

Merrymeeting Board Endorses Maine Woods National Monument Proposal

At its May meeting the Merrymeeting Audubon Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the establishment of a Maine Woods National Monument in the region east of Baxter State Park. In so doing, the board is echoing Maine Audubon's efforts to rally support behind this remarkable, once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve a large expanse of natural habitat in the North Woods region.

Entrepreneur and conservationist Roxanne Quimby has offered to donate 87,500 acres to the federal government for a national park and recreation area, the establishment of which would require congressional approval. However, President Obama can designate the land as a national monument without the approval of Congress. Environmentalists and conservationists throughout the state are hoping the President will take action before the end of his term.

The property includes beautiful views of Mt. Katahdin, spectacular falls and rapids along the East branch of the Penobscot River, several ponds, extensive wetlands, and is home to moose, bear, lynx, and many bird species. Faced with the ongoing loss of habitat that is plaguing many species of birds, the Merrymeeting Board views the preservation of this magnificent forest as an important and welcome opportunity to help protect bird populations from further decline.

More information about the proposed park and ways that chapter members can support it can be found at the websites of Maine Audubon, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Maine Conservation Voters.

Steve Spear



Chapter installs new board members and officers

The Chapter held its Annual Meeting on April 26th. Part of the event is to elect new officers and approve new board members. We are pleased to announce that **Doug Sutor** is Merrymeeting Audubon's new president. Over the past six years he has expanded the scope and

number of our many field trips. His focus has been not only on increasing the number of our outings, but also changing their times so that we can observe birds other than between 5:30 and 11:00 A.M. For example, Doug is a shorebird specialist, so now we schedule our shorebird

Merrymeeting Audubon Chapter

Officers

Doug Sutor, *President* 841-1951
 Steve Spear, *Vice President* 353-8863
 Karen Carlisle, *Secretary* 833-6033
 John Berry, *Treasurer* 632-7257

Board of Directors

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The Call

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

The **PROPOSED PARK AREA** map, for the Maine Woods National Monument, courtesy of Doug Sutor. Bird photos: **OSPREY** courtesy of Laura Suomi-Lecker; **NAZCA BOOBY** and **WAVED ALBATROSS** courtesy of Jeanette Lovitch.

There is something
 infinitely healing
 in the repeated
 refrains of nature.

Rachel Carson

Hog Island: volunteer or camper it's a memorable experience

Once upon a time, on an island not too far away, an adventurous woman stepped off a mini-bargelike boat onto a dock, which serpented up a rocky ledge to a beautiful open view of gardens and quaint buildings surrounded by forests and the sea. A most wonderful welcome to Hog Island, one of the Audubon camps just off the Maine coast, near Damariscotta and Bremen.

On this arrival day (June 5) the sun shone warmly, accompanied by coolish breezes wafting a salt-sea fragrance. One could easily feel the natural serenity of this place, even though over 40 campers—birders, primarily—arrived for their week of the “Joy of Birding”. The mantle of serenity suddenly fell away as I, the adventurous woman, was quickly swept into the flurry of “volunteer” tasks needing attention! I must add, though, I was a happy member of the “corps of volunteers”—some new like me, others Hog Island veterans—ready to share the demands of the week.

Since I am a “foodie” and definitely a “kitchen person”, most of my tasks involved food prep, dining room setup for meals and clean-up patrol. Unlike home, doing these things for approximately 70 people, three times a day can be daunting. However, among the volunteers there was such an unparalleled sense of teamwork, we accomplished our duties like a well-oiled machine. By the way, Chef Cleo and her staff provided some fabulous food every day—fresh, local and made from scratch. Amazing the things you can learn working in a professional kitchen! If you're lucky you can bring home some recipes.

An extraordinary highlight of my stay was observing the Osprey nest, on a pre-built platform, next to one of the buildings. There were three eggs in the nest, and during our time there, two of them hatched! Everyone could watch the process thanks to a videocam set up above the nest. This particular videocam allowed local and global observation of the nest 24 hours a day. When the eggs hatched there were cheers throughout the camp!

Aside from our responsibilities, the staff made sure that we had opportunities to enjoy our natural surroundings, as well as partake in the lectures and trips scheduled for the campers. I chose the all-day boat trip to Eastern Egg Rock and Harbor Island. Along the way we witnessed several species of birds—Roseate Tern, Ruddy Turnstone, Eiders, Cormorants, Puffins, Guillemots and Red Knots—as well as many seals swimming or catching a few rays. On Harbor Island we went ashore. Following a great picnic provided by Chef Cleo, we could choose one of three offerings to tour the Island—easy, medium, or challenging. The staff expert for the medium walk took our group on a beautiful hike, through meadow and woods, where we identified different species of birds by sight or song. Our island hike showed us some truly beautiful scenery. Note for the future: bring good binoculars or spotting scope, and a good camera!

All in all, this was a truly memorable experience. Whether you go as a camper or a volunteer, you are sure to make new friends, learn a lot from the staff experts, enjoy a sense of tranquility among some of nature's most beautiful surroundings, and eat very well! If Hog Island calls, you must go.

Dee Miskill

Beginning birders want to know. . .

Question: What makes birds decide to migrate and why don't they all go at the same time?

Answer: Birds migrate to move from an area of lower or decreasing food and nesting locations to areas of high or increasing food and nesting locations. The long distance migration of many of our summer visitors probably evolved over thousands of years. We believe it is controlled by genetic makeup, incorporating responses to weather, geography, food sources, and day length. Likely our tropical migrants moved north for the seasonal abundance of food and increased daylight that studies indicate allows them to raise roughly twice the number of young as those birds which remain and nest in the tropical locations.

Migration is believed to be triggered by day length, lower temperatures, and food supplies. Studies of caged birds show restlessness occurs at the time of normal migration suggesting an innate desire to migrate.

Within a species, not all birds will migrate at the same time for several reasons. In some species it is known that birds that have not successfully raised young will start their migration early. Adult birds normally leave next, and finally the young birds of the year will start their migration. The first year birds do make the trip on their own and somehow do know where to go and will also find their way back next spring. With some species it is believed that the young may be less efficient at finding food and, thus, will take longer to make the trip if it requires rebuilding energy and fat supplies along the way.

John Berry and Karen Carlisle

Can you identify these avians ?

For answers and more information, come to hear guest speakers **Laura Suomi-Lecker** and **Derek Lovitch**, on September 27 and October 25 respectively, at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. Both programs begin at 7:00 p.m.



BOARD MEMBERS, from page 1

walks by the tides. When not presiding over chapter business, he is a *lakes biologist* at Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Steve Spear, who has chaired the Merrymeeting Audubon Scholarship Committee for three years, has accepted the vice president position. He comes from a background of educational administration and ably carries on the work performed by so many of his predecessors. With ample funds in our scholarship coffers, we continue to send all of our scholarship applicants to overnight summer camps.

A couple of years ago, **Jay Stormer**, a long-time visitor from way down south in Texas, moved to Brunswick. He now participates on our field trips far more frequently than before, and has contributed to our public presentations on local and Texas birds. His interest in birds extends to the location of his new home which affords him one of the largest yard-bird lists of our group.

Finally, as editor of *The Call*, **Dee Miskill** has brought a raft of writing, organizational, and graphic design skills to the chapter. A regular participant at board meetings, she offers new ideas or fresh perspectives on how to reach our public audience, and use *The Call* as an important communication vehicle. She knows how to get our readers' attention and makes *The Call* fun to read as well. For these reasons she is most welcome as a voting board member.

We are definitely pleased to have these individuals as part of our Merrymeeting Audubon family.

Ted Allen



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Field Trips & Nature Programs 2016

www.maineaudubon.org/merrymeeting

September

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 4 - 7 P.M.

Field Trip: Sunset Birding at Popham Beach

Join us for an evening of birding at Popham Beach for late shorebirds and other migrant species. ØMeet at bathhouse on the southwest side of the parking lot at 4:00 p.m. FMI Doug Suitor at 841-1951.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 8:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Morse Mountain

The Bates Morse Mountain Conservation Area is a great spot for watching the fall migration of raptors. Maurice and 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 at 389-2585.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 AND

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 7:00 A.M.

Field Trips: Green Point Farm WMA, Dresden

Fall migrants will be the target on these two walks through the weedy fields at Maine Inland Fish and Wildlife's Green Point Farm Wildlife Management Area. Migrant sparrows abound, with ten species recorded here and individuals at times numbering in the hundreds. We'll also look for other migrants in the variety of habitats Green Point has to offer.

➤Meet at the Bath CVS at 7:00 a.m. to carpool; or at 7:30 a.m. at Green Point Farm. Park next to the large green metal shed at the Farm (not at the little

green farmhouse by the bridge). FMI call Ted Allen, 729-8661 regarding the first trip; call Gordon Smith, 725-0282 regarding the second trip.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 7:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Androscoggin River Trail, Lisbon

Opened in August 2014, the Androscoggin River Trail is a paved walking trail along the river in the town of Lisbon. Expect to observe migrating vireos, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows.

➤Meet at Hannaford in Brunswick at 7:30 a.m.; or 7:50 a.m. at the Sabattus River boat launch parking lot on Route 196 between Lisbon Falls and Lisbon Center. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Board Meeting – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

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

Program: Lessons from Avian Haven: A Citizens's Guide to Helping Birds of Maine – 7:00 P.M.

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

Laura Suomi-Lecker will discuss common reasons why birds are admitted to Avian Haven Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center in Freedom, and what public citizens can do to help our local birds. She'll discuss the facilities and recent cases of Avian Haven. 2016 summer admissions include orphaned and injured eagles, owls, hawks, waterbirds (including Northern Gannets, loons and ducks), and many species of songbirds. Laura Suomi-Lecker is the Technical Director at Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District—where

she does a variety of bird-related education and outreach—and is also the education and outreach coordinator and long-time volunteer with Avian Haven.

October

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 8 A.M. - 11A.M.

Field Trip: Bird Banding at Riverpoint, West Falmouth

Please join Biodiversity Research Institute on site at River Point Conservation Area in West Falmouth for an interpretive demonstration of bird banding. BRI will be conducting mist net surveys for songbirds as part of our migration monitoring and invites you to join them to observe research methods and gain knowledge about identifying and aging birds in the hand. Guests should expect to observe the banding process, visit mist nets, and see birds in hand as they are released back to the wild. We plan time to explore the diverse 40-acre property bordering the Piscataquis River.

➤Meet at Hannaford in Brunswick at 7:00 a.m. to carpool. FMI contact Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

Field Trip: The Big Sit! Wharton Point, Brunswick

Join Merrymeeting Audubon for this fun event. Some people have called it a "tailgate party for birders." The concept is simplicity itself: find a good spot for bird watching, sit in one spot for 24 hours, and count all the bird species you see or hear. Today there are Big Sit circles all over the world. Merrymeeting Audubon is staking out a circle at Wharton Point. Join our own Gordon Smith and co-host Jay

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Stormer for any part, or all of the day. FMI call Gordon at 725-0282.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 9 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Work Morning: Hamilton Sanctuary, West Bath

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 stop sign. Here New Meadows Road turns into Foster Point Road. Follow Foster Point Road nearly to its end to the sanctuary sign and 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 16, 7:00 A.M.

Field Trips: Green Point Farm WMA, Dresden

See *September 17* for Trip Description.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 8:30 A.M. - 12 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 Bath Plaza near CVS, or 8:30 at Head Beach, Hermit Island, Route 216, Phippsburg. FMI call Doug at 841-1951.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25 5 - 7 P.M.

Board Meeting – 5:00 P.M.

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

Program: Galapagos Islands –

7:00 P.M. Speaker, Derek Lovitch

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

The Galapagos Islands. Few places in the world conjure up as much intrigue, excitement, and awe. Could

the land of volcanoes, giant tortoises, Marine Iguanas, and Darwin (or so we have been told) possibly be as legendary as our wildest dreams have imagined? Not surprisingly, it far exceeded them! And we haven't even mentioned the birding yet: from flamingos and penguins, to Blue-footed Boobies and Frigatebirds. From Swallow-tailed Gulls to rails and a finch that uses tools, the birding was unreal. Join us as we get to know all of the feathered (and non) species that call these islands their only home, especially the "Darwin's Finches," a group of 16 birds that are the perfect example of evolution via "adaptive radiation."

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 8:00 A.M.

Field Trip: Waterfowl of 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 the Brunswick Hannaford at 8:00 a.m. to carpool. FMI call John at 632-7257.

November

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 7:00 P.M.

Board Meeting, hosted by Jay Stormer – 449-1177

141 Rossmere Road, Brunswick

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 7:30 A.M.

Field Trip: Viles Arboretum

The Arboretum provides a number of habitats for observing many kinds of resident birds and late migrants.

➤ Meet at Hannaford at 7:30 a.m. or at the Arboretum at 8:15 a.m. FMI call Gordon Smith at 725-0282.

December/January

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 at 632-7257 or Berry. John@comcast.net.

Field Trips: Christmas Bird Counts

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17
Bath–Phippsburg

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 warm, 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.

