

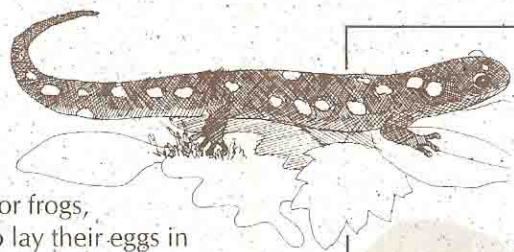
Massabesic Audubon Center
Auburn, New Hampshire

Funded by The Arthur Getz Foundation

Stop 14 – Vernal Pool

This low-lying area, filled with water in spring but relatively dry the rest of the year, is called a vernal pool. It provides a perfect habitat for frogs, toads, and salamanders, who lay their eggs in water but spend their adult lives on dry ground. In the background, notice the mountain laurel, a tall evergreen shrub. Its twisting stems provide winter shelter for small animals, and its leaves are browse for deer.

You have probably noticed discarded household items along the trail, and especially at this point. This junk was deposited by the landowners back at a time when there was no other place to dispose of trash. It is part of the history of this land. Beware of the poison ivy along this part of the trail.



Stop 15 – Stop, Look, Listen

You are still surrounded by mixed hardwoods. What do you hear? Birds singing? Squirrels chattering? Leaves rustling in the wind? What do you see – high, low, and in-between? Do you recognize any of the tall trees from earlier on the trail? Oaks, birch, beech? What covers the ground? Anything new? How many of these plants do you think you could see in the winter?

Stop 16 – Field Management

Because this field hasn't been mowed for decades, shrubs and small trees are gradually moving in. In 2000, we initiated a new field management plan which includes a prescribed burn. The field is thick with weeds, including milkweed, which attracts monarch butterflies in the summer, and thistle, which attracts goldfinches. Many weeds remain standing all year, providing a continuous supply of seeds for birds and small rodents. Notice the difference in appearance between this field and the mowed field up ahead. There the growth is shorter and grasses dominate.



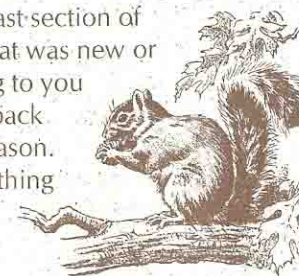
Stop 17 – Pond

This pond is small but healthy. It has a muddy bottom and warm water. If you walk quietly down to it, you may see a great blue heron or belted kingfisher fishing in the summer or hear the frogs. There are tiny crayfish in the water and dragonflies flying above it. The frogs, crayfish, and insects are important food sources for larger birds and animals.

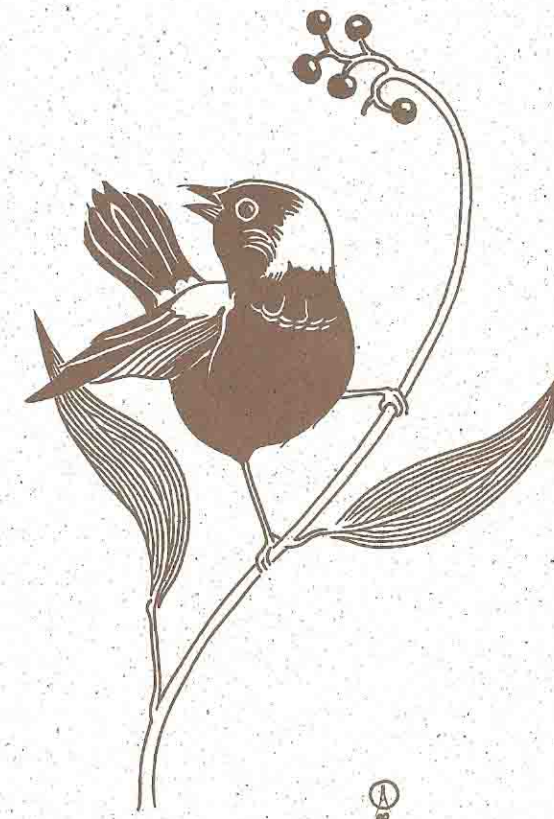
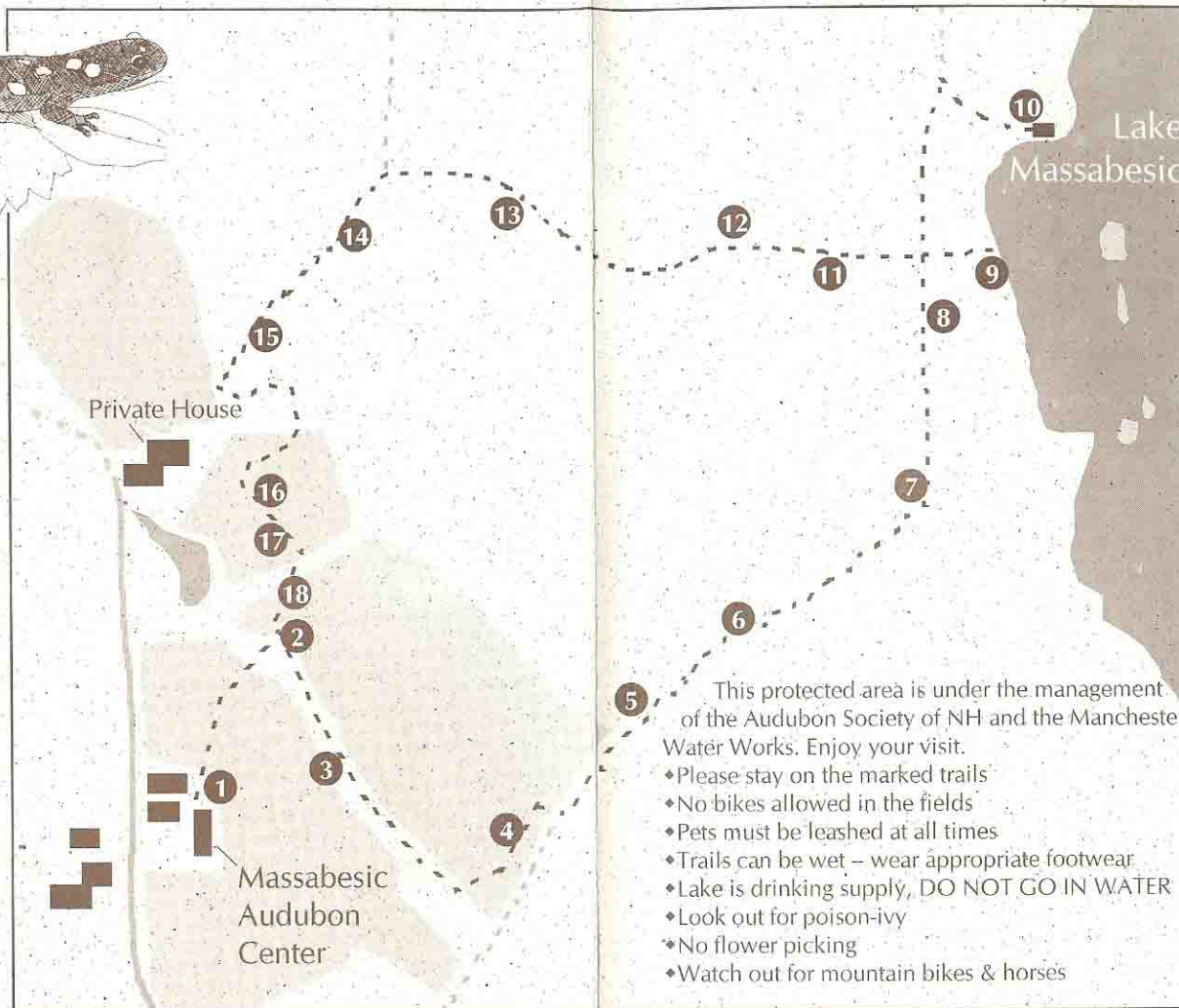
The land adjacent to the pond is low and wet and is a perfect environment for speckled alders, the shrub-like trees to the left of the pond. A variety of birds forage and nest in the dense growth.

Stop 18 – Farewell

As you cross the last section of field, think about what was new or surprising or pleasing to you on this walk. Come back next week or next season. There's always something new to see, and something old or familiar.



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