



The Call



Winter/Spring 2023

Return to Hog Island for a dream come true

Last June I returned to Bremen, Maine for my third season of Hog Island birding camp. After participating in the *Mountains-to-Sea* session in 2019, and then 2021's pandemic-induced megacamp combo, this year I signed up for *Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens*, the camp I'd wanted to attend for the last several years.

The familiar rocky shoreline, lichen-clad evergreens and birches, and the buzzy songs of Northern Parulas welcomed me back to the island. After being introduced to the camp leaders – Drew Weber, Justine Weber, Emma Rhodes, and junior instructor Isaiah Scott – I went to my assigned room in the loft of the Queen Mary building overlooking the bay.

Throughout the camp session we explored Hog Island and its birdlife through morning bird walks and day hikes. We even observed a bird-banding demonstration. But the highlight of the week was my dream-come-true day – landing on the famous seabird nesting colony of Eastern Egg Rock.

EER is best known for being home to a population of Atlantic Puffins. After being driven from the island by humans and human-related factors, Stephen Kress' **Project Puffin** efforts in the 1970's and 80's (which continue today) successfully reestablished the population.

During summers, boat tours regularly go out to the island to see the puffins, but landing on the island is

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President's Perch

Remembering Ted Allen

I am sad to report the passing of Ted Allen, a longtime member of our Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter, and a good friend to all who knew him. Ted was an avid birder, an excellent educator who enjoyed teaching courses on Ornithology, and an active participant in local conservation efforts.

He served as president of our Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter for (HOW) many years, leading us on many worthwhile projects. Ted was a dedicated Chimney Swift advocate. He would frequently monitor the comings and goings of the Swifts at their popular local habitats—J&J Cleaners and the old Brunswick High School (before it was demolished). Ted spearheaded the effort to include an appropriate chimney habitat for the Chimney Swifts when the new Harriet Beecher Stowe elementary school replaced the old Brunswick High School. His legacy of contributions to many local environmental causes will remain significant, and his cheerful presence will be missed.

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter conducted its Christmas Bird Counts in the West Bath-to-Boothbay area and the Brunswick-Harpswell-to-Freeport areas. The weather caused the first count to reschedule to another day, but both count events enjoyed pleasant weather thereafter. The CBC results were fairly normal without an extraordinary sighting like last year's Stellar Sea Eagle. Be sure to check out our Field Trips section and public Speaker Programs. There's an adventure around every corner! Hope you can join us! We look forward to birding with old friends and newcomers. See you soon.

George Sergeant

MMA discovered the Rachel Carson Refuge is for the birds (and birders!)

On September 10th, MMA offered a birding trip to the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in southern coastal Maine. The Refuge was established in the 1960s for migratory birds. It comprises 11 divisions, each incorporating salt marsh/estuarine environments. These highly productive habitats offer shelter and food for migrating birds. The 11 divisions currently extend along almost 50 miles of Maine's coast from Kittery to Cape Elizabeth.

This year's trip focused on four central divisions, extending from Wells to Biddeford, highlighting some of the lesser-known parts of the Refuge, including a recently-acquired site for a new multi-purpose Visitor Center.

The ten participants met at the Upper Wells Division, the current site of Refuge Headquarters and the one-mile handicapped accessible Rachel Carson Trail.

The first stop was the Moody Division, where a pull-off and platform along the Furbish Road allowed for outstanding views of the salt marsh. Highlights

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Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

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Dee Miskill, *Vice President* 833-6381
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The Call

Dee Miskill, *Editor*

Scholarship Committee

Bronda Niese (*co-chair*)
Sue Sergeant (*co-chair*)
Beth Bullock • Ed Caswell
Joan Newkirk • Peggy Page

Coordinators

Maurice & Cathie Dauphin, *Bird ID*
Doug Suitor, *Christmas Bird Count*
Glenn Evans, *Hamilton Sanctuary*
Karen Carlisle, *Speaker Programs*
Jane Robinson, *Field Trips Coordinator*
Jay Stormer, *Web site & Publicity*

Our E-mail:

merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org

Our Web Site:

www.merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org

Our Facebook:

www.facebook.com/MerrymeetingAudubon

PHOTO ATTRIBUTIONS:

HERRING GULL SKETCH: **BETTY BAKKILA**; RACCOON SKETCH:
BRONDA NIESE; SNOWY EGRETS, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:
DONNA SALKO; ATLANTIC PUFFIN, COMMON TERN, & BLACK
GUILLEMOT: **WESTON BARKER**; "CREAM PUFFINS": **DEE MISKILL**;
YELLOW WARBLER & CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER: **JOHN BERRY**;
ETHAN WHITAKER: **ETHAN WHITAKER**; PUERTO RICAN BIRD:
JEANNETTE LOVITCH; FOZ DO RIO MINHO: **JAY STORMER**.



Hello, Friends!

I'm an Audubon summer camp mascot. The Scholarship Committee wants you to know that they are now accepting donations for the 2023 camping season.

It costs roughly \$600 to send a student to one of our four U Maine / 4H camps and about \$1000 to send a student to Hog Island. The committee would be so grateful for a donation of **any size**. Checks should be payable to **Maine Audubon**, and on the **memo line**: MMA Scholarship Fund. Send your gift: c/o Sue Sergeant - 84 Harding Road - Brunswick, Maine 04011.

Scholarship Committee News

Betty Bakkila is a seventeen-year-old mixed media artist from Brunswick, Maine. She currently resides in Northern Michigan, where she studies visual arts at Interlochen Arts Academy.

Although in view from the mainland, Hog Island feels like a whole other world. One where wildflowers are blooming, roots are crawling, and, of course, birds are chirping. Upon arrival, I could feel a spark, something about this place was special.

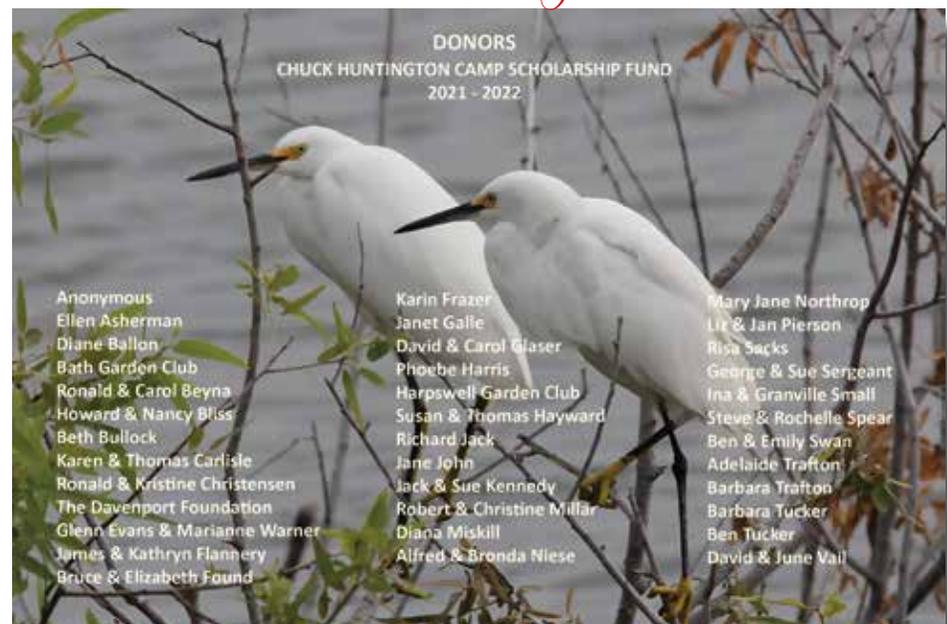
When I arrived at my living quarters, I was met, not with a cabin reminiscent of childhood summer camps, but a quaint little room painted a creamy white. The camp is steeped in history. Beginning in 1936, the camp has a legacy of "inspir[ing] its visitors to become stewards of wildlife and wildlands"; and it's no wonder why, the camp boasts an impressive number of professionals in the field of Ornithology. We interacted with these people on a daily basis, and not just in a professional sense. We also shared social experiences during meals.

Throughout the camp, I was able to capture some of Hog Island's beauty and wildlife through my art. The convergence of science and art is why I was drawn to Hog Island in the first place. While I was there, I was able to practice drawing as a skill for scientific purposes, but also for storytelling and bringing these birds to life. It was interesting to see the dual purposes of art, one, being a tool, and two, the ability to bring creativity to scientific fields.

Betty Bakkila



With heartfelt gratitude. . . .





Field Trips & Nature Programs 2023

www.merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org

Please Take Note:

If inclement weather (rain/snow/ice/strong winds/extreme temperatures) is predicted, the Field Trip might be cancelled.

Please check out our web site (<https://merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org>) or call the Trip Leader before venturing out.

Possible COVID Restrictions:

For all upcoming field trips, Maine and/or federal CDC outdoor guidelines then in effect will be followed. However, if you have any symptoms of illness, please stay home.

FEBRUARY

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25,
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Work morning at Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

As conditions allow, we will be pruning apple trees, removing invasive plants and doing trail maintenance.

◆ Directions: Take the New Meadows exit off U.S. Route 1 in West Bath. Turn left onto New Meadows Road and go straight ahead to the traffic signal at Bath Road. Proceed across Bath Rd. onto Foster's Point Rd. and follow it nearly to the 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.

MARCH

SATURDAY, MARCH 11,
7:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. (approximate)

Field Trip: Salisbury Beach and Plum Island

Join the search for late winter birds on this all-day outing to coastal New Hampshire and Massachusetts. First stop is Salisbury Beach State Park, where we will look for ducks, loons, grebes and short-eared owls. Then on to Newburyport and Plum Island to see Iceland and Glaucous gulls, snowy owls, snow buntings and

more waterfowl. Dress warmly and bring lunch.

◆ The number of vehicles is limited on this trip. Morning meeting location to be decided. Please call John Berry at 632-7257 to reserve your spot.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25,
9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Field Trip: Reid State Park, Georgetown

Reid State Park is a magnificent site in late winter/early spring. We'll search for all manner of coastal waterbirds, including scoters, grebes and loons, as well as sanderlings and Purple Sandpipers.

◆ Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Park's main parking lot overlooking The Lagoon. **FMI** John Berry 632-7257.

APRIL

SUNDAY, APRIL 23,
7:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance

In addition to observing early returning woodland migrants, we will be on the lookout for hunting Kestrels on the airfield grassland. Also, we'll be listening for singing Field and Savannah sparrows, as well as Eastern Meadowlarks. We'll walk paved/gravel roads and easy paths (up to 3 miles).

◆ Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29,
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Work morning at Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

As conditions allow, we will be pruning apple trees, removing invasive plants and doing trail maintenance.

◆ Directions: Take the New Meadows exit off U.S. Route 1 in West Bath. Turn

left onto New Meadows Road and go straight ahead to the traffic signal at Bath Road. Proceed across Bath Rd. onto Foster's Point Rd. and follow it nearly to the 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, APRIL 30,
7:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Green Point Farm WMA, Dresden

Expect a wide variety of spring migrants in the woodlands, fields and wild rice flats of this diverse State Wildlife Management Area. We'll walk easy paths, farm roads and open fields (up to 2 miles).

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

MAY

SUNDAY, MAY 7,
7:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Capt. William Fitzgerald Recreation & Conservation Area/ Bay Bridge Landing Wetland Park, Brunswick

We'll explore these two Town-owned properties for early spring migrants. The "Fitzgerald Preserve" is one of the few sandplain grasslands remaining in Maine. We'll walk easy sandy paths (up to 2 miles) exploring this unusual natural area. Following, we'll visit the nearby Bay Bridge Landing Wetland Park on the Androscoggin River.

◆ Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the iron gate at the end of Lindbergh Crossing Road (off Old Bath Road), 1.3 miles northeast of the Bath Road/Old Bath Road intersection. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

MAY (continued)

SUNDAY, MAY 14,
7:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance

In addition to observing early returning woodland migrants, we will be on the lookout for hunting Kestrels on the airfield grassland. Also, we'll be listening for singing Field and Savannah sparrows, as well as Eastern Meadowlarks. We'll walk paved/gravel roads and easy paths (up to 3 miles).

◆ Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SUNDAY, MAY 21,
7:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Green Point Farm WMA, Dresden

Expect a wide variety of spring migrants in the woodlands, fields and wild rice flats of this diverse State Wildlife Management Area. We'll walk easy paths, farm roads and open fields (up to 2 miles).

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

SATURDAY, MAY 27,
7:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Shorebird Sunday - Wharton Point, Brunswick

Join us for Shorebird Saturday as we search for shorebirds and late spring land migrants at Wharton Point (Maquoit Bay) in Brunswick. We will be observing the shorebirds as they begin to forage on the mudflat on the outgoing tide. Any shorebirds we observe will be in breeding plumage!

◆ Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Wharton Point (head of Maquoit Bay) at the intersection of Maquoit Road and Woodside Road. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

JUNE

SUNDAY, JUNE 4,
7:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Capt. William Fitzgerald

Recreation & Conservation Area/ Bay Bridge Landing Wetland Park, Brunswick

We'll explore these two Town-owned properties for early spring migrants. The "Fitzgerald Preserve" is one of the few sandplain grasslands remaining in Maine. We'll walk easy sandy paths (up to 2 miles) exploring this unusual natural area. Following, we'll visit the nearby Bay Bridge Landing Wetland Park on the Androscoggin River.

◆ Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the iron gate at the end of Lindbergh Crossing Road (off Old Bath Road), 1.3 miles northeast of the Bath Road/Old Bath Road intersection. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SUNDAY, JUNE 11,
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Birds & Butterflies at Mitchell Field, Harpswell

Join us for the inaugural Birds and Butterflies. We'll walk paved and gravel paths around the perimeter of this 120-acre Town-owned property searching for these flying wonders, whether they be birds or butterflies. Jack Collins, our butterfly expert, will be joining us, providing commentary and insight into the butterflies we may encounter.

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking area near the bay and pier. Mitchell Field is located in West Harpswell, off Harpswell Neck Road (Rt. 123). **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24,
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Work morning at Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

As conditions allow, we will be pruning apple trees, removing invasive plants and doing trail maintenance.

◆ Directions: Take the New Meadows exit off U.S. Route 1 in West Bath. Turn left onto New Meadows Road and go straight ahead to the traffic signal at Bath Road. Proceed across Bath Rd. onto Foster's Point Rd. and follow it nearly to the 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.

AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5 AND
SATURDAY, AUGUST 12,
5:15 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Field Trip: Shorebird Saturday - Wharton Point, Brunswick

Join us for Shorebird Saturday as we search for shorebirds at Wharton Point (Maquoit Bay) in Brunswick.

We will be observing the shorebirds as they begin to forage on the mudflat on the outgoing tide.

◆ Meet at 5:15 p.m. at Wharton Point (head of Maquoit Bay) at the intersection of Maquoit Road and Woodside Road. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20,
4:45 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Shorebird Sunday - Wharton Point, Brunswick

Join us for Shorebird Sunday as we search for shorebirds at Wharton Point (Maquoit Bay) in Brunswick.

We will be observing the shorebirds as they begin to forage on the mudflat on the outgoing tide.

◆ Meet at 4:45 p.m. at Wharton Point (head of Maquoit Bay) at the intersection of Maquoit Road and Woodside Road. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27,
4:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Field Trip: Shorebird Sunday - Wharton Point, Brunswick

Join us for Shorebird Sunday as we search for shorebirds at Wharton Point (Maquoit Bay) in Brunswick. We will be observing the shorebirds foraging on the mudflat as the incoming tide forces them closer to shore.

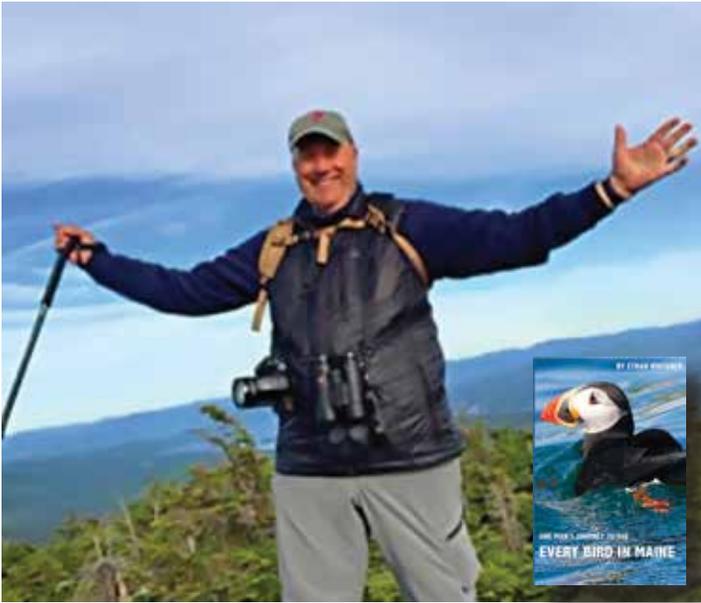
◆ Meet at 4:30 p.m. at Wharton Point (head of Maquoit Bay) at the intersection of Maquoit Road and Woodside Road. **FMI** Gordon Smith 449-8206.

MMA SPEAKER PROGRAMS

WINTER-SPRING 2023

FEBRUARY 27 — ETHAN WHITAKER

*“Every Bird in Maine:
One Man’s Adventure”*



Ethan Whitaker is a retired software developer and entrepreneur who has started and sold multiple companies during his 40-year career. He is a 1980s graduate of Bates College and has authored dozens of Apps for Apple and Google. In 2021, Ethan broke Maine’s Big Year Birding record, finding and identifying 324 species of birds in the State in a single calendar year! Ethan and his wife, Ingrid, wrote about his Big Year Adventure, in *“Every Bird in Maine”*, available where birding books are sold. Their most recent book, *“What’s that Bird? — A Kid’s Guide to the Backyard Birds of New England,”* was published in September of 2022.

MARCH 27 — DEREK & JEANNETTE LOVITCH

*“Puerto Rico:
Birding
in the U.S.
Tropics”*



Join Derek and Jeannette as they recount their birding travels, during the pandemic, to the island of Puerto Rico. As always, Jeannette’s outstanding bird photography will be coupled with Derek’s snapshots of habitat, scenery, culture and conservation.

APRIL 24 Annual Meeting — DOUG HITCHCOX

*“Introduction
to
Warblers”*



Doug has been a staff naturalist and educator for Maine Audubon for several years. He writes for Audubon’s *HABITAT* publication on various topics covering avian safety, habitats, education, Audubon events, and just about everything environmental. He also does a variety of presentations.

Adeus, querido amigo (*Farewell, dear friend*)

JAY STORMER is a very special person to all of us at the Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter. He has graciously served with our Board of Directors for several years. When we needed to bring our Chapter communications into the 21st century, Jay stepped up, designed and maintained our web site, produced beautiful posters for our periodic public speaker programs, regularly connected us with our members via Mail Chimp, also using the latter to update changes in Field Trip schedules, special programs and the like. He is also an avid birder, who happily shared his photos of avian migrants and residents congregating in his back yard, to exotic species discovered in his travels.

Jay is also an extraordinary artist, specializing in Woodcut technique. He shared many of his works with us, produced prints for sale, the proceeds of which supported the Chapter's mission. Some of his originals were even displayed in local art galleries. He expanded his passion for art by taking classes and attending lectures in Portugal. Therein lies this fondest farewell.

In his own words, "The rigors of winter have become tiresome, but I now have a frost-free place, complete with orange trees, in a small town on the Minho River in the north of Portugal. It is surrounded by mountains and an estuary with good birding in various habitats. There are 460 species of birds recorded in Portugal, and several active birding organizations such as the Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA), which I have joined". He will be moving there permanently this Spring.

Jay has given us a photo of his new "habitat" to share with our readers. We will miss him very much, though we hope to stay in touch—he, sending photos of his birding excursions, perhaps even new art works; us, keeping him updated on the Chapter's news and goings-on in his old stamping grounds. We believe that Jay has extended an invitation to anyone, who happens to be in his neighborhood, to stop by and visit. He will always welcome old friends!



View from the mountain over VN Cerveira to the ocean. My place is in the lower right corner of this photo.

HOG ISLAND, from page 1

restricted to researchers that live there through the nesting season. That's why *Coastal Maine Bird Studies* is so special. Each year this camp receives special permission to land on the island for a private tour of the colony and research station, and to see the nesting seabirds up close.



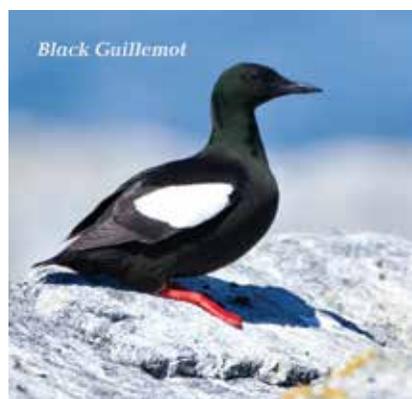
Atlantic Puffin

of their concealed lairs under the boulders, and puffins went blazing overhead with beaks full of small silvery fish.

We walked to the middle of the island for a quick tour of the small, rugged research station, and took a short walk along the narrow trails through the grass to look at the nests of Laughing Gulls, Spotted Sandpipers, multiple species of terns, and even a Leach's Storm-Petrel that one of the researchers expertly grubbed from its earthy burrow.



Common Tern



Black Guillemot

In small groups we transferred from the Snow Goose III to a wooden dinghy and rowed to the shoreline of the island, carefully stepping onto the rocky shore. We were immediately surrounded by the sight and sound of hundreds and hundreds of birds swirling all around us, with Roseate and Arctic Terns sitting just feet away. Black Guillemots zipped in and out

But the stars of the show, of course, were the Puffins. Small groups of us took turns sitting in wooden blinds, overlooking a rocky ledge where the birds rested after making trips to their hungry nestlings somewhere below us. I was even lucky enough to watch and photograph the puffins from a blind with Dr. Steve Kress himself! Even a few unexpected birds made an appearance during our visit, including several flyby Razorbills and a Brant.

Throughout the rest of the week we continued to explore the woods and waters around Hog Island and made van trips farther afield to places such as the Damariscotta Mills fish ladder and Hidden Valley Nature Center in Jefferson.

Between outings we enjoyed meals expertly prepared by the Hog Island kitchen staff and volunteers and at the end of the week were treated to the much-anticipated famous "cream puffins".

Spending time at Hog Island is always an unforgettable experience, from exploring new places and birds to meeting new people and reconnecting with friends. I'm forever grateful for the amazing people and the generous scholarships from Merrymeeting Audubon that have made my Hog Island experiences possible over the years. Each year has been unique and exciting in its own way.



Weston Barker

REFUGE, from page 1

included a beautiful Northern Harrier, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and Great Egret.

Next stop was at the Lower Wells Division off Harbor Road, where the Refuge recently completed a pedestrian trail with new interpretive signs and a new observation deck. Highlights included a Green Heron, White Ibises, Black Bellied Plover, and Green-winged Teal. The White Ibises were first sighted in August and it's only the fourth time White Ibises have been sighted in Maine.

Third stop was the Mousam River Division (Kennebunk) where Refuge Ranger, Tom Wall allowed us access to the property which will house the new multi-purpose Visitor Center, replacing the current Refuge headquarters in Wells. The existing building will be renovated to become a true visitor's center with displays, a gift shop, and office spaces for the Refuge staff, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program and the Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. The center and area will officially be open to the public in 2025.

A beautiful overlook of the Mousam River/salt marsh and a covered foot bridge over a freshwater/saltwater interface allowed sightings of Red Shouldered Hawk, Bluebirds, Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds, and an American Bald Eagle.

The final stop was Timber Point on the Biddeford side of the Little River Division. The diverse habitat (salt-water sand beach, salt marsh, fresh water marsh, field, forest) allowed the group to identify Semipalmated Plover, Sanderlings, Swainson Thrush, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Yellow breasted Chat.

In all, the group identified 60 different bird species. Not bad for a half day at this incredible Refuge!

Glenn Evans



Merrymeeting Audubon
84 Harding Rd.
Brunswick, ME 04011

www.merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org

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US POSTAGE

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PORTLAND, MAINE
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MERRYMEETING AUDUBON
CHAPTER

Annual Meeting

MONDAY, APRIL 24 6:00 P.M.

CURTIS MEMORIAL LIBRARY,
BRUNSWICK
MORRELL MEETING ROOM

OUR SPECIAL PRESENTATION IS

“Introduction to Warblers”

WITH OUR GUEST SPEAKER
DOUG HITCHCOX
MAINE AUDUBON STAFF NATURALIST

