

Invasive plants are no match for Hamilton Sanctuary's stewardship volunteers

For many years, Maine Audubon has advocated the removal of non-native species of invasive plants. These invasives rapidly overtake and cause the decline of native plants. This creates a chain effect for the organisms that feed on native plants (such as insects) and subsequently, for the species that feed on those insects (for example, birds).

THE CHALLENGE

Many native plants have specific host-species relationships with indigenous insects. Various insects, in their larval or nymph stages, rely on a single or limited species of plants for their survival and growth to the next phase of development. Birds also need a diverse, native insect population, as well as high-quality berries from native plants. Ensuring protected areas maintain an ecologically healthy, native-plant habitat is paramount to the survival of dependent species.

Maine Audubon has actively encouraged replacing invasives with native plantings, using their annual Native Plants' Sale, and public education. **Eric Topper**, their education director, offers a presentation entitled "*Bringing Nature Home*", which is also the title of the book by author and entomologist, Dr. Douglas Tallamy.

Certain areas of the Hamilton Sanctuary have gained concentrated populations of invasive plants including: Asiatic Bittersweet, Burning Bush,



Nannyberry



Raija Suomela

NATIVE PLANTS

AND

NATIVE PLANT-ERS



Glenn Evans, Bill Good, Sue Sergeant, Marianne Warner

Multiflora Rose, Glossy Buckthorn, Japanese Barberry, Privet, Eurasian Bush Honeysuckle, and Norway Maple. In most cases, these plants originated on homeowners' landscapes, producing seeds that were spread by wildlife and wind to other natural habitats where they flourished. Hamilton Sanctuary comprises forests, fields and walking trails, including one such invasives area—the wooded edges of the large field across Foster Point Road where the Red Trail is located.

TAKING ACTION

Hamilton Sanctuary has taken steps

to address this growing issue, with their Stewardship Committee and volunteers recruited from local communities. Last Spring, the Sanctuary added some new members, thanks to its volunteers and the foresight of one committee member in particular, **Raija Suomela**.

Raija grew up in Topsham, graduated from Mt. Ararat High School, then left Maine for college and employment. A couple of years ago she returned looking for opportunities to contribute to local environmental groups. Fortunately for the Sanctuary, Raija chose the Hamilton Stewardship Committee as one of the groups where she could contribute effectively to the mission.

The book, "*Bringing Nature Home*", fueled one of Raija's passions—removing non-native invasive plants and replacing them with native plants. She considers "*Bringing Nature Home*" the 21st-century version of Rachel Carson's "*Silent Spring*", inspiring its readers with a new understanding and a call to action.

With Raija's energy focused on repairing the damage caused by invasives at the Sanctuary, she had an idea and presented it at the recent Annual Stewardship Committee meeting. Raija wants to replace the removed invasives with native plants along the edge of the field loop trail on its way to

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

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E-mail us at:

merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org

PHOTO ATTRIBUTIONS:

THE NATIVE PLANTS AND VOLUNTEERS: MARIANNE WARNER; RAJJA SUOMELA; RAJJA SUOMELA; GREAT COMORANTS AND PUFFIN: MAGGIE LIBBY; SEAGULL WITH FISH: WESTON BARKER; DEREK LOVITCH AND BOOK JACKET: JEANNETTE LOVITCH.

◇◇ I HATE
QUOTATIONS.
TELL ME
WHAT YOU
KNOW. ◇◇

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The MMA Scholarship Fund: from acorns great oak trees grow

THE ACORNS

As I write, I listen to a yellow warbler, and muse about the MMA Scholarship Fund, its origins, evolution and current state which offers camp scholarships to youngsters, teens and adults.

When MMA formed in the early 1970s, the founders thought it natural to offer scholarships to one of National Audubon's premier ecology camps in Maine, Hog Island. We know from about 1974, the first scholarship recipients were adults. By the 1980s, scholarships were awarded to youths, ages 12-18. Following that, children in grades 2-5 could receive scholarships to attend the Tanglewood camp in Lincolnville. The chapter proudly sent two students to that week-long residential camp.

Also in the early 1980s, the Bath Garden Club supported MMA's youth scholarships with generous donations, a relationship that continues today. Initial funding for two campers has now grown to include several children, depending on the level of support requested and the programs chosen by the Bath applicants. We are most grateful to the Garden Club for recognizing and supporting the important benefits these programs offer the youngsters.

In 1992, history shows that 87 eager campers requested scholarships, but MMA had funds for only five. Not wishing to disappoint, the chapter solicited individuals and co-sponsors, and funded an additional ten campers. By 2001, 22 individuals and organizations contributed to the scholarship fund. MMA's continued solicitation of donations and co-sponsorships has significantly increased available scholarship monies.

At one time, the MMA Board wanted to offer "a more advanced experience" to middle schoolers, so for five years, seven girls and seven boys attended Duck Trap at Tanglewood. Then MMA decided to offer a new venue, and these scholarship funds were designated for Bryant Pond instead. About a dozen 10-13-year-olds attended the Bryant Pond camp that summer. MMA also offers scholarships to one or two teachers to attend Hog Island's Educator program. This summer, 22 young people are benefiting from MMA scholarships, as well as a Bath middle school teacher.

Our annual target is to fund about 30 campers for the various programs. We do our best to put out the word about our scholarship program, but additional help is always appreciated. Please talk to your family, friends and neighbors about the availability of scholarships in 2020. Applications are due in February and March. Check our web site for more information.

MMA named the Scholarship Fund after a dearly beloved professor, Chapter founder, Board member and veteran birder, Dr. Chuck Huntington, who fostered the fledgling scholarship fund. Help us plant more "acorns" and encourage a growing legacy of "oak trees" for the future. Donations to the **Chuck Huntington Scholarship Fund** can be made through MMA's website: merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org/camp-scholarships, or directly sent: c/o Steve Spear, 9 Livernois Dr., Topsham, ME 04086.

Kathy Claerr

Editor's Note: Every year MMA receives wonderful letters, drawings, etc. from campers telling us how much they enjoyed their experiences. See Page 7 for a couple of those letters from teen scholarship recipients (a.k.a. "Oak Trees").



Upcoming Field Trips and Nature Programs

(See the full trip descriptions inside)

AUGUST

Saturday, August 31 Curtis Farm Preserve

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 1 Morning Birding at Popham Beach

Saturday, September 7 Morse Mountain

Sunday, September 8 Androscoggin River Trail

Sunday, September 22 Green Point Farm

Monday, September 23 Board Meeting & Speaker Program

Saturday, September 28 Bird Banding at River Point
Conservation Area

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 5 Androscoggin River Trail

Sunday, October 6 Brunswick Landing

Sunday, October 13 Big Sit! Wharton Point

Saturday, October 19 Work Morning at Hamilton Sanctuary

Sunday, October 20 Green Point Farm

Saturday, October 26 Hermit Island

Monday, October 28 Board Meeting & Speaker Program

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 3 Waterfowl at Sabattus Pond

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 7 Waterfowl Walk, Giant Stairs

Saturday, December 14 Christmas Bird Count: Bath–Phippsburg

Friday, December 27* Christmas Bird Count: Brunswick–
Freeport

*[Saturday, December 28 Alternate CBC day, TBD]

JANUARY 2020

Saturday, January 4 South Coastal Birding

Sunday, January 12 Winter Coastal Birding

Saturday, January 25 Cape Elizabeth Coastal Birding

Monday, January 27 Board Meeting & Speaker Program

“Whenever I have found myself stuck in the ways I relate to things, I return to nature. It is my principal teacher, and I try to open my whole being to what it has to say.”

Wynn Bullock





Field Trips & Nature Programs 2019-20

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

Please Take Note:

If inclement weather (rain, strong winds, extreme temperatures) is predicted, the Field Trip may be canceled. Please call the Trip Leader before venturing out.

AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31
7:00–11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Curtis Farm Preserve, Harpswell

We will explore this Harpswell Heritage Land Trust preserve for early Fall migrants, including shorebirds on Basin and Curtis Coves. Expect to walk on easy/moderate trails (about 2 miles total). Portable toilet available nearby at Mitchell Field.

➤ Meet at Curtis Farm Preserve lower parking lot off Basin Point Road at 7:00 a.m. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
7:00–11:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Morning Birding at Popham Beach

Join us for a morning of birding at Popham Beach for late shorebirds and other migrant species.

➤ Meet at the gate (closed until 9:00 a.m.) at 7:00 a.m. FMI Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
8:00–11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Morse Mountain

The Bates Morse Mountain Conservation Area is a great spot for watching the Fall migration of raptors. Maurice & Cathie Dauphin will help you identify the birds as they fly overhead. After the view from the top, enjoy Seawall Beach and any late migrating

shorebirds. Bring sturdy shoes and lunch.

➤ Meet at the Morse Mountain parking lot off Route 216, Phippsburg, at 8:00 a.m. FMI call Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
7:30–11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Androscoggin River Trail, Lisbon

We will walk an easy paved path (about 3 miles total) along the river to observe Fall migrants.

➤ Meet at the Sabattus River boat launch parking lot off Route 196 at Frost Hill Avenue at 7:30 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
7:30–11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Green Point Farm, Dresden

Expect a wide variety of Fall migrants in the woodlands, fields and wild rice flats of this diverse State Wildlife Management Area. We will walk paths, farm roads and open fields (about 2 miles total). Wear footwear suitable for walking in dew-covered grassy fields.

➤ Meet at Green Point Farm by the green shed off Rt. 128 at 7:30 a.m. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
7:00 P.M.

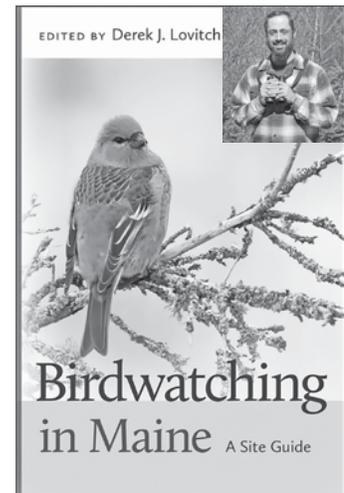
Board Meeting: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Public Speaker Program: Bird Watching in Maine, Derek & Jeannette Lovitch

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

With nearly 450 species of birds recorded, Maine offers an abundance of birding opportunities for people of all levels of interest and experience, from

those looking beyond their backyards for the first time, to knowledgeable visitors looking to plug a hole in their list of sightings.

From mountaintop to barrier beach, from “The County” and the Crown of Maine to the southwest coastal plain,



a wide variety of birds can be found, and “*Birdwatching in Maine*” will show you how, where, and why. Full of photographs from Derek, and his wife, Jeannette, of iconic species and iconic places, this program will explore all that birdwatching in Maine has to offer.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
7:15 A.M.—12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Bird Banding at River Point Conservation Area, West Falmouth

We will meet Biodiversity Research Institute for an interpretive demonstration of bird banding. We will also walk the easy trails (up to 2 miles total) seeking Fall migrants. Restrooms available nearby.

➤ Meet at Brunswick Hannaford at 7:15 a.m. or at Hannaford at River Point off Rt. 100 in West Falmouth at 8:00 a.m. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

OCTOBER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5
8:00—11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Androscoggin River Trail, Lisbon

We will walk an easy paved path (about 3 miles total) along the river to observe Fall migrants.

➤ Meet at the Sabattus River boat launch parking lot off Route 196 at Frost Hill Avenue at 7:30 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6
8:00—11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing

We will explore a variety of habitats for Fall migrants. Expect to walk paved and hard packed paths (up to 2.5 miles total).

➤ Meet at the parking lot off Admiral Fitch Avenue (.6 miles from Bath Road entrance) opposite Southern Maine Community College complex at 8:00 a.m. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13
DAWN TO DUSK

Field Trip: The Big Sit! Wharton Point (Maquoit Landing), Brunswick

Join Merrymeeting Audubon for this fun event. We will be staking out a 17 foot diameter circle, and from within the circle we will attempt to observe/hear all birds in the surrounding area. Observations (and listening) will begin at dawn (or before, depending on the weather) and continue until dusk, or after. Anyone is welcome to join The Big Sit! at any time during the day, and stay as long as desired.

➤ Meet at Wharton Point (head of Maquoit Bay) at the intersection of Maquoit and Woodside Roads. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19
9:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M.

Work Morning at Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

Directions: Take the New Meadows exit off US Route 1 in West Bath. Turn left onto New Meadows Road and go straight ahead to the stop sign. Here New Meadows Road turns into Foster Point Road. Follow Foster Point Rd. nearly to its end. You will see the Sanctuary sign and a parking area on the right. If you plan to participate, please contact the Sanctuary manager, Glenn Evans, at 443-9652 prior to the day, for planning purposes.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20
8:00—11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Green Point Farm, Dresden

Expect a wide variety of Fall migrants in the woodlands, fields and wild rice flats of this diverse State Wildlife Management Area. We will walk paths, farm roads and open fields (about 2 miles total). Wear footwear suitable for walking in dew-covered grassy fields.

➤ Meet at Green Point Farm by the green shed off Rt. 128 at 8:00 a.m. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26
8:30 A.M.—12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Hermit Island

Doug Suitor will lead this outing to Hermit Island on Small Point in Phippsburg. We'll walk along Head Beach, by ocean overlooks, and along a wooded dirt road by a saltwater cove. Expect to see ducks, grebes, and loons as well as some woodland birds.

➤ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the north end of Bath Plaza across from McDonald's, or 8:30 at Head Beach, Hermit Island, Route 216, Phippsburg. FMI call Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28
7:00 P.M.

Board Meeting: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Public Speaker Program: TBD

Please check the MMA Web site closer to the date for more details.

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

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3
8:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl at Sabattus Pond

John Berry will lead this trip to Sabattus Pond in Sabattus, ME. In the Fall, Sabattus hosts large concentrations of migrating waterfowl, including Ruddy and Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, scaup and Coots.

➤ Meet at Brunswick Hannaford at 8:00 a.m. to carpool. FMI call John Berry at 632-7257.

DECEMBER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
8:30—11:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl Walk, Giant Stairs, 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: hhltmaine.org. The estimated time is three hours. FMI John Berry at 632-7257 or Berry.John@comcast.net.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

Field Trips: Christmas Bird Counts: Bath — Phippsburg

Birders of all ages and experiences are welcome. 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 warmly, as you'll be outside much of the time. If you can't venture out with our teams, then consider doing bird counts at your home feeders. Submit the best estimates of birds in your yard—species and numbers. If you would like to participate as a team or individual, please contact Doug Suitor at 841-1951 or dougsuitor@gmail.com. ➤ FMI for changes in the trip, please check our

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27

(alternate date Sat., Dec. 28 TBD)

**Field Trips: Christmas Bird Counts
Brunswick — Freeport**

(See description above)

JANUARY 2020

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

6:30—11:30 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 north end of the Bath Plaza parking lot near McDonald's at 7:00 a.m. or at Brunswick Hannaford at 7:20 a.m. or at a meeting place and time in Ogunquit. FMI call Maurice Dauphin at 389-2585.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

9:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M.

**Field Trip: Winter Coastal Birding,
South Harpswell**

As time and conditions allow, we'll search Pott's Point, Basin Point and Mitchell Field for waterfowl, gulls and various wintering land birds.

➤ Meet at the end of Rt. 123 in South Harpswell at 9:00 a.m. Park along the roadside by the Town Pier. FMI Gordon Smith at 449-8206.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

7:00—10:00 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. with Gordon Smith, 449-8206; or 9:00 a.m. at Portland Head Light with Andrew Gilbert, 207-329-7525.

Calling all birders to The Big Sit!

"What is The Big Sit!", you ask? It's a *stationary* "Big Bird-a-Thon", so to speak. Instead of traveling places to find the birds, you *stay in one place* observing the birds passing by.

Founded by the New Haven, CT Bird Club, and hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*, The Big Sit! takes place on the second Sunday in October. The event is open to every person and club nationally and internationally, and participation is free!

The Big Sit! guidelines begin with a real or imaginary circle, 17 feet in diameter, from which participants can observe passing birds. Merrymeeting Audubon (MMA) has established its Big Sit! circle at the large rock monument at Wharton Point on Maquoit Bay in Brunswick. Only birds observed and/or heard by someone *inside* the circle can be counted.

If a bird is seen or heard that cannot be identified reliably, due to distance or obstacles, a person can leave the

circle to get a closer look to confirm the bird's identity. However, any *new* species seen or heard while outside the circle cannot be counted, unless someone inside the circle observes or hears it as well.

Since the inception of MMA's The Big Sit! in 2012, an impressive total of 111 bird species has been compiled, topped by two rarities never seen at Wharton Point before—an American White Pelican in 2012 and a Leach's Storm-Petrel in 2015.

All interested persons are invited to participate in the 2019 The Big Sit! to be held on Sunday, October 13. Observations (and listening) will begin at dawn (or before, depending on the weather) and continue until dusk, or after. Anyone is welcome to join The Big Sit! at any time during the day, and stay for as long as desired. (See *Sunday, October 13* in this *Field Trip* section for more details).

Gordon Smith



The Huntington legacy endures

THE OAK TREES

Weston Barker, 14

Last spring, I was lucky enough to receive a scholarship from the Merry-meeting Audubon Chapter to attend Audubon's week-long Hog Island **Mountains-to-Sea-Birding-for-Teens** camp. Our leaders were: Doug Hitchcox, Abby McBride, and Christian Hagenlocher.

During our stay at Hog Island, we saw birds such as Red Crossbills feeding up in the spruce and tamarack trees, and Atlantic Puffins, Black Guillemots and three species of Terns at Eastern Egg Rock, plus a bonus bird, a Common Murre. After an exciting few days on Hog Island, we spent the second half of the week on Borestone Mountain. We stopped along the way to do some birding, and saw Black Terns, Sandhill Cranes, and Purple Martins. We arrived at the Borestone camp, continued birding in that area, and went to the Shirley Bog, where we

saw a Ring-necked Duck, an American Bittern, Common Loons, and lots of breeding warblers.

On our last full day of camp, we hiked to the summit of Borestone Mountain. We could barely make out the trees below through the fog, but we did see some singing Nashville Warblers and a White-winged Crossbill.

The next morning at Portland Jetport, I was sad to leave the group of birders I had gotten to know over the week, and was amazed by how quickly it had gone by. I feel privileged to have been able to attend this wonderful camp. Having been birding in Maine for around eight years, I am still learning many new things about the birds of my home state and can think of nobody better than Doug, Christian, and Abby to learn from. I left with so much more than just having seen some new birds, and I am looking forward to coming back to Hog Island some year for another great week of adventures.

Maggie Libby, 16

I spent a week with the amazing staff and councilors at Maine Audubon's Hog Island, **Mountains-to-Sea-Birding-for-Teens** camp. I never thought much of my interests in wildlife or birds, but this camp brought those to light. The councilors shared inspiring stories about what they've done in their lives that really got me thinking about what the future could hold if I pursue my fascination with the outdoors.

The camp was filled with like-minded people who were often more

knowledgeable than I was when it came to birds. I learned a lot just in conversations with other campers, as well as in the nightly lessons and outings. The experience was incredible, and I hope to keep in touch with the new people I met, as well as continue learning about the environment and the possible careers that can be made from it.

Thanks to everyone at Merry-meeting Audubon for making this camp experience possible for me!

MEMORIES FROM CAMP AT HOG ISLAND



See **INVASIVES**, from page 1

the woodland trail. She researched the types of native plants that would do well and created an appropriate list.

Peter Baecher, Maine Audubon's Properties Manager, helped obtain the following native plants and members of the Stewardship Committee planted them this past April:

- 3 Moosewood – understory tree
- 3 Hornbeam – understory tree
- 2 Wild Raisin – understory
- 2 Arrowwood Viburnum - understory
- 2 Nannyberry - understory
- 3 Virgin's Bower – vining plant

Committee member Sue Sergeant, also an organic farmer, offered salient advice for sizing/shaping the planting holes and calculating the proper amount of mulch needed. Volunteers planted these natives on a wet Saturday morning and took it as a good omen, since the following very wet Spring was perfect for giving the new plants the start they needed to set healthy roots. All of the natives are doing well except one Hornbeam that never leafed out.

Sanctuary visitors can see most of the new plants which are visible on the right, from the Red Trail, and are easily recognized by their white tags. Raija hopes to add small signs formally identifying the new additions.

REAPING THE BENEFITS

Over the next few years, areas with the new plants will receive continued attention, ensuring that the remaining root fragments and seed bank of the removed invasive plants don't overwhelm the new plantings. In time, Sanctuary wildlife will benefit from the successful transformation of the planted areas, the insects they support, and the berries they produce.

Glenn Evans
Hamilton Sanctuary Caretaker



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Merrymeeting Chapter

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