.