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

The Merganser

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

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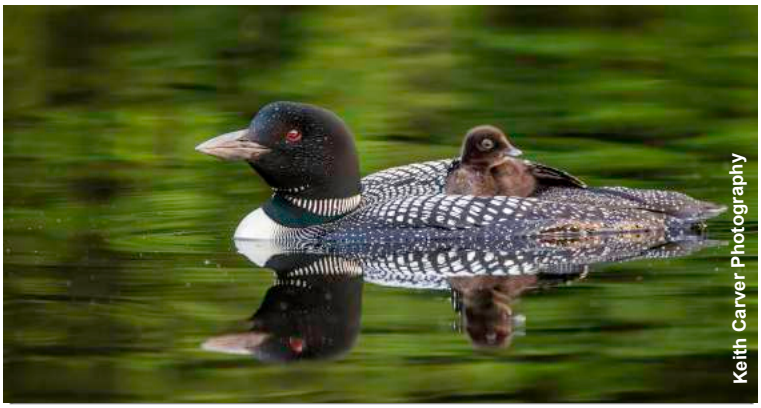
Our state's actions are key to reversing trend of bird population decline

Well-managed forests can sustain livelihoods while ensuring that birds still have places to nest and raise their young.

BY **SALLY STOCKWELL** SPECIAL TO THE PRESS HERALD

FALMOUTH—The numbers are staggering. A recent article in the journal Science documents declines among 64 percent of all Eastern forest bird species—a loss of 167 million birds—and among 50 percent of all boreal forest species—a loss of 501 million birds—in North America alone. That means nearly one in four of all Eastern forest birds and one in three of all boreal forest birds that were coloring the forest with their flashy feathers and cheerful songs in 1970 are no longer with us.



Common Loon - an increase in 3 degrees Celsius would threaten Maine's loons.

There are many reasons for these declines. Some of the more persistent are habitat loss on both breeding and wintering grounds, loss or degradation of migratory stopovers, decline or contamination of insect food from overuse of pesticides, collisions with windows and other human structures and predation from cats. Individuals can take simple steps to steward birds and habitat, and every little bit helps. Maine can do more than a little bit; in fact, we can play an outsized role in helping to stem the decline.

Our state has the largest remaining contiguous block of forest in the eastern U.S. and these forests are vital to the breeding success of millions of forest songbirds every year. We are the "baby-bird" factory for the entire Atlantic Flyway.

Because of that, much of northern and western Maine

Continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Sue Schubel

Yellow leaves are fluttering past my windows, blowing against a blue sky in the aftermath of our recent Nor'easter. At Pemaquid Point the gray and green waves crash into white foamy dazzle on the shore. A brilliant Blue Jay is reprimanded by a russet-coated squirrel at the bird feeder. These are lovely images of the natural wonder that we are surrounded by.

Zooming in on a Northern Parula

A friend of mine is cycling across Europe —Scotland to Istanbul. He posts the most beautiful pictures of green landscapes, old stone buildings, white narrow alleyways. Places I don't know much about, but from the news, one would think are just rubble and dust. He has framed the shots beautifully, and I expressed surprise and hope for the world after seeing them. Ah, but it is not all so perfect, he says. A conversation was begun about whether he should "zoom out" a bit to reveal the piles of garbage and the ugly human impacts outside the frame. Both views have merit, and I think we need both. Zoom in—find a small perfect vignette; zoom out—see the big picture. Zoom back in to focus on a problem that needs tackling.

This world in the Anthropocene epoch is complicated and can be overwhelming. Recent evidence confirms that 30% of the birds in North America have disappeared in the last 50 years. One in four birds. Habitat loss, windows, cats, and climate change are all to blame. Sometimes we want to hide our heads in despair. Sometimes we just need blinders (not a blindfold) to reframe our view, to focus, to charge ahead. Like a horse, the distractions can hinder our progress.

Greta Thunberg has focused firmly on her task to wake up the world to the threat of climate change. She has spoken scathingly at the U.N. about the lack of action. But she is talking to all of us! Even though we don't feel like the problem, and we certainly don't feel like adults.

I don't need to preach to the choir. Evidence also shows that a pep talk helps people accomplish hard tasks! And your brain doesn't differentiate much between a pep talk from your coach and from yourself. You can do it! Make a positive impact! Zoom in and frame up a scene of perfection. Zoom out to see which problem you'd like to tackle. Zoom all the way out to see the big blue marble spinning in space, without false boundaries. Like an astronaut, feel a deep love for this planet we call home. Every day an exercise in framing and action is your challenge. Enjoy!

CRITTER CORNER *Don Reimer*

As a kid, I was fascinated with flying insects. My summers were occupied with lightning bugs and dragonflies held briefly in a big Mason jar for closer inspection. On lucky occasions, a praying mantis would turn up in our flower beds. With its powerful forelegs armed with rows of sharp overlapping spines, *Mantis religiosa* is a formidable predator. The mantis is also a master of camouflaged disguise as it waits patiently with raised arms to ambush its quarry.

Praying mantis on leaf

Nearly 2,000 species of mantids are found throughout the world. They are typically green or brown, but can be purple or pink in color to blend into the local habitat. Nature has designed them well as predators. Mounted atop an elongated thorax, their triangular-shaped head rotates 180 degrees to scan the surroundings. Stereo vision is provided through two large compound eyes and three other simple eyes positioned between them.

Mantises are extremely swift and agile, pursuing a broad diet of beetles, butterflies, spiders and crickets. They are also known to eat vertebrates such as small frogs, lizards, mice, and even hummingbirds. Victims are quickly immobilized by a well-placed bite to the neck and are then devoured as live prey.

Mantises will consume others of their own kind as well. At mating times, the adult female's behavior is notorious as she may eat her mate just after—or during mating. Apparently this behavior does not deter the unsuspecting males from reproduction. Females lay groups of 12-400 eggs in the fall contained in a frothy liquid that turns into a hard shell that protects the eggs during winter conditions.

If you have trouble distinguishing the praying mantis from the greenish background of my photo, you may appreciate the dilemma faced by its prey.

Our state's actions . . . *cont'd*

has been designated as a globally significant Important Bird Area by National Audubon and BirdLife International. We have both an opportunity and a responsibility to help these declining birds.

Each spring we welcome back feathered friends like the hermit thrush or blackpoll warbler returning from Central and South America to breed and raise their young in our forests. Many others travel through Maine on their way to their breeding grounds in the expansive boreal forests of Canada. Birders wait and watch to see which new species will arrive each day, and rush to try to catch a glimpse of them and hear their unique songs before they fly on. The birds themselves usually return to the same place they were raised, seeking a good place to build a nest, find food, seek shelter from predators and raise their young.

Great Gray Owl visits Maine's woods.

That's why, at Maine Audubon, we have teamed up with foresters and biologists at the Maine Forest Service, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Forest Stewards Guild to work with foresters, landowners and loggers to manage their forests "with birds in mind." The idea is simple—in addition to managing a woodland for values like water, timber and recreation, you can actually improve habitat for a wide variety of birds at the same time.

Imagine an apartment building. The more stories, the more apartments on each story, and the more people can live there. Forests are like that, too—the more vegetation in the understory, midstory and overstory, the more places there are for birds to nest and feed. Add in dead standing trees, or snags, and suddenly chickadees and woodpeckers show up. Large dead logs on the forest floor invite ruffed grouse to boom for a mate. Shrubs around a forested wetland? You might find a Canada warbler. Each different species is adapted to use a different part of the forest. But if only a few of those forest features are present, only a few birds can live there. With 96 percent of Maine's land privately owned, landowners can play a critical role in helping birds and other wildlife.

By increasing both the vertical and horizontal structure of the forest by retaining and/or growing a variety of tree species, ages and sizes, woodland owners can provide many more places for different species and multiple pairs of that species to nest, feed and raise young.

Our Forestry for Maine Birds (maineaudubon.org/FFMB) program provides foresters, landowners and loggers with information, guidebooks and other materials they need to help create high-quality breeding habitat so these forest birds can keep making babies. Because without more babies, there will be no more birds.

Sally Stockwell is director of conservation at Maine Audubon in Falmouth.

What Can You Do to Help Birds?

1. Make windows safer

2. Keep cats indoors

3. Use native plants

4. Avoid pesticides

5. Drink shade-grown coffee

When We Take Action, Birds Recover!

6. Reduce plastic waste

7. Do citizen science

Visit https://www.3billionbirds.org to learn more about what you can do and how and other organizations involved.

Calendar of Events

FREE bird walks (no pets please) and programs; donations are welcome to help defray costs.

Program chair: Kathy Cartwright 832-5584. Field trip contact: Dennis McKenna 563-8439

NOVEMBER

Program: Thursday, November 21, 7-8:30 p.m.
Camden Library
Birds, Songs, and Flowers Explore Maine birds, their unique songs, and native plants and flowers that can be found in each bird's habitat. Explore the natural history of Maine birds, the interesting connections between seasons and songs, where to find them in the landscape, and how your yard can provide bird habitat and food throughout the year.

Gary Roberts, has volunteered as a naturalist at Maine Audubon for over 30 years and is a Registered Maine Guide specializing in guiding from a natural history perspective. He is a life member and past board member of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization. He also paints birds in his spare time (such as this Barred Owl).

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 14
Christmas Bird Count:
Damariscotta/Pemaquid. Contact compiler Dennis McKenna at 563-8439

Monday, December 16
Christmas Bird Count: Bunker Hill. Contact compiler John Weinrich at 846-1221

Saturday, December 21
Christmas Bird Count: Thomaston/Rockland. Contact compiler Don Reimer at 273-3146

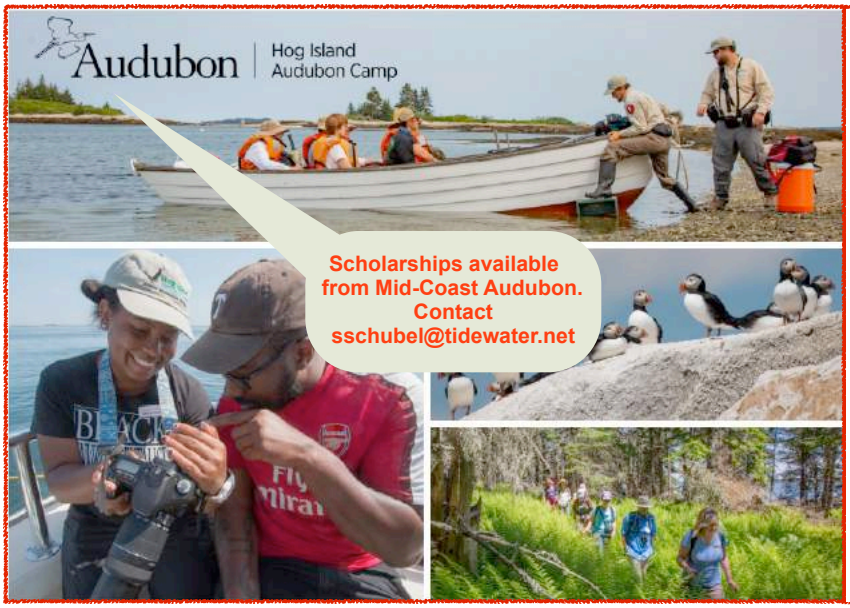
For updates and detailed information about our events, visit our website

https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/ or
e-mail midcoast@maineaudubon.org, or
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/MidCoastAudubon/

Talkin' (Wild) Turkey Quiz

The Wild Turkey was seriously depleted 100 years ago, but is now established, and increasing, in every U.S state but Alaska. What do you know about this iconic bird?

1. How many species of turkey are there in the world?
2. How is the domestic turkey related to the Wild Turkey?
3. Are turkeys really stupid?
4. How much does the average Wild Turkey weigh? What do they eat?
5. What does one call male, female, and young turkeys?
6. What is the name of the bare, bumpy skin on a turkey's head?
7. What is a snood? Why does it appeal to a female turkey?
8. How and why do males display or "strut"?
9. Where do Wild Turkeys roost? Where are their nests?
10. Why are turkey flocks so large?



Hog Island promo code EARLYBIRD to save $50

Spring Monhegan and Hog Island: *May 31-June 5*
Building Better Birding Skills: *June 7-12*:
Puffin Islands: *June 14-19*
Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens I: *June 14-19*
Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens II: *June 21-26*
Field Ornithology: *June 21-26*
Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens: *June 28-July 3*
Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week: *July 12-17*
Creating Bird-friendly Habitats: *July 19-22*
Arts & Birding: *July 19-24*
Costa Rica Teen Camp: *August 1-6*
Family Camp I: *August 9-14*
Family Camp II: *August 16-21*
Road Scholar: Saving Seabirds: *September 6-11*
Fall Migration & Monhegan: *September 6-11*
Raptor Migration and Monhegan Island: *September 13-18*

Who Knew About Lobster Bakes

Every year, Mid-Coast chapter has its big fundraiser: an old-fashioned lobster bake at Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen, Maine. It's always popular and a tradition for some members.

This year it was rained out by Hurricane Dorian, so 93 prospective diners had to forgo their seaweed-baked lobster feast—lobster, potatoes, corn, onions, cream puffins—the following weekend, the weather cooperated and 55 managed to satisfy their craving.

Some of you might know about Maine's lobster history and lobster bakes but for those who don't here's a taste of Did you Know from History.com!

• When the first European settlers reached North America, lobsters were so plentiful that they would reportedly wash ashore in piles up to 2 feet high. They were a precious source of sustenance during hard times—and giving them a nasty reputation as the poor man's protein.

• Native Americans used lobsters to fertilize their crops and bait their fishing hooks. They also ate the abundant crustaceans, by covering them in seaweed and baking them over hot rocks. According to tradition, this cooking method inspired the classic New England clambake.

• Dirt-cheap because they were so copious, lobsters were routinely fed to prisoners, apprentices, slaves and children during the colonial era and beyond. In Massachusetts, some servants allegedly sought to avoid lobster-heavy diets by including stipulations in their contracts that they would only be served the shellfish twice a week.

• The first lobster pound was established in Vinalhaven, Maine, in 1876. The town is still home to a thriving lobster fishery.

• In the 1880s, lobster began to shed some of its negative reputation and gain a following among discriminating diners, particularly in Boston and New York City; prices immediately began to rise.

• Because lobster was considered a delicacy by the time World War II began, it was not rationed. The booming wartime economy allowed wealthy cravers of crustaceans to consume them at unprecedented rates.

• American lobsters—or Maine lobsters, as they are commonly known—can weigh more than 40 pounds and grow up to 3 feet long. The largest lobster on record was caught off Novia Scotia in 1988. It weighed 44 pounds and was 42 inches long. Scientists believe it was at least 100 years old—twice the lifespan of the average lobster.

• The lobster, which has changed little over the last 100 million years, is known for its unusual anatomy. Its brain is located in its throat, its nervous system in its abdomen, its teeth in its stomach and its kidneys in its head. It also hears using its legs and tastes with its feet. One of the few things lobsters have in common with humans: They tend to favor one front limb, meaning they can be right-clawed or left-clawed.

• When crowded into tight quarters such as store display tanks, lobsters tend to become cannibalistic. Sellers tightly band their claws to prevent them from feasting on their neighbors.

• Though considered a rich and decadent food, lobster meat contains fewer calories than an equal portion of skinless chicken breast. It also boasts healthy omega-3 fatty acids, potassium and the vitamins E, B-12 and B-6.

Save the date for the 2020 lobster bake
September 5, 2020

Be Part of the 120th Christmas Bird Count!

Join fellow Mainers in counting birds during the 120th Christmas Bird Count. See page 4 for dates. Learn about the history and how to participate by visiting Audubon's website at: https://www.audubon.org/conservation/history-christmas-bird-count

Welcome New and Rejoining Members!

Lisa Gates, *Belfast*
Greta Gulezian. *Lincolnville*
Laura M. Hiestad, *Alna*
Martin W. Lepow, *Lincolnville*
Margo B. Maloney, *Thomaston*
MiMi McGee, *Appleton*
Pete Schiot, *Owl's Head*

Rusty Blackbird

Why Buy A Duck Stamp?


Dena Harrison, ME

It brings young artists to birding and conservation.

Nationwide, states have preliminary junior contests that pick best in show to go on to the national challenge. In Maine, hopeful artists from kindergarten to high school exhibited their work at Maine Audubon in their respective age groups. Best in show award went to Dena Harrison for her American Wigeon.

Purchasing a Duck Stamp not only helps budding artists but also helps preserve wildlife habitat. Visit https://www.fws.gov/

Harlequin Duck, 2019-20 Junior Duck Stamp winner Nicole Jeon, N.Y.

Quiz Answers

1. Only two: Wild Turkey of North America, and Ocillated Turkey of Central America.

2. Early native people domesticated Wild Turkeys. In the 1500s, European explorers brought them home from Mexico as a delicious new food. Later colonists brought domesticated turkeys back to the New World from Europe.

3. Domesticated birds are bred for meat only. Wild Turkeys are wary and smart with keen eyesight and hearing; they communicate with each other through a variety of sounds.

4. The average male reaches 16-20 lbs., while the female averages 9 lbs. They are omnivorous ground-feeders, eating mostly plants and nuts according to season, but sometimes adding insects and small creatures.

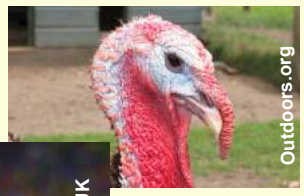
Ocillated Turkey

5. A young male is a jake, a mature one a gobbler. Females are hens and young are poults.

6. The featherless bumps on both sexes are called caruncles. They range in color from white to tan to blue to bright red.

7. The snood is similar to a wattle, and may be called a wattle when all of a turkey's face, head, and neck markings are described together. The base of the snood is just above the bill; a short snood may stand upright and be pointed like a small horn, while a longer snood will dangle down the bird's bill and may flop on one side or the other. It is an indicator of health and virility.

8. Gobblers strut to show dominance and attract hens. They display their elaborate plumage, including a swinging beard on the chest. They touch their wings to the ground, fan their upright tails, and erect their back and breast feathers to appear larger. The neck forms an S shape and the wattle becomes more colorful. They take a few steps, shake, and make guttural sounds. If two males compete, a loud fight may ensue.



9. At dusk turkeys fly high into treetops to roost with less chance of predation.

Nest sites are more vulnerable: shallow depressions lined with leaves at the base of a tree, in a brush pile, under shrubbery or in an open field.

10. Hens lay 10-15 eggs and feed their young for a few days, then form flocks with their female offspring, often joining with other hens to make winter flocks of 50 or more. Males form their own flocks, segregated by age with constantly shifting dominance. Large flocks offer protection.

Mid-Coast Audubon

Organized December 6, 1969

a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization

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The Merganser is published three times a year in February, May, November. **News items and photos are welcome.**

Deadline for next issue is January 15!
Send to juanitar@tidewater.net

Good News from Far Away

You never know when good news will come. That's the wonder of it. For the Mid-Coast chapter, it came in an e-mail from Jeff Wells, a friend as well as Vice President of the Boreal Conservation for National Audubon.

He asked if we'd seen the news that six million acres of land, yes, SIX MILLION acres had been permanently protected.

In our November 2018 issue of *The Merganser,* we ran an article about Florence Catholique, a First Nation participant at the Hog Island Audubon Camp, who received a scholarship from Hog Island and travel fare from MCAS. She is a leader in her community Lutsel K'e and spent time telling us about her village's plans for a conservation park. Little did we know that she was talking about SIX MILLION acres called Thaidene Nene.

Florence Catholique at Hog Island

Her tiny First Nation community, Lutsel K'e along the shore of one of the world's largest lakes, Great Slave Lake, gave the world a massive gift: the permanent final establishment of a new Indigenous Protected Area called Thaidene Nene.

Palm warbler and Yellow Warbler, two frequent Maine visitors who spend time in the Boreal Forest and Thaidene Nene.

Think of the largest protected area that you know. Is it Baxter State Park? Thaidene Nene is more than 25 times larger. Yellowstone National Park? Thaidene Nene is more than twice the size; more than seven times larger than Rhode Island, and more than three and a half times the area of Delaware.

Thaidene Nene means, in the indigenous language, "land of our ancestors." These newly protected lands support ten million or more breeding birds, most of which migrate south to winter from southern Canada and the U.S. south to southern South America. Undoubtedly, some birds end up migrating through or wintering right here in Maine.

Within Thaidene Nene, the shores and cliffs overlooking the East Arm of Great Slave Lake hold the nests of ospreys, bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Small islands and lakes throughout the region host nesting common and red-throated Loons, surf and white-winged scoters, Arctic terns, and occasional parasitic jaegers. The vast landscape of forests, wetlands, shrublands, and peatlands across the millions of acres of Thaidene Nene ring each summer with the songs of breeding olive-sided flycatchers, hermit thrushes, Lincoln's sparrows, Harris's sparrows, Smith's longspurs, blackpoll warblers, Tennessee warblers, palm warblers, northern waterthrushes, yellow warblers, common redpolls, rusty blackbirds, and many more. Thousands of loons, grebes, sandpipers, ducks, geese, and swans flock here each spring and fall, making it an important region for waterbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl.

And thanks to the leadership of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, ten million or more birds will never face the prospect of returning North in the spring from their wintering grounds thousands of miles distant, to find their habitats destroyed or degraded by industrial activities like mining and its spider web of related infrastructure.

The Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation has been working for many years with both the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government to enshrine Thaidene Nene as an interconnected protected area consisting of a national park reserve, a territorial park, and a specially managed wildlife conservation area. The signing ceremony this year makes those designations official, along with the First Nation's designation under Indigenous law of the area as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area. In an exciting new model, the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation will be managing Thaidene Nene in equal partnership with both the federal and territorial governments.

The people of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation have shown us a creative, positive path forward as the world wrestles with problems of climate change, biodiversity loss, and social justice. Thank you, Florence and the Lutsel K'e community for your vision and foresight.

Editor's note: *Excerpts taken from an article by Jeff Wells in the* Boothbay Register, *August 20, 2019. Find* The Merganser, *Nov. 2018 at: https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/*

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Don't Miss the Feast of Summer 2020!

September 5, 2020

Annual Lobster Bake at Hog Island

$50 per person

SAVE the DATE

Give a teen you know a lasting holiday gift

Costa Rica for Tropical Teen Week!

Join the Hog Island and ABA team in Costa Rica, July 31-August 6, 2020.

Sign up at http://hogisland.audubon.org/

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

MAINE AUDUBON

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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!

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