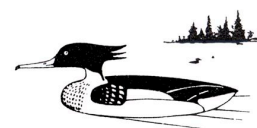


Bulletin



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. 2 - May 2013

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Birds and Coffee

Slipping along a steep, muddy trail, I struggled to keep my balance as I climbed through the dim, humid shade of a dense forest at daybreak. All around me, birds were calling and flitting - some that I recognized as old friends, others that were new and exotic.

I was in the highlands of northern Nicaragua, so far off the tourist track that the road into the nearest town, San Juan del Rio Coco, had just been paved a few months earlier.

Yet this region gets more than its share of travelers. The forests of Central America are critical to the survival of countless millions of migrants from the north - warblers, vireos, thrushes, hummingbirds, flycatchers, orioles, tanagers and many more, which flood south to these hills each winter.

As the light came up, the trees around us simply dripped with birds - great, rolling flocks moving through the woods.



By preserving healthy forests like these in northern Nicaragua, certified shade-grown coffee protects the habitat for millions of migratory songbirds.

There were migrants like Philadelphia and warbling vireos; yellow, chestnut-sided and Wilson's warblers; summer tanagers and rose-breasted grosbeaks. Mixed with them were flamboyant resident species like emerald toucanets, blue-crowned motmots and masked tityras. It was paradise for a birder like me, and I hardly knew which way to look.

But viewed from the birds' perspective - high above the ground - these hills around San Juan del Rio Coco are an immense island of green surrounded by denuded cattle pastures, eroded grain fields and rice paddies. Much of Nicaragua - much of the entire region on which migratory birds depend - is degraded, nearly useless land for them.

The difference, here in these cool mountains below the Honduras border, is coffee. The farmers around San Juan largely continue to grow coffee the way it's been raised for generations in Latin America - beneath the shade of an intact, fully functioning forest. It was hard to believe, as I looked out across

Continued on page 3



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

"Up in the woods!" I say to the dogs, and they race ahead of me in a state of tongue-flapping joy, sniffing the good

wet spring earth and leaping over thick cushions of green moss. The sunlight sparkles through the leftover raindrops on this wonderful April morning.

The birds that are usually high in the treetops are busy with each other down where I can see them. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets flashing their crowns while some Titmice shout encouragement or derision at them. Chickadees calling for their sweeties. Turkeys gobbling in the distance.

Juncos in a frenzied tangle of three race from the junk under the porch and remind me it's time for spring cleaning.

Spring - wet, luscious, froggy-filled time of wonder. I encourage you to get out and enjoy a Mid-coast Audubon Preserve now, during this sweet season before the bugs get too fierce!

If you'd like a companion check out our field trip section or join us for a preserve workday.

We would like to get you involved in your chapter. Let us know what skills you can share and what you would like to see us offer up – encouragement or derision – it's the season to communicate!

Sue Schubel

CRITTER CORNER

By early April, several frog species begin to vocalize at local ponds and wetlands. High-pitched choruses of Spring Peepers provide auditory contrast to the low-pitched, glunking Green Frogs that enliven our spring days. The Green Frog's explosive twanging song is often likened to plucking the base string of a banjo. The scientific name *Rana clamitans* means "frog that cries loudly," referring to its habit of making a loud squeak as it jumps toward water to avoid approaching danger.

The Green Frog is one of the most abundant amphibians in eastern regions. This species lives in close proximity to shallow water, such as springs, swamps, creeks and ditches, but is also found near rotting debris, such as fallen trees. Green frogs have a relatively small home range and are very territorial.

Last fall, I encountered a bright blue frog bounding across my sunny lawn. I was confused as I pondered the sky-blue

creature with its yellow-brown legs and pea-green splotch of color in the middle of its back. A blue frog in Maine? In tropical zones, brilliantly colored frog species are frequently poisonous.

After checking some of the body characteristics, such as general size and the prominent folded skin ridges running the length of the back, I decided the mystery croaker was a color variant of Green Frog. Later I learned that the blue-toned phenomenon occurs in this segment of frogdom when the natural yellow pigment of the skin is lacking.



This blue frog is a color variant of a Green Frog.

The frog's normal upper body coloration is generally greenish above with darker spots or blotches and dark banding on the legs. A large eardrum or tympanum is another trademark feature. With a bright yellow throat, the male Green Frog is slightly smaller than females.

Take some time to enjoy the amphibian singing and egg-laying season. It is all too brief.

Don Reimer



MCAS Preserves

Have a picnic, take the family, bird, or explore the preserves of Mid-Coast Audubon. Better yet, adopt a preserve.

See page 7 for descriptions. For more information, to volunteer, or to adopt a preserve, call Bill Goodwill, Preserve Manager, at 354-0669 or send an e-mail to barredowl@juno.com.

Another way your local chapter is at work.



Birds and Coffee - continued from page 1

the misty hills, that the solid blanket of forest around me, and which rolled away in every direction, hid hundreds of small, thriving coffee farms.

Such farms have always been superb habitat for migratory birds, and they have never been more profoundly important than today. Tragically, more than 40 percent of the traditional (also known as "rustic") shade coffee farms in Latin America and the Caribbean have been destroyed, replaced by monocultures of sun-tolerant coffee - habitat with as much benefit to birds as a parking lot, and generally soaked in herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and chemical fertilizers to boot.

The coffee you buy makes a real, demonstrable difference for the birds that come back to Maine each spring - wood thrushes, Baltimore orioles, Tennessee warblers and many more. If you buy your coffee in a can at the supermarket, you're supporting the destruction of critical shade coffee farms, since essentially all of that stuff comes from sun-coffee operations.

Sadly, paying more for premium coffee at a specialty shop, or purchasing organic or fair-trade coffee, usually doesn't mean you're helping the birds; neither USDA organic certification, nor any of the fair-trade programs, includes shade as a criteria. Even much of what's sold as shade coffee is really from what's known as "technified shade" farms, in which a coffee monoculture is grown beneath a few, widely spaced trees, often exotic species like Australian eucalyptus, with virtually no benefit to the birds.

What should a coffee-drinking birder do? Look for the certification.

To be certain the coffee you drink is good for birds, look for the Bird Friendly® seal from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Created by renowned Smithsonian scientists like

Russell Greenberg, Bird Friendly® is by far the most rigorous certification system, requiring complex, native forest cover that research has shown is

almost as good for migrant birds as untouched forest.

(It also requires USDA organic certification to qualify.)

There are a number of sources for BF coffee - one is Birds & Beans, roasted by Maine's own Wicked Joe in Portland; this is the coffee served at Audubon's Hog Island camp, and it's also fair-trade certified. I helped get Birds & Beans started, so I'm obviously biased, but there are others roasters selling Bird Friendly® coffee, most available online and happy to ship to your door. Buying from any of them will make a serious difference for birds.

If you drink coffee, you have a choice. You can buy the stuff that actively destroys bird habitat, or you can purchase beans that protect the birds you love, while giving you a great mug of morning java. There's really no middle ground.

If you take the time to seek out certified shade coffee, every cup you drink helps support small family farmers in places like San Juan del Rio Coco, and the multitudes of migrant songbirds that spend most of their lives on those farms - birds that are already on their way back to us, with spring following on their wings.

For more information on the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center's certification program, go to <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/scbi/migratorybirds/coffee/default.cfm>. Another great resource on coffee and birds is the "Coffee and Conservation" blog by biologist Julie Craves, <http://www.coffeehabitat.com>. See box on back cover for some stores selling "Bird-Friendly" coffee in Maine.



Fluffed and asleep, a wood thrush roosts for the night in the understory of a certified shade coffee farm in Nicaragua.

©Scott Weidensaul



Marvin Venega, a family farmer in San Juan del Rio Coco, grows many shade-tolerant crops in his bird-rich forests, including cacao from which chocolate is made.

©Scott Weidensaul

Scott Weidensaul directs the ornithological programs at National Audubon's Hog Island Camp in Bremen. He is a field researcher and the author of several dozens books on nature.



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

MAY

Saturday, May 18

Warblers at Evergreen Cemetery and Cupisic Pond, Portland

Bring lunch. Meet at Hannaford's in Damariscotta at 7:00 a.m.

Tuesday, May 28, 3:30 p.m. (Note date change.)

Skidompha Library, Damariscotta

John Rogers, Eastern Bluebird expert, will present *All About Bluebirds and More*. Co-sponsors: Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association and Skidompha Library

Tuesday, May 21

Morse Property, Waldoboro with Bill Goodwill

An early morning walk on private property to listen and observe warblers, flycatchers and many other species. A rare added delight are the numerous lady slippers and other wildflowers. Meet at SubWay's parking lot in Waldoboro at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 25

Annual Monhegan Spring Trip

A day of birding spring migrants and more on famous Monhegan Island. Make reservations on the Monhegan Ferry for a 7:00 am departure. Boat returns from the island at 4:00 pm. Call John Weinrich (563-2930) for information.

JUNE

Saturday, June 1

Vaughan Woods/Airport/Belgrade Lakes

A full day of birding starting at the historic Vaughan Woods in search of the Louisiana Waterthrush. Next, the Augusta

Airport most often produces a wide variety of birds, including Brown Thrasher, Mockingbird, Prairie Warbler, and more. Finally, the Belgrade Lakes area rarely fails to turn out Black Tern, Purple Martin and often the Sandhill Crane. Meet at Hannaford's in Damariscotta at 7:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 6 - Saturday June 8 Sold Out

Two-night trip with Bob Duchesne. Call Bill Goodwill at 354-0669 or e-mail at barredowl@juno.com to be put on the waiting list or more information.

Tuesday, June 11

Kennebunk Plains/Sanford Treatment Plant

The Kennebunk Plains has one of the Northeast's most unusual geological formations. This location is home to the rare Blazing Star wildflower and the only area to support the black racer snake. The added attractions are Meadow Larks, Upland Sandpipers, warblers, sparrows and more. Meet at Hannaford's in Damariscotta at 7:00 a.m.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 10th

Weskeag Marsh

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

Tuesday, August 27th

Plum Island Day Trip with Dennis McKenna.

Check website for updated information.

We have no programs or fields trips in July. Check our website, www.midcoastaudubon.org for updates on trips and programs.



Save the Date

Our annual Lobsterbake Fundraiser will be held on Hog Island **September 1, 2013!** Come join the fun with an on-the-beach, under-the-seaweed cooking of lobsters, clams, corn, potatoes and onions! There will be time to explore this beautiful island and learn more about the many facets of Audubon.





Passionate About Watching Birds? Volunteer From Home!

Project Puffin is looking for volunteers to operate live cameras that will be watching puffins, terns, ospreys, and other seabirds this summer! The cameras are streamed live via [Explore.org](https://www.explore.org), allowing millions of viewers worldwide to share in the magic of these incredible animals.

Volunteers monitor multiple cameras remotely from their home computers. If you have a passion for birds and a good Internet connection, you can watch these magnificent creatures throughout their summer breeding season in Maine.

No experience necessary! Training and guidance are provided. Volunteers must have flexible schedules and be willing to commit 10-15 hours a week from mid-April through August. Most important, they must be passionate about watching these incredible birds!

To learn more, view the live cams and email Volunteer Coordinator, Janine Parziale: janine.explore@gmail.com.



Photos courtesy Explore.org

Feathery Fun Quiz

"Wood'n it be luverly . . ."

1. What animal can survive freezing and thawing as long as less than 65% of their total body water freezes?
2. What "weasel-colored woodland thrush" is often an unwitting but accommodating host to the parasitic cowbird?
3. Which shorebird lives in woodland perimeters and shrubby fields?
4. Name this long-legged bird that flies with neck outstretched and is the only representative of this child-delivering group to occur in North America.
5. What colorful, acorn-eating, cavity-nesting bird is a much-harvested gamebird?
6. Which bird builds a lichen-covered nest on a horizontal tree branch, and may be declining due to the forage effect of the large White-Tailed Deer population?

Answers on page 7

Nest Boxes Bring Birds

Clean out your old ones and buy a few additional ones. Stop the housing shortage for Maine's 35 cavity nesting species of birds.

Mid-Coast Audubon makes top quality Eastern Bluebird nest boxes bearing the "Approved" stamp of the North American Bluebird Society.

Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Tufted Titmice, Nuthatches, Chickadees boxes (\$25), Saw-whet Owls and American Kestrel boxes (\$30), Wood Duck boxes (\$35) and Bat box (\$20). 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.



Welcome New Members!

Eileen Benemann, Hope
Ralph Check, Pittsburgh, PA
Jeff Cotton, Bremen
Margaret A. Davis, Camden
Suzanne Dwyer, Jefferson

Kathleen Flory, Walpole
Patti Forster & Lori Lamma, Washington
Dorothea Guthrie, Camden
John W. Hoogerheide, Georgetown, TX
Dorothy Hoogerveen, China Village

Anne Jackson, Edgecomb
Rick Kidson, Morrill, ME
Reginald Lehoullier, Owls Head
Francis Lemieux, Topsham
Carolyn McKeon, South Bristol

Marilyn McLelland, Belfast
Jennifer Meade, Waldoboro
James Peters, Damariscotta
Sarah Ruddy, Rockport
Thomas Savidge, Camden

George Sayre, Rockland
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Schneller, South Thomaston
Mr. & Mrs. William Scollo, Nobleboro



This Winter Wren is all about communication. Tell us what you'd like to see in the *Bulletin*.

Martha Scudder, Damariscotta
Robert Stephan, Bedford, MA
Paul Weislogel, Bristol
George Wilmot, Chamberlain

... and Renewing Members

Robert E. Anderson, Tenants Harbor
James Barstow
John Brown, Camden
Ellen Coyne, Newcastle
Mark Digirolamo, Rockport

Delight D. Hefferen, Poland
Michael Herz, Damariscotta
Carolyn Howe, Bristol
Alan S. Kumble, Rockport
Carolyn Landau, Damariscotta

James O. Lott, Friendship
John Newcomb, Spruce Head
Kathleen Nordstrom, Alna
Brooke Pacy, Waldoboro

Joanne Sharpe, Edgecomb,
Martha Sholes, West Rockport
Jo Stage, Dallas, TX
Steven Wallace, Bremen
Kathleen Zwick, Warren



Birding on the way to Monhegan

Answers
1. Wood Frog.
2. Wood Thrush (scientific name, *Hylotrichia mustelina*, means weasel-colored)
3. Woodcock
4. Wood Stork
5. Wood Duck (second only to Mallard)
6. Eastern Wood Peewee

Mid-Coast Audubon

Organized December 6, 1969

a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization

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

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Special Events: Sue Schubel, 380-1370

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 July 15!**

Send to juanitar@tidewater.net

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A Scholarship Trip to Monhegan



I spent 6 days at the Hog Island Camp at "Migration and Monhegan Island" in September 2012. I cannot express how grateful I am to Midcoast Audubon for the scholarship I was given, which allowed me to have this fabulous week of adventure and learning.

Our four instructors, Scott Weidensaul, Steve Kress, Peter Vickery and Jeff Wells were all top-notch teachers and birders and just great guys to spend time with. We had some glorious fall days, including an entire day on some very calm waters in Muscongus Bay observing large numbers of Surf Scoters, Common Loons, Mergansers and Golden Eyes close by the boat.

We birded on land and water by day and had stimulating presentations in the evenings on Seabird Research, Migration, Boreal Forest Research and Night-time Bird "Song".

When the weather turned bad (a real storm!), the instructors showed flexibility and worked well as a team in making the decision to go later to Monhegan island and spend a rainy day doing workshops on topics such as Preserving Bird Skins, Plantings for Bird Habitat, and Learning to Use Ebird.

Although we did not get the fallout we had hoped for on Monhegan Island once we arrived, we had some special treats, including a long and close look at a Yellow-Billed

Cuckoo preening, several Philadelphia Vireos close up, various warblers, gorgeous Yellow-Shafted Flickers flashing in the sun, and a Greater Shearwater flew by the boat on our return to Hog Island.

The food was fabulous and catered to individual needs. I highly recommend the "Hog Island Experience" to anyone who likes islands and the seashore as well as birds, and would like to enjoy the simple life for a few days. Kudos to all the folks who worked so hard to keep this educational facility in the Audubon family - continuing to offer fun and enriching educational experiences.



I learned many things, but my understanding of migration patterns and habitat needs at winter and summer locations, as well as the desperate need to find ways to preserve these habitats was enhanced. I did not know that the Boreal Forest is the

largest intact forest in the world and found it frightening to learn that logging, mining and tar sanding are going on there, destroying critical breeding habitat. I had two life birds - Greater Shearwater and Great Cormorant.

Jody Telfair-Richards

Jody was a Mid-Coast Audubon chapter scholarship recipient in 2012. For MCAS scholarship information, contact Carolyn Gray at 563-3578.

Explore Our Preserves this Spring

The chapter owns and manages four refuges open to the public for quiet recreation. These refuges are natural areas, where we allow nature to take its course except for the trail system. Birders are encouraged to use the refuges in all seasons.

Davis Bog Preserve, a 40-acre white cedar wetland in the Town of Morrill, is the latest chapter land protection acquisition. Access is by a 10-foot right of way over lands of Rudy Hamm on the Higgins Ridge Road, about 1 mile from Route 3, east of the state's Ruffingham Meadow Preserve.

The 30-acre **Guy Van Duyn Refuge** is on Route 220, 1.5 miles south of Waldoboro. Park on right berm, several trails bisect diverse habitats and vegetation, from upland oak, spruce forest, field, riparian hardwoods, to tidal salt marsh on the Medomak River. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and more than 80

species of songbirds may be seen, depending upon the season.

The 95-acre **Nelson Nature Preserve** is on Route 97, on the left about 1 mile from Friendship Village and has a parking lot, trails, and diverse habitat, from upland mixed forest to unique red maple swamp fronting the Goose River. Proximity to the coast makes this an excellent spring birding location for warblers and year-round for dense forest-dwellers such as thrush family and woodpeckers.

The 3-acre **Weskeag River Preserve** is a narrow strip of land 0.1 mile from Route 73, on Waterman Beach Road just past Snowdeal Road. The parcel fronts 300 feet on the Weskeag River and has spruce, balsam fir and red maple. Shorebirds on the river and birds inhabiting dense conifer forest may be seen. Parking and trail system under development.

Please, no wheeled vehicles or fires. Pack it in, pack it out.

Mid-Coast Audubon
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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

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Do you love Bluebirds?

Don't miss our program *All About Bluebirds and More* at Skidompha Library on May 28.

See page 5, for details.

Some "Bird-Friendly" Coffee Stores



Rising Tide - Damariscotta
Whole Foods - Portland
Blue Hill Co-op - Bluehill
Freeport Wild bird Supply - Freeport
Wicked Joe - Brunswick