

A great lady, moving on

Beth Bullock, you will be missed!

For seventeen years, Beth has contributed immeasurably to our Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter, though her name has become synonymous with the



Scholarship Program. This program has provided the opportunity for hundreds of school-aged children, teenagers, and area teachers to enjoy residential summer camp experiences in Maine.

Beth became involved with Maine Audubon and our Chapter's Scholarship Program in 1999, shortly after relocating to Maine from Colorado. Collaborating with her colleagues Jane John, Barbara Tucker, and Sue Sergeant, Beth worked tirelessly to raise funds, make connections with summer camps and area public schools, and promote our scholarships whenever the opportunity arose. She especially enjoyed hearing the excitement in the voices of the young scholarship recipients when she called to let them know they were going to one of the camps.

She also served as a Chapter Board member for ten years and has contributed to the success of countless chapter events: pot luck dinners, annual meetings, and public presentations.

See **BULLOCK**, page 5

Paradise lost? Paradise found.

Creating backyard habitats

The loss of suitable habitat is perhaps the principal cause of the decline in the population of many birds and other wildlife. As pointed out by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, "We have turned 54% of the lower 48 states into cities and suburbs, and 41% more into various forms of agriculture." However, our yards can have an important function



Great Spangled Fritillary on a purple coneflower.



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth on bee balm flower.

in preserving biodiversity. (Tallamy's web site <http://www.bringing-naturehome.net/gardening-for-life.html> is a good place to start learning about the importance of birds, native plants, and the suburban yard.)

For our yards to function as

habitat, the single most important thing we can do is to plant native species of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Ninety-six per cent of all terrestrial birds depend on insects for at least part of the year, particularly to feed nestlings. Tallamy's research has shown that native plant varieties support a much greater diversity of insect life than exotic species. For example, our native oak trees support

over 500 species of insects, maples almost 300 species. Many alien species support few or even no bird-sustaining insects. Native fruits and seeds also generally provide better nutrition at the right time of year.

A yard planted with native trees and flowers need not be messy or unattractive. Our native oaks, maples, birches, and pines are beautiful.



American Goldfinches in winter, feeding on seeds in my "wildflower meadow".

Crabapples and cherries flower in the spring, and the fruits of many varieties are colorful well into winter. These fruits support Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and other birds as well.

In my own yard, I have planted much of the lawn as a "wildflower meadow" with lupine, Black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, daisies, asters, Joe Pye weed and bee balm—all native. These are popular with many insect pollinators. The bee balm especially attracts hummingbirds. Sparrows and finches also enjoy the seeds in winter. I have also planted the shrubs

See **HABITATS**, page 5

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

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 Jane Robinson, *Field Trips Coordinator*
 E-mail us at:
merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org

New national monument established in Maine

On August 24, 2016 President Obama designated 87,500 acres in the North Maine woods as the **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument**. The property, donated by Roxanne Quimby, was accepted by the National Park Service on it's 100th anniversary. The new preserve provides birding and recreational opportunities. Check our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MerrymeetingAudubon/>) for a report on an exploratory cross-country skiing and birding trip scheduled for late February to America's newest National Monument.

Doug Suito

Scholarships offer great opportunities

Dear Merrymeeting Audubon Society,

Thank you for giving me a scholarship to go to Bryant Pond 4-H camp. I went to the fishing camp with my best friend, Julia. We had a great time!



We did a lot of fishing. We caught lots of fish. Some of the kinds were Brook Trout and Bass. One of the boys caught a 4-1/2 lb large-mouth bass! That was the record for the week we were there. I learned how to take a fish off the hook. I can also put my own worm on the hook. I learned how to fly cast, but I didn't like that as much as regular fishing. Julia loved the fly casting, though.

We also took our Boater Safety test. I passed with 100%! Everyone passed their test. I got a certificate and a card with my boater safety information. Along with fishing, we did some other things. We swam and went kayaking and canoeing. It was fun. Kayaking was my favorite out of those things.

My real favorite was when the whole camp played a huge game of capture the flag! There was a red team and a blue team, but on each team there were "mosquitoes," "bears," and "trout." We had face paint that matched the color of our team. The symbol of the face paint represented whether you were a mosquito, trout, or bear. The way the game was played, was that bears could only "eat" trout, trout could only "eat" mosquitoes, and mosquitoes could only "bite" bears.



I was a mosquito and Julia was a bear, but we were on the same team, which was blue, so we couldn't get each other. I could only get red bears because I was a blue mosquito. Julia could only get red trout because she was a blue bear. Trout on my team could only get red mosquitoes. The red team won twice, and the blue team won once.



I had a great time! And the food was AMAZING! The best part was the cookouts. Normally there is only one cookout, but because of 4th of July, we had two! It was awesome. We also had sparklers on the 4th of July. It was fun!

We also did two off-site trips for fishing. Those were fun as well. The 4-1/2 pound bass was caught on one of those trips. On the other trip, we didn't catch anything! I still had a great time. I saw a fish at the second trip, but it was too small for catching.

Thank you very much for giving me a scholarship so I could go to Bryant Pond 4-H camp. Julia and I had tons of fun! I am hoping to go again next year!!

Sincerely,
 Morgan Poulin

Beginning birders want to know. . . .

Question: I watch birds out my window and worry about their welfare when it's cold. Are there tips to help them this winter?

Answer: Winter is a challenging time for birds. Days are colder, finding food can be a challenge, and unfrozen water can be difficult to find. You can help with all of these problems.

To help birds survive the cold, windy days of winter, *shelter* is the most important assistance. You can help by building a brush pile in an out-of-the-way corner of your property to provide a safe spot for ground nesting birds, preferably close to food sources. Start with larger limbs and branches stacked loosely and then add smaller branches, leaves and grasses. If you clean out your birdhouses in the fall, they may be used by social species, such as chickadees, as roosting boxes where they will communally roost to conserve body heat. A long-term solution is to include evergreen trees and bushes in your landscaping. These keep their cover throughout the year and provide a natural winter shelter. Many also provide seeds or berries for a natural food source.



Cold weather also increases the birds' need for *food* at a time when food is scarce. You can provide natural sources of food by leaving dead flowers, seed heads, and grasses in your gardens until spring. Birds will eagerly eat the seeds of large flowers like Black-eyed Susan, sedums and coneflowers. Hawthorns, crab apples, bayberry, and winterberry also provide natural fruits consumed in the winter. Another enjoyable way to help is to provide a variety of nutritious food in feeders or scattered on the ground. Suet, thistle, and black oil sunflower seeds are all very nutritious and enjoyed by many species. Cracked corn and white millet are good for ground feeding birds such as juncos, sparrows, and doves. It is important to keep your feeders clean and have them placed in a safe location.

The third important aid you can give is to provide a reliable source of clean, *unfrozen water*. This can be done either with a heated birdbath or by adding a heating element to one you already have. Most of these turn on and off as appropriate, based on the temperature. Providing winter water saves the birds valuable energy by eliminating the need to fly long distances to find consumable water.



Our winter birds do quite well surviving the coldest months, but they can use help to improve their chances of survival, and attracting birds to your yard can help brighten the winter days as well.

John Berry and Karen Carlisle

HABITATS, from page 1

winterberry, and alternate-leaved dogwood, and “encouraged” existing red-osier dogwood and arrowwood viburnum.

It is not always easy to find genuine “native” plants and seeds. After all, everything is “native” somewhere, except perhaps some hybrids or GMOs. Even at good nurseries some employees may not be well informed on exactly which plants are native to Maine. You will have to do some research to make sure the plants you buy are specifically native to Maine. Entering “**Maine native plants**” into an Internet search will bring up many good sources. A few are:

- <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2500e/> Bulletin #2500, Gardening to Conserve Maine’s Native Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid.

- <http://wildseedproject.net/using-natives-in-the-landscape-a-comprehensive-plant-list/> Using Natives in the Landscape: A Comprehensive Plant List.

- <http://www.mainelakes.org/what-you-can-do/native-plants/> Some comments and suggestions on native plants to use on Maine lakefront property (and elsewhere).

Jay Stormer



BULLOCK, from page 1

After seventeen years, Beth has decided to move on to other interests— devote more time to travel, visits with her children, their families, and her seven grandchildren.

Members of the Chapter, especially the Scholarship Committee, will miss her dedication and enthusiasm, her knowledge and experience. *Thank you, Beth, for everything you’ve done to help our Chapter be the best it can be!*





Merrymeeting Audubon
36 Federal Street
Brunswick, ME 04011

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

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Maine Audubon

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Merrymeeting Chapter

YES! I would like to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in my community and
 join **renew my membership** with Maine Audubon and the Merrymeeting Chapter.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Seasonal Address: _____ from _____ to _____

City/State/Zip: _____

I'm enclosing an additional \$10 to receive *Audubon*, National Audubon's magazine
(free for Patron members and above)

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

Charge my monthly Frequent Flyer gift of \$ _____ to Visa MC AMEX Discover

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Card # _____ Exp. _____ CSV _____

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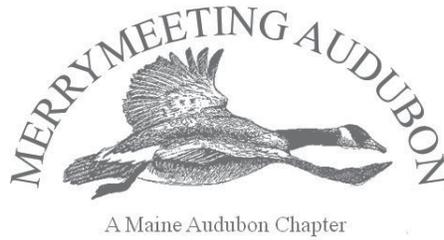
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Upcoming Field Trips and Nature Programs

(See the full trip descriptions inside)



December 2016

Join us for the

Christmas Bird Counts





JANUARY 2017

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY												
26	27	28	29	30	31	1												
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15 Winter Waterfowl Watch from Brunswick to Harpswell												
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23	24 Pot Luck Dinner & Presentation	25	26	27	28 Cape Elizabeth Coastal Birding	29												
30	31	Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter Field Trips & Nature Programs		<table border="1" style="font-size: small; width: 100%;"> <tr> <th>DECEMBER 2016</th> <th>FEBRUARY 2017</th> </tr> <tr> <td>M T W T F S S</td> <td>M T W T F S S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td> <td>6 7 8 9 10 11 12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</td> <td>13 14 15 16 17 18 19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td> <td>20 21 22 23 24 25 26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26 27 28 29 30 31</td> <td>27 28</td> </tr> </table>			DECEMBER 2016	FEBRUARY 2017	M T W T F S S	M T W T F S S	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	6 7 8 9 10 11 12	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	13 14 15 16 17 18 19	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	20 21 22 23 24 25 26	26 27 28 29 30 31	27 28
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* * Field Trip Happenings * *



Juvenile white morph
Snow Goose



Northern Mockingbird



Eastern Phoebe

2016 Big Sit!: Worst birding weather, ever!

The 5th annual Big Sit! of 2016 will go down in the record books, not for the fantastic number of species, but for the most awful weather conditions for birding, ever. Earlier in the week, we were looking forward to a decent day with a slight chance of showers, but it turned out to be almost constant wind-driven rain and drizzle all day long.

Considering the conditions, we were fortunate to tally 42 species, but it wouldn't have been possible without the sharp eyes (under those umbrellas and rain coats) of co-leader Jay Stormer, Carol Jack, Ted Allen, Kathy Claerr and Jack Collins. Stella Walsh also stopped by to offer encouragement and cookies.

Despite the unfortunate weather conditions, several birds were seen for the first time on our Big Sit!, including a juvenile white morph Snow Goose (a rather tame goose that had been present for 5 days, hanging out around the boat launch), a Northern Mockingbird and Eastern Phoebe, spotted by Kathy, and a Blackpoll Warbler. Incidentally, the Snow Goose is just the second sighting of this species

ever at Wharton Point, the previous sighting having occurred in 1975.

Earlier in the day while traveling to the Big Sit!, several participants remarked about observing a large group of wild turkeys along Maquoit Road. But houses and trees prevented us from viewing the turkeys from the Big Sit! circle. At the end of the day as Jack was pulling out onto Maquoit Road to go home, he looked over in the marsh and spotted the turkey flock there. However, they were still not visible from the Big Sit! circle. But Jack, by waving his arms, encouraged the turkeys to walk in the correct direction (akin to a baseball player waving his arms over his head from side to side to encourage a fly ball hit down the line to stay in fair territory), the turkeys proceeded to parade one-by-one through the marsh, all 24 of them visible from the Big Sit! circle. It was a great way to end an otherwise dreary day.

For more information about the Big Sit!, please see the **Bird Watcher's Digest** website at, <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit.php> *Gordon Smith*

Merrymeeting areas for Bird Counts:

LOWER KENNEBEC

Arrowsic, West Bath,
Georgetown, Westport,
Phippsburg/Popham,
Small Point, Southport

BRUNSWICK/FREEPORT

Yarmouth/
Cousins Island,
South Freeport,
Wolf's Neck/
Freeport East,
Freeport West, Maquoit,
Brunswick Landing,
Harpwell Islands,
Harpwell Neck,
Chebeague



117th National Audubon Christmas Bird Count

One of the largest and most respected citizen science efforts on the globe, the Christmas Bird Count began on Christmas Day in 1900 as an alternative to the "side shoot" when hunters tried to shoot as many birds as possible. Frank Chapman proposed the count and 27 birders counted 90 species in 25 count circles in eastern North America. The program has grown to more than 2000 count circles (with over 70,000 birders) all over North America and beyond.

The results are compiled locally, sent to national headquarters and are published in a special publication called "*American Bird*". Again this year, Merrymeeting Audubon will join other Audubon chapters around North America in surveying the winter bird population. Each local count area is broken into several groups that count all the birds

they see in their area. You are encouraged to join us. Just call or email **Don Hudson** at 443-9795/wdon-hudson@gmail.com) [for the Lower Kennebec count Dec. 17] or **Stella Walsh** at 807-3679/stella-walsh@earthlink.net) [for the Brunswick-Freeport count Dec 31]. Please remember to *dress warmly* and wear comfortable shoes! If you live in either count area you can also participate by keeping and reporting a feeder count list to the above-listed leaders (please do it **on the day** of the count).

You might also consider opening your house to a group as a warm-up, rest stop. Hosts usually provide warm cider, coffee, tea and snacks. We start counting around 7:00 A.M. and finish in the mid to late afternoon. Afterwards, we get together for a pizza party at a member's house to compile the results and share our best sightings.

George Sergeant



Field Trips & Nature Programs 2016-17

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

Please Take Note:

- If you're planning to go on a Field Trip, please call the Trip Leader the night before to confirm.
- Inclement weather might cause trips to be cancelled. Please call the Trip Leader before venturing out.

December

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 8:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl Walk, Giant Stairs on Bailey Island

Join John Berry and Merrymeeting Audubon for a look at the winter waterfowl of eastern Casco Bay from one of Harpswell's most scenic locations. Directions for the site are on the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust web site. The estimated time is two hours. FMI John Berry at 632-7257 or Berry. John@comcast.net.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17



Bath Area Christmas Bird Count

Join one of several Merrymeeting teams in the field for this annual event, which brings together experienced and inexperienced birders alike. A pizza party will be held immediately following the count to compile the data and share any special sightings.

➤ FMI contact Don Hudson at 443-9795 or wdonhudson@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31



Brunswick-Freeport

The CBCs usually begin early in the morning and last most of the day. The weather can be very iffy, but at the very least, cold and windy. Dress very warmly, as you'll be outside much of the time. For more information or changes in the trip, please check our

website close to the trip date: www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting.

NOTE RE both CBC events:

Join the Christmas Bird Count at home by counting your feeder birds on the count day.

➤ Contact Stella Walsh for details by 12/17 for the BATH area or by 12/31 for the BRUNSWICK/FREEPORT areas: stellawalsh@earthlink.net or 207-807-3679.

January 2017

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 7:00 A.M.

Field Trip: South Coastal Birding

On this annual outing from Ogunquit to Biddeford Pool, we should see many of Maine's wintering birds including Harlequin Duck, scoters, Purple Sandpipers, and maybe a Snowy Owl or King Eider. Bring a lunch or a snack.

➤ Meet at the Bath Plaza CVS at 7:00 a.m., or at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:20 a.m. FMI, or a meeting time and place in Ogunquit, call Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 8:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Winter Waterfowl Watch from Brunswick to Harpswell

We'll search the bays and coves off Brunswick and Harpswell for winter waterfowl.

➤ Meet at Brunswick Hannaford at 8:30 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 6 - 9 P.M.

Potluck Dinner and Presentation

➤ Location: Mid Coast Chapter American Red Cross, 16 Community Way, Topsham

Enjoy good company and delicious food. If you wish, bring a few of your

favorite slides. Bring a dish to share.

Please bring your own plate and utensils. Beverages will be provided. Feel free to bring a friend. Dinner will be served at 6:15, but you are welcome to come around 5:30 to socialize. Call Carol Jack at 729-0220 for info about dinner or if you need a digital projector for slides.

➤ **Directions: From Brunswick or Topsham:** At the intersection of U.S. 201 and Rte. 196, go east on 196 toward Route 1. At the first traffic light turn right on Community Way. The Red Cross Chapter is on your left. **From Bath or Harpswell:** Take Rte. 1 to Rte. 196 (Topsham). Go two traffic lights and turn left on Community Way.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 9:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Cape Elizabeth Coastal Birding

We'll visit coastal birding sites in Cape Elizabeth including: Portland Head Light, Dyer's Cove, Two Lights State Park, and Kettle Cove.

➤ Meet at Brunswick Hannaford (to carpool) at 8:00 a.m.—John Berry, 632-7257; or 9:00 a.m. at Portland Head Light—Andrew Gilbert, 207-329-7525.

February

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 8:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Reid State Park, Georgetown

Reid State Park is a magnificent site in winter. Join Doug Sutor to search for coastal birds including grebes, loons, and scoters. We will also look for Purple Sandpipers, and wintering songbirds. Dress warmly. Bring lunch or a snack.



6

➤ Meet at the Bath Plaza CVS at 8:30 a.m. to carpool. FMI call Doug Suitoer at 841-1951.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Board Meeting - 5:00 - 7:00 P.M.

➤ *Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick – Seminar Room*

Public Program: 7:00 P.M.

Birding the Border: The Birds and Refuges of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX

➤ *Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick – Morrell Room.*

“Jay” Stormer is our presenter.

The birder visiting the Lower Rio Grande Valley for the first time may list a dozen or more life birds. The area is home to many tropical bird species found nowhere else in the United States. These as well as many migrants comprise a list of over 500 bird species. Nine refuges and parks each with unique features make up the “World Birding Center” stretching from the Gulf of Mexico shores 100 miles inland along the river. The scene varies from virtual wilderness and farmland to strip-mall lined freeways. A Mexican heritage overlaid by Florida-like “snow bird” trailer parks and condos produce an exotic cultural mix.

March

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 7:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Salisbury Beach & Plum Island

Join the search for wintering birds on this all-day outing to coastal Massachusetts. First stop is Salisbury Beach State Park, where we will look for wintering ducks, loons and grebes, and Short-eared Owls. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls will be the target birds in Newburyport. Then on to the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island to see Snowy Owls, Snow Buntings and more waterfowl. Dress warmly and bring lunch.

➤ Meet at the Brunswick Hannaford

at 7:00 a.m., or call John Berry at 632-7257 for a meeting spot and time in Yarmouth, or at Salisbury Beach.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 8:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing

Brunswick Landing has open areas and evergreen forests. We will be looking for early Spring migrants and winter finches.

➤ Meet at the parking lot inside the entrance off Bath Road at 8:00 a.m. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Board Meeting - 5:00 - 7:00 P.M.

➤ *Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick – Seminar Room*

Public Program: 7:00 P.M.

The Maine River Bird Project

➤ *Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick – Morrell Room.*

Erynn Call is the Raptor Specialist in the Wildlife Research and Assessment Section of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Tonight she will discuss the *Maine River Bird Project*, a statewide citizen science initiative aimed at better understanding relations between riverine ecosystems and river birds, emphasizing dams, dam removal, river restoration, and the return of sea-run fishes. Features such as water flow, presence of dams, and land cover may be altered by river restoration and urbanization. The project commenced in the fall of 2008 and encompasses 10 rivers and over 80 survey sites. Increased awareness of the interactions between river features, river herring, and bird abundance will provide valuable insights to guide future management and conservation decisions.

April

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 7:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Scarborough Marsh

On this annual “Welcome-to-Spring” outing we hope to see Brant and

other migrating waterfowl, snipe, sandpipers, herons, egrets, ibis and sparrows. Bring lunch or a snack.

➤ Meet at the Bath Plaza CVS at 7:00 a.m. or at the Brunswick Hannaford at 7:20 a.m. FMI call Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 8:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing

Among the open areas and pine forests, we can expect to find early returning migrants.

➤ Meet at the parking lot inside the entrance off Bath Road at 8:00 a.m. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

ANNUAL MEETING

Speaker, time and location TBD.

Look for more details in the spring issue of *The CALL*.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 7:30 A.M.

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.



Snow Goose