

Speaker Series by Alana Bordewieck

In September **Jay Kaplan** Director of Roaring Brook Nature Center presented CT Butterflies and Moths.

We learned about:

Identification aids: Moths have thicker, fuzzier bodies with feathery antennae; butterflies slimmer bodies with thin, shoot-like antennae.

Caterpillars of moths weave a cocoon, butterflies a chrysalis.

Protection: Mimicry and taste. The IO moth with its large, eye-like circles confuses the predator into thinking it is bigger than first thought. The Monarch butterfly lays its eggs on the bitter milkweed plant. The caterpillars feed on the milkweed making them distasteful to birds.

Threats: climate change, the agricultural practice of mowing down to the road leaving no undisturbed space for milkweed to grow, and GMO plants with pesticides bred into them.

Migration and hibernation: Monarchs migrate to Mexico for the winter. Successive generations make the return journey North. We think of butterflies as summer denizens dining on nectars, but the mourning cloak butterfly hibernates here and can be seen in late winter- early spring drinking sap. Others acquire salts and minerals from mud and cow flops. Butterflies/moths do not have mouths but rather proboscises—long, tube like tongues.

Interesting facts: The non-native Gypsy Moth imported mid 19th century by a businessman intending to create a better quality of silk by interbreeding with silk worms of the Manchester Cheney mills. The result --wide spread defoliation in the 1980's. The prolific moth lays up to 300 eggs developing into caterpillars, stripping trees of leaves all over the state. Spraying destroyed many beneficial insects as well until a fungus was developed to kill only the gypsy moth before pupation.

Further info: like the annual bird count one can participate in one for butterflies at www.naba.org. For how these insects inspire recent innovations in solar panels and olfactory sensors in drones check out Butterfly Blueprints on [nova pbs.org](http://nova.pbs.org), or YouTube



Bobcats in CT by Susan Pearson

Hartland resident and DEEP Furbearer Biologist **Jason Hawley** treated an enthusiastic audience to a sneak preview of his doctoral research on our bobcat population here in CT. He started with some fun facts about our elusive neighbors. Bobcats are the only native feline species currently living in our state and are found throughout CT. Typical bobcat habitat is young forestland with wetlands. Spending so much time in the brush may be responsible for their iconic bobbed tails. The thick understory gives them cover as they are “ambush predators”; fast and effective hunters, they can take down even a 100-pound deer. Not fussy eaters, analysis of their stomach contents reveal they eat the meat of squirrels, rabbits, birds, muskrats, rodents, beaver, cattle, chipmunks and even porcupines! Their ranges can be as large as 30 square miles. A typical litter consists of 1-4 kittens, born in April to May, and the kittens stay with their mother until the next winter’s breeding season.

Jason’s CT Bobcat Project utilizes trail cameras and iNaturalist citizen science reports of bobcat sightings. With the assistance of volunteers Jason has trapped over 100 bobcats in a variety of different habitats and fitted them with GPS collars to obtain data on their movement and habitat preference. His surprise finding from this data is that bobcats are found in even urban areas as long as there is adequate cover for the animals to hide while hunting. Our CT bobcats are indeed very adaptable animals!

For those of you who missed Jason’s presentation, it was taped by Granby Community TV and can be found on their website: <https://gctv16.org>.



Photo by
Harald Bordewieck



Conservation and Stewardship Fund

“We must strive to touch the land gently and care for it as true stewards...for those who follow us... may see that our mark on the land was one of respect and love.”
Robert B. Oetting (1934-1990), wildlife researcher

The Fund was first established June 2013 in memory of Gib Anderson, longtime supporter of our organization and former Chairman of the Hartland Conservation Commission. Since inception, the fund has named 49 honorees.

If you would like to help the fund grow, you may give in the following ways:

- outright donation
- in honor of a living supporter of conservation
- in memory of someone who has died

If you choose to recognize someone, please indicate the person’s name along with your donation on the enclosed envelope under Conservation and Stewardship Fund or under Join/Donate on our website.

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