

Bulletin



Mid-Coast Audubon's mission is to promote long-term responsible use of natural resources through an informed membership, education, and community awareness

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 37, No. 3 - August 2013

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September 1, 2013

Annual Lobster Fundraiser

What's That Shorebird?

Here's how you know when you've crossed the line from being a casual birdwatcher to being a serious birder: shorebirds. Most people would not suffer the woes of walking in shoreline mud just to glimpse a bunch of drab birds that all look alike. Well, now's the time to test your mettle. There are thousands of shorebirds sitting on sandbars along the Maine coast, waiting to be identified.

The bulk of the shorebird population nests in northern Canada. In the spring, they're in a rush to get there. They follow an interior route through the United States, largely bypassing Maine. But after a stressful breeding season, the birds need the coastal fuel supply to get back south.

Most of the population funnels through Maine in August and September. Shorebirds are abundant in downeast Maine, but they skip over the "rockbound coast of Maine" around Acadia due to a lack of mudflats. Shorebirds become numerous again in our area and Mid-Coast Audubon is fortunate to have great

sites like Weskeag Marsh in South Thomaston and Seawall Beach in Phippsburg.

It's daunting to open a guidebook and see how many shorebirds are pictured. Around three dozen species have been reported along the Maine coast. *Continued on page 3*



Two confusing shorebirds - maybe not - read on. Answer box on page 6.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Writing this in July, I'm mainly focused on the sweltering temperatures we've been experiencing, even here on Hog Island! It makes a person think about global warming, and it makes for exquisite swimming conditions.

Today we visited the intertidal zone with a group of educators - perfect on a hot day if you can jump into the subtidal zone for relief. It's a great place to think about the adaptations that all marine organisms have to cope with the variety of weather they endure from hot to freezing, from very dry to being inundated with freshwater rain.

Some animals, like crabs and amphipods, can move to a better location in a damp shady spot, but many stationary organisms must just "clam up" to hold their moisture in until the ocean returns to give them relief. The sessile and motile organisms benefit from the abundant forest of seaweed (*Ascophyllum* and *Fucus*) that drops down and covers the boulders when the water recedes. When the tide

rises, the rockweed also rises, to provide a complex sheltered habitat for fish, larval shellfish and others.

It's interesting to watch the harvesting of the Knotted Wrack and wonder what effect it will have on the marine food web. Not worth too much as a crop, but relatively easy to get – and possibly a sustainable marine resource. Since there hasn't been much study yet, we don't really know how it will shake out in the end. But we do know that there is a lot of life in the intertidal zone. Location, location, location where nutrients from land meet the cold seas and substrate allows for attachment within a zone of sunlight for photosynthesis; where things grow upon things; where larval fish grow to feed seabird chicks; and where tiny mussels and lobsters can settle and find cover.

We humans, while not living in the sea, certainly are significant players in the complex marine web of life. Come be part of the food web and explore the Hog Island intertidal zone at our annual Mid-Coast Audubon lobsterbake September 1. A great chance to support your local chapter at our main fundraiser, and an excellent opportunity to learn more about the Audubon Camp.

Sue Schubel

CRITTER CORNER

On a sunny morning in late March, I watched a brown bat foraging for insects low to the ground. The date seemed a bit early in the season for bats to leave hibernation. With temperatures in the mid-50s, insects were apparently buzzing down near the grass tops.

Maine has eight bat species. Five species hibernate in mines or caves, so are susceptible to white-nose syndrome (WNS). These include the big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*), and tri-colored bat (*Pipistrellus subflavus*).

The newly emerging WNS fungal disease has killed more than five million cave- and mine-hibernating bats in the Northeast since 2007. The disease is named for the white fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, that infects the skin of the muzzle, ears, and wings of hibernating bats.

This devastating disease has now spread to 22 states and 5 Canadian provinces. It is suspected that the disease was first transferred to the U.S. from Europe by international cave explorers who carried the spores on their footwear. Precautions against wearing contaminated clothing and footwear are now taken in major cave areas, such as Kentucky's Mammoth Cave, to prevent further problems.

The syndrome causes bats to awaken more often during hibernation and use up the stored fat reserves that are



needed to get them through the winter. Infected bats often emerge too soon from hibernation and are often seen flying around in midwinter, leading to starvation and death.

World-wide, bats consume a wide variety food items, including fruit, nectar, small mammals, birds, lizards, fish and frogs. Seventy percent of bats eat insects, however, sharing a large role in natural pest control. Hunting by echo-location, a nursing little brown bat mother can eat more than her body weight nightly (up to 4,500 insects). Beyond the potential extinction of several bat species, mankind would lose the significant benefits of insect control as yet another link in the nature's chain is broken.

Consider purchasing a Midcoast Audubon bat box for your yard. It will pay natural dividends as you provide a safe, clean home for these useful and magical flying creatures. See box on page 4.

Don Reimer

Shorebirds - continued from page 1

Many look alike. I admit that a single sandpiper standing alone might be tough for a beginner to identify. But these



guys are seldom alone. They're in big flocks that allow you to compare them to each other. Let me make this easy for you: divide and conquer. When you hit the mudflat, divide up the flock you're seeing into three categories: sandpiper, plover, or something that's not a sandpiper or plover.

Now, since they are the most numerous, divide up the sandpipers. Use my rule: "everything is a semipalmated sandpiper unless it's not." Most of the small, grayish peeps are semipalmated sandpipers. Semipalmated means that there is a little bit of webbing between the toes, which helps them walk on the mud. Least sandpipers are slightly smaller and browner, with yellowish legs. Together, they make up the bulk of the sandpiper flock on the beach. Next, look for anything that isn't one of them. White-rumped sandpipers are very similar but slightly larger. Since their legs are a fraction longer, look at the birds that are standing a little deeper in the water. The rare Baird's sandpiper is the same size as the

white-rumped sandpiper. An oversized peep could be either one of them. A pectoral sandpiper stands much taller than the others.

Try it with the plovers. Every plover is a semipalmated plover unless it's not. Black-bellied plovers are twice the size. Together, they make up most of the larger peeps on the beach. Piping plovers will look different than semipalmated because they are much whiter. Sanderlings are nearly as big as black-bellied plovers but they are the color of white sand.

When you realize that most of the smallish birds are one of just four species – semipalmated and least sandpipers, and semipalmated and black-bellied plovers, life on the mudflat gets simpler. After all, you learned this game in kindergarten: "which one of these things is not like the others?" Now it should get easy to pick out the few short-billed dowitchers, red knots, and ruddy turnstones in the flock, right?

See box on page 6 for names of birds in photos.



Bob Duchesne leads bird tours, writes articles for the Bangor Daily News, has a weekly outdoor radio program on WEZQ, and is founder of the Maine Birding Trail.

Calendar of Events

Bird walks and programs are free; donations are welcome to help defray costs.

Program chair: Kathy Cartwright 832-5584. Field trip chair: John Weinrich 563-2930

AUGUST

Saturday, August 10

Weskeag Marsh

Shorebirds, ducks, sparrows and raptors. Timing for this field trip is dependent on tides. *Check website for updated information.*

Tuesday, August 27

Plum Island Day Trip with Dennis McKenna.

Check website for updated information.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 1, 3 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Mid-Coast Audubon's Lobster Bake Fundraiser on Hog Island, Bremen. \$40 ticket includes boat transportation, lobster, clams, potato, onion, corn, lemonade, coffee and dessert. Dinner served at 5 p.m. BYOB. Reservations required by August 25. Call Sue at 380-1370 or e-mail sschubel@tidewater.net - subject LOBSTERS.

Thursday, September 19, 7:00 p.m.

Camden Library

Annie Kassler presents *Bats* - why we should care about bats, myths versus facts, and more.

Saturday, September 21

Hawk Watch with Don

Join Don and Mid-coast Audubon for a raptor watch along

the Maine coast in the Harpswell area.

Meet at Hannaford's in Damariscotta at 7:00 am.

Saturday, September 28

Annual Monhegan Fall Trip

Join Mid-coast Audubon's chapter for a day of birding fall migrants and more on famous Monhegan Island. Make reservations to meet the Monhegan Ferry for a 7:00 am departure. Boat returns from the island at 4:00 pm.

Call John Weinrich (563-2930) for further information.

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 12

Green Point Wildlife Preserve, Dresden

Once a saltwater farm producing apples, blueberries, hay and other produce Green Point is now a beautiful preserve jutting into Kennebec River and Merrymeeting Bay. The preserve has been a magnet to fall migrating sparrows.

Meet at Hannaford's in Damariscotta at 7:00 am.

Thursday, October 17, 7:00 p.m.

Camden Library

Fred Gralenski, from the Fundy Audubon Chapter, will speak on the history and comparison of moths and butterflies.

Check our website, www.midcoastaudubon.org for updates on trips and programs. Thank you.

Feathery Fun Quiz

Lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. . . what bird does each clue make you think of?

1. These birds hand 10 (or really 8) on the Pacific Coast of North America.
2. Thi entirely red bird (only one in North America) specializes in eating wasps and bees.
3. The family *Nectariniidae* shines brightly with 132 species - one of which is the National Bird of Singapore
4. Travel between Mexico and southern Peru to see this sole member f the family Eurypygidae and enjoy its dramatic wing display.
5. Vamos a la playa!
6. So hot, we feel like it's set to bake or broil.

Answers on page 7

Bat Boxes

Mid-coast Audubon makes bat boxes as well as bird boxes.

Bat boxes are \$20

Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Tufted Titmice, Nuthatches, Chickadees boxes (\$25), Saw-whet Owls and American Kestrel boxes (\$30), Wood Duck boxes (\$35) . Oriole feeder (\$20), platform feeder (\$30 and \$45) and log suet feeder (\$10), metal hole repair kit (\$3).

Call 207-563-2930 or email jweinrich@roadrunner.com.





Juanita Roushdy



Juanita Roushdy



explore.org

Did you see me fledge? I'm on Hog Island, too.

September 1 is Coming!

Our annual Lobsterbake Fundraiser will be held on Hog Island in Muscongus Bay

Sunday, September 1, 2013

First boat at 3 p.m; last boat at 7 p.m.

Dinner at 5 p.m. (BYOB)

\$40 per person

Come join the fun with an on-the-beach, under-the-seaweed cooking of lobsters, clams, corn, potatoes and onions, plus lemonade, a delectable dessert, and shade-grown coffee to finish the meal.

Come early to explore this beautiful island, learn more about the many facets of Mid-Coast Audubon, and enjoy camaraderie by the fire

For reservations: send e-mail to sschubel@tidewater.net and in the subject line put LOBSTERS or phone 207-380-1370 by August 25
Mail payments to: Seabird Sue, 11 Audubon Rd. Bremen, ME 04551

This is our major fundraiser that allows us to put on so many free programs and give out scholarships for camp. Please support our programs.



Don Reimer

I have TWO luncheon items!



Don Reimer

This Great-Crested Flycatcher thinks the Black-Capped Chickadee's catch (opposite) looks juicier than his dragonfly!

Welcome New Members!

William Clough, Round Pond
 Julie and Matt Lutkus, Damariscotta
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard McKittrick,
 Lincolnville
 Ingrid Perry, Rockport
 Beverly Sawyer, Waldoboro
 Sherrie Tucker, New Harbor

... and Renewing Members

Frank Caputo, Swanville
 Charles D. Gibson, Camden
 John Griffith, Cushing
 Megan E. Hughes, Bradford



We Missed You ...

A group of Mid-Coast Auduboners hit pay dirt June 6-8 with Bob Duchesne and a great trip with great birds. The Spruce Grouse (above) was a lifer for many of us. Up close and personal looks at Uphill Sandpipers, Olive-Sided Flycatchers and a lone Red-Knot amid a group of Black-Bellied Plovers made up for the miss on Boreal Chickadee.

The last day of rain did not deter the group from wanting to bird hard and that they did, including great looks at Bay-Breasted Warblers, another lifer for some. Everyone was happy with the birds they saw and yearned for another day - perhaps next year!

Injured Birds!

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www.avianhaven.org

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www.ontherushofwings.org

Answers
 1. Surfbird
 2. Summer Tanager
 3. Crimson Sunbird
 4. Sunbittern
 5. Seaside Sparrow
 6. Ovenbird

Shorebird i.d. Answers

Page 1 - Upper left is a Baird's Sandpiper. Note that it is significantly larger than the Least Sandpiper, but lacks the chevrons under the wings that would be typical of White-rumped Sandpiper.

Page 3 - Top left photo - The Short-billed Dowitcher is standing in front of the Black-Bellied Plover, with its bill down in typical feeding fashion. The Black-Bellied Plover is a big bird, towering over the dowitcher.

Page 3 - Bottom right photo - Semipalmated Plover.



Quoddy Lighthouse



Piping Plover and chick with an itch at Reid State Park

Mid-Coast Audubon

Organized December 6, 1969

a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization

P.O. Box 458, Damariscotta, ME 04543-0458

OFFICERS

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The *Bulletin* is published quarterly in February, May, August, November. News items or photos are welcome. **The deadline for the next issue is October 15!**

Send to juanitar@tidewater.net

Do You Have an Invasive?

Japanese Knotweed, Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, and Ornamental Jewelweed - all are beautiful and add different textures and colors to the landscape. But they are aggressive growers and smother native species and take over native habitats. Each is a monoculture.

The University of Maine, the National Park Service, and Invasive.Org have a number of tips on how to control or eradicate these species..

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is a fast-growing herbaceous perennial that grows from three to nine feet in height and forms large thickets where it colonizes. Leaves are 2 - 6 inches long and broadly oval. Flowers bloom from August to September and form shiny black-brown, three-sided seeds. In autumn, its leaves fall and the chestnut brown stems



remain standing most of the winter. It reproduces through the extensive rhizomes.

The best method to control this species is to prevent it from becoming established. Remove it as soon as possible. If well established, eliminate it by repeatedly cutting the stalks. Three or more cuttings in a single growing season can offset growth of rhizomes. Digging up the roots is not suggested because digging can lead to root fragments that can repopulate the area. (Bulletin #2511 - Maine Invasive Plants)

Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculata*) is a deciduous vine that climbs by twining itself around a support (think trees). Its branches are round, hairless, light to dark brown, and have noticeable lenticels (surface bumps). It can reach heights of 50 feet and is often confused with our native American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*). The two can be distinguished by examining the location of the flowers and fruits on the stems. American Bittersweet's are always found in clusters at the end of stems, while Oriental Bittersweet's



are found in the joint where the leaves grow out of the stems.

To control it, small patches can be hand-pulled, but be sure to remove the entire root to prevent sprouting. Low patches have been successfully removed by cutting the vine and treating the regrowth with glyphosate. The plant has a substantial seed bank; complete



eradication may depend on repeating methods for control for several years. (Bulletin #2506 - Maine Invasive Plants)

Ornamental Jewelweed (*Impatiens glandulifera* Royle) is a herbaceous annual plant growing from 3 to 6 feet tall. It is native to the Himalyan region of Asia. Flower colors range from white to pink to purple to red and occur June to October. It supplants native jewelweed (orange flowers) and alters the composition



Photo by Barbara Tokarska-Guzik

and behaviour of pollinating insects. In high densities it can alter water flow besides aggressively competing with native plants.

To control it, mechanical methods such as pulling, mowing or cutting have been successful in eradicating stands of Ornamental Jewelweed. Such methods should be completed before seed is set (800-2500 seeds per plant). It should also be cut below the lowest node; otherwise it will regrow and flower later in the season.



Photo by Jan Samanek

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www.midcoastaudubon.org



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04543

September 1, 2013

Annual Lobster Fundraiser

3 - 7 pm. Hog Island

\$40 per person

(Boat ride to island included)

See page 4 for details



Juanita Roushdy

M I D - C O A S T A U D U B O N

Join Maine Audubon Today



Yes, I would like to join Maine Audubon and the **Mid-Coast Chapter** (this also includes membership in the National Audubon Society). I want to help promote environmental education and advocacy in our communities, and protect and conserve wildlife habitat. I will receive the quarterly publications *Habitat: The Journal of Maine Audubon* and the *Mid-Coast Chapter Bulletin*.

\$25 Volunteer/Senior \$35 Individual \$45 Household \$65 Contributor \$100 Patron

\$250 Sustaining \$500 Benefactor National Audubon Magazine is an additional \$10

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Don Reimer

Bats and Moths and Butterflies

Don't miss our program *on Bats* at Camden Library on September 19 and the *Moths and Butterflies* program also at Camden on October 17,

See page 4, for details.



Juanita Roushdy