

The Merganser

Mid-Coast

Audubon

Promoting long-term responsible use of natural resources through an informed membership, education, and community awareness

Mid-Coast Audubon – a chapter of...



MAINE AUDUBON

Volume 46, No. 2 - May 2022



*It's spring
and there's
music all
around!*

Inside...

2 President's Corner

*Lights Out with
Sue Schubel*

3 Sound Recording, cont'd

*with guest writer
Laura Sebastianelli*

3 You Can Help Birds!

*Citizen Science
opportunities*

4 Critter Corner

*In It to Win It
with Don Reimer*

5 Quiz

Thinking Spring!

5 Bird Feeder Project

Apply this summer!

6 Calendar

Field trips and programs

7 Remembering Bill

Photos: American Redstart/Sherrie
York, Common Yellowthroat/Lew
Purinton, Song Sparrow/Sherrie York

DIY Bird Sound Recording

An abundance of bird song is what first comes to mind when I think of spring. Why not consider recording it? You likely already have the tool you need to give it a try – your cell phone! Here are some tips I learned from the Macaulay Library at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology.

1) Download a dedicated recording app for your phone (such as Voice Record Pro) that allows you to record using uncompressed WAV files, rather than an MP3 file. While you personally may not hear the difference in the sound files, the MP3 format compresses the file

and data will be lost, making it of less value to science as critical measurement information will be missing.

2) Approach a singing bird slowly, indirectly, and incrementally to avoid scaring them off.

It can be hard to guess how close you can get without causing the bird to change its natural behavior. At first, try about 25 meters away (about 80 ft). Using the sound level meter in your app, increase/

Continued on page 3



Mid-Coast



Audubon

Organized December 6, 1969
a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization

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

OFFICERS

Sue Schubel, President
Gail Presley, Vice President
Sherrie York, Secretary
Lew Purinton, Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Will Broussard, Brunswick
Kathy Cartwright, Waldoboro
Jeff Cherry, Newcastle
Bill Goodwill, Friendship
Keegan Kennedy, Bristol
Dennis McKenna, Damariscotta
Kristin Pennock, Whitefield
Don Reimer, Warren
Juanita Roushdy, Bremen

COMMITTEES

Field Trips: Dennis McKenna, 563-8439
Nest boxes: Lew Purinton, 215-1913
Membership: Sherrie York, 677-2061
Preserves: Keegan Kennedy, 850-375-9309
Programs: Will Broussard, 837-9520
Scholarships: Sue Schubel, 380-1370
Special Events: Sue Schubel, 380-1370
The Merganser editor: Sherrie York, 677-2061

**The Merganser is published
three times a year in February, May,
and November.**

News items and photos are welcome.
Deadline for the next issue is October 15!
Send submissions to sy@sherrieyork.com



Scarlet Tanager /Don Reimer photo

President's Corner: *Don't lighten up!*

Migration time! Spring and Fall, bazillions of birds move across the landscape. After a pandemic pause to my own travels, I recently travelled both by car and by plane across this great continent of ours, seeing it from the ground and from the sky.

I saw a lot of human-dominated landscape. In some places, it seemed relentless – expanses of agriculture, suburbs, urban sprawl. Where are the quiet corners for wildlife? Borders between fields, drainage ditches beside highways? From the air, like a bird, I saw a quilted landscape of fields and roads, and at night – lights like a neural network almost everywhere. Birds need places to rest and feed on their journeys, and they need to see the stars to navigate. We've known that windows and lights can have devastating impacts on migrants – huge numbers of birds killed in Chicago, New York, Texas, and other places in notable large strikes. Other birds circle in confusion, until weakness leaves them vulnerable in a dangerous place. Downed birds disappear fast though, into the maws of urban wildlife and feral cats, so the impact is often undercounted.

Toronto was the first city, in 1991, to create a program addressing the light problem through information and voluntary action. (*FLAP – Fatal Light Awareness Program*) The National Audubon Society in Chicago was first in the United States to take similar action (*Lights Out*, 1999), and now 20 cities are on board. Recent data has quantified the situation better (up to 230,000 birds killed annually just in New York City, over 100 million across the country), and in December helped several *Lights Out* laws to be passed in NYC. Now buildings owned by the city must turn off non-essential outdoor lights, and use occupancy sensors to reduce interior lighting during nights of most dense migrant passage. Migration is tracked by radar imaging – you can watch the movement at <https://aeroecolab.com/uslights>.

Seventy percent of North American Bird species are migratory, and 80 percent of them migrate at night. Audubon's *Lights Out* program (<https://www.audubon.org/lights-out-program>) helps everyone contribute to the cause, in small and big ways. If you have the power to cut the power – great! If you have an avenue of influence to convince someone else to flip some switches – fantastic!

There's something to be said for quiet corners and dark skies. A break from the human-dominated landscape. Dazzling diamonds overhead, more birds making it to their destinations, lower electric bills, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and happier vampires!

Seabird Sue Schubel wears a variety of seasonal plumages, using her skills as scientist, artist, and educator with Audubon's Seabird Institute. A unique taxonomic species, Sue's common names include Seabird Researcher, Assistant Sanctuary Manager, Conservation Decoy Painter, and Outreach Educator.



Yellow Warbler /Don Reimer photo

Recording Bird Sounds-

from page 1

decrease the gain till the peak range is -6 to -12dB and begin recording.

Once you have recorded for at least 30 seconds and up to 2 minutes, consider getting closer. Or, keep recording to gather more information! Add a short announcement to identify species (if you know it), behavior, location, time and date. If you decide to try getting closer, aim to halve the distance between the bird and the microphone, as the power of the audio signal will increase by 75% (6dB). But remember, no audio recording is worth creating stress for the bird.

3) Once home, download your file. Resist anything more than minor edits. Using free audio software like Audacity, you can trim the ends (to about 3 sec before and after the song).

If you want to cut a little bit of low frequency noise (such as distant traffic), you can apply a High-Pass Filter at 60-100Hz, but never more than 250Hz.

Then, go ahead and normalize the recording (via "Amplify"); the bird song by -3dB, and your voice announcement by -10dB. Export your modified sound file to save and rename it (something different than your original file), and *voila!* You are now ready to add your sound recording to your e-Bird checklist!

Laura Sebastianelli is an Ecological Educator, Naturalist, and Wildlife Field Technician based in Virginia. She is currently collaborating with the Schoodic Institute to build a library of bird sounds of Acadia National Park. For more information, visit <https://schoodicnotes.blog/>



Wood Thrush /Don Reimer photo



Ruby-throated Hummingbird /Don Reimer photo

Things you can do for birds this spring and summer

• Turn off lights

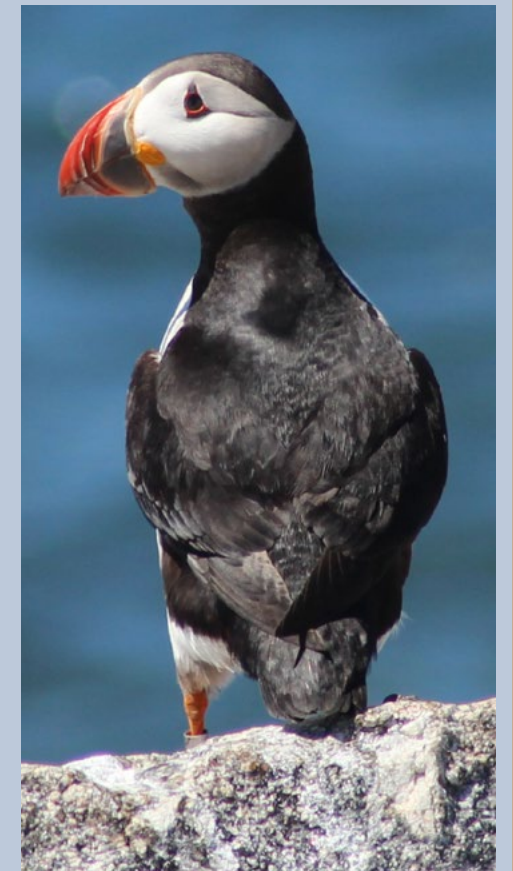
Audubon's *Lights Out* program: <https://www.audubon.org/lights-out-program>

• **Collect data for the final year of the 5-year Maine breeding bird atlas!** <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/maine-bird-atlas/index.html>

• Monitor nightjars

The Maine nightjar project is looking for volunteers to cover their Swanville study routes.
<http://mainenightjar.com/volunteer>

• **Connect people to seabirds with Project Puffin.** Volunteer opportunities are available at Pemaquid Point (Bristol), Todd Wildlife Sanctuary (Bremen), and the Project Puffin Visitor Center (Rockland).
Contact Kimberly Keller
kimberly.keller@audubon.org



Atlantic Puffin / Sherrie York photo

Critter Corner: *In It to Win It*



Tom turkeys grappling / Don Reimer photo

With multiple complex physiological tasks in the equation, May is a pivotal month for bird nesting activity across New England. These existential chores involve locating, advertising and defending a territory, and securing a suitable mate. All such activities involve strenuous hormonally-driven behaviors that would seem dramatically overdone at other seasons of the year. Extended bouts of singing, in and of themselves, require durable physical energy and endurance. Active pursuit and courtship of eligible nest mates consumes additional time and energy within a tight timeframe.

While bird song is a primary mechanism for nesting success, pressures can mount for male suitors as their optimal nesting timetables are up-ended for various reasons.

The inevitable progression of the nesting calendar can occasionally trigger physical scuffles between rival males. I watched two neighborhood male cardinals (brightly plumaged adults) square off when a grayish female landed on a nearby branch. Both individuals streamlined their body posture toward a threatening attack position, until one bird eventually withdrew and moved away. A similar scenario developed when two male Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers grew vocal and assertive with each other at the presence of an arriving female.

Perhaps the tom Wild Turkey gives us the clearest indications of what intense breeding behaviors really look like. Their

strident courtship “gobble, gobble” strains have probably reached your ear from some distant woods or field. And you’ve undoubtedly witnessed their elaborate puffed-up, fan-tailed displays beside roadways. In terms of true physicality, squabbling tom turkeys might qualify as the “Big Time Wrestling” champs. Some physical battles may continue for 15 minutes or more. Their typical fight tactics include bumping and torso-slammings, entwining their neck with the opponent’s, striking with wings and feet, and pecking another’s face and eyes. These worthy wild combatants are definitely “in it to win it!”

Don Reimer is the author of Seen Anything Good? Seasons of Birds in Midcoast Maine. He’s a regular visitor to a wide variety of habitats, but can be reliably spotted on the edges of Weskeag Marsh and the pages of The Free Press.

Q&A Thinking Spring



Tree Swallow / Sherrie York photo

Q1: Swamp Bat, Labrador Twister, Timberdoodle and Bog Sucker are nicknames for this early spring migrant.

Q2: The wail, yodel, tremolo and hoot are four vocalizations given by this iconic Maine bird.

Q3: An annual migration of 25,000 miles is typical for this bird which nests on just 10 offshore islands in Maine.

Q4: Which one of the following birds has never been documented breeding in Maine?
Sandhill Crane
Golden Eagle
Sedge Wren
American Oystercatcher
Boreal Owl

Q5: An omnivorous diet that includes the hard, waxy fruits of this Maine native plant allows Tree Swallows, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, and Yellow-rumped Warblers to return a month earlier than their relatives.

Q6: This Maine breeding bird is also the largest duck in North America.



Eastern Phoebe / Sherrie York photo

Injured Bird?

Contact
Avian Haven

Avian Haven accepts all bird species year-round.

207-382-6761

avianhaven.org

A1: American Woodcock
A2: Common Loon
A3: Arctic Tern
A4: Boreal Owl
A5: Northern Bayberry
A6: Common Elder

Find a Feather?

The US Fish & Wildlife Service maintains a **free feather identification tool online!**

If you spot an unfamiliar feather in the wild, take a photo and use it to search the database by color, pattern, size, and more! (At present the database is limited to tail and flight feathers.)

<https://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/idtool.php>

Bird Feeder Project

Mid-Coast Audubon would like to support your school or local library’s natural history learning and exploration by providing free equipment and resources to establish a bird feeding station. Ten feeder stations have been awarded since the program began in 2020.

A Feeder Station kit includes feeders, starter seed, 2 compact binoculars, and other resources.

The 2022 application deadline is June 30. Successful applicants will be notified in August.

Details and application form online at: <http://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/>



Live and Online Events with Mid-Coast Audubon!

Full event descriptions and current information on our website: midcoast.maineaudubon.org

Program Coordinator: Will Broussard 837-9520 / Field Trip Coordinator: Dennis McKenna 563-8439

Field Trips

ALL ARE WELCOME!

You don't need to be an Audubon member or have advanced birding skills to join us! We simply hope to instill interest in the natural world through an understanding of how birds live and what birds live and thrive in our area.

At this time we do require that participants over the age of twelve be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Carpools meet at the Damariscotta Hannaford parking lot.
See individual trips for times.

May 12, 2022 (Thursday)

Sears Island (Searsport)

Join us as we seek spring migrants at this mid-coast birding hotspot in Searsport. During spring migration, many species rest and feed on the island during their long northbound trip. Warblers galore! Other songbirds include Scarlet Tanager, thrushes, flycatchers, and White-throated Sparrow.

Carpool 6:00am. OR meet at the Sears Island causeway at 7:30am. For more information, or in the event of inclement weather, please call Trip Leader, Gail Presley, at (207) 975-5930.

May 21, 2022 (Saturday)

Evergreen Cemetery in Portland

Evergreen Cemetery and its surrounding 100-acre forest in Portland is a warbler haven in May, with owls, hawks, ducks, and herons possible at the ponds. Thrushes are vocal and common at this time of year.

Carpool 6:15am. OR meet at the back parking area at Evergreen Cemetery, near the turtle pond, at 7:30am. Trip Leader: Dennis McKenna, 207-563-8439 (home) or 207-522-2891 (cell)

May 24, 2022 (Tuesday)

Florida Lake (Freeport)

Florida Lake is new to our spring line up of field trips because we only recently discovered this birding gem. There are about 3 miles of trails through the 167-acres of differing habitats including emergent marsh, shrub swamp, forested wetland, and wooded upland. In May, 158 species have been reported here such as warblers (including Northern Waterthrush), Great Crested Flycatchers, American Pipits, and ducks and herons in the lake.

Carpool 6:15am. Otherwise, meet at the Florida Lake parking area at 7:00am. Trip Leader: Dennis McKenna.

May 28, 2022 (Saturday)

Viles Arboretum (Augusta)

The 224-acre Pine Tree State Arboretum has fields, marshes, ponds, gardens, and woods making for a diverse habitat for birds. Bobolinks, bluebirds, and tree sparrows can be seen in the meadows, warblers in the woods, and ducks and wading birds in the ponds. Last year we saw both Sora and Virginia rails. Meet trip leader Will Broussard at the Arboretum parking lot at 7:30am.

June 4, 2022 (Saturday)

Belgrade Lakes and Bond Brook

A visit to Belgrade Lakes offers a mix of fresh water and northern hardwood forest species with highlights including Black Terns, Sandhill Cranes, Purple Martins, and many warbler species. Carpool 6:45am. OR meet at the Messalonskee Lake boat launch at 8:00am. Trip Leader: Dennis McKenna.

June 9, 2022 (Thursday)

Kennebunk Plains

The 1,300-acre sandplain is home to breeding grassland species found almost nowhere else in the state, such as Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows, Upland Sandpipers, and Eastern Meadowlarks. Carpool 7:00am or meet at the Kennebunk Rest Stop on Route 95 (south) at 8:30am. Trip Leader: Dennis McKenna.

Monthly Nature Programs

Our third-Thursday monthly programs are on hiatus for the summer! Join us and our Camden Library partner again starting in September.

Until then, you can watch many of our past programs online <https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/program-videos-available/>



Virginia Rail / Lew Purinton photo



Remembering Bill

We can't imagine anyone more appropriately named than Mid-Coast Audubon board member Bill Goodwill, who met everyone and everything with a ready smile, a kind word, and cheerful enthusiasm.

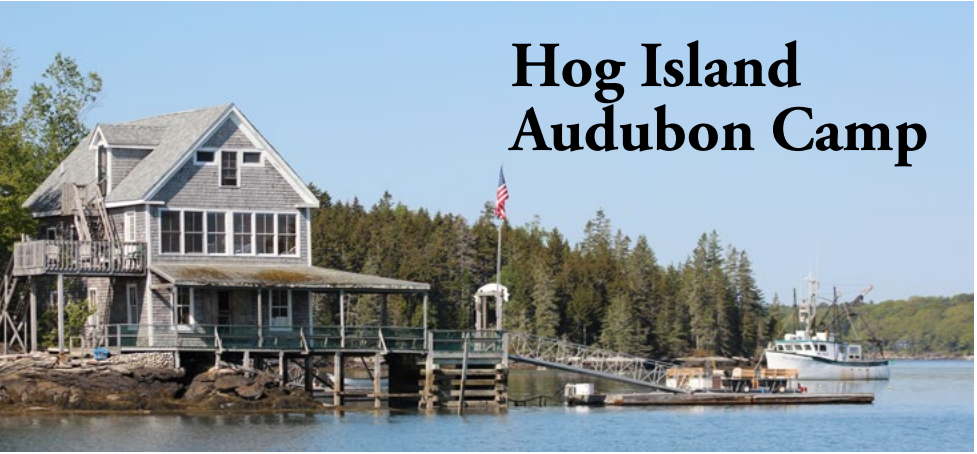
That enthusiasm included birds, of course. His wife Karen tells us that his response to her questions about the "best bird" of his birding trips was always the same: "All of them!"

Bill passed away in April, leaving us with a mix of sadness at his departure and gratitude for his hard work and friendship through the years. He will be missed.

John Weinrich photos



Hog Island Audubon Camp



Summer camp! It's not just for kids anymore! Spaces are still available for this summer's adult, teen, and family sessions at Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION AT <https://hogisland.audubon.org>

Hog Island Day Trips: May 24, 25, 26 & 27

Spring Migration & Monhegan: May 29–June 3

Joy of Birding: June 5–10

Puffin Islands: June 12–17

Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens I: June 12–17

Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens II: June 19–24

Field Ornithology: June 19–24

Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens: June 26–July 1

Arts & Birding - Sketching & Painting: July 10–15

Arts & Birding - Photography: July 10-15

Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week: July 17–22

Costa Rica Teen Camp: July 28–August 3

Family Camp I: August 7–12

Family Camp II: August 14–19

Creating Bird-Friendly Habitats: August 21-24

Birds of Maine Islands: A Service Week: Sept. 4–9

Fall Migration & Monhegan: September 4–9

Raptor Migration & Monhegan: September 11–16

Welcome, new and rejoining Mid-Coast Audubon members!

NOVEMBER

Sally E. Butler
Sarah Caputo
Terry R. Hackford
Margaret L. Macleod
Kristin Pennock
Susan Reilly
John Rice
Susan St. John
Johanna Stinson
Jody Telfair-Richards
Lewis Wheelwright and Jacinda Martinez

DECEMBER

Peter Abello
Karen Brace
Foy and Lydia Brown
Jordan Cohen
Margaret R. Davis
Judith R. Falk
Victor Goldsmith
Frances S. Hitchcock
Betty Lou Richards
Deidre E. Sousa

JANUARY

David Brakke
Ann Marie Noble

FEBRUARY

Maren Granstrom and Emilio Codega
Joan Ray
Sherry Spaulding
David Stanuch
Helen N. Walsh

MARCH

Eugenia and Nicholas Gallagher
Jack R. Green
Peg Hobbs
Debra and Douglas Morgan
Thomas O'Donovan
Elisabeth Wolfe

Mid-Coast



Audubon

Mid-Coast



Audubon

Mid-Coast Audubon

PO Box 458

Damariscotta, ME 04543-0458

midcoast.maineaudubon.org*An all-volunteer, 501(c)3 chapter of Maine Audubon*

Nonprofit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit #11
Newcastle, ME
04553

Stay in Touch!

facebook.com/MidCoastAuduboninstagram.com/midcoastaudubon

Eastern Kingbird / Lew Purinton photo

MAINE 
AUDUBON

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mid-Coast Chapter

YES! I would like to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in Maine as a ☐ new ☐ renewing member.

Annually: ☐ \$30 Senior/Student ☐ \$40 Individual ☐ \$50 Household ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$ Other _____

Monthly: ☐ Enroll me in the Frquent Flyer Program and charge ___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$25 ___ Other \$ _____
to my credit card each month (\$5 minimum).

Name (as it appears on credit card): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

☐ Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____ (Please make checks payable to Maine Audubon.)

☐ Charge \$ _____ to my credit card # _____

Exp. _____ CSV _____

Join or renew online
maineaudubon.org/join

Our community of members is integral to our success on behalf of Maine's wildlife and habitat. When you join or renew your Maine Audubon membership, you ensure that work can continue.

Thank you!

Checks payable to Maine Audubon, 20 Gilsland Farm Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105. FMI: 207.781.2330, ext. 230