



# Friends of Salt Springs Park

January 2021

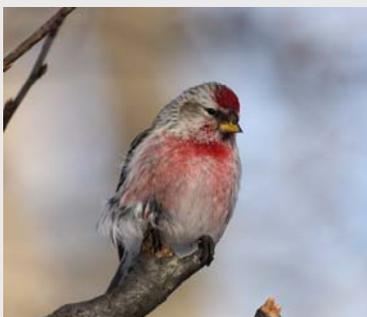
[www.friendsofsaltspringspark.org](http://www.friendsofsaltspringspark.org)

570-967-7275



## Wintering in the Park

Parks offer places and spaces for outdoor fun all year round. More attention is given to spring, summer, and fall activities, because most people prefer the warmer, sunnier days. But, with the proper clothing and accessories (poles, snowshoes, cleats, yaks, as needed)—and activities lined up—time outside in the winter, alone or with your family, can be enjoyable too.



Common redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*).

Landscape photography and wildlife spotting are fun no matter the season, but consider the impacts winter can have on them. Without leaves on the trees and vegetation in the fields, new vistas open up. Hikers can better see and appreciate the rock formations and odd-shaped trees scattered throughout Salt Springs. It is also easier to spot certain animals at this time. Not all hibernate. Certain birds descend from northern Canada, Alaska, and the Arctic to enjoy the warmer PA temperatures, including Redpolls and American tree sparrows. Who said you have to wait for a sunny summer day to start your birding life list?

Keep reading for some more DIY inspiration!

## Camping, Anyone?



D. McNerney traded the comforts of his Philadelphia home for the rustic amenities at Campsite 3 over the January 15-16 weekend. We have plenty of openings in February!

## Spotting Wildlife

Porcupines build their dens in caves, decaying logs, and hollow trees. They don't go far from home in winter, venturing mostly back and forth between their dens and the trees where they are feeding.

Porcupines are excellent tree climbers, and they are also vegetarians. In winter, the twigs and small branches of trees are a large part of their diet. Because the hemlock is a preferred evergreen, you might venture along Hemlock and Gorge trails in search of a porcupine up a tree.



Porcupine in a sitka spruce.



Muskrat at water's edge.

Muskrats are another interesting animal to look for in the winter, as they also do not hibernate. They feed primarily on aquatic vegetation and live in places like swamps, wetlands, ponds, and freshwater marshes. At Salt Springs, look for them along the Wetland and Upper Fall Brook trails. Muskrat populations have been declining rather dramatically across North America in the past several decades, so if you see one, take a picture of it if you can.

Tip: Muskrats and beavers share the same habitats, so an easy way to distinguish between them is by the tail. A muskrat's is long (8-10 inches), skinny, and scaly (like a rat's). The beaver's is wide, flat, and paddle-shaped.

## Covid Update

In early December all public programs in state parks were cancelled until January 15, 2021, by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Given that Pennsylvania is still experiencing a spike in number of cases, DCNR has extended that period until March 31, 2021.

Restrooms, trails, parking lots, picnic areas, tent sites, cottages, and the Williams Pavilion remain open. The Wheaton House (exhibit rooms and gift shop) remains closed.

As a reminder, these restrictions and requirements remain in place:

- Anyone from another state (1) must have a negative COVID-19 **test** within 72 hours before entering a state park or forest or staying overnight in a camping cottage or (2) must **quarantine** for 10 days upon arrival in Pennsylvania (or 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5 of quarantine) before visiting a state park or forest or staying overnight in a camping cottage.
- **Masks** are required to be worn in park and forest offices; any other indoor public space, including restrooms; and while outdoors when social distancing (at least 6 feet) is not possible.

## Save These Dates

Of course all depends on the status of the pandemic when the times come, but we always hope for the best. Therefore, we are planning to hold our annual events on the following dates and will let you know if any has to be cancelled or rescheduled. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing you on:

- April 17, Chainsaw Day
- April 24, Trail Day
- Sept. 4, Field, Forest & Falls Trail Race
- Sept. 4, Salt Springs Celebration
- November 5, Annual Membership Dinner Meeting

We also plan to return to two other seasonal favorites in 2021--the free evening concert All-American Music on July 3 and apple-cider making on October 3. We hope to add a third in May, dandelion wine making the old-fashioned way. We'll keep you posted!

## Help Needed With New Website

We're pleased to announce that the Friends' website is being refreshed! Development is complete but before it goes live, we need to create procedures to maintain it. If you have experience working with WordPress websites (or know someone who does) and are willing to give us a hand, please email Tom Stoll at "president@saltspringspark.org". Thanks in advance!