

HABITAT

VOLUNTEERS

Committed to the Mission



INSIDE

Volunteer Spotlights • News and Notes • Legislative Preview 2022 • Naturalist's Almanac

Conservation

More Stream Exploring to Come!

The second season of the Stream Explorers program has wrapped up and we are happy to report that 2021 had a successful macroinvertebrate treasure hunt! More than 50 community science volunteers (an increase from 26 the first year) surveyed 35 streams (also up from 26 the first year) across Maine. “The volunteers were the first to sample a number of streams, such as Rolfe Brook, Sevenmile Brook, and Walker Brook,” says Tom Danielson from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. “It was encouraging to see pretty nice results from several streams in more populated areas of the state, such as Meadow Stream, Silver Brook, and West Cathance Stream.” Stream Explorers will continue in 2022 with an added focus on including students in schools in the southern Maine area. Email Hannah Young (hyoung@maineaudubon.org) to be notified either of general Stream Explorer trainings or those geared toward educators.



that help provide high quality habitat by adopting the recommendations in our new Forests for Fish guides. The guides complement our Forestry for Maine Birds guides, and describe how shoreland homeowners, forest landowners, loggers, foresters, and farmers can manage forests and restore missing or degraded shoreland and streamside areas to enhance habitat for fish and watershed wildlife.

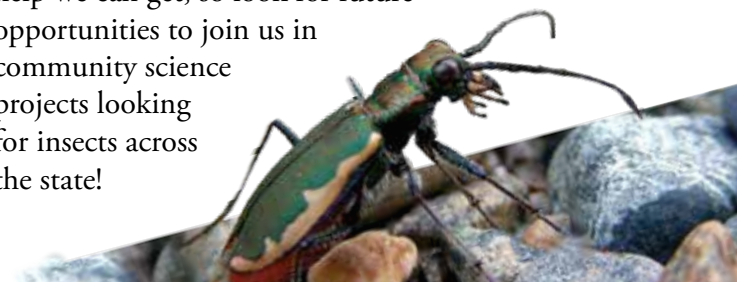
In partnership with the Forest Stewards Guild, Lakes Environmental Association, Maine Forest Service, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Lakes, and Trout Unlimited.

Counting All Insects

Hearing reports about insect declines from around the world, Maine Audubon started to wonder how Maine’s insect populations are doing. To understand trends in populations, you need to have data going back decades. Did those datasets exist? Working with partners from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), the Maine Entomological Society, and others, and with funding primarily from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, we put out a call to entomologists and state agencies for insect datasets, and hired Dr. Francis Drummond to evaluate them. Nine of the 17 datasets, including IFW’s community science based butterfly and dragonfly atlases, had enough data to see some potential trends. Dragonflies, butterflies, and hoverflies showed some declines, but more data and deeper analyses are needed. With 22 million acres in Maine, we will need all the help we can get, so look for future opportunities to join us in community science projects looking for insects across the state!

Forests for Fish

Do you like to fish? Ever cast your line into a deep hole beneath a fallen log thinking you might catch “the big one”? Maine’s fish, forests, and wildlife go hand in hand. Forests protect and feed the watery homes and food baskets of many of Maine’s most prized fish and wildlife. When properly managed, forests can provide quality fish and wildlife habitat as well as benefits for people, including abundant clean water, forest products, and recreational opportunities. Learn how you can manage your forest in ways



Education

Spring Native Plants Update

As spring begins to spring, Maine Audubon is gearing up for another busy year of plants sales, outreach, and programs around our “Bringing Nature Home” native plants restoration and community engagement initiative. Sales are set to begin in June, both online and, we hope, in person at a live plants sale on June 11 at Gilsland Farm. In the meantime, join us for an in-person program or online webinar, or drop by our booth at the Maine Garden + Marketplace at Thompson's Point in Portland on March 25-27 to learn more about our work and the importance of native plants.

Plant Sales
start June
2022!



Expanding Urban Youth Stewardship Corps

Maine Audubon is pleased to be partnering again with the City of Portland, Portland Parks Conservancy, and others

on a second year of Portland Youth Corps, the summerlong habitat stewardship training program for local teens. The pilot version in 2021 was a huge success, and served as a model for other communities. In fact, Maine Audubon will be working with the City of Lewiston and other partners to pilot a Lewiston Youth Corps, which will benefit from our ongoing collaboration with U.S. Fish & Wildlife and Maine State Parks as we improve habitat for pollinators and other wildlife at Range Pond State Park and throughout downtown Lewiston this summer. Diverse youth in Maine's two largest cities now have new opportunities for real world engagement within their communities and points of entry to possible careers in environmental fields.

Making Good on Portland's Promise

Not long before the pandemic began, Portland Schools announced a newly expanded public pre-kindergarten program, an objective central to the district's equity goals under what they call “Portland's Promise.” The program provides a lotteried spot for every four-year-old in the district, at sites both in elementary schools and with community partner providers around the city. Thanks to a mini-grant for outdoor learning from the Maine Environmental Education Association, every Portland Pre-K classroom will get two visits from Maine Audubon's early childhood educators during this school year. During each visit, students build STEM knowledge and skills through cooperative play, hands-on exploration, readalouds, and art. This winter, that meant learning about things like animals getting ready for winter, animals in the snow, snow science, and backyard birds. In the spring, we'll shift to flowers and pollinators.

Chapters & Properties



Happy Retirement, Peter

Maine Audubon's sanctuaries and properties have flourished under the thoughtful guidance of Properties Director Peter Baecher, so it was with great respect and more than a tinge

of sadness that we gathered in December to wish Peter well as he moved into retirement. Peter joined Maine Audubon in 2015 and many of his countless accomplishments can be experienced during visits to each of our sanctuaries, thanks to his thoughtful approach to our mission of connecting people with wildlife.

A Place for Remembrance

As the pandemic continued through 2021, the Portland Multi-Faith Communities expressed a desire to provide a place for remembrance and reflection for loved ones lost to COVID-19. Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm was chosen to be such a location, given the solace and hope that nature can provide. Last October, four representatives of the Portland Multi-Faith Communities were on hand for a tree planting, helping Properties Manager James Kennedy plant a Bur Oak at the edge of the orchard at the sanctuary in Falmouth. This spring, the public will be invited to a dedication ceremony and a plaque, donated by members of various Jewish, Christian, Universalist, and Baha'i Communities in Maine, will be installed near the tree. All are welcome to come visit, spend time in nature, remember those who are no longer with us, and keep their memories alive as we nurture this newly-planted oak.

The Sal Rooney Scholarship Recipients

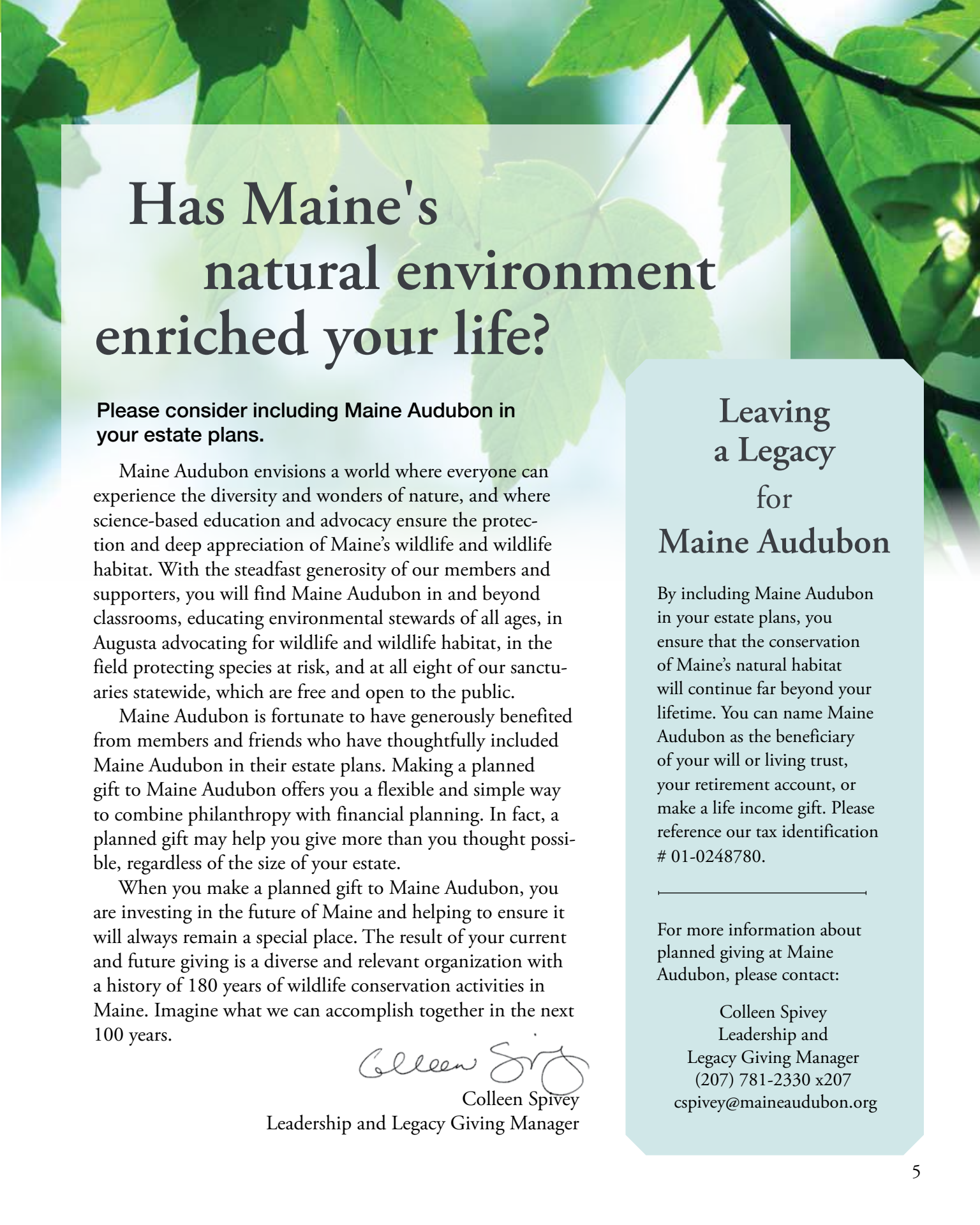
The Downeast Chapter of Maine Audubon (DEA) has awarded the Sal Rooney Memorial Scholarship this year to two outstanding students, Wriley Hodge and Rosie Chater, both at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor. Intended to aid college students working on pre-graduate research, this scholarship was set up in 2020 in memory of Sal. Sal was a dedicated DEA board member, accomplished botanist/naturalist, and talented birder, and this scholarship is designed to help students follow her footsteps through the natural world.

Wriley, a sophomore from New York, was on Great Duck Island (located off Mt Desert Island) last summer where he contribut-



(l-r): Wriley Hodge, Eleanor Gnam (last year's scholarship recipient), and Rosie Chater.

ed to the banding of more gulls than had been done in any previous summer. This summer he will either return to the island or go to Alaska to work with guillemots. His dream is to study guillemots in Maine and in Alaska and compare nesting behavior and chick rearing. Rosie, a freshman from the Falkland Islands via Pony, Montana, was also a member of the gull team on Great Duck Island last summer. This summer she may either work with terns on Petit Manan or intern on Mount Desert Rock to continue banding gulls and to satisfy her craving for marine mammals.




Has Maine's natural environment enriched your life?

Please consider including Maine Audubon in your estate plans.

Maine Audubon envisions a world where everyone can experience the diversity and wonders of nature, and where science-based education and advocacy ensure the protection and deep appreciation of Maine's wildlife and wildlife habitat. With the steadfast generosity of our members and supporters, you will find Maine Audubon in and beyond classrooms, educating environmental stewards of all ages, in Augusta advocating for wildlife and wildlife habitat, in the field protecting species at risk, and at all eight of our sanctuaries statewide, which are free and open to the public.

Maine Audubon is fortunate to have generously benefited from members and friends who have thoughtfully included Maine Audubon in their estate plans. Making a planned gift to Maine Audubon offers you a flexible and simple way to combine philanthropy with financial planning. In fact, a planned gift may help you give more than you thought possible, regardless of the size of your estate.

When you make a planned gift to Maine Audubon, you are investing in the future of Maine and helping to ensure it will always remain a special place. The result of your current and future giving is a diverse and relevant organization with a history of 180 years of wildlife conservation activities in Maine. Imagine what we can accomplish together in the next 100 years.



Colleen Spivey
Leadership and Legacy Giving Manager

Leaving a Legacy for Maine Audubon

By including Maine Audubon in your estate plans, you ensure that the conservation of Maine's natural habitat will continue far beyond your lifetime. You can name Maine Audubon as the beneficiary of your will or living trust, your retirement account, or make a life income gift. Please reference our tax identification # 01-0248780.

For more information about planned giving at Maine Audubon, please contact:

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MAINE AUDUBON

VOLUNTEERS

Committed to the Mission



**“I know I am young,
but I want to make a difference,”**

says 11-year-old Lilah O'Connor. Lilah, along with her nine-year-old sister Hazel and her parents, Brian O'Connor and Sonya Kahlenberg, volunteer for Maine Audubon's BirdSafe Maine project. In 2021, the family walked a two-mile route in Portland very early on spring and fall mornings to look for birds injured or killed from window strikes.

Lilah is the epitome of a modern volunteer—committed to a cause, young, and wanting to be part of a community. What makes people these days decide to offer up their free time and provide services, resources, labor, or skills? And how has the pandemic affected volunteerism and the way people volunteer?

“Our family loves birds and birding together,” says Sonya. “When I heard about this project, I immediately wanted to get involved because getting data is key to understanding the collision threat for migrating birds and for finding solutions. Waking early and walking the city route also ended up being a great bonding experience for our family and a nice way to meet other people in the area who want to help birds.”



Lilah (left) and Hazel O'Connor

A belief in the mission is the most common reason that people volunteer for a nonprofit, according to Kelsey Preecs. Preecs is the Program Officer for Volunteer Initiatives at Volunteer Maine, the Maine Commission for Community Service where she focuses on national service and volunteerism within Maine. “Something about the mission really speaks to them,” she says.



photo: wildfilephoto.com

That's certainly the case for Vivian Howe, who has been a volunteer for Maine Audubon ever since she retired from the Southern Maine Agency on Aging in 2008. She says, "I agree with the aims of the mission, especially around wildlife habitat and solar siting."

Another reason people volunteer is to "give back." That motivated Nancy Swanson, a retired middle school teacher who volunteers at the Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden. She says, "Soon after Maine Audubon acquired the Fields Pond property in the 1990s, I began to bring my students there for scientific investigation. I am happy to give back to the organization that enabled so much hands-on environmental discovery and fun for my students and myself for many years."

Retirees like Vivian and Nancy have traditionally made up the vast majority of the volunteer pool in Maine, says Preecs. Maine does have the oldest population of any state in the country. It also has one of the greatest rates of volunteerism, consistently ranking in the top ten in the nation. "If you look at our demographics and geography, it makes sense," says Preecs. "We're a community-based place. In rural communities and places without large populations, so many people wear tons of hats in their communities. That's how these small communities run and function."

However, the pandemic has created a shift in volunteerism. In fact, Volunteer Maine conducted a statewide survey last spring to assess just what kind of impact COVID was having. Not surprisingly, they found that volunteer hours

were greatly reduced and, in some cases, eliminated. But, says Preecs, "Volunteerism did not go away, it just looked different."

As older people have been more cautious about in-person activities, numbers of younger volunteers—and families, like the O'Connors—have increased in comparison. Preecs says it's also possible that anxiety about the pandemic has inspired people. The pandemic led Jodie Fortin to her role as a volunteer at Gilsland Farm. "I took an interest in putting feeders in my grandmother's yard during the pandemic," she says. "She told me about cardinals and how they are

"I am happy to give back to the organization that enabled so much hands-on environmental discovery and fun for my students..."

-Nancy Swanson



a sign of a passed loved one; I lost my mom and brother years ago. So one day we went to Gilsland Farm and I saw my first cardinal that same day." Jodie noticed the bird feeders were empty, so she asked if she could help out. Now she fills the feeders two days a week. "I absolutely love helping out," she says. "This pandemic has changed everyone, even me. It has changed me to be a better person."


It changed the way Jim and Ann Hancock gave their time to Maine Audubon's native plants sale and festival. Jim says, "We had helped on all aspects—selecting plants, helping transplant seedlings, building the greenhouse, moving bags of soil, labeling plants, and of course,

“We had helped on all aspects—selecting plants, helping transplant seedlings, building the greenhouse...”



Ann Hancock (left) helps at the native plants sale.

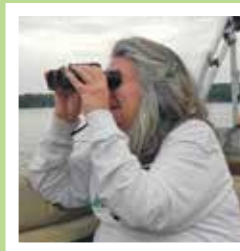
setting up the sale and meeting and greeting the public participants . . . This wonderful interaction ended for us when the sale went electronic because of COVID.” Jim has since become a Maine Audubon Trustee and Ann has become an Advisory Trustee, so both continue to volunteer in an impactful way.

In the end, it's reassuring to know that community-minded Mainers continue to be committed to volunteerism, pandemic or no. If it gets them outdoors, or attracts younger people, all the better. Lilah O'Connor says, "I knew that by recording what we found, it would help other birds in the future." And she adds, laughing, "At the end of the route, we always got hot chocolate or doughnuts, so I was also thinking about that." Mission first, but doughnuts help too. 

Many Maine Audubon projects involve outdoor work and so, fortunately, have been able to continue throughout the pandemic.

The Annual Loon

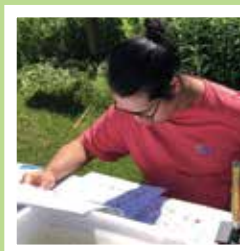
Count relies heavily on volunteers, both to serve as regional coordinators and to do the count, which takes place every year on the third Saturday of July. In 2020, loon count manager Tracy Hart says about 50 loon counters weren't able to make it due to COVID-19-related reasons. But in 2021, they once again joined the count, and more than 1400 volunteers were able to look for loons on 20 more lakes than in 2020.



For the **Coastal Birds Project**, coordinators organized 160 volunteers to help monitor six of the 20+ beaches covered.



For the **Stream Explorers program**, to look for macroinvertebrates as indicators of water quality, 50 volunteers helped sample aquatic insects in 35 streams in 2021.



The Maine Bird Atlas is another enormous project with volunteers at its core. Staff Naturalist Doug Hitchcox is the outreach coordinator and reports that to date 2,200 volunteers (up from 1,500 last year) have submitted 87,000+ checklists (up from 55,000) to help record the status and distribution of birds in Maine.



SPOTLIGHT

on



VOLUNTEERS

In recognition of National Volunteer Month this April, we offer these spotlights on a few Maine Audubon volunteers and extend enormous thanks to all the many people—past, present, and future—who help us further our mission of conserving Maine’s wildlife and wildlife habitat.

STEWARDED a Sanctuary



Our Borestone Mountain Sanctuary in Elliottsville Township has for decades captivated legions of nature lovers, with its 1600-acre forest, three crystalline ponds, and breathtaking mountaintop views. Perhaps its most ardent fans, though, are a cadre of volunteers from the East Sangerville Grange in Dover-Foxcroft, who are also its most loyal caretakers. For more than 20 years (yes, 20 years!), these grangers have made it their mission to help maintain the preserve’s 100-year-old Adirondack-style log cabins, devoting countless hours of labor every spring and fall.

The chores they tackle are invaluable to Borestone Sanctuary’s manager Dan Simons. “They save me and my staff weeks of work,” Simons notes. “And because they have the institutional memory of the place after all these years, they help guide me when I need it, with how things should be done.”

To ready the compound for summer renters, grangers arrive in May to prep the main

lodge, the guide's camp, the dining hall, the cook's quarters—six buildings in all. They wash floors, windows, and log walls; fill the woodboxes; inspect the fire alarms and extinguishers; haul the library books, dishware, kitchen equipment, and linens from the mouse-proof storage shed; prep 22 beds; and hang 50 sets of curtains.

They also tackle carpentry, painting, roofing—“a lot of physical improvements to the lodges,” explains long-time volunteer Alan Bray. “We’ve taken down trees, and we put the docks in the water and take them out, along with the boats, in the fall. We do work that the staff would be pushed to do; they tackle more of the large projects.”

Grange Grand Master and lead organizer Dyan McCarthy-Clark adds, “We’re like a portable ant hill, with lots of little ants running about. We also have a very skilled crew with a variety of talents, including foresters and carpenters. And grangers often help with projects during the season. Borestone managers know they can always call on us.”

Volunteers return in late October to close up for winter, and they show up rain or shine. “We’ve been there in every kind of weather, when it’s spectacular and when the black flies have nearly carried some of us away,” laughs Dyan. “One October we had three to four inches of snow. We’ve been there when we had to break the ice on the pond to get through. The treat of being able to stay overnight there is the payoff. We have a ball and it’s very satisfying to know we’re helping.”

Steve Grammont has been helping to maintain the compound since before Maine Audubon took over stewardship in 2000 and often spends part of each weekend either up on a roof, or up to his waist in the lake deal-

ing with the docks. “The place still awes me,” he says. “It’s a privilege to be here.”

“It’s a labor of love,” echoes Rusty Willette, who assists with kitchen chores. “The place is a jewel, just a jewel.”

Dyan sums it up: “If there ever were a place that would help people to understand the importance of being good stewards, it’s Borestone. You’re immersed in nature, immersed in beauty. It puts a spell on you.”

ONLINE EXTRA:

For an expanded version of this article, as well as information on the sanctuary and the lodges (which are available for rent), visit:

maineaudubon.org/visit/borestone

—By Tina Fischer

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Spring and summer are especially busy times for us at Maine Audubon.

To get involved with one of our **community science or conservation-related projects**, contact Hannah Young: hyoung@maineaudubon.org.

For all **other volunteer opportunities**, visit maineaudubon.org/volunteer or contact Volunteer Coordinator Jill Valley-Orlando: jvorlando@maineaudubon.org.

WALKING the Walk

All of our volunteers are extremely generous and enormously appreciated; some have committed to a particularly tough task. Jill Osgood and Austin Smith are two of the 26 volunteers who walk downtown Portland in the early morning hours during spring and fall migrations, searching for birds that have been killed or injured after colliding with office windows. They walk several times a week with volunteers from the University of Southern Maine, Portland Society for Architecture, and Avian Haven, as part of a project with Maine Audubon's Bird-Safe Maine to document bird strikes. Both Jill and Austin admit it can be grim work, but the ends—to raise awareness and share solutions—do justify the means for them.

"It is tough," Jill says. "My first day we found two hummingbirds and that was really hard; they are so incredibly beautiful." Jill is a book artist and a Maine Master Naturalist; her love for birds drew her to the project. "I've been birding for years. Holding a dead bird in your hands . . .," she pauses. "They're surprisingly heavy and often still warm."

Scientists estimate that hundreds of millions of North American birds are killed each year in building collisions. Volunteers in Portland found close to 100 birds last fall alone. Walkers work in pairs, each starting at opposite ends of a two-mile route and often circling back to buildings that are known to be "death traps," as Austin Smith calls them. Austin is a principal with Simons Architects in Portland. He explains that reflections of the sky on windows confuse the birds. Trees planted close to buildings "create a natural habitat, which, with a glass facade,



makes a lethal combination. Of course trees are a major element in the fight against climate change, but it's about thoughtful placement of windows and landscaping. And there are several ways to make the glass itself bird safe."

Volunteers photograph the birds, noting the date and location of the find. As an avid birder, Austin finds the photos—which he can't bring himself to erase from his phone—haunting. As an architect and a member of the Portland Planning Board, he's focused on the future. "A lot of the buildings I've designed have used glass," he says. "I feel a calling to try to make some changes. I review a lot of new buildings going up and I do mention the issue to a lot of applicants. A portion of the architectural community is very committed to this and it's a point of discussion, nationwide."

Both Austin and Jill look forward to continuing with the project, despite the emotional toll. Jill says, "I'm not a morning person, but it's great to see the sunrise, and it's a great little community of people. And as hard as it is to find dead birds, this is a problem that has a solution. That's what keeps me going."

—By Tina Fischer



TRUSTING the Future

Ask our two youngest trustees about their experience serving on the Maine Audubon board and you'll hear "just amazing," "fantastic experience," and "incredible opportunity."

Eban Charles and Katie Galletta both come to us through Bowdoin College, coincidentally, where Eban is a junior; Katie a recent alum. Both have focused their studies on ecology, evolution, and marine biology and both are passionate about future careers in education. They're the first trustees recruited for the board in their age group as part of an effort to include younger voices. Both serve on several committees, including the Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion Committee.

Originally from Goffstown, New Hampshire, Katie has "fallen in love" with Maine and its ecosystems. Eban grew up in Waterville, fishing "every moment I could." He's a member of the Bowdoin Outing Club, a certified Wilderness First Responder, and is especially passionate about marine ecology and the opportunity to contribute to conservation work



in his home state through Maine Audubon. "When COVID hit I found myself thinking a lot about what my priorities were. 'What's my purpose, what should I do?' One of Bowdoin's mottos is 'serving the common good', and we talk a lot about 'the Bowdoin bubble'. I thought it would be great to get out of that bubble and serve the larger community."

"It's a really exciting time to be involved in conservation and to learn how organizations like this work," Katie says. "We talk about, 'What do we want this organization to look like now? Who are the people we want to come to our sanctuaries?' I strive to lend my voice in an effort to make Maine Audubon more inclusive and relevant to younger generations and traditionally underserved populations in the state of Maine. The younger generations are hopefully going to be the ones running things in the future."

—By Tina Fischer

LENDING an Ear

Libby Danielson

found herself home from college in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, so she decided to volunteer for our Song Meter Project. Each week, she hiked through the forest at Woodbury Nature Sanctuary to move song meters among survey sites. “Volunteering for this project was incredibly meaningful to me, especially in the middle of a pandemic,” she says. “Simply having the opportunity to explore nature not only helped my mental health, but helped me discover an interest in ecology field work.”

She was one of 40 volunteers who helped us monitor how bird communities respond to wildlife-friendly forest management. Volunteers, including some of Maine’s top birders, donated 1300 hours to identifying birds in the field, deploying song meters, listening to recordings, and analyzing data.

The Song Meter Project is part of the Forestry for Maine Birds Program, which provides woodland managers with tools to enhance forest habitat. To understand how these forestry practices are helping birds, we recorded the dawn chorus and surveyed birds in the field at four forests managed “with birds in mind,” showcasing properties of the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, Midcoast Conservancy, 7 Lakes Alliance, and Stanton Bird Club.



Photo: Seth Benz



Clockwise from top: Earl Johnson, Ron Vasaturo, Jess Costa, and Libby Danielson

One key aspect was to identify species of birds within hundreds of hours of recordings. We tackled this in two ways: using acoustic software and through the ears of skilled birders. Earl Johnson drew on his avian research experience and donated some 250 hours to test how well software identified birds. Ron Vasaturo, who contributed nearly half of the 330 hours volunteers donated to recordings, commented, “This project married technology with my lifelong love of watching, listening, and learning about birds. How fortunate is that?! With each recording, I’m walking through a Maine woods, taking in the cacophony of bird sounds during breeding season’s dawn chorus. So much life happening in the middle of a pandemic!”

For a comparison with the recordings, birders also headed into the four demonstration forests to identify birds on site. Howie Nielsen donated the most time to field surveys, spending approximately 40 hours at Hidden Valley

Nature Center in 2020. Jess Costa, an avian biologist, surveyed Sewall Woods and also listened to recordings, enabling comparison of the two methods. Out of 26 species she identified at one site, 21 were identified only through the recordings. She says, “I think that shorter, in-person point count surveys may result in under-detecting species that call less frequently; whereas the longer song meter recording periods likely allow for more opportunity to detect these species.”

Other volunteers also helped tease out the advantages and disadvantages of song meters. While noting both pros and cons, *Bangor Daily News* bird columnist Bob Duchesne concluded, “I could picture the habitat—and even the time of day—just by the species of birds singing [in the recordings]. Overall, I think it was more effective to sit on my couch for two and a half hours, rather than driving three hours round trip to Kelley Woods, and then spending another three hours swatting mosquitoes, while possibly discouraging the birds by my presence.”

Maine Audubon staff are completing a report on project findings. It will include associations between habitat features and bird species, a review of song meters, and information about the essential contributions made by the 40 intrepid volunteers.

—By Tracy Hart

SHARING the Marsh



If you’ve had the pleasure of joining a boat tour at the Scarborough Marsh Audubon Center, you’ve likely had the pleasure of meeting Bill Dunn. Bill has been helping visitors and sharing his knowledge of the marsh for more than 20 years. (He took a few years off when his two daughters were young but signed on

again in 2008, and has since brought his now 27-year-old daughter Cassie into the fold—she occasionally helps with evening tours.)

Bill has no formal education as a naturalist; he says he’s learned on the job. He worked in information technology at UNUM before retiring last year. He finds the “peacefulness” at the marsh appealing. Center Director Linda Woodard notes, “Bill’s done every full moon, sunset or specialty tour, and if we needed more volunteers, he’d fill the slots through his network at UNUM.” Bill also donated hand-carved wooden trivets to the center’s store. He insists he’s not an artist, but visitors purchased 90 of his creations last year.

“It’s fun helping people with the boats. We share the history of the marsh too. It’s been under threat several times; at one point the town considered filling it for a dump,” he says. “We hope that when people understand what a special place it is, they’ll want to keep it that way. Unless we protect it, it may not always be here.”

—By Tina Fischer

Second Session
of the
130th Maine Legislature

Legislative and Advocacy 2022 PREVIEW

Dear Maine Audubon members and supporters,

2022 is about perseverance. We are undeterred as we stare down the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and increasingly apparent changes to our climate and weather. We know what we need to do, and we must do it. Maine Audubon's legislative priorities for the second session of the 130th Legislature reflect our unwavering dedication to our mission to protect Maine's wildlife and habitat.

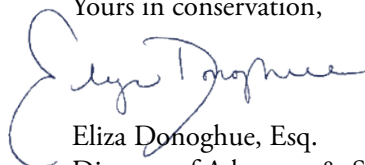
Several of our priorities for this session are focused on implementing the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan we helped create in late 2020. The Climate Action Plan identified strategies to help Maine meet its obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. One bill critical for our climate future would help expand and improve Maine's Ecological Reserve System, which protects lands essential to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We're also supporting a bill to improve climate education in Maine's schools, giving Maine students the tools to understand and fight back against our changing climate.

Our climate work will also focus on the need to continue to secure additional renewable energy. That work continues, in towns and cities and in state government, and in the legislature where we're supporting bills to procure additional renewable energy and to balance renewable energy development with the conservation of natural and working lands.

Climate isn't the only focus of our ambitious legislative slate. We're dedicated to protecting and improving Maine's environment in many ways, including by keeping invasive aquatic species out of our waterways, removing unnecessary dams which block the passage of sea-run fish, and better quantifying the use of pesticides in Maine. We're also committed to equity, and once again support the bill to recognize the sovereignty of Maine's tribes.

As always, we need your help. Join our Action Network at maineaudubon.org/act to stay up to date on all advocacy opportunities. We can achieve a brighter future if we work together.

Yours in conservation,



Eliza Donoghue, Esq.
Director of Advocacy & Staff Attorney

Legislative and Advocacy Preview

Continued Push on the Climate Action Plan

Photo: Scott Heron/Flickr



Enhancing Maine's Ecological Reserve System - LD 736

As Maine faces growing threats from irresponsible development, pollution, and climate change, it is more important than ever to protect rare, threatened, and endangered species and ensure ecosystems remain intact. Maine's ecological reserve system was created by the Legislature in 2000 to maintain effective examples of all the different natural communities found in the state, serve as scientific research sites, protect biodiversity, and provide low-impact recreation opportunities. The goal of protecting all Maine's habitat types has not been met, even when accounting for privately held lands, because the 20-year-old law limits the size of the state's ecological reserve system. LD 736 updates the state's ecological reserve law by lifting the limits to the size of the system, while also helping to meet Maine's climate goals through nature-based carbon sequestration and storage.

Encouraging Climate Education in Maine Public Schools - LD 1902

Supported by a strong coalition of local nature-based education organizations, LD 1902 would give teachers the tools they need to effectively teach climate science and the impacts

of climate change. The bill would provide grants for professional development in K-12 interdisciplinary climate change education, and also help fund partnerships between schools and nature-based organizations to improve curriculum content to engage students in new ways. Maine Audubon has always supported the role of STEM education in helping students develop the skills to find solutions to real-world problems, and giving teachers the power to educate the next generation of climate problem-solvers will benefit us all.



Expanding Maine's Clean Energy Economy - LD 1350

Maine Audubon continues our support for LD 1350, which was carried over from last session. The bill would authorize Maine's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to conduct additional competitive solicitations for contracts to procure new renewable energy resources. The additional energy would be a substantial step toward Maine's mandatory target of 80% of retail electricity sales from renewable resources by 2030 and 100% by 2050. In our 2021 testimony, Maine Audubon highlighted this bill as a critical strategy to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat by reducing the need for energy powered by fossil fuels, the largest contributor to climate change, as well as proposed a critical amendment that would ensure new resources are sited to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and habitat.

Protecting and Enhancing Maine's Environment



Maintaining Opportunities for Salmon Connectivity - LR 2167

Maine Audubon's legislative work includes not only supporting beneficial bills but also working to prevent harmful bills from passing. LR 2167 would potentially preclude the state from improving habitat for endangered Atlantic Salmon along the Kennebec River. Fish passage is currently blocked by four small dams that generate very little power, and Maine Audubon believes that removing the dams should remain an option to protect and improve salmon habitat.



Reducing the Threat From Aquatic Invasive Species - LD 1826

Like many states, Maine has been rocked by the introduction of aquatic invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil, Brazilian waterweed, and curly-leaf pondweed. New outbreaks can occur easily, and result in habitat disruption, loss of property values, diminished water quality, reduced fishing, and water recreation opportunities. LD 1826 would require the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plants and Nuisance Species to recommend ways to reduce the threat of further infestations to the Maine legislature.

Supporting Tribal Sovereignty - LD 1626

Maine's Wabanaki tribes—the Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, Houlton Band of Maliseet, and Aroostook Band of Micmacs—are treated differently from the vast majority of tribes in other parts of the country in that they do not have sovereignty to form their own government, determine membership requirements, or play a substantial role in law enforcement and court systems. Maine Audubon supports Wabanaki sovereignty as outlined in LD 1626 as a step toward acknowledgement and reparation of the occupation and seizure of Wabanaki ancestral homelands, and by further enabling, empowering, and entrusting tribal traditions and values connected to Maine Audubon's work.



Understanding Pesticide Use - LD 586

Reducing pesticide use is one of the best ways to protect native insects and improve native bird populations. Maine does not quantify pesticide use, though the state does have a policy to "minimize" pesticides. This bill would improve the pesticide registration and reporting systems used by the Bureau of Pesticide Control to better track licensing and applicators of potentially harmful chemicals.

Spring Events



GILSLAND FARM

Falmouth (Greater Portland)

Family Fun

Weekly on Wednesdays (*7 weeks per session*)

9:30–10:30 am OR 10:45–11:45 am

Spring Session I: March 2–April 13

Spring Session II: April 27–June 8

For young children and their grown-ups to explore nature together.

Earth Day Film Festival with Maine Outdoor Film Festival

Friday, April 22, 7 pm

Maine Outdoor Film Festival presents the 9th annual special conservation-themed version of the popular film tour. Join us for a selection of short independent films, curated specially for this event. *Sponsored by Allagash Brewing.*

FIELDS POND

Holden (Greater Bangor)

Youth Birding Club (ages 11–16)

Saturdays, March 26, April 23, May 21

9–11 am (*3 sessions*)

We'll explore bird biology and behavior, bird friendly landscapes, scientific data collection, and sketching/journaling, and take field trips too!

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 14

Activities include Fields Pond birding walk; binocular sale and demo; and bird wood carving demonstration with Steven Valteau, artist-in-residence with the Wendell Gilley Museum

Read & Ramble

Spring Session: March 2–April 13 (*7 weeks*)

Wednesdays, 10–11 am

Join us for an interactive storytime in the outdoors, geared towards children ages 2–5 and their grown-ups.

Family Fun

Spring Session: April 27–June 8 (*7 weeks*)

Wednesdays, 9:30–10:30 am

Drop-ins welcome if space allows

For young children and their grown-ups to explore nature together.

CAMPS
at Gilsland Farm
and Fields Pond

April Vacation Camp

April 18–22, 9 am–3pm

Summer Camps

Registration opens March 15

FMI: maineaudubon.org/camps



SCARBOROUGH MARSH

Scarborough

Spring Clean-up

April 23, 9 am–12 pm

Join us for a clean-up of Scarborough Marsh and surrounding areas.

Snowy Egret 5K

Monday, May 30

In person and virtual!

FMI: maineaudubon.org/5K



ONLINE

Invasive Insects & Maine Birds

Wednesday, March 2, 6 pm

In partnership with Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District and Maine Forest Service

Roads, Rain, and a Couple Thousand

Amphibians—A Big Night! with Greg LeClair

Friday, March 25, 7 pm

In spring, frogs and salamanders move to their breeding grounds. Learn how we can assist and protect during these mini-migrations.

Birding Basics Series

Tuesdays, 6:30 pm, March 8–29 (4 weeks)

New topic each week; perfect for beginner birdwatchers, but even the 'pros' may learn something.

Intro to Warblers

Thursday, April 28, 6:30 pm

Get some tips on how to identify these colorful, fast-moving song birds.

“Bringing Nature Home” Short Course

Wednesdays, 6 pm, April 27–May 18

This series of talks will explore the use of native plants to enhance habitat for birds in gardens, yards, and communities.

Bird Migration in the Classroom: Using

MOTUS technology with your students

Wednesday, May 11, 4–5:30 pm

Engage your students with real-time data analysis that will bring bird migration into your classroom.

AROUND THE STATE

Spring Themed Weeks

Events and activities—online and in person—for people of all ages. Each week we will focus on a different topic of wildlife and habitat conservation.

Activities will include:

Read & Ramble (*in-person*)

Family Trivia Night (*online*)

Lectures (*in-person*)

Webinars

Activity Guides for Educators



March 27–April 2
Big Night Week



April 24–30
Fish Migration Week



May 8–14
Bird Migration Week



May 15–21
Maine Arbor Week



Loon Restoration Program

Coming this spring: Artificial nest building workshops and loon monitoring webinars for a limited number of lakes. If you or your association would like to do more for loons and want to find out if your lake qualifies for this new program, contact conserve@maineaudubon.org.

Forestry for Maine Birds Workshop Saturday, May 7, 9 am – 12 pm, Hiram

Hosted by Oxford County Soil & Water Conservation District, at the Tenmile River Demonstration Forest

World Series of Birding May 14

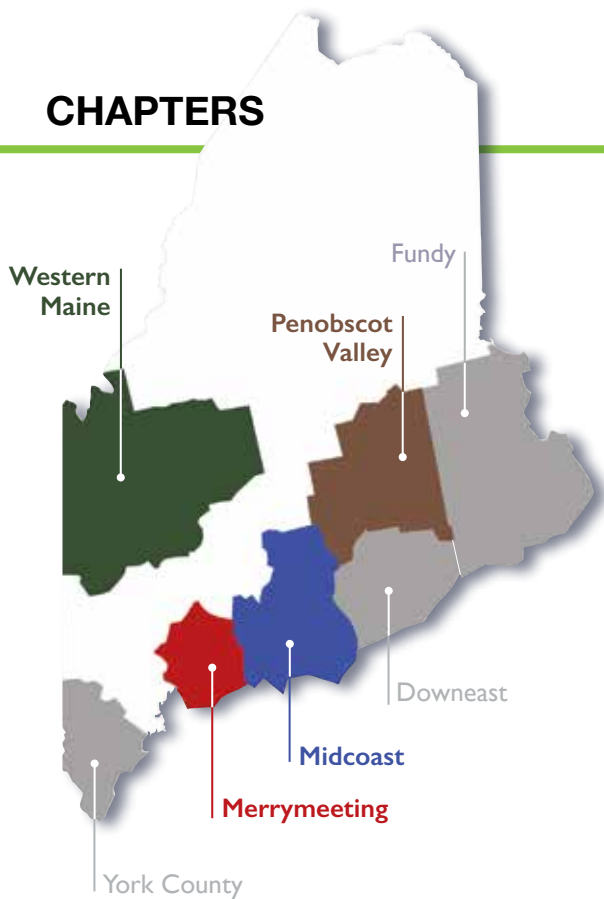
Support our team in the annual World Series of Birding birdathon! Watch for livestreams, real time updates, and more as our six-person team crosses the state to see if they can break last year's record of 161 species counted in 24 hours.
FMI: maineaudubon.org/worldseries

Stream Smart Phase I Workshop Thursday, May 26, Camden

Hosted by Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District

FMI: conserve@maineaudubon.org

CHAPTERS



Mid-Coast
midcoast.maineaudubon.org

Field Trips

April 9: Salt Bay Farm, Damariscotta
April 23: Reid State Park, Georgetown
May 12: Sears Island, Searsport
May 21: Evergreen Cemetery/Capisic Pond, Portland
May 24: Florida Lake, Freeport
May 28: Viles Arboretum, Augusta



March 17: A World on the Wing with Scott Weidensaul

April 21: Camera Trapping Your Wildlife Neighbors with Janet Pesaturo

Western

western.maineaudubon.org

Invasive Plants with Hunter Manley
March 9, 7 pm
Lincoln Auditorium, Roberts Learning Ctr.
UMaine/Farmington

How to Attract Pollinators, Birds, and Butterflies to your Yard with Gary Fish
April 13, 7 pm
Lincoln Auditorium, Roberts Learning Ctr.
UMaine/Farmington

Penobscot Valley

pvc.maineaudubon.org

Morning Bird Walks in greater Bangor
May-June, 7-8:30 am
FMI: Gordon Russell at grusss@roadrunner.com



Natural History at Katahdin Woods and Waters with Elise Goplerud
April 1, 7 pm

Merrymeeting

merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org

Speaker Program with Michael Boardman
March 28, 7-8 pm
Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick

Wildlife artist Michael Boardman will present his updated Alaska program.



Naturalist HQ

Doug Hitchcox, Staff Naturalist



Maine Bird Atlas Begins its Final Year


Results so Far

We're about to begin the fifth and final year of the Maine Bird Atlas, a project by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and we're in great shape! Thanks to 2,200 volunteers (up from 1,500 last year) who have submitted more than 87,000 checklists (up from 55,000), we have confirmed 215 species breeding in Maine! The goal of this project is to help improve our understanding of the abundance and distribution of Maine breeding and wintering birds, and data collected will be invaluable in guiding future species status assessments, priority species' needs, and identifying and conserving high value wildlife habitats.

Final Year Priorities

For the atlas, there are 974 "Priority Blocks" systematically spread across the state. These blocks are nine square miles and a standardized survey size for atlas. As I wrote in last year's *Habitat*, we hit our goal of 30% priority blocks "complete" at the end of the third season, and have since managed to pass our 60% goal for last year (actually up to 68%!) To "complete" a block they need at least 20 hours of survey effort and at least 50% of the species found need to be confirmed as breeding. Our biggest challenge for this final year is going to be accessing many of the remote priority blocks in northern and western regions of the state, but there are still blocks needing attention in all but a few counties. Now is the time to get involved and help us complete the atlas!

Learn How to Help

Join me and other Maine Bird Atlas staff and volunteers every Thursday evening, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm on Zoom! We started these virtual Q&A sessions when COVID-19 kept us from in-person meetings and they've proven to be a superior way to connect with more people and we can hold them more regularly. Come learn what the atlas is about, ask specific questions, or just hang out and hear what others are finding. Find the links and learn more about the atlas at maine.gov/birdatlas or facebook.com/mainebirdatlas 



A photograph of several yellow Trout Lilies (Erythronium americanum) with green leaves, growing from a rocky, mossy ground. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, some fully open and some as buds.

Photo: Jean Gazis/Flickr

The Naturalist's Spring Almanac

MARCH

- 7 Use a warm March day to clean out old birdhouses and be ready for nesting season.
- 17 Ice Out Days: Last year ice-out dates on Maine lakes ranged from March 17 to April 18. Be careful on the ice!
- 20 Vernal Equinox. Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers are returning to Maine's beaches already.
- 27 Maine Maple Sunday! Did you know that more than 30 bird species use maple sugarbushes as nesting habitat? Some New England maple producers are starting to integrate bird habitat into the stewardship of their forests.

APRIL

- 16 Tonight's full moon is known as the "Full Fish Moon." Historically, coastal tribes knew this moon coincided with shad runs upstream. It's also called "Full Pink Moon" because wild ground phlox is an early spring flower.
- 18 Go slow for salamanders! The first warm rainy night will see frogs and salamanders moving across roads toward breeding pools. Learn more at: vernalpools.me
- 21-22 Peak nights for the Lyrid meteor showers. Best viewed in early hours before dawn.

MAY

- 1 Time to put those hummingbird feeders up!
- 4 Look for Trout Lilies and Painted Trilliums emerging from the forest floor. Our Mast Landing sanctuary in Freeport is a great place to look.
- 15 White Oak trees are starting to flower, though leaves may be only half or partially grown. The male flowers, called catkins, droop in long clusters. These attract insects, which in turn attract birds and squirrels looking for meals.
- 16 Full Moon tonight, and in the middle of spring migration! You may be able to see birds migrating tonight by watching the full moon. *Pro tip: wear sunglasses for prolonged viewing.*
- 25 Blackpoll Warbler migration peaks in late May, a sign that warbler migration is wrapping up.





2022 marks the fiftieth year of
Maine Audubon operations at
Scarborough Marsh!

To celebrate, we will have special events
and commemorations of this historic
occasion all summer long!

...

We're getting the party started
with a special run/walk. Join us
in person or virtually from any location!

Snowy Egret 5K
May 30, 2022

Special
T-shirts for
the first 100
entries!

Register: maineaudubon.org/5K

Cool
Swag
Bags



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Indicia

% PCW or FSC logo

**MAINE
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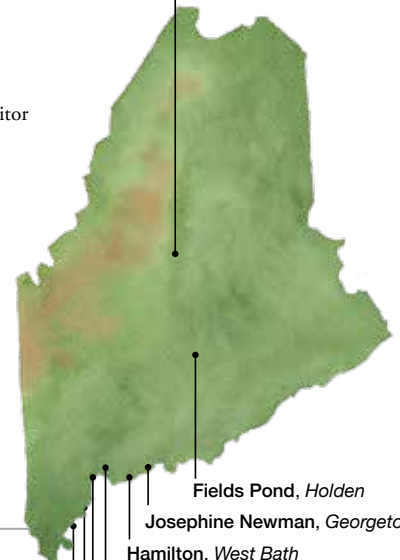
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Visit Maine Audubon's
Centers and Sanctuaries
which are free and open
to the public from dawn to dusk.

Borestone, Ellitsville



Fields Pond, Holden

Josephine Newman, Georgetown

Hamilton, West Bath

Mast Landing, Freeport

Gilsland Farm, Falmouth

Scarborough Marsh, Scarborough

East Point, Biddeford Pool

Cover photo: Volunteers from Diversified Communications help install a fence in the West Meadow at Gilsland Farm Audubon Center in Falmouth.