



*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. 3 – November 2022

# It's not all binoculars and bird song...

Some days caring about birds involves power tools and chainsaws! Mid-Coast Audubon owns and manages four properties in our chapter region,\* which means there's always work to be done to maintain trails, improve habitat, and provide opportunities for people to get out and enjoy Maine's bird life.

The largest Mid-Coast Audubon property is Nelson Preserve, on Route 97 in Friendship. Nelson Preserve primarily comprises mixed woodland with red maple swamp habitat, with over 1.5 miles of hiking trails. That red maple swamp is really... um... swampy! most of the year, although intrepid hikers can find their way through it to the Goose River when the weather is colder and the marsh frozen.

During a recent work day, volunteers cleared windfall from trails, updated trail signs, and built and installed a new information kiosk at the trailhead parking lot.

Information about and directions to MCA preserves is available on our website: [midcoast.audubon.org](http://midcoast.audubon.org). They are open to the public for quiet use. No motorized vehicles, please.

Davis Bog Preserve (Morrill)  
Guy Van Duyn Preserve (Waldoboro)  
Nelson Preserve (Friendship)  
Weskeag River Wildlife Preserve (Thomaston, no trails)

\*The Mid-Coast Audubon chapter region encompasses Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo counties.



*Preserves manager Keegan Kennedy clears windfall from the Middle Trail at Nelson.*



*In October, Mid-Coast Audubon board members and volunteers built and installed a new trailhead kiosk at Nelson Preserve in Friendship. L to R: Sue Schubel, Juanita Roushdy, Adam DiNuovo, Sherrie York, Keegan Kennedy.*

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Photos: Mallards and Northern Saw-whet Owl/Sherrie York. Work day photos by Sue Schubel and Sherrie York.







## Leave Your Leaves for Wildlife

Many species of insects (aka pollinators and bird food!) rely on leaf litter and cover vegetation to help them survive the winter. There are lots of ways to balance the needs of your yard with those of wild creatures. Check out some great tips from the Xerces Society: <https://xerces.org/blog/leave-leaves-to-benefit-wildlife>

### Mid-Coast



### Audubon

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

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**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 January 15!  
Send submissions to [sy@sherrieyork.com](mailto:sy@sherrieyork.com)

# President's Corner: *Tree-mendous*

Ah, the roadside gardens. Slowly ambling with an old dog on a daily basis, one can really appreciate the plants changing through the seasons. It seems remarkable that nature can assemble such perfect collections of fern and aster, horsetail and groundnut, goldenrod, selfheal and buttercup. In spring the delicate pink of tiny flowers against the glowing green moss. In summer the textures of ferns and oak bark, asters and goldenrod. In fall there are still many blooms, but the leaf colors take center stage. Red leaves of huckleberry and maple, yellows of birch and aspen. The play of buckskin toned beech leaves against balsam fir needles and cascades of moss on granite is a beautiful thing. Nature cannot be outdone by any Ikebana master!

This fall it is the striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*) in the dark forest catching my eye. The leaves – so big! So yellow in the understory – luminous. AKA moose maple, moosewood (the browsers like to eat it), or goosefoot maple (because of those big 3-lobed leaves), it is a small tree native to eastern North America. The rest of the 20 species in the snakebark maple group are in Asia. Its wood is soft, so not used much in building, but you can make whistles from the small branches by sliding the bark off the inner section (another name is whistlewood!) The leaves are large and soft and seem perfect for picnic plates or wrapping small gifts. When the trees are young, their bark is green with vertical white stripes. Native American wisdom says that the plants can tell us their use by their look, and the bark striping (like blood vessels) shows human and moose that ingesting it is helpful for blood disorders. The buds are eaten by Ruffed Grouse.



Striped Maple / Sue Schubel photos

One really interesting trait of this tree is that it is a sequential hermaphrodite, meaning it can change sex throughout its lifetime. These trees are most often male, but respond to environmental stress by becoming female, to bloom and influence the gene pool as effectively as possible despite the added costs of making flowers and seeds.

Stresses for trees this year included summer drought and an abundance of leaf-eating insects. Those green leaves of summer, abundant in chlorophyll to make food, start to change in response to reduced sun and temperature. The chlorophyll breaks down and is not replaced and other pigments (yellows and oranges) are revealed. Chemical changes cause the darker red colors to develop. The best conditions for a good leaf year are when we have dry, sunny, cool weather after a growing season with adequate moisture. Climate change is reducing the fall show because warmer temps delay the onset of color, but the light levels triggering leaf drop remain the same. Some studies show that there is a maximum amount of photosynthesis a plant can undertake – so a longer growing season won't necessarily mean the leaves will produce food longer... they start and finish sooner. Maybe they've formed a tree union. I wonder though, how the reduced leaf area caused by the abundance of caterpillars will affect their efforts – can they work a bit longer to make up for the lack of sugars produced by those lacey leaves, or do they need to take an early vacation?

Speaking of leaves and vacations – you can leave those leaves! If not right where they fall, at least somewhere nearby. The invertebrates to feed our birds are wintering within. Leaves make great mulch to protect the garden – yours, and those wild ones along the road!

*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.*

# Bird Feeder Project

Learning to observe birds can be a springboard for exploring nature, sound, flight, animal behavior, biodiversity, and climate change as well as writing, music, and art. In 2020 Mid-Coast Audubon set out to support natural history teaching and exploration in area schools and libraries by providing equipment and resources to establish bird feeding and observation stations. Since the project began we have established stations at 14 locations in our chapter region.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to our 2022 feeder station winners!! We had an outstanding response to our call for applications. Although we are not able to provide materials to all the applicants this year, we plan to continue this project and support additional sites in the future. This year's awardees are:

Ames Elementary School, Searsmont (Waldo County)  
South School, Rockland (Knox County)  
South Thomaston Library (Knox County)  
Medomak Middle School, Waldoboro (Lincoln County)



*Young human visitors to the Jackson Memorial Library in Tenants Harbor check out the avian visitors at the first Mid-Coast Audubon-sponsored bird feeding station.*

***If your school or library would like to participate, check our website in late spring 2023 for our next application period.***

## 9-2-2023

### *Save the date!*

Sure, we know it's almost a year away, but 2023 marks the return of our autumn Lobster Bake fundraiser on Hog Island! Mark your calendars now, and make plans to join us on September 2!



## Hog Island Audubon Camp

Summer camp. It's not just for kids anymore! Registration opens November 9 at 10:00am for Summer 2023 adult, teen, and family sessions at Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen.

### Summer 2023 REGISTRATION INFORMATION AT [hogisland.audubon.org](https://hogisland.audubon.org)

**Spring Migration & Monhegan Island:** May 28–June 2  
**Joy of Birding:** June 4–9  
**Photography of Maine Birds and Landscapes:** June 4–9  
**Puffin Islands:** June 11–16  
**Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens One:** June 11–16  
**Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens Two:** June 18–23  
**Field Ornithology:** June 18–23  
**Mountains to Sea - Birding for Teens:** June 25–30  
**Family Camp I:** July 9–14  
**Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week:** July 16–21  
**Costa Rica Teen Camp:** July 28–August 3  
**Family Camp II:** August 6–11  
**Arts & Birding - Sketching & Painting:** August 20–25  
**Birds of Maine Islands - A Service Week:** September 3–8  
**Fall Migration & Monhegan:** September 10–15  
**Raptor Migration & Monhegan Island:** September 17–22

And speaking of bird feeders, why not join...

## Project FeederWatch!

Join Project FeederWatch, collect observations about the birds in your yard, and compare your data to other information nearby. When you join FeederWatch you will receive:

- Double-sided poster of eastern and western common feeder birds
- Bird-Watching Days Calendar
- Tools to track your birds over time on the website and mobile app
- Winter Bird Highlights annual summary
- Digital access to *Living Bird* magazine

More information at <https://feederwatch.org/>

**Want to check out other community science projects? Try these resources:**

**SciStarter:** <https://scistarter.org/>

**UMaine Extension:** <https://extension.umaine.edu/4h/youth/citizen-science-opportunities/>

**Maine Audubon:** <https://maineaudubon.org/community-science/>



# Critter Corner:

## *Seasonal Changes*



Blackpoll Warbler in autumn / Don Reimer photo



Blackpoll Warbler in spring / Don Reimer photo

Perhaps there are good reasons why the *Peterson Field Guide to Birds* has a special section called Confusing Fall Warblers – indeed, warblers can be truly confusing at certain seasons of the year!

Most of the truly confusing, non-descript warblers you'll encounter during the September through October migration period are immatures, especially immature females. Immature males of most species resemble, or are indistinguishable from, adult females. And a common misconception is that all male warblers change into drab plumage before fall migration; males can retain some brighter, recognizable remnants of summer breeding plumage. And, although color may seem important, certain markings and behaviors persist throughout the year.

Let's check out a species with extreme seasonal plumage changes – the Blackpoll Warbler. With regional populations spanning the entirety of North America's boreal forests, this spruce-nesting species forages in mature spruce forest in summer, but also visits other habitats during migration, such as low-weedy cover. Undergoing a complete change from black cap, white cheek and throat, and black streaking on the flanks in spring, fall Blackpolls appear with

greenish-yellow-olive tones at migration time. Some thin, black streaking on the back and bold, sharp, wing-bars are characteristic. Given close-up views, the legs and feet are noticeably bright yellow.

The Blackpoll's open-ocean route and migration tactics are remarkable, and well-studied; peak migration for the species is late September and early October. Weighing less than an empty soda can, the 12 gram

warblers make a sustained three-day, 2800 km transoceanic jaunt to northern South America. Through data gathered from minuscule geolocating devices attached to some of the birds, these mega-journeys are being scientifically confirmed. The western-breeding Blackpolls face an even more daunting scenario. Before launching their east coastal non-stop ocean flights, the western component must first traverse the North American continent!

*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.*

### *.... And did you know?*



Snow Buntings / Sherrie York photo

Although breeding and nonbreeding Snow Buntings look quite different, the change from non-breeding to breeding plumage isn't caused by growing in a new set of feathers (molt). The change from brownish to pure white happens when males rub their bellies and heads on the snow, wearing down the brown feather tips to reveal immaculate white features below.

Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, "All About Birds" website: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>

# BIRD MIGRATION EXPLORER

Created through a partnership between ten organizations – including the National Audubon Society, Birds Canada, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology – the *Bird Migration Explorer* was released and officially announced this autumn.

*Bird Migration Explorer* is a state-of-the-art digital platform that visualizes consolidated migration data for over 450 bird species found in North America. This free and interactive online resource is currently available in English and Spanish, and it allows curious users to review some of the most interesting migration data currently available for migratory birds.

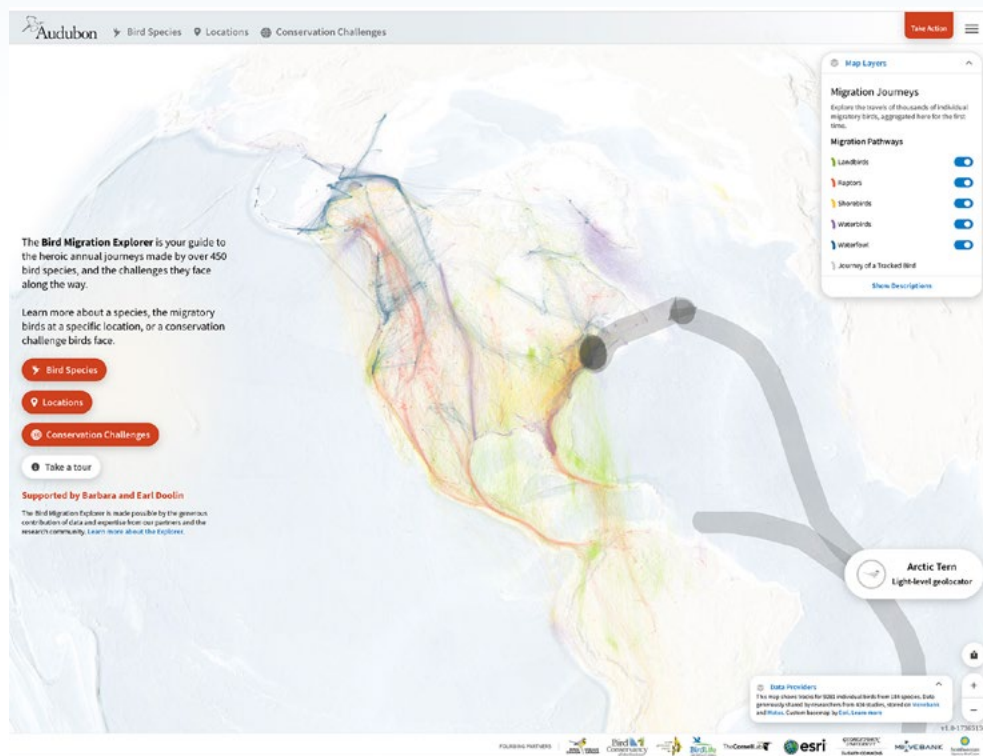
So far, the project includes over 4.2 million point-to-point migratory bird connections across the hemisphere, as well as visualizations for 19 selected “Conservation Challenges” that migratory birds are exposed to throughout the year across the Americas.

Read more about this from the project team at the National Audubon Society:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2022/the-bird-migration-explorer-lets-you-interact> or watch a three-minute explanation video here:

[https://www.birdscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BME-Explainer-Video\\_720p.mp4](https://www.birdscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BME-Explainer-Video_720p.mp4)

Or just go explore the site on your own! [www.birdmigrationexplorer.org](http://www.birdmigrationexplorer.org)



## 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>

## Injured Bird?

*Avian Haven*

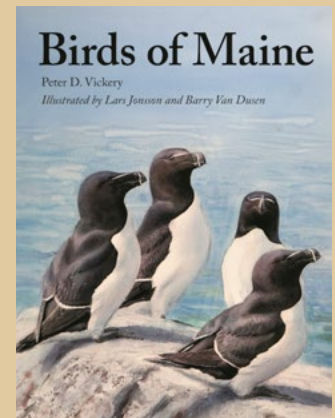
accepts all bird species year-round.

207-382-6761

[avianhaven.org](http://avianhaven.org)



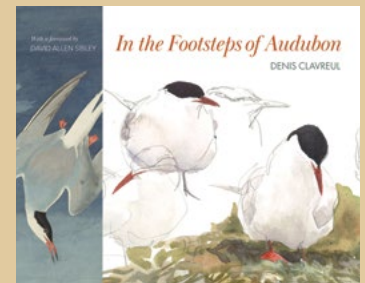
## Winter Reading....



The first comprehensive overview of Maine's incredibly rich birdlife in more than seven decades, *Birds of Maine* is a detailed account of all 464 species recorded in the Pine Tree State. It is also a thoroughly researched, accessible portrait of a region undergoing rapid changes, with southern birds pushing north, northern birds expanding south, and once-absent natives like Atlantic Puffins brought back by innovative conservation techniques pioneered in Maine.

Available through Princeton University Press or a bookstore near you!

<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691193199/birds-of-maine>



In the nineteenth century, John James Audubon traveled from Louisiana and the Florida Keys to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence (via Maine!) and the cliffs of the Yellowstone River to create *The Birds of America*, a pictorial record of North American birdlife.

Over a period of sixteen years, recording his own journey in journals and hundreds of original paintings, renowned French watercolorist Denis Clavreul followed in the naturalist's footsteps. A richly evocative journey, *In the Footsteps of Audubon* is an invitation to see the natural world as Audubon saw it—and to see with new eyes what it has become today.

<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691237688/in-the-footsteps-of-audubon>



# Live and Online Events with Mid-Coast Audubon!

Full event descriptions and current information on our website: [midcoast.maineaudubon.org](http://midcoast.maineaudubon.org)

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

## Monthly Nature Programs



Dickcissel / Lew Purinton photo

Our third-Thursday monthly programs are back! Some of our upcoming presentations will again be IN PERSON at the library, others remain virtual. Virtual programs require registration through the Camden Library to receive the Zoom link: <https://www.librarycamden.org/>

### November 17th

#### **The Clarity of Birds: A Talk by Betsy Headley** IN PERSON at Camden Library, 6:30pm

Local poet and photographer Betsy Headley will share work from her most recent book, *The Clarity of Birds*. The book features Headley's images interwoven with her thoughts on beauty and brutality, compassion and aging, and wisdom and wildlife.

Betsy Headley is from Swanville, Maine. *Something Is Always Left* (2017) was her first poetry book, and *The Clarity of Birds* is her second. Betsy has a BA in anthropology and art and has taught English in China and Japan. Her photography has been shown in numerous exhibits throughout Maine. Betsy's passion for wildlife, particularly birds, is reflected in her writing and photography.

### January 19th

#### **Climate Change and Maine's Ski Industry** Online only, register for link, 6:30pm

Our ski resorts may be adjusting to local climate change, but much is still left to be lost. Dr. Elizabeth Burakowski explores the effects of a changing climate on the ski industry and the future outlook of winter in the United States.

Dr. Burakowski is a Research Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire, where she studies snow science and uses climate models, observations, and remote sensing to understand how landscapes interact with surface climate. She has been skiing and snowboarding for 30 years in New England.

### February 16th

#### **Birdability: Disability, inclusion, access and what you can do to help ensure birding is for everybody and everybody!**

Online only, register for link, 6:30pm

Birding is an activity that can bring so much joy and empowerment to everybody, but not everybody is able to go birding easily. Birdability is a brand new non-profit, based in the US but with a global reach. Through education, outreach and advocacy, Birdability works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible for everybody. Birdability focuses on people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those who are neurodivergent, deaf or hard of hearing or who have other health concerns.

Presenter Freya McGregor (she/her), OTR/L, CIG is Birdability's Director of Programs and Outreach, and an occupational therapist. Birding since childhood, her 'dodgy' knee often creates an accessibility challenge for her. With a clinical background in blindness and low vision services, she works in her spare time for the radio show and podcast *Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds*, and is passionate about enabling all birders and potential future birders to enjoy birding and nature as much as she does.

### March 16th

#### **The Her-story of Birding**

Online only, register for link, 6:30pm

Let's face it, there's a bit of bias in the birding world when it comes to females. Bridget Butler breaks down *why* by looking at current research on gender and birding, retelling the stories and reclaiming the lost legacy of the Mothers of Ornithology, and making the connection to the current science on female birds.

Bridget Butler, AKA The Bird Diva, has been working in conservation and environmental education for more than 20 years. She owns her own small business, Bird Diva Consulting, which provides presentations, outings, and online courses for folks interested in exploring their connection with birds. Bridget is a certified Kripalu Mindfulness Outdoor Guide, and has worked for the Audubon Society in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Her Slow Birding work has been featured on numerous podcasts including *American Birding*, *Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds*, and *The Birding Life* from South Africa.

## Field Trips

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.* See individual trips for times and meeting locations.

### January 21, 2023 (Saturday)

#### Pemaquid Point

**Meet at the Pemaquid Point Lighthouse Park parking lot at 8:00a.m.**

Commonly-spotted species here include Great Cormorants, Black Guillemots, Common Eiders, and Longtailed Ducks, but there's always a chance we might see Razorbills, Purple Sandpipers, Black-legged Kittiwakes, or other surprises. Participants should dress for cold and windy weather. Leader TBA, check Mid-Coast Audubon website for updates.

### February 11, 2023 (Saturday)

#### South Coastal Area of Maine

**Meet at Perkin's Cove, Ogunquit at 8:30a.m.**

We will focus on the Ogunquit area including Marginal Way and the Cliff House resort. Regular observations include Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers and a variety of vociferous scoters. Again, dress warmly! Leader TBA, check Mid-Coast Audubon website for updates.

### March 11, 2023 (Saturday)

#### Biddeford Pool and Vicinity

**Meet at the East Point Sanctuary at 8:30a.m.**

We'll search for seabirds and early migrants at this popular spot south of Portland. Historically this area has had a winter population of Snowy Owls. Leader TBA, check Mid-Coast Audubon website for updates.

### April 8, 2023 (Saturday)

#### Salt Bay Farm /Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust

**Meet at the Salt Bay Farm parking lot, Belvedere Road, Damariscotta at 8:00a.m.**

The diverse Farm property includes meadows, a pond, woods, and plenty of river shoreline to peruse. Leader TBA, check Mid-Coast Audubon website for updates.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

There are three CBC circles in our Mid-Coast Audubon region this year. Contact the compiler/organizers if you would like to participate.



A rare Henslow's Sparrow spotted, this summer in Brunswick / Lew Purinton photo

**Damariscotta/Pemaquid - December 17**  
**Rockland/Thomaston - December 18**  
**Bunker Hill Region - December 19**

Dennis McKenna: dennismckenna@gmail.com  
Delia Mohlie: mohlie295@yahoo.com / 207-832-5091  
Jeff Cherry: jeff@cherrygallery.com / 914-489-7870

## Welcome, new and rejoining Mid-Coast Audubon members!

### APRIL

Win Brooks  
Sally E. Butler  
Sarah Caputo  
Caren Clark  
David Dethlefs  
Terry R. Hackford  
Katie Hayes  
Kristen and Richard Heller  
Debra Klingender  
Martin Lepow  
Shawn Stevens  
Bob Trapani

### MAY

Scott Farwell  
Diane Oltarzewski  
Carole Perkins  
Monya Zurkus

### JUNE

Laura Conkey  
Norma Jones  
Allison Middleton  
Donald Stanley  
Harbor Square Gallery

### JULY

Michael Laska  
Milo Popkin

### AUGUST

Jane Carroll  
Richard and Jaqueline Dunham  
Ernest Johnson  
Karen Mastrian  
Devin and Marian Rutkowski  
Virginia Tuttle

### SEPTEMBER

Betsy Brown  
Sara Eastler  
Katherine Fitzgerald  
Deborah Hitchings  
Danielle Molloy  
Deb Soule

## Mid-Coast



## Audubon

## Mid-Coast Audubon

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## Stay in Touch!

[facebook.com/MidCoastAudubon](https://facebook.com/MidCoastAudubon)[instagram.com/midcoastaudubon](https://instagram.com/midcoastaudubon)

American Robin / Sherrie York 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](http://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