



The Call



Newsletter of Merry Meeting Audubon
A Chapter of Maine Audubon

Volume 44, Issue 1, Spring 2014

Georgetown Birds: 1935 - 2008

There are three Maine Audubon Sanctuaries within the Merry Meeting Audubon service area. Brackish marsh environments are present in all three. The tidal Harraseeket River flows through the Mast Landing Sanctuary in Freeport; the Hamilton Sanctuary in West Bath is located on Mill Cove of the New Meadows River; and the Josephine Newman Sanctuary in Georgetown is enclosed by the east and west branches of Robinhood Cove, an offshoot of the Sheepscoot River. In addition to the two very different ocean environments provided by high and low tides which run for miles into the three estuaries, all three also provide many land-based plant communities. The shoreline, meadow, and upland woods ecosystems give birds a broad choice of environments in which to feed and mate.

People often ask us whether a bird is becoming more common or is suffering from declines in population. Often the answer is difficult to make. For example, a count of successful Piping Plover nests conducted by Maine Audubon over the past decade varies up and down from year to year. How many other summer residents are actively breeding in the three sanctuaries, and how much do their numbers vary? A breeding survey was conducted by Maine Audubon not long after Josephine Newman willed her property to us in 1968. The list contains 38 birds which were nesting in the Sanctuary in the 1980s. An additional 31 species were annually present but not nesting in the Sanctuary. Some of them are like Great Blue Herons which breed near Reid State Park but feed in nearby marshes. Others are migrants that pass through from their northern breeding grounds and return to their winter feeding areas in the fall. The breeders in the Sanctuary are common backyard birds like Robins, Chickadees, Blue Jays, many woodpeckers, flycatchers, and warblers. I have observed two birds breeding at Josephine Newman which in the 1980s had not been recorded there: Barred Owl and Least Flycatcher. My surveys were conducted during the period 1994 to 2009 along the uplands bordering Indian Point Road. They also included the Little River marsh which is no more than half a mile from the boundary of the Sanctuary, as the birds fly. The Little River marsh is much larger than any wetland in the three sanctuaries and contains breeders of birds common to large marshes: Swamp Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Willet, and Killdeer.

These differences become more interesting if we compare a list kept by J. Otis Swift from 1935 to 1941. He birded along Bay Point Road which runs parallel to Indian Point Road, less than a mile to the east. Some birds in the Bay Point area are not listed in the surveys of the two later time periods. For example, Eastern Towhee populations declined throughout Maine in the twentieth century. On the other hand, Swift's observations also include Field and Vesper Sparrows. They are not mentioned in the Josephine Newman lists because the Sanctuary's field is and has been smaller by comparison. I have not seen them on Indian Point Road for the same reason. Swift also saw the now rare Blue-winged and Orange-crowned Warblers. As migrants, they may always have been rare in Maine. Finally, Northern Cardinals, the poster birds of northward expansion, are not listed in either of the two early surveys. In the 1990s they spread rapidly into our sanctuaries and throughout Maine.

If you are interested in thinking about these changes, join us in conducting surveys in all three sanctuaries. Look for listings of these activities in future issues of *The Call*.

Ted Allen

WANTED!! Editor for *The Call*

Please contact Tulle Frazer at 725-8942 or tullef@myfairpoint.net if you are interested.

Job description: Edit and layout articles for the three annual issues. Presently this work is done using *Publisher*, but if you have experience using other desktop publishing software that would work as well. You aren't required to write articles unless you wish to do so. Tulle is stepping down and would be glad to help you get started.

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 Karen Carlisle, Secretary, 833-6033
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 Tulle Frazer, Editor *The Call*, 725-8942
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 Don Hudson, Christmas Bird Count, 443-9795
 Carol Jack, Refreshments and Potluck, 729-0220
 Wayne Robbins, Special Projects, 443-2287
 George Sergeant, Membership, 442-8195

Bath Student Wins Scholarship

Kevin Tolan, a junior at Morse High School, is this year's winner of the MMAS scholarship to attend *Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens* at Hog Island this coming June. Kevin is in the Advanced Placement Environmental Science course. In his essay, he tells of his fascination with the natural world and in the interconnections between everything on our planet. Kevin hopes to learn more about bird evolution, diversity, and migration at the *Coastal Maine Bird Studies* program.

We think that Kevin will learn a great deal during the birding program and that he will be an enthusiastic and integral member of the Hog Island community. Congratulations, Kevin!

Other Scholarship News

The information packets for scholarships to Tanglewood and Bryant Pond 4H Camps have been sent out to the local elementary and middle schools. If you know of children who would benefit from a camping experience, please encourage them to ask for applications from their guidance counselors. Information is also available from members of the scholarship committee.

Donations from our generous co-sponsors are coming in steadily, fattening up the scholarship fund. There's still time to send a check of any amount to The Merrymeeting Audubon Scholarship Fund, in care of Jane John, 134 Middle Bay Road, Brunswick, ME 04011. You will be helping to give a child a life changing experience!

Beth Bullock, MMAS Scholarship Committee

The Nominating Committee is Inviting Nominations to the Board

Every year the Board of Directors of Merrymeeting Audubon makes a commitment to recruit new members who are willing to serve a three year renewable term. Some stay for three years and others for longer. We know how difficult it is to persuade others who might have great interest in birding to add yet another commitment to their busy lives. I joined the Board two years after moving to Maine and will try to tell you why.

Along with all other board members I like to study birds and talk about them. At meetings, which come to eight a year, one of my jobs as president is to stick to the agenda because it's easy for all of us to have several conversations going on at the same time. But talking about the conservation of birds is what brings us all together, and we do have time at the end of every meeting to talk freely and enjoy sharing experiences.

Every board member has an opportunity to develop specific interests. When I first joined the board I wasn't quite sure why I did it. As time went on I found projects that would never have occurred to me had I not come to know fellow board members. We are always looking for new perspectives. Whether they have to do with field trips, camp scholarships, bringing public speakers to our monthly programs, writing for our newsletter, or introducing something totally new, there are always better ways to get things done and we benefit from fresh input.

This year the Board of Directors would like to find at least two new members. We invite any Merrymeeting Audubon member interested in nomination to contact me, a current Board member, or a Coordinator.

Ted Allen



Field Trips and Nature Programs 2014

April

Tuesday, April 1, 7:00 pm

Board Meeting, hosted by Ted Allen:
Directions 729-8661.

Saturday, April 5

Field Trip - Waterfowl of Bowdoinham

Join Merrymeeting and York County Audubon on this outing to Brown Point in Bowdoinham in search of early waterfowl migrants. The area has been a good site in the past for unusual species such as Eurasian Wigeon and Eurasian Green-winged Teal, as well as more common treats such as Snow Goose, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and Blue-winged Teal.

Meet at the Bowdoinham Town Landing at 7:30 am. Itinerary following Brown Point will be determined at the time based on scouting reports from the area.

Trip is dependent on the ice being out. Trip status updates will be posted at www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting, or you can contact Stella Walsh at 807-3679 on Friday.

Saturday, April 12

Field Trip - Scarborough Marsh

On this annual welcome-to-spring outing we hope to see Brant and other migrating waterfowl, Wilson's Snipe, sandpipers, herons, egrets, Glossy Ibis, and sparrows. Bring lunch or a snack.

Meet at the Bath CVS at 7:00 am or at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:20 am. FMI contact Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

Saturday, April 19

Field Trip - Whiskeag Creek, Bath

Join Merrymeeting Audubon and the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust

(KELT) to explore Whiskeag Creek where it empties into the Kennebec River at Thorne Head. The targets for this trip include Canada Geese, Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue and Green-winged Teal, Common Mergansers, as well as early arriving songbirds.

Meet at the CVS in Bath at 7:30 am or at Sewall Woods on Whiskeag Road at 8:00 am. FMI contact Ted Allen at 729-8661.

Tuesday, April 22, 6:00 pm

Annual Meeting, Silent Auction, and Talk "Divorce Among Savannah Sparrows" by Nathaniel Wheelwright, Professor of Biology, Bowdoin College

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, McKean Street, Brunswick

Nat Wheelwright specializes in songbird behavior. His talk will put an interesting perspective on the Savannah Sparrow, a bird which breeds widely in Maine.

****Please mail in your check to reserve a spot. See the last page of this Call.****

Saturday, April 26

Field Trip - Reid State Park

Reid State Park includes habitats for coastal waterfowl, freshwater ducks, and marsh birds. We also expect to see early migrants in the woodlands and open areas of the park. Bring a lunch or a snack.

Meet at the CVS parking lot at Bath Plaza at 8:30 am to carpool or at the bathhouse parking lot at 9:00 am. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

May

Saturday, May 3, 9:00 - noon

Work Day - Hamilton Sanctuary

Clear trails, repair erosion damage, and spruce up the memorial garden. Continue removing invasives from the newer property. Pending state permits, we will also work on the new trails.

Please contact Glenn Evans at 443-9652 if you plan on coming.

Sunday, May 4 and Wednesday, May 14

Field Trip - Florida Lake, Freeport

While small by State standards, this undeveloped pond is Freeport's largest freshwater body. It provides prime waterfowl and wading bird habitat and a stopover point for many migratory species. American Bittern, a species of special concern in the northeast, breeds in the area - a rich mix of forested wetlands, seasonally flooded shrub-swamps, and aquatic vegetation.

Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:00 am. To carpool contact Doug Suitor at 841-1951 for Sunday, or Carol Jack at 729-0220 for Wednesday.

Tuesday, May 6, 7:00 pm

Board Meeting, hosted by Chuck Huntington: Directions 725-5657.

Wednesday, May 7

Field Trip - Brunswick Landing (former Navy Base)

The easy trails go through varied habitat of mixed woods, fields, streams, and swamps, to a pond. We'll see a variety of migrating and nesting birds, including an active Osprey nest.

Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:00 am to carpool to the gate near Cooks Corner. FMI call Carol Jack at 729-0220.

Saturday, May 10

Field Trip - International Migratory Bird Day at Viles Arboretum, Augusta

Join us on International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) for a bird walk through what was formerly known as the Pine Tree State Arboretum. Other morning programs for children and adults include bird banding and a raptor demonstration. You may purchase a simple inexpensive lunch at Viles.

The 224-acre arboretum includes woods, fields, and ponds that are easily reached by six miles of trails. Fifteen warbler species were among the many migrants seen here during IMBD in past years. Wetland species found in May include Sora and Virginia Rails.

Meet at 8:00 am at the kiosk in the Arboretum parking lot. FMI contact Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

Sunday, May 11 and Tuesday, May 20

Field Trips - Bradley Pond Warbler Series, Topsham

These two relatively easy walks pass through a conservation easement surrounding a privately-owned working farm. The easement includes varied habitat. We focus on migrating land birds: warblers, flycatchers, blackbirds, vireos, sparrows, and an occasional raptor.

Meet at 7:30 am at the Brunswick Hannaford or about 8:00 am at Bradley Pond, 2nd parking lot. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282 for the Sunday trip, or Ted Allen at 729-8661 for the Tuesday trip.

Thursday, May 15

Field Trip - Crystal Spring Farm, Brunswick

This trip is run jointly by MMA and BTLT. Jan Pierson will lead this walk through a variety of habitats including fields, forests, and ponds. We hope to see sparrows, Bluebirds, Bobolinks, and several species of warblers.

Meet at Crystal Spring Farm on Pleasant Hill Road in Brunswick at 7:30 am. FMI contact Ted Allen at 729-8661.

Saturday, May 17

Field Trip - Morse Mountain and Seawall Beach, Phippsburg

The Bates-Morse Mt. Conservation Area is a great spot for late migrants and nesting woodland birds. We will also see shorebirds, gulls, and probably nesting Piping Plovers.

Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford parking lot at 7:30 am or at Morse Mountain parking lot off Rte. 216, Phippsburg, at 8:00 am. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

Sunday, May 18

Field Trip - Evergreen Cemetery and Capisic Pond, Portland

Evergreen is one of the best places in southern Maine to see a wide variety of songbirds at very close range, particularly warblers.

Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford at 6:15 am. FMI call Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

Wednesday, May 21

Field Trip - Green Point Farm, Dresden

Expect a wide variety of migrant birds in the woodlands, fields, and wild-rice flats of this diverse area. Warblers and other woodland birds, sparrows and other field birds, waterfowl, and raptors may be seen on this walk. Waterproof footwear is recommended.

Meet at Bath CVS at 6:30 am to carpool or at Green Point Farm by the green shed at 7:00 am. FMI contact Carol Jack at 729-0220.

Saturday, May 31

Field Trip - Thorne Head, Bath

This field trip is run jointly by MMAS and KELT. Thorne Head overlooks Whiskeag Creek (see April 19) and is located on the Maine Birding Trail. The preserve is rich in vireos and warblers. The paths provide easy walking under a canopy of mature trees.

Meet at the CVS in Bath at 7:30 am to carpool or at the preserve parking lot at the north end of High St. at 8:00 am. FMI contact Ted Allen at 729-8661

June

Sunday, June 8

Field Trip - Brownfield Bog

This is a pristine wetland of almost 6,000 acres located along the Saco River. Its various habitats are bursting with wildlife. Bring a lunch and bug repellent.

Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford at 6:00 am. FMI call Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

Saturday, June 14

Field Trip - Cathance River Preserve, Topsham

We will walk the trails looking for Towhees, sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, and other birds. Wildflowers, ferns, and mosses grow in the moist woods by the river.

Take Rte. 196 and turn into the Highland Green Community on the north side of the highway. Drive in about 1/2 mile and meet in the parking lot of the Golf Course, on the left, at 7:00 am. FMI call Carol Jack at 729-0220.

Saturday, June 21

Field Trip - Hidden Valley Nature Center, Jefferson

Enjoy a kettle bog, Dyer Pond, and miles of woods trails.

Meet at Bath CVS at 7:00 am. FMI contact Jack Collins at 373-0336.

Saturday, June 28, 8:00 - 11:00 am

Work Day - Hamilton Sanctuary

Cut back trails and remove non-native bittersweet to maintain native habitat. Pending state approval, work on the new trails.

Please contact Glenn Evans at 443-9652 if you plan on coming.

August

Check our website for dates and times of field trips in August.

See p5 for the first September trip.

Welcome to the following new members who joined during 2013. We hope that you will find field trips or talks of interest to you. A few people who rejoined may be listed here as new members. If so, we are sorry for the mistake.

Ms. Michelle Reeves	Arrowsic	Ms. Sharon Randall	Georgetown
Ms. Cindy Baumgartner	Bailey Island	Jeff Bills	Harpwell
Ms. Judith A. Atwood	Bath	Ms. Elizabeth Davis	
Ms. Colleen Brouwer		Mr. Leonard Liebes	
Ms. Adair Delamater		Ms. Maureen Anthoine-Orlandini	
Terri Nickel		William L. Diehl	Lisbon Falls
Ms. Jacquelyn Perfetto		Rich and Joni Smith	Litchfield
Kim Wilson		Ms. Dee Miskill	Orrs Island
Ms. Faith Woodman		Mr. E. Jeffrey Stann	
Ms. Eugenie Shepard	Boothbay	Mr. and Ms. Roy Clark	Phippsburg
Ms. Sonia Bissell	Boothbay Harbor	Ms. Marie Harvell	
Mr. Samuel Kucharsky		Mr. Stuart Carlisle	Portland
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Sullivan	Bowdoinham	Ms. Amanda Moeser	
Ms. Margaret Butler	Brunswick	Craig W. and Linda E. Williams	
Ms. Shelia Carey		Abigail Greene G and Jeff Goldman	Pownal
James Parmentier and Elizabeth Fowler		Mr. Richard S. Kivela	
Mr. Bill Good, Jr.		Mr. Robert Zottoli	Richmond
Ms. Emily Griffith		Mr. David Brewer	Sebasco Estates
Ms. Delia Guzman		Ms. Judy Plouffe	South Freeport
Ms. Ruth Klein		Ms. Nancy S. Adams	Topsham
Ms. Sue Ann Maynes		Ms. Sandra D. Bent	
Ms. Diana McFarland		Sarah G. Bloy	
Benjamin and Sheila Menair		Ms. Kristen Drinkert	
Ms. Emily Rose		Mr. Richard King	
Jean and Walt Sawyer		Mr. Russ Kinne	
Dr. John Stormer		Ms. Sherry Saxida	
Kevin and Sally Twine		Mrs. Amy Wesson	West Bath
Ms. Emily Umbriaco		Ms. Mara Abbott	Westport Island
Ms. Anna Grimes	Durham	Ms. Emma Balazs	Wiscasset
Diane Magrass	Freeport	Kathryn Dionne and Brian Beard	
Mrs. Eirette Santiago		Ms. Frances Stinson	Woolwich
Mrs. Marisa Tobey		Loren Wright	
Mr. Richard B. Whiting			
Ms. Ann H. Wright			



September

Saturday, September 6

Field Trip: Rachel Carson NWR

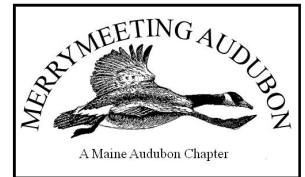
The Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was established to preserve ten important estuaries from Kittery to Cape Elizabeth that are key points along migration routes of waterfowl and other migratory birds. We will look for migrating shore and marsh birds. Bring a snack/lunch and water. Meet at Hannaford in Brunswick at 6:30 am. FMI call Glenn Evans at 443-9652.



Merrymeeting Audubon
36 Federal Street
Brunswick, ME 04011

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**Make your reservations now for the annual dinner meeting, silent auction, and talk by
Nathaniel Wheelwright
6:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, 2014
at St. Charles Borromeo Church Meeting Hall, 132 McKeen Street, Brunswick**

Please send a check (\$20 per person), made out to Merrymeeting Audubon.
Mail your check to: Tulle Frazer, 271 Harpswell Neck Rd, Harpswell, ME 04079.
FMI call Tulle at 725-8942.

Reservations must be received by Tuesday, April 15th

Simply Elegant caterers will serve a buffet dinner of:

Appetizers: hot spinach artichoke dip, bourbon cocktail meatballs, puff pastry bites

Main course: lemon ginger chicken, cranberry roast pork loin, herb ricotta lasagna

Sides: salad of mixed greens, rice pilaf, and roasted mixed vegetables

Assorted delectable desserts

If you are unable to attend the dinner, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Merrymeeting Audubon Scholarship Fund. Mail your donation to: MMA Scholarship Fund, c/o Jane John, 134 Middle Bay Road, Brunswick, ME 04011