

# Bulletin

Mid-Coast



Audubon



*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 38, No. 3 - August 2014

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Visit our website for  
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## Ospreys

Ospreys are icons of the Atlantic coast. From Newfoundland to the Florida Keys their big, bulky stick nests adorn all nature of structures—from trees (old school) to cell-towers (a modern favorite) to man-made nest poles to channel markers and just about anything else that projects above its surroundings near a large body of water.

Ospreys are unmistakable as they hover over the water on very long, slightly bent wings searching below for “the finny tribes that swarm in our bays, creeks, and rivers,” as Alexander Wilson wrote in 1812 in his *American Ornithology*. And then—the pay off when they fold their wings back and arrow headfirst toward the water, eyes locked on a fish. Just before hitting the water, their legs swing 180 degrees forward, toes opening wide, ready to drive needle-sharp talons into their unsuspecting prey. This happens fast enough that some people think they hit the water headfirst. They don't. It's the

business end of the Osprey—the feet—that breaks the surface of the water. An Osprey can catch a fish as much as three feet below the surface of the water, sometimes fully submerging, perhaps to pin a flounder to the sandy bottom.

After a successful dive, the hard work begins. The Osprey has to helicopter up out of the water with a big fish, perhaps weighing half as much as the bird itself. The first few wing beats may be labored, as the fish is often at an awkward angle. The Osprey will reach down and shift the fish so it is being carried headfirst through the air. When they do this, taking advantage of the hydrodynamic shape of the fish, you can almost see them shoot forward, and you notice a much easier wing beat.

Then they shake like a wet dog, twisting their body back and forth. It looks like they don't have any joints at all—all their body parts seem to be gyrating in different planes, and water sprays off them in every direction.

On Hog Island on Maine's midcoast, two adult Ospreys are raising a brood of three healthy youngsters. The parents, known by thousands and thousands of avid nest-cam viewers as

Rachel and Steve, are internet rock stars.



Rob Bierregaard lowers osprey chick from nest for banding.

*Continued on page 3*



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

SUE SCHUBEL

I am living a quintessential Maine summer experience – on an island surrounded by beautiful Muscongus Bay. Each week, boatloads of interesting people come to join me, and we learn together while playing like kids in nature.

Some highlights of this Hog Island summer have included watching Merlin chicks “branching” (the term for when they first leave their nest and clamber around nearby branches – next step fledging!); seeing “our” Osprey chicks

up close and personal when they were quickly banded and returned to their nest; and most recently, spending hours staring into an illuminated night sea for glimpses of a shoal of squid.

They shot forward and back without seeming effort, and occasionally would shoot out two long tentacles to grab a fish and pull it to their beaked mouth to consume. So fast and sleek – the molluskan opposite from the snail.

*Continued on page 6.*



## CRITTER CORNER - DON REIMER

Lepidoptera is the large order of insects that includes both moths and butterflies. While most of us are not butterfly experts, the colorful Monarch is a summer / fall icon in the Northeast that is familiar to young and old alike.

I recall epic fall migrations of Monarch Butterflies crossing the tip of Pemaquid Point several decades back. In the gathering morning light, tens of thousands of Monarchs hung suspended from the Point's dark spruce branches like deep orange curtains. With time those impressive seasonal flights decreased, followed by notable declines in the past twenty years or so.

Why did Monarch numbers plummet so dramatically in 2012-13? The number of butterflies migrating to Mexico has been dropping sharply. In 2012, just 60 million Monarchs arrived at overwintering habitats, a record low. Wintering data for 2013 suggested even lower numbers.

Monitoring and migration studies have identified three probable factors leading to declines: (1) Loss of wintering habitat in the mountains of Mexico due to logging activity

affecting habitat across 12 mountain ranges; (2) Severe weather events and rising temperatures resulting from the massive drought in certain Western states; (3) Major decline of milkweed crops across the Mid-Western regions due to broad herbicide use that kills non-resistant wild plants and flowers.

There are 108 species of milkweed in the United States, and the whole Monarch migration and reproductive process depends on this milkweed flora and wild flower nectar. Between February and mid-March, the 5 month-old winter Monarchs leave Mexico, migrate through Texas and lay their eggs on milkweed. A new generation is produced in about three weeks that moves north toward Canada.

Similar to an intergenerational relay team, the Monarchs' continental migration is linked to intact natural habitat that provides sufficient food and vital host plants such as milkweed along the entire migration route. Here's wishing you Monarchs this summer!



Milkweed



Monarch on zinnia

## Did you know . . .

Almost everyone knows about the citizen science project eBird, but did you know that there is now e-Butterfly, an international data-driven project dedicated to butterfly biodiversity, conservation and education.

At [www.e-Butterfly.org](http://www.e-Butterfly.org) you can enter your daily butterfly sightings. You can even post photos of a butterfly that you don't know and one of the reviewers will identify it for you. Like e-Bird, the site has range maps so that you can follow butterfly migration and sightings. Check it out.



*Butterflies have club-shaped antennae, while moths have feathery or saw-edged antennae. Both are a favorite food for birds.*



## Ospreys - *continued*

As prominent as Ospreys are along the Atlantic coastline, they seem to be almost as abundant on the Internet. Someone recently counted 29 Osprey nest cams online—and that's almost certainly not all of them. I know of nests that are streaming on websites from Estonia (it's a great cam!) to Seaside, Oregon. But none that I know of is as good as the Hog Island cam. As far as I know, it's the only one where volunteer camera operators can move and zoom the camera to follow the action in the nest. That, and the HD image, put the cam at the head of the class.

In mid-July, I was fortunate enough to visit Hog Island for the first time. I was an instructor at the Audubon's "Raptor Rapture" week. (Also fortunately, I'm happy to report, if there was a rapture, all the campers and instructors were "left behind.")

During the week, I climbed up to the nest and lowered the three young down to the ground, where master bander Scott Weidensaul placed uniquely numbered U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands on their legs. All three were in great health and were returned to the nest after just a few minutes of processing.

Sometime in early August, about eight weeks after they hatched, the young will make their first flights from the nest and begin to explore Muscongus Bay. As they're exploring, they will begin to fish. Their first attempts are unlikely to be successful, but Steve will keep them well fed—sort of on an allowance—while they hone their fishing abilities.

Rachel will head south probably in the latter half of August, leaving Steve in charge of the last bit of provisioning while the young slowly become independent. He, and the young, will head south sometime in September. They will all go their separate ways. Rachel and Steve will return to some far-away location, almost certainly somewhere in South America, where they have spent all their winters since their

first trip south some years ago. The young will also head south, guided by nothing more than an instinct to head south and stay over land whenever possible. That simple strategy, surprisingly enough, will get them to South America—either following the coast to Florida and then via Cuba and Hispaniola—or, remarkably including an open-water crossing of the western Atlantic, perhaps from Cape Cod to the Bahamas.

The young, if they survive all the perils of their first trip south, will settle down for 18 months. On average, about half the young Osprey born each year make it to South America. Some die before they settle down, but many will find a winter home.

Next spring (2015), when all the adults head north to breed, this year's young will take a pass on the spring migration. They're

not going to breed until they're three years old, so it doesn't make sense for them to make a 4,000-8,000 mile round trip migration to do nothing. The following spring (2016 for this year's brood)—sometime after the adults have left South America for the breeding grounds—the young will mosey on back home. They're pretty much Osprey teenagers, and unlikely to breed on the first trip north, so they're not in any real hurry.

Males are likely to settle down within 10-15 miles of Hog Island. Females wander more than males, so they might find a mate anywhere in the New England area. A young female Osprey I banded on Martha's Vineyard decades ago wound up breeding in southern Maine. This is Nature's way of keeping the gene pool mixed up.

Someday, someone may find an Osprey wearing one of the bands I put on the young this year. If that happens, I'll be informed and our knowledge of the movement and longevity of Ospreys will be increased just a little bit more.

*Rob Bierregaard began studying birds of prey when he became a falconer in high school. His Ph.D. investigated the role of competition in raptor communities worldwide. He spent 8 years in the Amazonian rainforest studying mostly songbirds. He conducted a 10-year study of Barred Owls in and around Charlotte, NC, and has been monitoring the growing Osprey population on Martha's Vineyard and tracking Ospreys up and down the eastern U.S. via satellite telemetry since 2000 ([www.ospreytrax.com](http://www.ospreytrax.com)).*



**Hog Island Osprey chick takes first flight while siblings and Rachel look on.**



**Hog Island Osprey chick ready to go back to nest after banding.**

*Editor's note:* See Rachel and Steve's three chicks practice their fishing skills, at [www.explore.org](http://www.explore.org) and click on the Osprey icon. Rachel was named after Rachel Carson and Steve after Dr. Steven Kress.

# 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 2

*Weskeag Marsh*

With Bill Goodwill

Meet at Marsh parking lot (time to be determined)

### Thursday, August 14

*Plum Island – Dennis McKenna*

Meet at Hannaford's at 7:00 a.m.

### Sunday, August 31

*Hog Island Audubon Camp, Bremen*

Meet at the Audubon boat dock at

3:00 p.m.



## SEPTEMBER

### Saturday, September 27

*Monhegan Island*

Meet at Monhegan Boat lines dock in Port Clyde 7:00 AM

## OCTOBER

### Saturday, October 11

*Green Point Preserve - Dresden*

Meet at Hannaford's Damariscotta 7:30 AM

## NOVEMBER

### Saturday, November 8

*Sabattus Pond*

Meet at Hannaford's Damariscotta 7:30 AM

*Check our website, [www.midcoastaudubon.org](http://www.midcoastaudubon.org) for updates on trips and programs. Thank you.*



*Sweet, tender lobsters, clams, potatoes, onions, corn -*

*all steamed to perfection on a bed of rockweed and tended lovingly by Mid-Coast Audubon's own board members, Don, John, Lew, and Bill. Then lemonade, shade-grown coffee, and a delectable dessert to finish the meal.*

*Sunday, August 31, from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m.*

*Dinner at 5 p.m. - \$40 per person*

**BYOB**

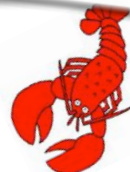
*The first boat leaves the Audubon dock at 3 p.m.*

*Park in the parking lot by the mailboxes.*

*This is our annual fundraiser that enables us to bring you free programs, field trips and give scholarships to Midcoast students.*

*This is a great opportunity to learn more about your local chapter, Mid-Coast Audubon, and visit the Hog Island Audubon Camp.*

**Reserve your spot by** emailing [sschubel@tidewater.net](mailto:sschubel@tidewater.net) - subject LOBSTERS (preferred method) or call 207-380-1370 by August 25. Mail payment to Seafood Sue, 11 Audubon Road, Bremen, ME 04551.





# Spring Birding in Brazil!

*This is the second in an occasional series of articles about members' birding adventures.*

This spring we were fortunate to spend some time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and while there to do some birding. Rio was one of the host cities for this year's Soccer World Cup, so the news is full of what is happening there both good and bad and what to see, where to eat and what to do. Rarely is birding mentioned, which is too bad because Rio has some excellent places to see a wide variety of tropical birds.

Our favorite, most accessible and totally safe place is the Botanic Garden. It is a short taxi ride from nearly anywhere in the city and open from 8am to 5pm daily. Originally laid out by Dom João VI in 1808, it is famous for its avenue of Royal Palms but has hundreds of other trees and shrubs, water courses and open areas, which have attracted nearly 200 species, among them: the Channel-billed Toucan, Rusty-margined Guan, Saffron Finch, Violaceous Euphonia, Blue-headed Tanager, Common Waxbill, Maroon-bellied and Green Parakeets.

We also took two trips with a knowledgeable, English-speaking bird guide, Ricardo Barbosa. The first trip was to the Tijuca Forest, which surrounds Rio's iconic Christ Statue. It was rainy that day but the birds didn't care. We saw Antbirds, Antvireos, Antthrushs and Antwrens, none of which eat ants but rather follow the ants to their preferred food! In Tijuca, our best birds were the Long-billed Wren and the uncommon Yellow-eared Woodpecker.



Rusty-margined Guan



Brazilian Tanager

The second trip was to Serra dos Orgãos National Park, about 60 miles northwest of Rio. Ricardo drove, stopping on the way to introduce us to Brazil's best *pão de queijo* (cheese bread). Serra dos Orgãos has a suspension trail through the trees,

perfect for seeing birds. There we saw several life birds and had excellent views of many more. The Blue Manakin is my personal favorite. Others were: Rufous-crowned Greenlet, Black-goggled Tanager, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper and Streaked Xenops.



Blue Manakin

We also spent several weeks on an island about 70 miles southwest of Rio where our daughter has a house. There we put up hummingbird feeders that attracted at least three different kinds of hummers, who turn out to be quite nasty and territorial, the Swallow-tailed being the most belligerent. We birded there too, seeing many of the same species we

had seen around Rio, with better looks at some. The picture of the Squirrel Cuckoo shows its spectacular tail; it gets its name because it slips along tree branches much the way a squirrel does.

Brazil is a fabulous place to go birding for anyone mildly adventurous and not intimidated by the recent bad press!



Squirrel Cuckoo

*Stephanie & Wendell Stephenson live in Newcastle and are chapter members. Wendell has birded all his life; Stephanie birds in self-defense but cataract removal has made a difference.*

#### Editor's note

Do you want to share your birding adventure with Mid-Coast members. Send it to the editor at [juanitar@tidewater.net](mailto:juanitar@tidewater.net) and put MCAS in the subject line.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - *continued*

Three of us stayed up way past bedtime, gazing with only the occasional "look there!" and "he got one!" It was magical. The squid were low in the water, darting up for prey on occasion. At the surface were many copepods and larval fish, one-inch-long tiny "superman" lobster, and a mystery fish that stayed the whole



Mystery fish

evening. I posted it online asking for help with identification.

The online virtual world, I'm finding interesting. Our live Osprey cam ([www.explore.org](http://www.explore.org)) has a loyal following all over the globe. People watch it year round, even after the Ospreys have migrated to South America! Viewers from Germany and California alerted us and the Coast Guard to a sailboat aground this winter. We often find Osprey followers on the mainland dock, looking across the Narrows to see the nest. Several volunteer camera operators came to Hog Island for Raptor Rapture Week. Reality TV to Reality!

Having this wide community, watching and learning about Ospreys, puffins and terns 24/7 brings up some interesting points. The cam is a window to how things are in real time. Are there enough fish to feed a baby? If not, do we have a responsibility to care for the ones we know so intimately? Or do we need to allow nature to "take its course"? Join in the discussion on the Cam sites.

*And if you'd like to ground-truth the reality of your Osprey cam experience, please join us for our annual Mid-Coast Audubon Lobster bake on Hog Island (see page 5). Finish up the summer with a perfect island moment!*

## Feathery Fun Quiz

1. What is the largest bird in the world. (a) Emu; (b) Bald Eagle; or (c) Ostrich?
2. Which bird has eyes facing forward instead of on the sides of their heads like most birds? (a) Eagles; (b) Owls; (c) Falcons; or (d) Hummingbirds?
3. Not all birds fly. Which of the following do not? (a) Penguins; (b) Ostriches; (c) Emus; or (d) all the above.
4. Which of the following might be lunch for a bird? (a) Seeds; (b) Insects; (c) Worms; or (d) all the above.
5. What bird travels the most distance in migration? (a) Red-Knot; (b) Blackpoll Warbler; (c) Arctic Tern; or Bar-Tailed Godwit?

Answers below.

## Welcome New Members!

Linda Beeler, Lincolnville  
Jere H. Davis, Washington  
Edmond Gervais, Morrill  
Greg and Leah Gordon, Hope  
Jeanne and Eugene King, Warren  
Christine S. Nelson, Damariscotta  
Tom Tutor, Isleboro

## ... and Renewing Members

Helen Black, Rockport  
Robert W. Brown, Searsport  
Charles Crawford, Toronto  
Linda K. Wakely, Belfast

Answers  
1. c. Ostrich  
2. b. Owls  
3. d. All the above  
4. d. All the above  
5. c. Arctic Tern. It travels more than 49,700 miles in a year and experiences two summers as it travels from the Arctic to the Antarctic.

## 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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**Bulletin editor:** Juanita Roushdy, 529-2355

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](mailto:juanitar@tidewater.net)



## Injured Birds!

All bird species - year-round

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## Sit and Enjoy a Quiet Moment at Nelson Nature Preserve in Friendship

Bill Goodwill, Dan Cassidy, and Sue Schubel



Dan beside the bench he built in honor of Linda Lou and Ray Nelson.

On a sunny summer day, which coincided with Friendship Day, a small group gathered at the Nelson Preserve to unveil the new sign and honor the donors of the sign and Preserve. The sign was made to honor Ray and Linda Lou Nelson, the original donors of the magical moss-covered woodland that is the Nelson Preserve. Ray passed away in 2002, and Linda Lou died in 2013, inspiring her relatives and friends to revitalize the Preserve by increasing visibility with new signage.

After the ribbon was cut, quotes from various luminaries were read, echoing our thoughts on the importance of wilderness and nature, including this one from Rachel Carson: "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

A new bench, handcrafted by relative Dan Cassidy, will be placed in a special spot in the Preserve. Look for it on your next visit and enjoy a quiet moment there with the Black-throated Green Warblers, lush sphagnum moss, and abundant mosquitos! Many thanks to the Cassidy family and friends of the Nelsons, as well as the MCAS Board members who had the sign fabricated and installed.

*Sue Schubel*

## Collaborating to Conserve a Birding Mecca - Weskeag

*(Excerpts from the Maine Coast Heritage Trust Newsletter, Summer 2014)*

A wild expanse along one of midcoast Maine's largest tidal marshes will soon be permanently protected and accessible for public recreation through the work of many partners. MCHT holds a purchase option to acquire 220 undeveloped acres along the Weskeag River estuary between Thomaston and Rockland.

They will manage 120 acres of the new acquisition as a public preserve; the Georges River Land Trust will own and manage another tract and a third will be added to Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Waldo Tyler Management Area.




The additional habitat will create a conserved area of more than 1,300 acres of marsh and upland, resulting in

near complete protection of Weskeag Marsh, observes Steve Walker, MCHT Project Manager. The state owns 600 acres along the upper Weskeag; GRLT has an additional 500 acres of upland buffer to the marsh and tidal flats.

Don Reimer, who conducted International Shorebird Surveys of the Weskeag for more than a decade says he recorded "30 different species, and would occasionally see 2,000-3,000 shorebirds at a time."

The Weskeag River Estuary is one of 22 Important Bird Areas in Maine due to the number and diversity of migratory shorebirds, as well as tidal wading birds and water birds.

MCHT plans to maintain the existing trail system and construct a new parking area (off Buttermilk Lane).

Mid-Coast **Mid-Coast Audubon**  
 P.O. Box 458  
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*Save the Date!*

Our annual fund-raiser lobster bake

*Sunday, August 31*

Hog Island, Bremen

*See page 4 for details*

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

## Join Maine Audubon Today

Mid-Coast  
  
 Audubon

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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Clip and send with check payable to "Maine Audubon" at 20 Gilsland Farm Road, Falmouth, ME 04015

### Enjoy an Autumn Walk in One of Our Preserves

*Davis Bog Preserve*, a 40-acre white cedar wetland in Morrill.

*Guy VanDuyn Preserve*, 35 acres, on Route 220 in Waldoboro, riparian hardwoods to tidal marsh.

*Nelson Nature Preserve*, 95-acres on Route 97 in Friendship, unique red maple swamp fronting Goose River.

*Weskeag River Preserve*, 3-acre off of Route 73, with 300 ft. frontage on Weskeag River..

**Contact Bill  
 Goodwill at 354-0669  
 or [barredowl@juno.com](mailto:barredowl@juno.com)  
 to help with preserve  
 maintenance or for  
 directions.**

