



# Merrimack Valley NAVHDA News



April / May

What makes our chapter work is a group of volunteers spending a lot of their time working behind the scenes. Humans all make mistakes, which unfortunately may impact others.

The club relies on emails, sent to its current member list, as the primary contact mechanism for bird orders, announcements, and notifications.

Occasionally issues may arise with emails not going through, usually these are due to incorrect/inactive email addresses or spam filters.

Some folks were waiting to join or renew membership at the first clinic day, this may have resulted in your not receiving email notifications.

If you feel emails are not getting through or know of someone who is not receiving notifications, please check the following:

- Review your email address with "???" and

- Make sure your spam filter is allowing club emails through

- Email our membership board member or Director of training

Help us out by renewing your membership ASAP. It is very easy to do one line.

## What Makeup our Merrimack Valley Chapter?



A **few** of the workers



# Dogs and Handlers, Chuckers



New and Old Friendships



## Other Interesting Links

Maine Fish and Wildlife (check out upcoming events)

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/>

Vermont Fish and Wildlife

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/>

Puddle Point Chronicles contributed by Dennis.

Very interesting articles

<https://swettdl.blogspot.com/>

**I recently found a couple of interesting web sites.**

[Granite State Dog Recovery](https://www.granitestatedogrecovery.com/)

*Granite State Dog Recovery*  
501c3 All Volunteer Non-Profit Organization



<https://www.granitestatedogrecovery.com/>

My brother's elderly Border Collie has run off several time. Each time this organization helped find him.

The last time was he was gone for over a week. After many calls and trips ~~to find him gone~~, my brother found him 3 towns away. It was amazing how many sightings there were. The biggest problem with the dog was he ~~vis~~ is very skittish would run off if anyone approached him. and

# DOGS

<http://nhdogs.org/>

I really know nothing about who really supports this group. None of the sponsors ~~don't~~ seem to be anti hunters. [What I like about it, is that it tracks legislation that concerns our furry friends.](#)

They do seem to be neutral about ~~the~~ proposed legislation.



## Dog Owners of the Granite State

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### 2019 Legislation Update #10

With the first round of the legislative process coming to a close, and Crossover approaching, I wanted to provide a status update for all of the bills we have been monitoring.



Want to become a member of D.O.G.S.?

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# Bird Box

## It's Duck Season in New Hampshire

Its duck season in New Hampshire right now. While some of you may be thinking "Hey we have no spring duck season?" What maybe I should say it is **the season** for ducks in the Granite state.

While I have loved observing ducks nearly my whole life I should actually fess up to falling in love with wood ducks a long, long time ago and in fact have been having an affair with them for over 50 years. From the gleaming iridescent head from the drakes to the high pitched squeal of a hen taking to flight there is just something about wood ducks that stirs my soul.

Let me tell you how I first fell in love with wood ducks. This will take me back over five decades now to about 1963. Yes see, my parents had moved the family from far northern Maine to Londonderry in 1962 and to my wonder I discovered a marsh not a half mile hike through the woods and fields behind my rural home. There I found Little Cohas Marsh. This is a 200 plus acre marsh created by a dam NH Fish and Game constructed in the late 1950's. I have always loved marshes too, or as my mom was quick to call them "swamps". A term I still favor for an afternoon of adventure.

It was at Little Cohas that I first spotted some strange wooden boxes attached to the trees in the marsh as I hiked to the marsh over that winter (1963). I began my research on these boxes and soon learned they were duck nesting boxes. That next year I took a hunter safety course given by the local Londonderry Fish and game Club. By the end of the course I was amazed that the men of the club liked wildlife and they liked ducks a lot too. So it was not that hard to convince them to fund my efforts to build another eight or ten boxes that winter (1964). I added a few more boxes to Little Cohas Marsh and a club member helped me put up the rest in other marshes in town.

By that next winter I began "checking" my duck boxes to see if they were used or not. And I faithfully checked them each winter on through high school. I can tell you right off that it is best to checking them in winter. I remember taking a small boat out to them in early summer one year only to find a hornets nest in one that had me stung up a bit and another time I stuck my arm in the hole only to have a mouse run up my sleeve and into the back of my shirt as I frantically untucked it to let the mouse out. Yes there always are some surprises to be found besides ducks. BY college at UNH I can't say that I checked them as regularly but years later I learned that in fact the Fish and Game waterfowl biologist was taking care of them. Although as part of a college project I actually checked a number of duck boxes the professor had put up at some local marshes near campus. I found ways to stay in love with wood ducks even while away from home.

Fast forward a bit to the mid 1980's. Here you will find me actually working for the NH Fish and Game Department as a wildlife biologist. By the late 1980's the Department had built Regional offices. I chose to not move and I became the Region 3 wildlife biologist out of the Durham office. Guess what one of my assignments became? Wouldn't you know it. It was to check the wood duck boxes each winter in Little Cohas Marsh along with other across the southeast part of the state. Talk about coming full circle. Here I was going to be paid to do what I wanted to do most as an early teenager. So I checked the boxes each winter at Little Cohas right up to my retirement in 2007. And I found a few more surprises. Like on one Ground Hog Day in the 1990's when I opened a box at Little Cohas only to find a hibernating Meadow Jumping Mouse. I was kind and just tucked the little fellow back into the box. I found a honey bee hive one year as well.

I should also mention that not only are the boxes checked during the winter but each May for a number of years I also checked a few to capture female wood ducks for banding. So I would canoe up to each box and block the hole and carefully take off the side panel to capture the female for banding. This was a pretty efficient way of banding female wood ducks. I remember one hen that I banded in a box in Bear Brook State Park returned to the same box several years in a row. I should also mention that hooded mergansers are the other cavity nesters that use these boxes.

I can guarantee you that the duck boxes at Little Cohas Marsh are still being checked each winter. In fact I recently called Fish and Game waterfowl biologist Jessica Carloni to learn the results of recent winter checks. Below is her summary:

At 50 marshes during the reporting period, 220 functional wood duck nesting boxes were inspected for use by nesting wood ducks and hooded mergansers. Evidence of use by waterfowl was observed in 136 (55.3%) of the functional boxes that were inspected. This was higher than last year but lower than the past few years: 2013 (52.6%), 2012 (63.9%), 2011 (69.0%), 2010 (68.6%), and 2009 (72.7%).

Wood ducks accounted for 21.3% of the observed use, which compares to 21.7% in 2013, 29.8% in 2012, 25.3% in 2011, 23.5% in 2010, and 29.3% in 2009.

Hooded mergansers occupied 57.4% of the nest boxes used by waterfowl compared to 62.3% in 2013, 63.9% in 2012, 67.8 in 2011, 70.6% in 2010, and 63.9% in 2009.

Hooded merganser and wood duck eggshells were observed in the same box on 29 occasions.

Waterfowl were considered to have been successful in hatching young in 75.9% of the nests that were initiated, which was similar to the past five years; 62.9% in 2013, 72.3% in 2012, 71.3% in 2011, 76% in 2010, and 75.9% in 2009.

Eric Orff

Epsom, NH

March 16, 2016