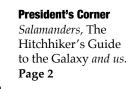


Mid-Coast Audubon's mission is to promote long-term responsible use of natural resources through an informed membership, education, and community awareness

Published three times a year

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New & Rejoining Members Page 6



Volume 44, No. 2 - May 2020

FLASH Hog Island Audubon Camp Closed

National Audubon has cancelled the 2020 season at Hog Island camp for the health and safety of all. Registration for the 2021 season is open, so sign up and save your space.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth...

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth... / Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth / Of sun-split clouds — and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung / High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there. . . .

This poem, *High Flight*, written by a 19-year-old Royal Canadian fighter pilot, John Gillespie Magee in 1941 never ceases to inspire and uplift those who read it, whether it be a line or two or the whole poem.

There is something about it that makes the heart beat faster, gives a sense of lift off, buoyancy, a sense of freedom and possibly escape. It gives us the feeling that all we have to



Glossy Ibis flying over Weskeag Marsh in the morning sun. Are they naturally practicing social distancing?

do is spread our arms and we'll be airborne. We'll share the experience—just like the bluebird or cardinal, the hummingbird or wren, the Great Blue Heron, slow and easy, or the Peregrine Falcon, blink-of-an-eye fast. We, too, can wheel and soar.

How *do* we slip our bonds of sheltering in place?

For those of us who live in Maine, we have endless vistas of forests, meadows, coastline, lakes, ponds, rivers, vernal pools, within a stone's throw. With our gift of time, we can discover or rediscover new things about our natural world. Most evident now are the migratory birds returning to renew life. After overcoming long journeys, they arrive at the very spot they left last season to raise their young. Jubilant, they burst into song, proclaiming territory and serenading a future mate.

Ablaze in breeding plumage,

performing mating rituals to catch the attention of a passing female, they spread out across our landscape and gardens.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER Sue Schubel

April is salamander time. I was moving some rotten logs when I found this little

salamander. Delighted, but chagrined, I named it Arthur Dent and relocated wood and critter to a safer spot. Arthur Dent, in the book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, is surprised to wake up one day to find his home about to be bulldozed to make way for a new highway.

This April feels surprising to us too many things are normal, like salamanders breeding, migrating birds moving through again and the days getting longer, but

things are suddenly so different as we navigate this new pandemic world. We're bound close to home to reduce spread of the COVID-19 virus. It's scary, and causing multitudes of problems at all levels. We must seek comfort where we can. Here's what brings comfort to me: being outside (fresh air, sunshine, moving the body), being in the company of other living things (Birds! Dogs! Salamanders!), SCIENCE (viruses are pretty amazing things — not even technically alive), and taking action (you can do a lot wherever you happen to be).



Salamander being moved to new home!

It's rather like life on a seabird island. After an initial resizing of one's world, this smaller place becomes all. Plenty to do, to learn, to observe. Fewer options open up new possibilities. The writer May Sarton found, "the free within the framed, as poets do" on her island. We islanders know

> from experience that creativity is enhanced as supplies dwindle! Take this quiet time to hone in on your small world, your "island", and get to know it.

> I was moving the little salamander to construct a small she-shed/quarantine hut. Pretty minimal impact overall, but even walking has an impact on the landscape when we look closely. Seeing the whole world slowing down is fascinating — life without humans rushing around certainly has benefits! Skies are cleaner as transportation and industrial production

slow; wildlife moves freely with less traffic. Nature's resilience is encouraging!

Arthur Dent doesn't realize that it's not just his house at risk, but the whole earth is about to be demolished for a hyperspace bypass. We must be vigilant — climate change may be our hyperspace bypass. This pause *could* help us envision new ways to live. Embrace clean technologies, simpler lifestyles, and value those whose work we all depend on.

CRITTER CORNER DON REIMER

A LEG TO STAND ON

While observing some small birds in my feeder trays, I spotted a one-legged chickadee. Despite its physical status, the otherwise healthy-looking bird went about its natural affairs, as perky and energetic as its two-legged companions. In this case, the label of *disability* did not seem to apply. I watched the chickadee carry seeds to an upper branch, where it used a toe to pin the seeds in place. Next the bird dangled upside down to nuzzle a dripping sap nodule. Since chickadees have impressive leg and foot strength, this one-legged task was readily accomplished. Now this resourceful little fellow continues to visit my yard daily.

For birds, loss of a limb can result from several reasons. Sometimes birds become entangled in thread, discarded fishing line or string included in their nest construction. Hatchlings can also get snarled in unsafe nesting materials. Leg injuries from predator attacks can cause total or partial



loss of a limb. Legs and feet of certain forager types, such as gulls, can get wedged and damaged in tight openings.

To what extent do these imposing life challenges affect birds? One-legged birds are more susceptible to predators, and their life spans are typically shorter. Affected birds may lose a mate or have difficulties with conducting courtship displays. Sparrows and other ground birds that rely on *double-footed* scratching in leaf litter must adapt quickly or face starvation. Individuals that typically migrate may choose to stay put, rather than deal with the stresses of a complicated migration process.

Gulls and shorebird species that routinely stand on one leg can sometimes fool us. Retracting one leg is a general means of retaining winter body heat by reducing heat loss across bare skin areas. At other times of year, birds may elevate a leg to

keep it off a hot summer surface, or switch legs periodically. More than once, I've been convinced that a roosted shorebird was missing a leg. Shorebirds will even hop for short distances on a single leg. Sooner or later, the bird in question will either reveal the tucked leg or lower it into position during takeoff.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds . . . *cont'd*

Watching them will help us slip those bonds, even for a few minutes or hours, hearing, seeing, and imagining the journey they've overcome to get here.

But how does someone living in an apartment building or who has no access to nature share this experience of migration? Reading a book can transport us to every place imagined, whether it be nature or another galaxy. Bernd Heinrich is a master storyteller of the natural world. One of my favorites is Winter World. His description of the little dynamo Golden-Crowned Kinglet brings to life its ability to thrive in the harshest of cold climates, dependent on to-our-eye-invisible larvae and insects on spruce and other trees; its ability to thermo regulate. Another book that will keep you rapt and transport you along the major flyways is Scott Weidensaul's Living on the Wind. At first, I thought this will be a tough read about migration. Was I wrong! Each page propelled me to the next, all the way from the Boreal Forest to Argentina.

Then, there is technology. This is the perfect time to nestle into your favorite chair and slip those surly bonds by watching any of the videos offered by Maine Audubon, National Audubon, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Geographic, American



A Double-crested Cormorant lifts off to sun-split clouds



Says the Bald Eagle to the Raven, "I dare you!"



Prothonotary Warbler in Portland reflecting on itself — who is that?

ohn Weinrich

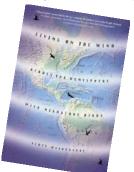
Bird Conservancy, or any of the other wonderful conservation nonprofits who are taking most of their program offerings online. Laugh and be amazed by the social attraction antics of Birds of Paradise on Cornell's YouTube. Watch live animals and birds in the world on Explore.org. Take online courses to deepen or begin your journey into birds, bees, insects, reptiles, mammals and all that makes up the natural world. You will not be disappointed. Even Facebook has daily tasks for you to undertake and learn: our own Tiny Quest challenge (see page 4) and Hog Island instructor Holly Merker has created a Facebook group Ornitherapy, birdand nature-centric.

We have only begun to uncover the many ways to soar and wheel way up there; to be weightless as we float unrestrained. We can take and sort through photos of things that move us; sketch, paint, draw the cock of a

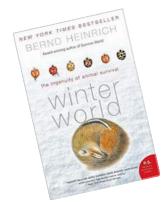
bluebird's head, the fluttering leaf; write an essay or a poem, reflect on ourselves and our relationship to nature, and our planet.

Find your escape. Like John Muir, I'm heading into the forest to lose my mind and find my soul. Tomorrow is another day full of promise, sights, and sounds. I'll be soaring.

Juanita Roushdy, an avid birder, lives in Bremen and keeps busy observing nature around her house and in the neighborhood at large.



Black-capped Chickadee getting ready for spring, cleaning out a nest cavity. This is another reason to keep old tree snags — called wildlife snags for the many creatures that find them useful for shelter and food.



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

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, all field trips and programs for May have been cancelled. Check our website for up-to-the-minute information on cancellations.

Thank you for understanding.

MAY

Tuesday, May 12 - CANCELLED

Viles Arboretum, Augusta

Mid-Coast Audubon continues to pursue spring migrants at this noted hotspot. Depending on reports we may initially look for Louisiana Waterthrushes at nearby Vaughn Woods. Meet at Viles Arboretum at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 16 - CANCELLED

Evergreen Cemetery and Capisic Park, Portland

We will continue the spring migrants search at this, historically, most successful field trip. Last year we found an excellent variety of warblers including a Kentucky. Thrushes are vocal and common at this time. Leave Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 23 - CANCELLED

Monhegan Island

We will venture to this classic spring migrant trap off of Port Clyde. Anything is possible at this renowned site. We catch the Monhegan Ferry from Port Clyde at 7:00 a.m. Participants make their own arrangements for transportation with the Monhegan Boat Line. For more information contact Dennis McKenna at 207-563-8439.

JUNE

Monday, June 1 South Thomaston

Mid-Coast Audubon will hold a joint bobolink walk with Georges River Land Trust, led by noted nature writer Scott Weidensaul, at the land trust's newly protected property in South Thomaston. The walk will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the property. Please call 207-594-5166 to register.

Friday, June 5

Augusta Airport and Belgrade Lakes

During this trip we will seek some regional specialties such as Sandhill Cranes, Black Terns and Purple Martins. Leave Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 13

Kennebunk Plains/Sanford Sewage Treatment Plant

Join our annual trip to this unique nesting area for grassland birds in Southern Maine. Previous trips have yielded Upland Sandpipers, Eastern Meadowlarks and a multitude of sparrows including Grasshopper, Vesper, Savannah and, last year, Clay-colored. Leave Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

Quiz: The Birds and the Bees (and the Flowers and the Trees)

1. What is the advantage of using native plants in your yard?

2. Are non-native plants harmful?

3. What is the very best tree to grow?

4. What is the difference between a host plant and a nectar plant?

5. Why should we want a yard full of caterpillars?

6. Honey bees are imported. Do we have native bees?

7. What are the advantages of native shrubs?

8. Why should we not cut down spent plants in autumn?

9. How can my plantings encourage animal diversity?

10. Where can I learn more? *Answers on page 6.*

MID-COAST AUDUBON IS FIFTY!

In 2020, we're celebrating 50 years of local nature education and conservation! Congratulations to you for supporting this great mission to protect and learn about nature in the midcoast.



We are inviting you to celebrate with us through Tiny Quests. This is our cure for Nature Deficit Disorder (<u>https://www.childrenandnature.org/.../</u><u>nature-deficit-disorder/</u>).

Each Friday, our Facebook page (<u>https://www.facebook.com/MidCoastAudubon/</u>) posts the Tiny Quest for the week. They are all quick, fun activities easily enjoyed in your backyard or farther out in nature. They are a way to inspire us to the wonders and beauty of nature.

So, grab a young person, harness your inner child, and go outside! Let's all connect with nature in tiny ways. These small moments, like the fine byssal threads holding a mussel to rock, have stronger staying power than you'd ever imagine. Watch for our Tiny Quest challenge each Friday and post a picture of your adventure on our Facebook page!

Fifty Years of Earth Day. I was There.

I was there. Fifty years ago. The first Earth Day. April 22, 1970. I was a freshman in high school and a small group of my friends and I were anxiously waiting to see if anyone would show up at the new recycling center we had just set up in the back parking lot at our school. For months beforehand we had been collecting drop-off bins, finding vendors who would take the recycled materials, and putting up flyers and posters encouraging students and their families to collect and drop off their paper, glass and cans (there was very little plastic back then....) come April 22. Newspapers went in one bin, cardboard in another, brown glass had to be separated from green and clear glass, and metal cans had to be separated from aluminum ones.

Today this might not seem like a big deal, since many towns in Maine now offer drop-off recycling centers at town facilities, or even curb-side pick-up, and large companies like EcoMaine happily collect recyclables. But back then – it was novel. I think we were one of the first sites in all of St. Paul (a city of about 300,000 at the time) to start collecting.

We gathered in the parking lot early to prepare for what we hoped was going to be a long day, and we weren't disappointed. Car after car arrived with trunks and backs filled with recyclables. We sorted and filled all of our containers to overflowing and



Continued on page 7.

finished the day weary but ecstatic. We felt vindicated that we weren't alone in caring for Mother Earth in our own small way.

That year was the start of a long career in conservation for me. That year also marked the start of a series of landmark



Calendar of Events ... cont'd.

Sue's mask https://projectpuffin.audubon.org/

Saturday, August 1

Scarborough Marsh

This trip will seek those earliest of migrants, shorebirds from the Arctic tundra. Leave Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, August 22

Pine Point and Scarborough Marsh

Hopefully we will find the second shorebird wave with this trip seeking sandpipers and plovers at this lure for shorebirds seeking to fatten up for the long flight south. Meet at Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

Early

Maine Audubon's annual pelagic trip out of Bar Harbor Watch for details on their web site. Previous trips have yielded all of the Jaegers, both Skuas, both Red and Red-necked Phalaropes, a variety of Shearwaters and Leach's and Wilson's Petrels.

Saturday, September 26

Monhegan Island

Join us for a day trip to see migrants that we missed on their way north. Who knows what rarities that we might encounter. The Monhegan Boat Line ferry leaves at 7:00 a.m. from Port Clyde and returns at 4:30 p.m. Call them at 207-372-8848 for reservations.

Tuesday, October 6 Popham Beach

Join us at this ever-evolving beach to look for late migrating shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Meet at Damariscotta Hannaford at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, October 17

Leader's Choice

After combing reports the leader will decide which spot will yield the most interesting finds. Meet at Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00AM

Saturday, November 7

Sabattus Pond, Sabattus

Join us as we look over the extensive flocks of south-bound ducks. We will learn to separate Lesser from Greater Scaup and while so doing, hope to pick out any unusual species. We have found Redheads in the past. Participants should dress warmly because Sabattus is one of the coldest places on earth! Leave Damariscotta Hannaford at 7:00 a.m.

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/



John serving lobster at the annual lobster bake.

been a regular of every field trip, program and lobster feast that we have had. But his family's move to Yarmouth has made it difficult to continue his involvement. We'll still see him on the occasional field trip and the annual lobster bake and he'll continue being compiler for the Bunker Hill Christmas Bird Count. Thank you, John. It won't be the same!

Farewell,

After 16 years with

reluctantly decided

to step down from

the board and from

his position as vice-

president. John has

Audubon, John

Weinrich has

John

Mid-Coast

Gail Presley, who keeps our website and Facebook pages up to date has agreed to be vice-president. Yea! Thank you, Gail. We also say farewell to Tom Arter who for personal reasons resigned from the board

Quiz Answers:

1. They provide food and shelter for our native animals and insects, because they have evolved together.

2. Introduced plants can be competitive or even invasive, and are often inedible to local insects.

3. White oak can host over 500 species of caterpillars in addition to providing food and shelter for many birds and animals.

4. A host plant supports larval development of insects, and a nectar plant provides nectar and pollen for adult insects. Most butterflies are specialists, requiring a single species of host plant for their eggs.

5. Caterpillars are the main food of most birds, especially during breeding season. One chickadee nest needs about 6,000 caterpillars! (Also, caterpillars turn into beautiful moths and butterflies.) after a short tenure. Thank you, Tom, for your commitment.

In other board news, we had our first Zoom meeting in March, which was a great success but we missed seeing each other in person and heading to our postmeeting meeting at the Narrows Tavern in Waldoboro! We'd love to have you join our board. Contact us at

midcoast@maineaudubon.org



Maggie Dewane, *Pemaquid* Kristine Federle, *Camden* Martha Frink, *Bremen* David Houben, *Palermo* Ruth and Anthony Lopreato, *Damariscotta* Jane S. Pyne, *Waldoboro* Vicki and Randy Mast, *Camden* Fred Ribeck, *West Rockport* Donna Green Stano, *Round Pond* Jim Stano, *Round Pond*

6. There are about 4,000 species of native bees, pollinating about 90 per cent of plants.



Arrowwood viburnum

7. Native shrubs like arrowwood viburnum have berries higher in fat than introduced shrubs such as bush honeysuckle. Birds need the extra nourishment for migration.

8. Many insects and bees nest or overwinter in the stems of perennials and shrubs.

9. Plant a diverse, layered landscape: ground cover, shrub, understory, and canopy.

10. For appropriate plant choices: <u>www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds</u> and books by Douglas Tallamy: *Bringing Nature Home*, 2007 and *Nature's Best Hope*, 2019. Maine Audubon has an annual native plant sale starting June 13, 2020.

Mid-Coast Audubon

Organized December 6, 1969

a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization

P.O. Box 458, Damariscotta, ME 04543-0458 midcoast@maineaudubon.org

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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 October 15! Send to juanitar@tidewater.net



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Fifty Years of Earth Day... cont'd

legislation that still stand today and forever changed the way our lives intertwine with the natural world around us. Shortly after Earth Day, the Clean Air Act (CAA) was substantially improved and amended (1970), the National Environmental Protection Agency was created (1970), and soon after the Clean Water Act (1972) and then the Endangered Species Act (1973) were passed – all in response to public outcry, all with substantial bipartisan support, and all signed into law by then-president Richard Nixon. Together these laws and programs established a new paradigm between industry and the public.

Paul Rogers, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment during the 1970 Clean Air Act deliberations, remembered it this way: *During the House floor*

debate on the [CAA] amendments, one of my colleagues quoted a small town mayor, who ...is reported to have said: "If you want this town to grow, it has got to stink." Before 1970, there were still many persons and companies throughout the United States who agreed with the mayor that pollution was the inevitable price of progress. In the 1970 amendments, however, Congress signaled its firm belief that economic growth and a clean environment are not mutually exclusive codes (soo EPA wobsite for



Endangered Piping Plover, mother and three chicks nest on busy beaches. Visit Maine Audubon to learn more.

exclusive goals. (see <u>EPA website</u> for more history)

Ever since then, we have seen remarkable improvements in our air quality and water quality, and we have saved 99% of species listed as Threatened or Endangered from going extinct. After the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts were passed in the 1970s we successfully reduced the ozone hole in the atmosphere that threatened to burn us up from too much UV light; reduced acid rain and toxic lead from falling on our soils and lakes and then into the food web; and eliminated the toxic foam and fires on our rivers caused by sulfite emissions and other pollutants. This was proof as Representative Rogers noted, that business can carry on and protect the environment, people and the planet's health all at the same time.

Which brings us to today, fifty years later. Unfortunately, many other changes have occurred since the 1970s that haven't been so great for people, wildlife, or the natural world. Just yesterday while I was driving from my house to the grocery store on near-empty roads because of the coronavirus, I felt as if I were transported back 30 years to when I first moved here – a time when I was surrounded by vibrant farmlands and forestlands; there were no telephone or electric lines alongside the last mile of road; and there were fewer homes, roads, businesses, parking lots, and cars. More recently, as I watched yet another home slip into a favored forest patch of mine, far back from the main road and right next to a vernal pool, I remember my young son telling me, "Mom – you can't save it all!" And he's right, but we can do better.

When we come together with the future of Mother Earth and all that she gives us in mind, we can chart a positive path forward. We've done it before, when we cleaned up our air and water, stopped the ozone hole from spreading, and recovered endangered bald eagles from extinction. And even though the problems before us are more complex than ever, we can do it again. By bringing together conservationists, poets, business professionals, artists, economists, policy-makers and others we can find creative

> solutions to tame the dangers lurking in front of us from a changing climate – but only if we choose to, and only if we act.

Now as most of us are sequestered at home, taking time to wander through the remaining fields, forests, and waterways nearby to soothe our anxiety and rejuvenate the soul, I hope when this is all over, we can remember what's really important. For me, that's connections with friends and family; connections with colleagues,

neighbors, and community; an outdoor oasis I can walk to from my house; clean air for healthy lungs; clean water for drinking and gardening; and fresh local foods that don't rely on chemicals and an international supply chain.

At the same time, we are all struggling with an uncertain future, perhaps with friends who have become sickened or even died, and a shrinking paycheck and economy. But consider this – right now as we are threatened with a killer virus, most of us have changed our habits in response – not only to protect ourselves, but to protect our friends, colleagues, and families. Can we do the same to protect Mother Earth and the air, water, plants, animals, food, and wood she gives us? These are the things we should be fighting for. Earth is feverish and struggling to survive too. She needs our help. And we need her healthy so she can help us.

So please join me on this 50th anniversary of Earth Day, and make a pledge to do your part to make sure we have plenty to celebrate on April 22, 2070 – just 50 years from now. That might seem like a long ways off, but believe me – the time goes by faster than you think! We have no time to lose.

Sally Stockwell is Director of Conservation at Maine Audubon. This article was reprinted from Maine Audubon's website.

Mid-Coast Audubon - The Merganser

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Mid-Coast Audubon P.O. Box 458 Damariscotta, ME 04543-0458 https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/

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Don't Miss the Feast of Summer 2020

September 5, 2020*

Annual Lobster Bake \$50 per person

*Check our website for updates on this event over the summer.

Check out Maine Audubon's "Connections" web page for all kinds of daily activities. https://www.maineaudubon.org/education/connections/

MID - COAST AUDUBON



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