

President's Perch

The is-it-spring-yet Annual Meeting 2015

Join Merrymeeting Audubon on April 28 for our annual dinner meeting and silent auction for benefit of our Scholarship Fund. Good food and company, a shopping adventure, and an exciting guest speaker program.

MMA is delighted to present our after-dinner speaker, **Doug Hitchcox**, Maine Audubon Staff Naturalist, eBird reviewer, moderator of the 'Maine Birds' listserv and secretary of the Maine Bird Records Committee.

After graduating from the University of Maine in 2011, Doug traveled to every corner of the state to observe as many species as possible in what is known as a "Big Year". He compiled a record-setting 314 species, along with a first state record Little Egret.

Doug will discuss the benefits of doing a "Big Year" in Maine, or why you might think twice about it—places you've never been, at times of day when you should be asleep, and in habitats that might not appeal. After our "winter of discontent" and attacks of cabin fever, this tour through Maine is designed to inspire.



Watch the birdie. **Doug Hitchcox**, Maine Audubon Staff Naturalist, photographs this immature Mourning Warbler in a moment of stillness. Beautiful!

Stella Walsh

Maine Audubon's Hamilton Wildlife Sanctuary opens new trail

Maine Audubon's Hamilton Sanctuary, off Foster Point Road in West Bath, recently doubled its trail system to allow visitors access to the Sanctuary's remote 26-acre peninsula.

Donated by Millicent Hamilton, the Sanctuary originally consisted of two separate parcels. A few years ago, Maine Audubon acquired an abutting property to connect them. The new mile-long, green-blazed trail accesses mature forests, a pond, forested wetlands and



Snowy Egrets

Heron, Snowy Egret, Belted Kingfisher, Osprey, and Bald Eagle. In the spring, Common Eider Ducks are often seen with their ducklings. Other waterfowl observed in the Cove are: American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye and Red-breasted Mergansers.



Flicker

outstanding views of the New Meadows River's Back Cove and Williams Island. Whether snowshoeing in winter, or hiking during spring, summer or fall, the new trail will be appreciated by all.

New Meadows River's Back Cove offers wonderful birding opportunities with tidal mudflats at low tide and open water at high tide. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, Back Cove's habitats are in the top 25% of Gulf of Maine's estuarine habitat for rare and declining bird species. Some of the birds sighted in and around the Cove include: Great Blue

Sanctuary upland habitat also is used by a variety of species. When spring arrives, American Woodcock display their courtship flights in the meadow at dusk. During the day, Tree Swallows and Boblinks patrol the field. Broad-winged Hawk and Goshawk have nested in the forest. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks have also been spotted. Smaller woodland birds that use the Sanctuary include: Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Ovenbird, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Pileated Woodpecker.

Song Sparrows, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Northern Flicker nest along edge habitat. If lucky, one may spot a rare bird such as the female Western Tanager. Sadly, one was found dead this past November, within

See **NEW TRAIL**, page 5

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

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E-mail us at:
merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org

Camp life: A personal perspective

I feel lucky to have had many camp experiences that enriched my life. My first overnight camp was a Girl Scout camp in New York State in the late 1950's. My vivid memories recall the smells and sights of the nature lodge, awakening to a bugle call, being away from my family for the first time, being close enough to a lovely brown cow to touch her. Sleeping outdoors under the stars in a long row of wiggly, giggly girls, and waking to dew-soaked sleeping bags was a highlight. When Mrs. Applegate told of her adventures through-hiking the Appalachian Trail, my horizons expanded. My counselors were also wonderful role models. I cried when I had to go home.

In the 1970's I had the opportunity to be a counselor in a girls' camp in Maine, leading the explorations (nature) activities. The campers and I enjoyed picking wild blueberries and making jam, frogging in the mucky edges of the lake, making dyes from plants, finding and trying edible plants, seeing luna moths, scouting for birds' nests, singing together in the Cathedral in the Pines. As a counselor, I could see the delight in their curious eyes. I could almost watch the campers grow, and develop so many friendships during those two summers.

After teaching science indoors for a number of years, I worked at Chewonki in the 1980's in the Environmental Education program. Just being outdoors in the spring and fall, and alert to the natural events going on around us, was exciting! The campers' endless questions kept me on my toes. The changes I observed in many of the children amazed me. They were so eager to learn about the creatures in each ecosystem, or how to climb in the barn, or how to canoe, or make spaghetti over a campfire. Living and learning as a small group for a week brought out hidden, valuable traits in even the shiest member.

If you've ever camped, as a child or adult, then you know the value of such an experience. Please consider contributing to the *Merrymeeting Audubon Scholarship Committee* so that we can continue providing local children with the opportunity to create their own memory-making adventures! Send your check, in any amount, to **Steve Spear**, 9 Livernois Drive, Topsham, ME 04086. The children we send to camps at Tanglewood, Bryant Pond, and Hog Island—will thank you.

Sue Sergeant

SNOWY EGRETS photo courtesy of John Berry; **FLICKER** photo courtesy of Doug Suitor; **DOUG HITCHCOX** photo courtesy of Stella Walsh; **BLUE HERON** and **SAND-ERLING** drawings courtesy of the private collection of Roy Winkelman.

“
&
Everybody needs beauty
as well as bread, places
to play in and pray in,
where nature may heal
and give strength to
body and soul.”

John Muir

MMA board seeks new members

Each year Merrymeeting Audubon makes a commitment to recruit new members for our Board of Directors.

I joined the Board because I like to find new habitats for locating birds, introduce myself to interesting speakers for public meetings, and learn from other Board members about new opportunities for field study. Conservation of birds is what brings us all together.

Whether your interests have to do

with field trips, camp scholarships for grade school students, writing for our newsletter, or introducing a personal interest, we welcome new ways to get things done. We all benefit from fresh input, new skills or talents.

If you are interested in finding out more about what we do or would like to join the Board, please feel free to call me or any other officer on the Board. We look forward to hearing from you.

Ted Allen

Beginning birders want to know . . .

Birding question:

When spring arrives, what should I do about feeding the birds at my feeders? Should I change the type of food? Will the suet I get at the grocery store get rancid? Should I leave the seed on the ground that has been covered by snow? Should I stop feeding so the birds don't become dependent on my food, or will this harm them when they are trying to raise nestlings?

Answer:

There is no reason to stop feeding birds just because spring has come. Feeding birds helps during severe weather and while young are being raised, and you don't need to worry that the birds will become dependent on food from your feeders.

It also can be fascinating to watch parents bring the young to the feeders. I especially have enjoyed watching young Hairy Woodpeckers clinging to trees near the suet feeder begging to be fed.

You may want to make some changes to the feed you are using in the summer time and to the quantities that you provide. Seed will go bad more rapidly during the warmer months, so only provide enough for a couple of days. **Black oil sunflower** is probably the best seed to use in the summer as the shell provides protection from moisture but is soft enough that nearly all birds can crack it.

Raw suet that you get from the grocery store should only be used when temperatures are below freezing, as it will rapidly turn rancid otherwise. **Processed suet cakes** from a reputable source are safe to use, but it is best to avoid cakes including *peanuts or corn* unless they are being consumed rapidly. Also keep them refrigerated until use.

You definitely **should clean seed and hulls** that have been on the ground, to avoid the spread of bacteria and disease. Moldy or spoiled food is unhealthy for both birds and mammals. It is also important to **clean your feeders** at least monthly and more often if there are signs of mold. I prefer to soak the feeders in soapy water and then brush. Rinse the feeder, then soak in a white vinegar solution and rinse clean.

John Berry and Karen Carlisle

NEW TRAIL, from page 1

the Sanctuary along Foster Point Road. The Sanctuary is also home to a number of mammals including White-tailed Deer, Red Fox, Weasel, Mink, Fisher, Porcupine and Snowshoe Hare.

The adjoining 19 acres was acquired through a combination of grants and generous donations. The Merrymeeting Bay Trust recently provided additional funding to purchase lumber for bridges, new trail signs, and a new kiosk. Construction of the trail was a team effort comprising: Maine Audubon Property Manager, **Bob Bittenbender**; Hamilton Sanctuary caretakers, **Glenn Evans** and **Marianne Warner**; the Hamilton Sanctuary Stewardship Committee; and the Morse High School Football Team.

The new kiosk, located across Foster Point Road from the parking area just beyond the corner of the field, contains a map showing the new Green Trail's route. A new donation box, nearby, will help Maine Audubon maintain the old and new trails.

With the doubling of its trail system, Hamilton Sanctuary is one of the premiere coastal protected areas for observing wildlife and enjoying the natural beauty in mid-coast Maine. To preserve that beauty and enhance wildlife viewing opportunities, please note that Audubon sanctuary trails prohibit pets, fires, off-road vehicles (including bicycles) and alcohol. Enjoy your visit!

Glenn Evans



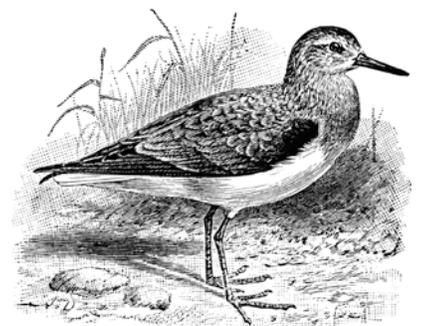
September

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

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 the Brunswick Hannaford parking lot at 6:30 a.m. FMI call Glenn Evans at 443-9652.





Merrymeeting Audubon
36 Federal Street
Brunswick, ME 04011

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

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MMA Annual Meeting

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GUEST SPEAKER

DOUG HITCHCOX IS A MAINE AUDUBON
STAFF NATURALIST, eBIRD REVIEWER & SECRETARY
OF THE MAINE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE. DOUG
WILL TALK ABOUT HIS "BIG YEAR" EXPERIENCE
AND THE BENEFITS OF DOING ONE. READY, SET, GO!
BE INSPIRED!

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 STEVE SPEAR, 9 LIVERNOIS DRIVE, TOPSHAM,
ME 04086. THANK YOU.

**Tuesday
April 28
6:00 p.m.**

**St. Charles Borromeo Church
132 McKeen Street, Brunswick
Reservations must be received
by April 21st.**

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:
MERRYMEETING AUDUBON. MAIL YOUR
CHECK TO: MERRYMEETING AUDUBON,
36 FEDERAL ST., BRUNSWICK, ME 04011
FMI call Beth Bullock at 729-9650



Field Trips & Nature Programs 2015

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

April

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

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 12:30 p.m. Trip is dependent on the ice being out. Please check www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting for trip status updates; or call Stella Walsh at 807-3679 on Friday.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 7:00 P.M.

Board Meeting hosted by Ted Allen

Directions: call 729-8661.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

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 a.m. or at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:20 a.m. FMI call Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

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 Bath CVS at 7:30 a.m. or at Sewall Woods on Whiskeag Road at 8:00 a.m. FMI call Ted Allen at 729-8661.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

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 Bath CVS at 8:30 a.m. to carpool; or at the Park bathhouse parking lot at 9:00 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 6:00 P.M.

Annual Meeting, Silent Auction and Guest Speaker

➤ *St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, McKeen Street, Brunswick*

For more details see "President's Perch" on the front page.

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

May

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 9 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Work Day — Hamilton Sanctuary

Clear trails, repair erosion damage, and spruce up the memorial garden. Continue removing invasives from the newer property. We will also continue improving the new trails. Call Glenn Evans at 443-9652 if you plan on coming.

SUNDAY, MAY 3 AND WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

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 habitats, 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 a.m. To carpool, call Doug Suitor at 841-1951 for Sunday; or Ted Allen at 729-8661 for Wednesday.

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 7:00 P.M.

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing (former Navy Base)

The easy trails go through varied habitats 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 a.m. to carpool to the gate near Cook's Corner. FMI call Jack Collins at 373-0336.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

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 the kiosk in the Arboretum parking lot at 8:00 a.m. FMI call Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

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SUNDAY, MAY 10 AND TUESDAY, MAY 19.

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 habitats. We'll focus on migrating land birds: warblers, flycatchers, blackbirds, vireos, sparrows, and an occasional raptor.

➤ Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:30 a.m. or at Bradley Pond, 2nd parking lot at 8:00 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282 for Sunday; or Ted Allen at 729-8661 for Tuesday.

THURSDAY, MAY 14

Field Trip: Crystal Spring Farm, Brunswick

This trip is run jointly by MMAS and BTLT. This walk is 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 a.m. FMI call Ted Allen at 729-8661.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

Field Trip: Morse Mountain & Seawall Beach, Phippsburg

The Bates-Morse Mountain 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 7:00 a.m.; or at Morse Mountain parking lot, off Rte. 216 in Phippsburg, at 7:30 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

SUNDAY, MAY 17

Field Trip: Evergreen Cemetary 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 a.m. FMI call Doug Suito at 841-1951.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

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 a.m. to carpool; or at Green Point Farm by the green shed, at 7:00 a.m. FMI call Carol Jack at 729-0220.

SUNDAY, MAY 24 AND SUNDAY, JUNE 14

Field Trip: Capt. William Fitzgerald Recreation and Conservation Area, Brunswick

These two easy walks along sandy paths are on one of the few sandplain grasslands remaining in Maine. Join us as we explore this rare natural area for birds such as Field and Vesper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Towhees and Prairie Warblers. We also will be on the lookout for unusual reptiles and butterflies.

➤ Meet at the iron gate on Lindbergh Crossing Road at 6:30 a.m. From Cook's Corner intersection, take the Bath Road to the stoplight at Lowe's. Turn Left on Old Bath Road, go approximately 1.3 miles and look on your right for Lindbergh Crossing Road. Park along the road before the iron gate. NOTE: Due to a controlled burn at this location, on a TBD date, please check our website, or call Gordon Smith at 725-0282 for a updates.

SATURDAY, MAY 30

Field Trip: Thorne Head, Bath

This trip is run jointly by MMAS and KELT. Thorne Head overlooks Whiskeag Creek (*see April 18*) 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 Bath CVS at 7:30 a.m. to carpool; or at the Preserve parking lot at the north end of High Street at 8:00 a.m. FMI call Ted Allen at 729-8661.

June

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

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 Brunswick Hannaford at 6:00 a.m. FMI call Doug Suito at 841-1951.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

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 a.m. FMI call Andrew Gilbert at 329-7525.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

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 a.m. FMI call Jack Collins at 373-0336

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 8:00 - 11:00 A.M.

Work Day: Hamilton Sanctuary

Cut back trails and remove non-native bittersweet to maintain native habitat. Please call Glenn Evans at 443-9652 if you plan on coming.

August

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

See Page 5 for first September trip.

Field Trip Input Wanted:

Over the past decade we have sought to offer free monthly field trips to local birding locations. Some of our trips have been well-attended and others not as much. We are soliciting input from our membership to help us provide more appealing offering of trips. Please contact us via email at dougsuito@gmail.com with any ideas or suggestions that you would like us to consider.