

THE CALL



September - December 2024

MMA

A continuum of legacies and new beginnings

Over the years of Merrymeeting Chapter's existence, there have been many presidents, officers, and boards of directors expanding the Chapter and its mission to include diversity, increasing membership, and educating the public about the natural world through our services and programs. We have indeed succeeded, and are proud of how far we've come! Yet, we are not complacent with our success. It simply serves as an impetus, a momentum to use the incomparable legacies from our past members as fuel to build new beginnings for the future. Recent transitions in the Chapter exemplify just such a continuum. Some of our highly dedicated officers and board/committee members have decided to step down, but not away, from their positions leaving incredible legacies of innovation, ideas and goals to the next generation. This is the true spirit that keeps the Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter alive and moving forward.

Dee Miskill
Editor

From the President

Ann Manson

Greetings! In April of this year, I willingly accepted the president role for the Merrymeeting Chapter. I am very excited to offer my ideas and strengths to the energetic and very talented board of directors. I also want to express my gratitude to George Sergeant and John Berry, both of whom served as past presidents of the Chapter, for their continuing support during this transition. They remain on the board and I consider myself most fortunate to have their council.

Here's some "getting-to-know-me" information. I am a Maine native. After graduating from the University of Maine, I sought job opportunities in southern New England, but made my way back home in the fall of 2020 after retiring. I joined Maine Audubon after coming home and I am still a member of Massachusetts Audubon. In 2022, I joined the board of the Merrymeeting Chapter.

New Beginnings: Welcome!

Please join MMA in welcoming our new Board officers and members. Ann Manson is our new President, and Donna Salko, our new Secretary. Both women have previously served on our Board. We are also pleased to welcome a new director, Lucy Timblin.

As we focus on the future of our Chapter's place in the community, we will continue to rely on the talents and skills of our Board members to benefit the natural world and educate and encourage all generations to help protect our precious environment.

I find solace and renewed energy in the natural world, and I am committed to preserving it for the health of our environment and for future generations to enjoy. Birding is one of my passions that allows me to appreciate and experience the natural world. I call myself a birder as I have spent years casually watching birds wherever I am, have participated in **Project Feederwatch** for the past five years, and have traveled with Mass Audubon to Belize and the Galapagos. Where I need to improve my "birder" status is in identifying birds by their silhouettes and calls. I take advantage of our field trips led by truly knowledgeable birders to work on those skills.

Another of my passions is reducing my lawn in favor of native plants. I am an enthusiastic advocate of Doug Tallamy's **Homegrown National Park** and Maine Audubon's **Bringing Nature**

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Legacies: with deep appreciation

We must acknowledge those who have served MMA with remarkable dedication and leadership. **George Sergeant** who served as president twice for 6+ years each time. An avid "birder" who gave 120% of his talents and attention to all MMA matters.

Bronda Niese, Sue Sergeant and **Beth Bullock**, the cornerstones of our Scholarship Committee. They spent untold time and energy managing scholarships, campers' applications, and

See **LEGACIES**, page 2

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

Officers

Ann Manson, *President*
Dee Miskill, *Vice President*
Donna Salko, *Secretary*
John Berry, *Treasurer*

Board of Directors

Karen Carlisle • Glenn Evans • Susan Fenn
Ralph Gabarro • Peggy Page
Jane Robinson (emerita) • Gordon Smith
George Sergeant (emeritus) • Lucy Timblin

The Call

Dee Miskill, *Editor*

Scholarship Committee

Peggy Page (chair)
Karen Carlisle • Ed Caswell • Glenn Evans
Ralph Gabarro • Joan Newkirk

Coordinators

Maurice & Cathie Dauphin, *Bird ID*
Peggy Page, *Christmas Bird Count*
Glenn Evans, *Hamilton Sanctuary*
Donna Salko, *Speaker Programs*
Gordon Smith, *Field Trips Coordinator*
Ralph Gabarro, *Web site & Publicity*
Susan Fenn, *Membership*

PHOTO ATTRIBUTIONS:

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER: PAUL REEVES PHOTOGRAPHY; BARROW'S
GOLDENEYE: JAY STORMER; BONAPARTE'S GULL: NSC PHOTOGRAPHY.



LEGACIES, from page 1

increasing donations for the scholarship funds. **Karen Carlisle**, our dedicated Secretary and speaker program coordinator for many years, decided to pass the baton and become an active Board member in other areas. **Jane Robinson**, an avid birder and Board member, was Field Trip Coordinator/attendee for many years. Physical difficulties have curtailed her active participation, but her “corporate knowledge” of the Chapter and its past members are a legacy in themselves.

Heartfelt Thanks to all who served MMA so well!



PRESIDENT, from page 1

Home programs. I’m a devoted and repeat customer of Maine Audubon’s native plant sales. When time allows, I also enjoy volunteering for Maine Audubon sanctuary work days.

One of my goals for the Chapter is to increase our offerings to our members. Going forward, we would like to add one or two remote presentations in months without scheduled speakers. Stay tuned for more details on that.

Remember to check our “Field Trips” section of this newsletter or our website (<http://www.merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org>) for more details on upcoming trips and speaker programs. Both are fun and informative. If you would like reminders about our field trips, presentations, or other upcoming events, please email to: (merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org) and request to be added to our *Reminders Distribution List*. Also, please feel free to contact me at: (merrymeeting@maineaudubon.org) with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. As summer wanes and fall approaches, I hope you take many opportunities to enjoy the nature around you. Consider participating in one of our bird walks during the fall migration.

Scholarship News

Peggy Page, Scholarship Committee chair

The 2024 Camp Scholarship season is in full swing! Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have had two teens and one educator attend Hog Island camp this summer. We also have 18 happy campers experiencing a variety of programs at the four UMaine 4H camps: Blueberry Cove in Tenants Harbor, Tanglewood in Lincolnville, Greenland Point in Princeton and Bryant Pond in Bryant Pond, ME.

This year, for the first time, one of our scholarship recipients is a “New American”, recently arrived in Maine from his previous home in Gabon, Africa. He and his family are thrilled that he will be spending ten days at the Ocean Adventures program at Blueberry Cove. In the next issue of *The Call* you will hear about our campers’ adventures directly from them.

The Merrymeeting Audubon Scholarship Committee works throughout the year to make this happen. Our members track and acknowledge donations, manage the scholarship application process, and get the word out to local schools and organizations.

Recently, three long-standing members have retired from the committee

with our heartfelt gratitude: **Bronda Niese, Sue Sergeant** and **Beth Bullock**. Several new members signed on— **Glenn Evans, Karen Carlisle** and **Ralph Gabarro**—to join **Joan Newkirk** and **Ed Caswell** as valuable committee members.

We can always use extra hands and new ideas, so won’t you consider joining our Scholarship Committee? The work is rewarding, knowing you give youngsters, teens and educators the opportunity to enjoy an unforgettable Maine camp experience. Contact committee chair **Peggy Page** at mpage815@gmail.com to learn more!

And of course, your donations to the camp scholarship fund are always welcome at any time. Please make your check payable to: **Merrymeeting Audubon**, on the **memo line: MMA Scholarship Fund**. Send your gift: c/o Peggy Page, P.O. Box 51, Brunswick, ME 04011.

Would you like to donate?

Any amount is welcome. Camp fees are roughly \$700 per student for the 4H camps and \$1400 for a student or educator to attend Hog Island. Thank you for your generosity.

A bird by any other name. . . .

Nick Lund
Advocacy & Outreach Manager,
Maine Audubon

In November 2023, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) announced a plan to change the eponymic bird names — those named after people — in the US and Canada. The announcement comes after years of work by the AOS, holding listening sessions, meeting with stakeholders, and ultimately deciding that naming birds after people is a useless and outdated practice. The AOS will convene a committee and engage the public to find new names for eponymic birds over the coming years.

There are fourteen eponymic birds that regularly occur in Maine, including Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Cooper's Hawk, Bicknell's Thrush, and others. Though the AOS's announcement was met with

criticism from some, the overwhelming response from Maine Audubon staff has been excitement: we get to think of new, better names!

In December 2023, Maine Audubon's Doug Hitchcox and Nick Lund hosted a webinar to debate some new potential names for Maine birds. Here were some of their suggestions:

- Barrow's Goldeneye to Crescent-faced Goldeneye. The moon-shaped mark on the drake duck's face is by far the easiest field mark.
- Bicknell's Thrush to Summit Thrush. A hike to mountaintop breeding grounds is the defining memory of searching for this thrush.
- Bonaparte's Gull to Tree Gull. This dapper species is the only gull that nests in trees.
- Blackburnian Warbler to Fire-faced Warbler. Recognizing the brilliant field-mark of this warbler.

These are just our own suggestions, of course, but it was fun to think about these familiar birds from a new angle. Stay tuned to learn more about any formal suggestions coming out of the AOS and ways to get involved.



Blackburnian Warbler



Barrow's Goldeneye



Bonaparte's Gull

Birds on the Wing in AMC's Maine Woods

AMC & Gabriella Gurney
AMC's Science Communicator

In March of this year, "The 30 Year Bird Study: The role of Maine's commercial forests for regional and national bird conservation, 1992-2022" was released. This document reports on a study originally conducted in 1992 and repeated in 2022 to give a 30-year view of bird densities in the northern Maine Woods. Appalachian Mountain Club is proud to have been a partner on this study.

North American breeding bird populations have fallen by 30% since 1970, primarily due to habitat loss and degradation. Maine's commercial forest landscape is the largest intact forest east of the Mississippi, and a key part of the globally significant important Bird Area in the lower 48 states. This study sought to understand what role AMC's

Maine Woods may play in maintaining bird populations.

The result?

70% of the bird species analyzed in the study **increased** in population—contrasting sharply with data from the same timeframe which shows those same species declined by 75% elsewhere in the United States. The study says this suggests that “somewhat different forces are at play in the commercial forest of Maine relative to the rest [of] North America”.

This could be because AMC's large, intact woods function as a landscape-scale refuge for birds, providing vital connected habitat in a time of loss and degradation.

Further study is needed to understand more about this important bird habitat, but for now, we know that protecting AMC's Maine Woods is bringing birdsong back to the forest.

Learn more about how AMC is conserving critical forestland in Maine's 100-mile Wilderness at: outdoors.org/mainewoodsinitiative.

This article was reprinted with the permission of AMC and Gabriella Gurney.

So, what can you do to help? Create safe and healthy habitats in your yards and gardens, using native plants and trees. Every small action can beget big results!



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Christmas Bird Counts

Get ready to bundle up for the annual CBCs. Right now, we're looking at tentative dates in December. Please check our website later this Fall for final details. The birds will be waiting. Hope you can join us!



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Merrymeeting Chapter

YES! I want to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in Maine as a **new** **renewing** member.

Annually \$30 Senior/Volunteer/Student | \$40 Individual | \$50 Household | \$100 | \$Other _____

Monthly Enroll me in the Frequent Flyer Program and charge my credit card each month:

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$25 Other \$ _____

View all member benefits online by visiting maineaudubon.org/memberFAQ

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Seasonal Address: _____ from _____ to _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____ Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card (below)

Card # _____ Exp. date: _____ / _____

Join or renew online:
maineaudubon.org/join

Our community of members is integral to our success on behalf of Maine's diverse wildlife and habitat. When you join or renew your Maine Audubon membership, you ensure that work can continue.

Thank you!



Field Trips & Nature Programs 2024 - 25

Please Take Note: If inclement weather (rain/snow/ice/strong winds/extreme temperatures) is predicted, the Field Trip may be canceled. Please check our website (<https://merrymeeting.maineaudubon.org>) or call the Trip Leader before venturing out.

Possible Health 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.

Tick Warning: Please be aware, ticks could be encountered at any location we visit. Precautions are advised.

SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, (southern coastal Maine)

The Rachel Carson Refuge was established to protect estuarine and salt marsh habitat in southern coastal Maine for migrating birds. Join leader Glenn Evans as we search for fall migrants at several Refuge Divisions.

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Rachel Carson Administrative Headquarters parking area, 321 Port Rd. in Wells. To get to the Admin. Headquarters, take I-95 to Exit 19 (Wells). From Exit 19, turn left onto Route 9/109. At the stop light, turn left onto Post Rd (Rte. 1 North). Just past the Maine Diner, turn right onto Port Rd. (Route 9) and follow for approximately 3/4 mile. Turn right into the Refuge entrance. From there we'll drive to several locations.

FMI Glenn Evans, 443-9652

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Curtis Farm Preserve/Mitchell Field, South Harpswell

Join co-leaders Gordon Smith and Peggy Page as we explore Curtis Farm Preserve for fall land migrants, as well as shorebirds in Basin and Curtis Coves.

Expect to walk on easy trails. Following, at Mitchell Field, we'll walk a woods path and view Middle Bay.

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Curtis Farm Preserve lower parking lot off Basin Point Rd.

FMI Gordon Smith, 449-8206 or Peggy Page, 650-0549

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Androscoggin River Trail, Lisbon

Join leader Gordon Smith as we walk an easy paved path (up to 3 miles) along the river to observe fall migrants.

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Sabattus River boat launch parking lot off Rte. 196 at Frost Hill Avenue.

FMI Gordon Smith, 449-8206

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance

Join co-leaders Gordon Smith and Peggy Page as we search for fall woodland and grassland migrants. Also, we'll be scanning the skies for southbound raptors. We'll walk paved/gravel roads and easy paths (up to 3 miles).

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Brunswick Landing Perimeter Trail, Pine Street entrance.

FMI Gordon Smith, 449-8206 or Peggy Page, 650-0549

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Morrell Room, Brunswick

Board Meeting: 5:30 P.M.- 6:30 P.M.
Public Program: 7:00 P.M.- 8:00 P.M.
Guest speaker: Becky Marvill, "The Acadia Birding Festival"

The Acadia Birding Festival is the largest birding festival in Maine. Becky

will cover how the Festival started and offer highlights of its past 13 years.

Becky Marvill lives with her family in Yarmouth, Maine. Her background is in Biology, Ornithology and Computer Science. She runs her own computer programming/webpage design business. She is the Executive Director of the Acadia Birding Festival, combining her love of birding, knowledge of webpage design and organizational skills. She also serves as the Secretary for the Maine Bird Records Committee, as the eBird Hotspot monitor for Maine, and on the Board of Maine Audubon. During her free time, she helps with local bird surveys, chases after rarities, loves to travel and enjoy birds in new locations.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Green Point Farm WMA, Dresden

Join co-leaders Gordon Smith and Peggy Page as we search for fall migrants in the woodlands, fields and wild rice flats of this diverse State Wildlife Management Area. We'll walk paths, farm roads and open fields (about 2 miles). The grassy fields may be wet/dew covered.

◆ Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Green Point Farm by the green shed off Rte. 128.

FMI Gordon Smith, 449-8206 or Peggy Page, 650-0549

OCTOBER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5
8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Capt. William Fitzgerald Preserve/Bay Bridge Landing Wetland Park, Brunswick

Join co-leaders Gordon Smith and Peggy Page as we explore these two town-owned properties for fall

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 8:00 a.m. at the iron gate at the end of Lindberg Crossing Rd. (off Old Bath Rd.), 1.3 miles northeast of the Bath Road/Old Bath Road intersection.

FMI Gordon Smith, 449-8206 or Peggy Page, 650-0549

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13
DAWN - DUSK

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

Join Merrymeeting Audubon for this fun event. We'll be staking out a 17-foot diameter circle, and from within the circle we'll attempt to observe/hear/record all birds in the surrounding area. Observation/listening will begin at dawn and continue until dusk. 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, 449-8206

Please note: If the predicted weather for October 13 is not favorable, this event will take place the previous day, Saturday, October 12. Please check our website for updates.

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

Field Trip: Work morning Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

As conditions allow, we'll be pruning, removing invasive plants and doing trail maintenance.

◆ Meet at Hamilton Sanctuary. From Rte. 1 in West Bath, take the New Meadows exit. Turn left onto New Meadows Rd. and go straight ahead to the traffic signal at Bath Rd. 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, 443-9652**, prior to the day for planning purposes.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20
8:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Hermit Island, Phippsburg

Join co-leaders John Berry and Gordon Smith as we explore this birding mecca. We'll be walking (up to 3 miles) in a variety of habitats, from sandy beaches, to rocky headlands, to woodland paths.

◆ Meet at Hermit Island. From Bath, take Rte. 209 (High Street) south into Phippsburg. Continue south on Rte. 209 (a.k.a. Main Road) until the Rte. 209/Rte. 216 intersection. Continue south on Rte. 216 (Small Point Rd.) for approximately 3 miles. Turn right onto Head Beach Rd. at the Hermit Island sign. Proceed approximately 1/4 mile to the Hermit Island parking lot (on the other side of the fence). **Please do not park along Head Beach.**

FMI John Berry, 632-7257 or Gordon Smith, 449-8206

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl at Sabattus Pond, Sabattus

Join leader John Berry as we explore Sabattus Pond for migrating waterfowl, including hundreds of ruddy ducks, as well as scaup and mergansers.

◆ Meet at Martin's Point Park on Sabattus Pond. From the intersection of Rte. 9 and Rte. 126 in Sabattus, take High Street north approximately .4 mile to Elm Street. Turn right on Elm Street and proceed .2 mile to Lake Street. Turn right on Lake Street and proceed to the Park at the end of the street.

FMI John Berry, 632-7257

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28

Location: Curtis Memorial Library, Morrell Room, Brunswick

Board Meeting: 5:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.
Public Program: 7:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.
Guest speaker: Peggy Page, "Birding in New Zealand".

Few birding locations on the planet offer such spectacular scenery and extraordinary birds as New Zealand. Isolated for millions of years, it features many species—even whole families—of birds found nowhere else. And its surrounding waters teem with albatross, petrels and shearwaters, all easily accessible on coastal pelagic trips. Join local birder Peggy Page as she shares her experiences with keas and kiwis, tuis and penguins, and even a visit with hobbits!

Brunswick resident Peggy Page has been birding for nearly forty years, including trips to 25 countries and every US state. She especially loves seabirds and never misses a chance to be out on a choppy sea searching for shearwaters. She is currently a member of the Merrymeeting Audubon board and chair of the Scholarship Committee.

DECEMBER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1
8:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl Walk - Giant's Stairs, Bailey Island

Join leader John Berry as we search for winter waterfowl in eastern Casco Bay from the Giant's Stairs Trail.

◆ Meet at the Giant's Stairs Trail on Bailey Island. From Harpswell Islands Rd. (Rte. 24), turn left onto Washington Avenue. Proceed approximately .1 mile to a small parking area for 4-5 cars at All Saints by-the-Sea Chapel. If this lot is full, proceed down Washington Ave. to additional parking at Harpswell Heritage Land Trust's McIntosh Lot Preserve.

FMI John Berry, 632-7257