



Welcome to Gumpus Pond Conservation Area -A Hidden Gem for Nature Lovers and Outdoor Explorers

Tucked away on Hinds Lane, just 0.6 miles off Bush Hill Road, Gumpus Pond Conservation Area offers over 200 acres of peaceful woodlands, scenic wetlands, and quiet trails. Acquired by the town of Pelham in 2004, it offers year-round trails for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and some cross-country skiing – though some steep hills, sharp turns, and uneven terrain make skiing suitable only on select trails.

This land is more than just a natural haven. In the 1700s, nearby Mammoth Road was a bustling colonial route. Gumpus- derived from the Native American “Gomposonque,” meaning “long pond” – was a vital resource to the Pennacook people and early settlers alike. The pond’s remarkable clarity makes it one of New Hampshire’s cleanest. By the late 1800s, it became a quiet summer refuge for city dwellers from Lowell and Lawrence, drawn by clear waters and cool forests. Start your visit at the small parking area on Hinds Lane. Enter at the marked trailhead, follow a short, moderately steep path that leads into a network of gently rolling trails. Gumpus features one notable glacial erratic – marked on the trail map-reminding visitors of the powerful ice age forces that shaped this land.



Beaver Dam at Gumpus Pond

Trail Overview: Trails are considered moderate in difficulty. Most are easy to follow and well-marked, with some hills, roots, and rocky sections. After the first 50 yards, the terrain becomes more gradual and enjoyable for hikers of most abilities. Plan an hour or two to walk the trails. Gumpus connects Cutler-Spalding Conservation Area via an old Class VI Road, extending your outdoor adventure across one of the longest continuous conservation hikes in Pelham.

Trail Distances (One-Way): Cottontail Lane – 1.0 mile; Beaver Pond Loop – 0.8 mile; Long Trail – 0.7 mile; Tower Hill Trail – 0.5 mile; Musquash Spur Trail – < 0.1 mile.

Gumpus remains a living reflection of our past and a shared sanctuary for the future!

Sponsored by: Pelham Pathways Inc.

Have an idea we should consider?

Want to join our active team? Reach out to us

Email: Pelhampathways@gmail.com

Web: Pelhampathways.com

Community Trail Coalition Presents

GUMPUS POND CONSERVATION AREA



Located on Hinds Lane
Pelham, NH 03076
Park open dawn to dusk

Mountain Biking, Hiking, Horseback Riding, Hunting, Leashed Pets Permitted

Natural Wonders of the Park

Welcome to Gumpus Pond Conservation Area-Home of Nature's Master Builders

Tucked away on Hinds Lane in Pelham, NH, Gumpus Pond Conservation Area is more than just a serene hiking spot — it's also home to one of nature's most fascinating engineers: the beaver! These tireless workers have transformed parts of Gumpus into a thriving wetland ecosystem — and yes, the beaver dam here has been growing for over 35 years!



A Tale of Survival and Comeback: Beavers once vanished from New Hampshire due to over-trapping by the late 1800s. But thanks to a reintroduction program in the 1920s, just six beavers started a wildlife revival. By 1955, beavers were back across the state, including right here at Gumpus Pond.

What Makes Beavers So Special?

- **Largest Rodent in North America** – Adults can weigh over 60 lbs. and measure up to 4 feet long!
- **Built for Water** – With webbed hind feet, waterproof fur, and closable ears and nostrils, beavers are perfectly designed for aquatic life.
- **Toothy Architects** – Their orange teeth never stop growing and are perfect for felling trees and building dams.

Nature's Engineers: Beaver dams create rich wetlands that benefit countless species — ducks, frogs, herons, otters, and even mink call these habitats home. Gumpus Pond's own dam, now four times larger than it was in the 1990s, helps purify water, reduce erosion, and supports biodiversity.

Fun Facts About Gumpus Beavers

- The lodge chamber is lined with woodchips to stay dry.
- One adult beaver can fell over 200 aspens in a year.
- Kits (baby beavers) can swim the day they're born!
- Beavers are monogamous and live in family colonies — even the teens stick around for two years!



Common Merganser

Spot the Styles: There are a few types of mergansers, but the most common at Gumpus Pond are the **Common Merganser** and the smaller, showier **Hooded Merganser**. The male Hooded Merganser sports a flashy white, fan-shaped crest on his head—like he's wearing a mini helmet!

Keep your eyes on the water during your walk. You just might spot a merganser slicing through the pond or bobbing up with a fish in its bill. These wild waterfowl are just one of the many wonders that make Gumpus Pond a wildlife-lover's paradise!

Why Leaves Change Color in Fall: Have you ever wondered why the woods around Gumpus Pond burst into brilliant color every autumn? Most of the year, tree leaves are green thanks to chlorophyll—the pigment that helps them capture sunlight and turn it into energy through photosynthesis. This process fuels the tree, producing sugars that help it grow. But when fall arrives, the days grow shorter and cooler. With less sunlight, the chlorophyll fades away, and the green disappears. That's when the magic happens. **Hidden colors emerge.** Yellows and oranges, always present but masked by the green, suddenly take center stage. Even more stunning are the fiery reds and purples—these come from a special chemical reaction. As sugars get trapped in the leaves, they produce new pigments called *anthocyanins*. These vibrant reds and purples weren't visible before—they're autumn's surprise gift! Trees like swamp maples, dogwoods, and oaks are masters of this transformation. At Gumpus Pond, their reflection in the water creates a breathtaking display, reminding us that nature is always changing—and always full of wonder.



Trees turning color at Gumpus



Beaver Pond – Blue Trail

Did You Know?

- A single water lily plant can spread out dozens of lily pads!
- Some species of lily pads can grow **up to 6 feet across**—big enough to hold a child (but not here at Gumpus!).
- Lily pads repel water so well, they inspired the design of **waterproof clothing** and technology!

So next time you visit Gumpus Pond, take a moment to admire these floating wonders. They're more than just pond decorations—they're vital members of the ecosystem, keeping the waters of Gumpus wild, healthy, and full of life.

Meet the Mysterious Mergansers: Nature's Underwater Rocket at Gumpus Pond

If you catch a glimpse of a sleek duck zipping across the water like a feathered torpedo, you may have just spotted a **merganser**—one of Gumpus Pond's most fascinating residents!

Mergansers are diving ducks with long, slender bodies and sharp, hooked bills designed for one thing: **catching fish**. Unlike most ducks with flat bills for dabbling, mergansers are true underwater hunters. Their bills even have **tiny serrated edges**, acting like a built-in comb to grip slippery prey—earning them the nickname "**sawbills**."

Fast, Feathered Fishers: Mergansers can **dive up to 40 feet deep** and stay underwater for more than **30 seconds** at a time! They use their powerful webbed feet to chase minnows, sunfish, and other aquatic snacks hiding beneath the surface of Gumpus Pond.

Family on the Move: In spring and summer, look for a **mother merganser leading a line of fuzzy ducklings** across the pond. She'll often raise her chicks in tree cavities or nest boxes near the water. Amazingly, **within 24 hours of hatching**, the ducklings jump from the nest—sometimes from 20 feet high—and head straight for the water!

Meet the Barred Owl — The Forest's Mysterious Storyteller



Photo of a Barred Owl- Jeremy Hanes

With soulful dark eyes, a rounded head, and feathers etched in brown-and-white bars, the **Barred Owl** is one of the most iconic and vocal owls of New England. Its famous call — "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?" — echoes hauntingly through the woods at dawn and dusk. Barred Owls are homebodies. They don't migrate and rarely travel more than a few miles from where they're born. These adaptable owls are most often found in mature forests near water, but are increasingly seen in backyards and neighborhoods—especially those with big old trees and plentiful rodents. They hunt from high perches, swooping silently thanks to special wing feathers that muffle sound. Their hearing is so advanced that they can detect the rustle of a mouse under leaves, even in complete darkness. And with necks that can rotate 270 degrees, they have an incredible field of vision.

Fun Owl Facts!

- Barred Owls are the only dark-eyed owl species in New England.
- Females are larger than males and do all the egg incubation.
- Owlets climb among branches weeks before they can fly!
- They may raise 3–5 chicks in years when mice and squirrels are abundant.
- Despite their size (up to 2.5 lbs.!), Barred Owls can fly almost silently.

Nature's Little Fisherman at Gumpus Pond

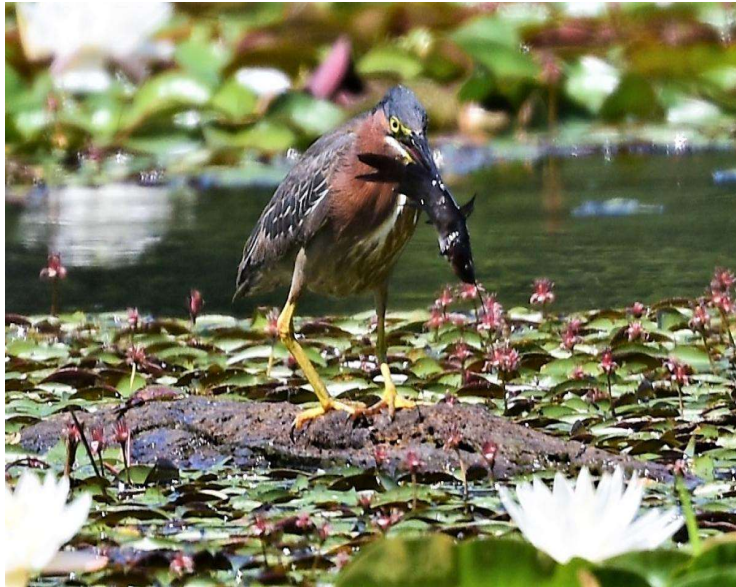


Photo credit- Jo-Ann Mathews

Meet the Green Heron: Gumpus Pond's Secret Fisher: If you're lucky and looking closely, you might spot one of Gumpus Pond's stealthiest residents — the Green Heron! These small, stocky birds are about the size of a crow, with a rich chestnut body and a greenish-black cap that helps them vanish into the shadows of wetland plants. Often, you won't notice them until they move — they're masters of camouflage!

Green Herons are full of surprises. Did you know they're one of the few bird species known to use tools? They'll drop insects, twigs, or even feathers onto the water to lure in curious fish — like a homemade fishing lure! Then, with lightning speed, they strike.

Though quiet by nature, you might hear their sharp "kyow!" call if startled. And when they're hunting or alarmed, they can stretch their necks dramatically — almost doubling their height!

These clever birds are summer visitors to New Hampshire, flying in from the southern U.S. and Central America to raise their young in peaceful, marshy places like Gumpus Pond. Keep your eyes peeled — and your camera ready!

The Floating Jewels of Gumpus Pond: Lily Pads

As you walk the trails or peer out over the still waters of Gumpus Pond, you'll notice a familiar and beautiful sight—**lily pads**, floating like green coins across the pond's surface. These aquatic plants aren't just pretty—they're powerhouses of the pond ecosystem!



What are lily pads, really? Lily pads are the leaves of **water lilies**, a group of flowering plants that thrive in still or slow-moving freshwater. Their roots grow deep in the muddy bottom, while their broad leaves float on the surface, soaking up sunlight like tiny solar panels.

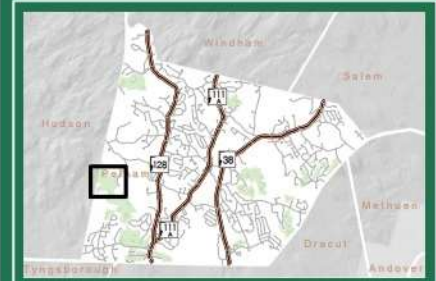
Summer Blooms & Pond Perfume: In summer, lily pads show off with stunning white, pink, or yellow **water lily flowers**. These blooms open with the morning sun and close in the afternoon—a daily show for those lucky enough to catch it. Some even have a sweet fragrance that attracts bees and other pollinators!

Wildlife Welcome Mats: To pond creatures, lily pads are more than decoration. Frogs sunbathe on them. Turtles rest between swims. Fish and tadpoles hide underneath, safe from predators. Even dragonflies use them as launchpads!

Built-In Pond Cooling System: By shading the water, lily pads help keep the pond cool and reduce algae growth. They create a comfortable climate for aquatic life and help maintain the pond's natural balance.

GUMPUS POND CONSERVATION AREA

TOWN OF PELHAM, NH
 PELHAMWEB.COM/
 FORESTRY-COMMITTEE



PERMITTED

- Walking
- Bicycling - including e-bikes
- XC Skiing and Snowshoeing
- Pets (leashed)
- Hunting (in-season and according to NH law)
- Snowmobiling (only on designated trails)

NOT PERMITTED

- OHRV
- Camping
- Fires

Please carry out all trash



For mobile navigation, download the ESRI Field Maps app to your device and search for PELHAM TRAILS

Map by NRPC