



# Fungi Kingdom News

Summer 2021

The newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

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A beautiful clump of *Schizophyllum commune*, found in Granby during the club's first walk of the season at Holyoke Range State Park. See article on page 3.

## Northeast Rare 20 Fungi Challenge

Here's a chance for us to put citizen science in action. From the May-June issue of Fungal Diversity Survey's newsletter, "Funga Decoded": Fungal Diversity Survey is sponsoring a second RARE CHALLENGE, this time in the



Northeast USA and Canada! Prominent mycologists throughout the Northeast have identified a total of 20 species that have been qualified as "rare" by virtue of their known records of occurrence. Some have only been

seen once or twice and a few haven't been seen for over 20 years. Are they gone? Have the habitats they are associated with changed due to global warming? Help us find out! Look for the posting of this project soon, complete with photos, habitat descriptions, known last locations and likely time of year to look for them. Help our team be successful after our very rewarding West Coast Rare 10 Challenge Pilot. Stay tuned for details!

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## Pioneer Valley Mycological Association

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### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Pioneer Valley Mycological Association is dedicated to enhancing the public's knowledge and appreciation of the fungal kingdom by providing ongoing educational programming in the form of guided mushroom walks, lectures, newsletters, information on multi-day regional and national forays, and citizen science projects. Because fungi are integral components of complex ecosystems, we are committed to advocating for responsible and sustainable study and collection methods. We focus on, but are not limited to, the three counties of the Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts (Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden).

PVMA is a member of the Northeast Mycological Federation ([www.nemf.org](http://www.nemf.org)) and the North American Mycological Association ([www.namyc.org](http://www.namyc.org)).

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

Also visit Dianna Smith's educational site [fungikingdom.net](http://fungikingdom.net) for articles, fungi photos, and more.

### We Welcome Your Submissions!

This is your newsletter; we'd love to have you contribute to it!

Prose, verse, photos, drawings, recipes, scientific observations – send them all to:

[jessicabensonevans@gmail.com](mailto:jessicabensonevans@gmail.com)

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### From the President...

The mushrooms are coming! Hooray! I am over-the-moon excited that we've finally emerged from what felt like the longest winter ever. Perhaps that's because I was teaching outdoors all winter, or because we were all still living with such uncertainty. Either way, it feels cathartic to finally hike with my people again, to spot my favorite spring species, and to plan for a summer full of mushroom camaraderie.



I was able to attend our first walk of the season this past Sunday, and was overjoyed to meet new members who are just joining us for the first time. Some folks became members last spring, just before the pandemic shut everything down, and they've waited an entire year to participate in PVMA walks and events. I am so glad you've patiently waited and joined us, new friends.

I am looking forward to seeing all of my old friends and getting to know our new members better this summer – I am feeling so hopeful for the future. See you out there on the trails!

- Jessica

## PVMA Scholarships

This is a reminder that PVMA has funds available to help defray the cost for members to attend multi-day forays. The application is for current PVMA members and should be comprised of a letter to the scholarship committee that includes:

- 1) The foray you plan to attend
- 2) Your specific interests in the field of mycology and how attending the foray will aid you in furthering your mycological education
- 3) Why you think you're a good candidate for the award

The application deadline is July 15. If there are no applicants before the deadline, late applications may be considered. In the event of a limited amount of funds, and there are multiple scholarship winners, the award may be split. If the winning applicant is unable to attend the chosen foray, the award will be forfeited and given to the next qualified applicant. We must receive a copy of the foray registration before the award is disbursed.

Note: The number of scholarships in any given year will be dependent upon the PVMA treasury balance. Scholarship recipients who wish to re-apply in subsequent years will be considered after those who have never applied before.

Please email all inquiries and/or applications to Philip Hadley, chair of the scholarship committee at [mphadley03@comcast.net](mailto:mphadley03@comcast.net).





# A jubilant return to club walks

**By Jess Benson Evans**

Our club has resumed offering walks to members, and our first walk proved to be a highly enjoyable and productive walk for fungi! Walk leader and PVMA Vice President Mary Obrzut selected a new hiking trail for our inaugural walk of 2021: the Batchelor Street gate at the Mt. Holyoke Range in Granby. Just before the walk, Mary reported that she'd scouted the trails and been surprised by a large bear just over a ridge from the trail!

With the potential for ursine surprises in mind, 15 club members finished introductions and set off down the trail. The mood was jubilant, with new members and old friends excited to finally be together again! Mary led us down a trail that followed a small stream, where we quickly spotted a multitude of fungi. *Gymnopus dryophilus* featured heavily throughout the walk, along with other spring favorites like *Megacollybia rodmanii*

and *Pluteus cervinus*. There were surprises, too: a beautiful array of freshly emerged *Schizophyllum commune* (see page 1), a lovely *Laccaria laccata*, and two different boletes. A very excited Ella E. spotted the first *Suillus weaverae* of the year, and a small contingent of walkers also discovered numerous specimens of *Xerocomellus chrysenteron*. In addition, we spotted a gorgeous “peaches and cream” pair of *Tricholomopsis rutilans* alongside the trail.



*Pluteus leoninus*

Another exciting find made by our most junior member Ella was *Pluteus leoninus*, a striking yellow *Pluteus*. We don't see this species as often as we see the more common *Pluteus* species in the spring. Members also spotted *Sarcoscypha occidentalis* – this was the first time I've seen this species in person! We also found a



*Tricholomopsis rutilans*



beautiful cluster of *Psathyrella delineata*, which I understand is now known as *Typhrasa gossypina*.

©J Benson Evans



*Psathyrella delineata* (= *Typhrasa gossypina*)

The trail boasted some non-fungal delights as well, including carpets of partridgeberry throughout and a few empty egg shells, likely from native turtles. In



Members discuss ID with Dave Hibbett

addition, while the parking lot was packed full, we rarely encountered other hikers on the trail. This made for a lovely hiking experience as a group!

©J Benson Evans



*Marasmius rotula*

When compared to other early June walks we've had in past years, this hike was far more productive in terms of numbers and variety of species discovered along the trail. The area did receive several inches of rain in the preceding week, so that perhaps contributed to the fungal diversity for early June. We'll add this new trail to our walks list for next year, for sure!



Ella E. consults the Baroni guide to ID *Pluteus leoninus*

## Species List

### Corals

*Artomyces pyxidatus*  
*Sebacina schweinitzii*

### Jelly-like

*Tremella foliacea*

### Gilled Fungi

*Amanita sinicoflava*  
*Cheimonophyllum candidissimum*  
*Crepidotus applanatus*  
*Entoloma* sp.  
*Gymnopus dryophilus*  
*Hymenopellis furfuracea*  
*Laccaria laccata*  
*Marasmius rotula*  
*Megacollybia rodmanii*  
*Mycena* sp.  
*Pholiota subsulphurea*  
*Pluteus cervinus*  
*Pluteus leoninus*  
*Pluteus petasatus*  
*Psathyrella delineata*  
(= *Typhrasa gossypina*)  
*Tricholomopsis rutilans*

### Polypores, Crusts and Stereums

*Cerioporus squamosus*  
*Fomes fomentarius*  
*Ganoderma applanatum*  
*Ganoderma tsugae*  
*Hymenochaetopsis olivacea*  
*Neofavolus alveolaris*  
*Polyporus varius*  
*Schizophyllum commune*  
*Stereum complicatum*  
*Stereum ostrea*  
*Trichaptum bifforme*  
*Tyromyces chioneus*

### Ascomycetes

*Auricularia angiospermarum*  
*Helicogloea compressa*  
*Hypomyces* sp.  
*Lophodermium pinastri*  
*Sarcoscypha occidentalis*  
*Scutellinia scutellata*

### Bolete-like

*Suillus weaverae*  
*Xerocomellus chrysenteron*

### Slime molds

*Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*  
*Stemonitis splendens*



# Desperately Seeking Fungi

Dave Hibbett's lab at Clark University in Worcester seeks specimens or spore prints of *Lentinus tigrinus* (the "tiger sawgill") for a research project on fungal development and evolution. This species occurs in two distinct forms: a typical gilled form (i.e., an "agaric") and a puffball-like "secotioid" form, in which the spore-producing structures are concealed under a persistent veil (see images below).

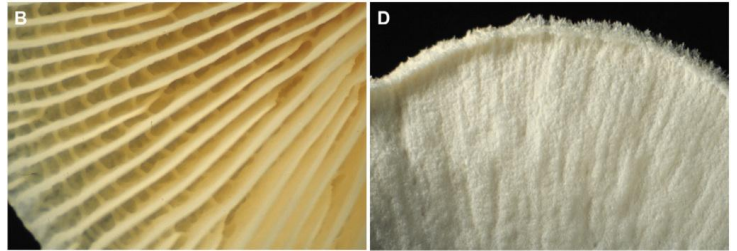


*Lentinus tigrinus*, gilled form. Image © Davide Puddu, used by permission under Creative Commons License [CC-NC-ND4.0](#)



*Lentinus tigrinus*, secotioid form. Image © Huafang, Mushroom Observer entry # 384188, used by permission under Creative Commons license [CC-BY-SA3.0](#)

*Lentinus tigrinus* is a lignicolous (wood-decaying) fungus that grows on willows, poplars, elms, maples, and other hardwoods. Although it can be found in upland habitats, it is most often collected near water, in riparian forests subject to inundation. These are not the sorts of places that mycophiles typically hunt for mushrooms (particularly edible mycorrhizal species). In southern New England, the habitats favored by *L. tigrinus* are often choked



Underside of the pileus in agaricoid (left) and secotioid (right) forms of *Lentinus tigrinus*. From Hibbett, D. S. 2007. After the gold rush, or before the flood? Evolutionary morphology of mushroom-forming fungi (Agaricomycetes) in the early 21st century. *Mycological Research* 111: 1001-1018.

with greenbrier and poison ivy. Hunting the tiger sawgill can sometimes be a painful experience! *L. tigrinus* frequently grows from logs that are emergent from water. A pleasant and potentially productive approach is to search via canoe. Some specimens of *L. tigrinus* emerge from sandy soil on riverbanks, presumably from buried wood. So if you would like to help us collect this species, you may wish to turn away from the uplands and look in the strips of woods along the banks of your local rivers and lakes.

For a detailed description and more pictures, see the entry on [Mushroom Expert](#).

If you are interested in helping us make collections of this somewhat elusive species, please see the "[Fungi Wanted](#)" tab on the Hibbett lab website. There you will find tips on how to identify and collect *L. tigrinus*, with lots of links and images.

The same lab would also love help with another project involving *Hohenbuehelia*, a close relative of *Pleurotus*, which includes oyster mushrooms. Together, they form the family Pleurotaceae. You all know oyster mushrooms, but you may not be familiar with *Hohenbuehelia*. One of the interesting things about *Hohenbuehelia*, and the subject of the lab's research, is that it traps and consumes nematodes. *Pleurotus* does this also, and it seems to be a unifying attribute (a synapomorphy) of the Pleurotaceae. There are four species described on MushroomExpert.com that should be in New England. For detailed pictures and descriptions, please visit the [Mushroom Expert](#) entry and follow the links for the individual species.

Please contact the Hibbett lab if you have seen these taxa in the field so that they can go have a look. To report sightings or for answers to any questions, please contact [dhibbett@clarku.edu](mailto:dhibbett@clarku.edu).



# The future of mushroom foraging in the Catskills and Mid-Hudson Valley

By Bill Bakaitis

In early May of this year, a major mushrooming group in New York State, the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association (MHMA), announced that beginning in 2022 they will no longer host morel walks. The rationale of their board of directors is as follows: "Sadly, given the continual loss of available, open public spaces and a significant increase in demand for morels (and other edibles and medicinals including chaga, reishi, chanterelles and ramps), we feel we have reached, if not already surpassed, the tipping point of foraging in the Catskills and Hudson Valley."

Clearly this implies degraded foraging conditions for more than morels and may be an early warning for foraging elsewhere, not just for springtime morels in the Hudson Valley.

If a message like this had been issued by a newly formed, or casual collection of foragers, it might be dismissed as sour grapes, but coming as it does from a long established NAMA (North American Mycological Association) affiliate, with a history of years of local foraging and collections, it raises serious concerns.

I hope here to examine the issue from several perspectives. Perhaps one way to begin would be to look at this spring's morel season.



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## Morels, Spring 2021

I cannot claim to be more than a journeyman when it comes to wide-spread fruiting patterns, but my hands-on assessment is that, while not overwhelmingly abundant, morels fruited widely and in normal numbers this spring. Evidence for this began in my own back yard when yellow morels appeared in late April, two weeks earlier than normal. They emerged in several locations, under a variety of associates: under a well pruned apple tree in a manicured lawn; a hundred and fifty year old *Aristolochia*, with weedy duff at the base; a Norway spruce of the same vintage with dry hard pack underfoot; and a twelve-year-old planting of a Korean tree peony (Ezra Pound) at the edge of a paved parking lot. In addition, I found morels on every foraging trip/survey I conducted on both sides of the Hudson River (Dutchess and Ulster Counties) during the last week of April and the first week of May. In each case when found, they appeared in normal clustered abundance, so much so that I ceased collecting on May 7th, after three successful outings.

Similar reports came from others. This spring I presented a well publicized, well attended morel Zoominar for a local conservation/citizen science group. The talk was held on Earth Day, April 22, a date set in advance to usher in the usual beginning of the collection season (early to mid-May) by a week or two. I had not as yet been out to look for morels, so was therefore surprised when I was advised by several participants and others that morels had been up since mid-April. They were so easily found that in Poughkeepsie, college students were collecting blondes (*M. esculentsa/americana* complex) from under spruce on campus, and attempting to "transplant" them elsewhere. I also heard from experienced professionals with whom I work that in a rural area to the north, black morels appeared in mid-April and blondes by the end of the month. Further afield, much further north, and at a higher elevation than sea-level Poughkeepsie a NAMA officer and experienced amateur mycologist leader reported that, quite by chance, she found water-soaked and over-the-hill morels on her property – under white pine of all places, in early May (!).

Finally, mushroomers and members of mycological clubs in the area with whom I correspond wrote to advise that their assessment paralleled mine - not the best year, but nevertheless, quite good. My conclusion

then is that throughout the region, the morel season was probably near normal in productivity, but a week or two earlier than normal in occurrence.

### **Climate changes: a new normal**

As readers might know, NOAA has recently updated weather standards to incorporate a “new normal,” caused by the increasingly warm temperatures of the past thirty years. In the Mid-Hudson/Catskill region the growing season is about ten days to two weeks longer than it was in 1980, as measured by frost and freezing temperatures. With this warmer weather and longer growing season, it stands to reason that morels will fruit sooner than what was usual in the past and that therefore, one might do well to begin the hunt for morels earlier than was done, even a decade ago.

Another factor to consider is that this past year in particular had a warm fall and early winter, followed in February, normally the coldest month of the year, with a three foot deep and long-lasting snow pack that insulated and kept frost from penetrating deep into the forest floor. When spring came, the warmer soils prompted an even earlier thaw, and growth commenced even faster than the new normal increase of 10-14 days.

### **The timing of the spring hunt**

In short, one might rule out the hypothesis that morels, this year at least, were in widespread decline due to repeated and heavy overharvesting. What is likely, however, was the unfortunate timing of the scheduled and unproductive morel walks that were hosted by mycological associations. They may have been a bit too late and too dependent upon tried and true sites of the past.

In this regard it might be best to think about two calendars of fruiting, the first tied to climate change influences described above. Foraging on a decade's old, out-of-date fruiting calendar means that someone else was the early bird that got the morels.

The second calendar is tied to the length of time a specific tree continues to produce, which is about three years. In this second timetable, the first year is easily the best, sometime with up to a half to full bushel fruiting within the root-zone of the tree. The second year is half or less than the first, and the third scarcely yielding a handful. Foraging without considering this time-sensitive sequence means that you would be looking where they fruited best three years ago and missing those trees and habitats which would be prime this year.

There is an interesting wrinkle to this three-year cycle

in that as one tree dies and/or exhausts its production potential, often others nearby will sicken and die-off to produce in the forest an ongoing cycle. In elms, root graft and beetle galleries are the primary vectors for transmission of the devastating Dutch elm disease. Experienced morel hunters know about this phenomenon and incorporate it into their overall calculus, so with walks led by experienced amateurs, we can probably rule out this second timetable as a reason for their morel walks to be barren. But if the walks are repeatedly held in the same area, an interesting possibility of widespread harvesting is raised. Let's have a look!

### **Heavy harvesting on public land**

My partner in life regularly takes long walks. I accompanied her on one such walk in late April. We went to a popular rail trail which offers easy walking and lovely views. No sooner had we entered the trail than we encountered what we took to be morel hunters. They were all young men with uniform tan sacks swinging at their sides. They appeared alone or in groups of two or three. They all seemed to have something in their sacks, and I guessed by the way they stopped at dead elm and ash, scouring the ground under foot, that they were looking for morels. From time to time on our walk we would see fresh, yellow, hollow stumps of morel remains. Hypothesis confirmed, it seems.

We were on the trail for nearly two hours and were never more than five or ten minutes from seeing these foragers, most on foot, but some riding bicycles from place to place, stopping along the trail in a deliberate fashion. No one spoke, so I do not know if they were members of a mycological group or not. Their collecting techniques and bags suggested some commonality but beyond that it is only conjecture. Being a public rail trail, we all had an equal right to be there; and foraging there was as much their right as it was for an amateur mycological association member.

To the extent that rail trails are used for outings and foraging walks by the population at large, it seems reasonable to assume that mycological associations that hold walks on these trails might lead some members to begin to feel as though others were trespassing upon their carefully researched patches. Let me lean on that supposition for a bit.

### **Population influx**

The most obvious factor is that the mid-Hudson and Catskill area is within an hour or so of one of the most densely populated places on earth, New York City and its associated 'burbs. The area is a prime vacation land for a quick weekend getaway or an extended BnB

rental. There are several parks, colleges, and cultural venues in the area, all heavily publicized and all interconnected by a dense network of quick, easy-to-navigate roads. In fact, one of the most frequently visited state parks in the nation is located in Poughkeepsie: the Walkway Over the Hudson, a reclaimed mile long Railroad Bridge repurposed as a walkway and part of a growing interconnected rail trail system drawing more than a half million visitors annually. Shucks, you can even take the train up to one of several stops and just pedal out and onto a rich network of trails, many of which traverse favorable mushroom habitats.

Consider next the pandemic which has brought about associated changes including the general shuttering of the economy, especially in urban areas, and the newfound ability to work from home. Add to this the exceptionally favorable mortgage rates (less than 2% at present and even lower last month) and the result has led to a large population influx into previously rural areas. Given the low mortgage rate young, savvy urbanites are able to transform a pricy month rental in the Big Apple into a half-million dollar purchase upstate. And they are coming in droves.

In this regard, the assessment made by the Board of Directors at MHMA appears to be well-founded. Areas such as rail trails which heretofore had been unimproved, open and relatively empty are now becoming increasingly developed, paved, popular and overcrowded, especially when compared to past standards.

### Poaching

"Don't poach on my patches" is a well-known injunction of morel hunters. It is not new. I have written about this phenomenon in the past for *Mushroom, the Journal of Wild Mushrooming*. Two of these articles have been captured by Dianna Smith at Fun kingdom.net: [A Lesson too Late for the Learnin'](#) and [Morels, Morels and Manners](#). To these two accounts, I can add a third: A few years ago I was conducting a month-long, university-sponsored, introductory course in mycology for a group of retired professionals. At the conclusion of the course, they asked if I would lead a walk for them. I agreed and they selected an out-of-the-way piece of property which was new to me. It was a good location and we found morels even before we left the parking lot. I don't know how it happened, but within a half hour a group of young men, with aggressive pit bull dogs at their side, seemed to have found our specific location. They overran the group, pushing in, around, and through our 20-member assembly. They were also quite efficient with machetes and other paraphernalia at cutting into the thickets and clearing

out all of the morels. What was more amazing was to see reinforcements arrive with food and drink for the mushroom hunters. The consensus of our group was that the marauders were gathering morels for sale at the local farmers markets and specialty food stores where they were fetching over \$25 per pound.

This behavior is offensive on several accounts. Not only are the aggressive confrontations frightening and perhaps illegal, particularly given the age of some of the retirees, but it also raises the question of the commercialization of a common good.

I have it on good authority that aggressive and "early-bird" poaching is common with other mycological associations as well. One club officer advised me that twice this year alone, group members broke protocol and ransacked the location of club walks in advance of the scheduled walks. In a related bit of information, I learned from Dennis Aita, morel maven of the New York Mycological Society, that fresh *esculentas* this spring were selling for an astonishing \$200 per pound at the Union Square Green Market in New York City. In Chinatown, the cultivated blacks (*M. importuna*, *M. sextalata* and *M. eximia*) from China were going for a mere \$100. With prices like that, it is easy to see how poaching can become appealing, profitable and devastating.

### Commercialization of mycology

What we might be seeing here is a case where the pigeons are coming home to roost. A decade ago mushroomers were touting a foraging film which was shown throughout the area. Mushroom clubs were advocating the romance of commercial foraging, encouraging local movie theatres to host the film and having group viewings there. Today that romance continues. There are tales, videos, books and new movies of fantastic *Fungi* served up with a religious proselytizing zeal, and medicinal and mystical claims being added to the previously established culinary appeal. Mycology, it seems, has become big business with an entrepreneurial thirst and thrust gone viral.

If you haven't as yet seen the two-page centerpiece in the business section of the Sunday edition of the New York Times, April 25th, look it up and take a cold shower. There in full color, the "psychedelic, culinary, and more" of mushrooms are described as being "a major force in the multibillion-dollar wellness market." Yes, multi-billion, with a B. The "shroom-boom" as the article describes, "is upon us" The article goes on to describe the wild popularity of fungi with a bit of hyperbole: "It is hard these days to throw a rock and not hit a mushroom," the authors say. Mycology has hit the big times.



## **Mushrooming is mushrooming**

At the very least, it is easy to see how wild mushroom foraging has become very popular, an extension of the organic and naturalistic food movements which recently have come into play. Consider the propagation of weekly, if not daily, newspaper and magazine articles devoted to home cooking with beautifully photographed meals, complete with crossplay between editors and readers, during this past homebound winter. Add the countless cooking and foraging videos on line, the easing of Covid restrictions and social distancing, and the arrival of spring, all coinciding with the fruiting of morels, that most coveted of fungi. What you end up with is a supercharged interest in finally getting out – and getting some morels for me and mine.

For those in a group-sponsored walk, I can imagine that the consequence was the frustration of finding that the morels were gone, the group was too late, the feeling that their favorite spot, carefully researched and treasured, had been violated.

It is also not hard to see how this violation had likely come about.

## **Digital divination**

The first factor is related to the supercharged motivations described above. Interestingly, it is presented in today's conspiracy theory subculture as the lip pursing phrase, "Where we go one, we go all," a mash-up philosophy that hurls naked individualistic libertarianism into a brash authoritarian, big brother, group-think.

And yet, even within the placid little sister of civil society, secrets, it seems, have a need to escape their bonds; competitive pride has a need to boast. The word gets out, and private patches soon become public property. "Where they have gone all, I go as one, and I am getting there before they all do!"

A second factor is a direct function of how today, with pride, we communicate our secrets; today we communicate by emails, tweets, posts, geocoordinates attached to photos, the photos themselves shared on Facebook or sent to centralized libraries such as iNaturalist.

Messages conveyed with these modalities can not only be read by those targeted, but also by others, those not intended. One can, for example, simply refer to last year's foray schedules to determine great spots to look this year, say on the Saturday before the scheduled Sunday walk by a club. The skills involved

are not those of learning one's way around the natural world as much as learning one's way around the internet. We see this described more and more frequently as the world we inhabit. More and more we live on-line. And we learn on-line. And on-line we learn to poach! With only a wee bit of cunning and greed we enter the studied world of the hacker.

I was shocked a few weeks ago when I called up the web site of one of the premier amateur mycology groups in the Northeast. (COMA). Instead of the familiar website, there was a full-screen warning prohibiting entry with the message that the site had been severely compromised by malicious phishing activity and that entry was denied.

Years ago amateur mycology groups met in person. Education, discussions, and walks were local. When forays and walks were being planned it was in person, perhaps with a phone-chain to fine tune walk locations and times as might be dictated by weather and/or other local conditions.

Today these groups are often organized by modalities like Facebook, where the membership may be large but the personal investment in educational or long-range goals of the group is shallow. Violations of trust are easy and anonymous. A new and odd mixture of private lust and public activity comes into play, similar to that of internet pornography.

Add then the Zoom phenomenon which cuts like a dual edged sword, with the seemingly private discussions and presentations being broadcast over a wide swath of the region and then recorded so as to make retrieval easy and practical, even to viewers who have no stake in the intentions of the local groups for which the talk was intended. With this, the problem escalates even more.

I was amazed when the talk on morels I recently delivered to a very local group was attended by viewers from throughout the Northeast, south through Pennsylvania and through time zones far into the mid-west, the most energetic respondent being a father sitting in his automobile in Indiana as his daughter participated in a soccer game next to the parking lot. There is no quitting time for those living online. I was astonished to learn that one talk I had given to a local group was put on YouTube and subsequently viewed nearly 15,000 times! What?!

Mixed metaphors perhaps, but it is difficult to say "don't poach on my patches" when the cat is out of the bag.

### A partial remedy

Is there a fix for all of this? One technique I suggested for MHMA in the 1990's was to not hold a group morel walk. Often such a walk might produce a dozen morels. For a group walk of 30 members that means scant picking for most: one person might by luck find the fruitful tree and walk away with most of the collection, while most would come home empty-handed. Rare was the walk where everyone on the walk would find a good collection, especially if the group were to return to last year's spot without accounting for the fact that a productive specific tree is likely to produce for only three years at best.

What I suggested, but was never enacted, was a procedure where, on the given day, foragers would start from their own home locations early in the morning and each, taking a slow meandering route, would search out likely looking places on their way to a common meeting venue, where the customary show and tell, picnic, and social interactions could take place.

In a way, absent the communal meeting, this is similar to the way I hunt morels. The techniques have been described elsewhere, in talks to local clubs and online. It involves coming to know the typical conditions from which morels might spring, appreciating the broad diversity of landscapes and terrain, respecting private property ownership and enjoying the ability to follow hunches, those quickly evolving hypotheses, to quit one area and move to another based upon the conditions of the day.

I have been impressed that this year morels have been fairly abundant. I have found them at nearly every venue investigated. And one night two weeks ago, as I was about to prepare morels for friends visiting from Maine, Claudia, my completely urbanized, non-

mycological partner, came quietly in the door, snuck up behind me with a broad sweet smile on her face, a loving whisper in her voice and proudly displayed a hat-full of fresh morels! They were found, trailside, quite obvious in a public park where she had decided to take her daily walk. And this wasn't the first time. Next year, have a look. Betcha they're in a park or yard near you, too.

### Final Thoughts

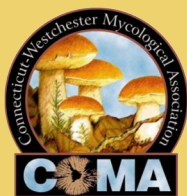
This article has only looked at the issue of searching for morels: The warning from MHMA, however, dealt with the larger issue of foraging itself as approaching or passing the tipping point. While some of the observations made here may also apply to summertime and fall foraging in the Catskills, foraging over a much wider, seemingly inexhaustible area (\*) during times when hundreds of species fruit involves a complex set of other forces and factors. Time will tell how all of that plays out.

During my tenure as a teacher I used a systems approach to analyze social problems. One core concept is that behavior has consequences. Some are planned, but many/most are not. They spill out as unintended primary, secondary, and tertiary consequences in complex interconnected ways. All good environmental planning begins with this premise. How are the actions we take today likely to shape our future?

I love the way Joan Kutcher, Membership Chair of the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association put it when assessing the challenge of over foraging: "In a very humble way, I feel ... we should be guardians of the kingdom, to help protect and preserve all life."

She seems to get it. I wonder if others do as well.

## 2021 Foray News



With the widely available vaccine turning the tide of COVID, the long-delayed 42nd Clark Rogerson Foray is now open for registration! Check the [website](#) for registration details.

**Dates:** Friday, September 3, to Monday, September 6th - Labor Day Weekend.

**Location:** Camp Hemlocks, in Hebron, CT.

**Chief Mycologist:** Alan Bessette.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to make the event as safe as possible, we will require that all attendees be **fully vaccinated at least two weeks prior to their arrival**.



After taking 2020 off due to the pandemic, the North American Mycological Association (NAMA) is once again offering their annual foray, this year Aug. 12-15 in Granby, Colorado. Note that you must be a NAMA member to attend. To join, [click here](#). Members of affiliated clubs (like PVMA) receive a \$5 discount. Please see the [NAMA website](#) for more information about the foray.