

The Merganser



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 49, No. 3 - November 2025



Help Track Winter Pine Warblers

By Mael Glon

Last winter, Pine Warblers showed up across Lincoln County in surprising numbers. Many stayed through the cold months, visiting backyard feeders from November into March. These birds usually winter farther south, so seeing them in Maine during this time is unusual. Warmer winters may be part of the reason, and the availability of suet and other feeder foods seems to help them stick around.

If you think you've spotted one, take a closer look. Pine Warblers have two pale wing bars, a slim pointed bill, and a faint eye ring that is often broken by a pale eyeline. Their winter plumage varies. Some individuals are mostly gray with just a hint of yellow, while others show brighter yellow on the throat

and breast. They are sometimes mistaken for American Goldfinches, especially in winter when goldfinches take on duller, olive tones. Goldfinches have a thicker bill built for cracking seeds. Pine Warblers have a longer, finer bill suited to insects and soft foods.

Pine Warblers often travel in small flocks and are frequently seen with Eastern Bluebirds, especially near open woods and feeders. If one visits your feeder this winter, I'd love to hear about it. Please email me at mainepinewarblers@gmail.com with the details and photos, if possible. Each report helps me better understand how these unexpected winter visitors are adapting to life in Maine.

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Mid-Coast



Audubon

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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



midcoast.maineaudubon.org
instagram.com/midcoastaudubon
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President's Corner: *The View from Cloudmarch*

Let's Go Syrphing

I discovered a new world of wildlife in my yard this past summer by focusing my attention and camera on a taxon that I'm growing to appreciate nearly as much as I do birds: Flower Flies.

Last winter I received an invitation to participate in the Maine Flower Fly Survey, a new community science project sponsored by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/maine-flower-fly-survey>). It's fair to say that this project quickly became my summer obsession.

Flower flies belong to the insect family Syrphidae. They are also known as hover flies because many of them are adept hoverers. They are a diverse and often colorful group, frequently mistaken for bees and wasps.

While bees get most of the credit, flower flies and other fly families are equally important pollinators of commercial and native plants. Anyone can participate in the Maine Flower Fly Survey, and it's especially nice that you don't need to be an expert to make meaningful contributions. You simply need to look for and photograph flower flies anywhere in Maine and post the photos to the community science platform iNaturalist where automated suggestions and flower fly experts help with identification.



Eastern Calligrapher. The most frequently encountered species in Maine. *Jeff Cherry photo*



Eastern Hornet Fly (on native goldenrod). There are four members of this genus in Maine. All of them are remarkable hornet mimics. *Jeff Cherry photo*

Looking for flower flies (aka "syrphing") primarily involves looking closely at flowers, so an incidental benefit is learning about our native and non-native plants and their flowering phenology.

Syrphing season in Maine starts in late April with the appearance of the first coltsfoot and dandelion blossoms and ends in October when the late asters go to seed. Flower flies can be found wherever there are flowers and



Black-footed Globetail (on native aster). One of several species of globetails found in Maine. In most cases, they are difficult to identify to species from photographs, this individual was specifically identified by one of the experts on iNaturalist. *Jeff Cherry photo*



Dimorphic Sickleleg male (above) and female (below). A habitat specialist, this species is found in saltmarshes and grasslands very close to the coast. Males have rusty red abdomens, and the females are a drab brownish green. Most syrphids aren't strongly sexually dimorphic. *Jeff Cherry photo*



it's warm enough for insects to be active. Birds tend to get less active just about the time flower flies start making their rounds to collect pollen and nectar, so birding and syrphing pair well together to induce day-long outdoor distraction. My birding camera works well for documenting both.

Over the summer of 2025 I found about 50 species of flower flies on my property. While we all grapple emotionally and intellectually with the reality of global biodiversity decline, it's uplifting to discover so much life in our backyards and favorite haunts while also contributing to scientific understanding that can guide conservation.

I'm hooked on syrphing and I bet that many of my fellow bird enthusiasts (i.e., you!) would enjoy tuning in to the beauty, diversity and ecological services of this intriguing group of insects.



Eastern Longnose (on a cherry blossom). A rare species I observed at Cloudmarch (my home property in Newcastle) is the only one documented in Maine since the project started. *Jeff Cherry photo*



Male Bobolink. Sherrie York photo



Annual meeting attendees peruse silent auction offerings. Heather Glon prepares to share tasty treats. Juanita Roushdy photos



Welcome, new and rejoining Mid-Coast Audubon members!

APRIL

Emily Harvey-Garcia

MAY

Henry Block
Isabel Fernald
Teresa Gandler
Daniel Hunter

JUNE

Doug Beck
William S. Clough
Wesley Dean
Carmine DeStefano
Maureen Goss
Kristina Harrison & Jay Dowling
Liga Jahnke
Keegan Kennedy
Bob Morrison
Diane Nobles
Rebecca Peters & Ben Wahle
Stephanie Silk

JULY

Phillips Axten & Petra Langer
Sally & Tom Morrison
Peggy Oben
Kevin Scully
Deb Soule
Xiaotong Zou

AUGUST

Orianna Cort
Gregor Davens
David & Kathy Guin
Andrea Perko
Gary W. Roberts

SEPTEMBER

Drew Laughland & Barbara Gage

Yes! Annual Meetings Can Be Fun

By Juanita Roushdy

The Mid-Coast Chapter's Annual Membership meeting was held on June 27, 2025, at the Coastal Rivers Salt Bay Farm, from 5:00-7:30 pm. It was a grand day and a well-attended event, with lots of delicious food, a bird trivia game, a silent auction, and a beautiful view of the Great Salt Bay.

Mael and Heather Glon and Alan Phipps provided the tasty food. Kass Hogan arranged a beautiful selection of donated bird carvings, books, and gift certificates for the silent auction. Heather Glon created a most challenging bird trivia program with three rounds of play. All members got engaged and competed by table for the grand prize of a free guided field trip with Mid-Coast Audubon. A huge thanks to all!

In the short business part of the meeting,

Board President Jeff Cherry acknowledged three Board members who were stepping down— Don Reimer, Kathy Cartwright, and Keegan Kennedy— and thanked them for their many years of service! Our two newest Board members, Seth Benz and Alan Phipps were introduced and welcomed. The slate of Board members up for re-election was made available, and a motion to approve them was proposed, seconded, and passed. Also, the membership approved our revised Bylaws, which were made available for review at the meeting and on the website during the preceding month. After a few questions, a motion to approve them was proposed, seconded, and passed.

We hope you'll join us at our 2026 Annual Membership meeting, which will be announced on our website in the spring.



Meet Your Board

Mid-Coast Audubon welcomes Justin Guider to the Board of Directors

Justin moved from Delaware to Maine in 2024 to begin work as a research assistant at the Darling Marine Center, where he helps to monitor water quality throughout the state. A lifelong naturalist and avid birder, he has been enjoying getting to know the birding scene around his home of Damariscotta and beyond.

As Chair of the Preserves Committee, Justin is looking forward to keeping tabs on Mid-Coast Audubon's four nature preserves. Justin is a prolific user of the citizen science platforms eBird and iNaturalist, and is excited to promote their use at Mid-Coast Audubon's preserves to record the birds, plants, insects and other organisms found there.

Along Came a Spider

By Don Reimer

Maine is home to 35 unique species of spiders. While many people are terrified of spiders, and find them rather creepy, spiders are incredibly interesting creatures that play a crucial role in our environment by reducing flying-insect populations.

If provoked, certain Maine species will bite, but they are essentially harmless to humans. Occasionally, spiders are found well outside their known range, being intentionally or accidentally transported by humans in cars, luggage, and other belongings.

Found in gardens, forests, and fields, Maine is home to various species of orb-weaver spiders, known for their classic “spider web” designs associated with Halloween decorations.

Orb-weavers engineer and build flat webs of sticky, spiral capture silk. Equipped with three claws, they float a line on the wind to another surface. Once they have secured the line, the builders drop another line from the center, forming a “Y.” The scaffolding construction proceeds as many radii of non-sticky silk are added; a final spiral of



sticky capture silk completes the job. The spider’s third claw is used to walk on the nonsticky parts of the web, and the success of the spider’s capture rate depends greatly on any given prey’s inability to avoid the nearly invisible webbing. Prey colliding with the sticky webbing is quickly bitten, and then packed securely inside cocoon-like silky

threads. Most of the webs are vertical, and the spiders usually hang with their heads downward. Most orb-weavers tend to be more active during the evening hours. Hidden for most of the day, they generally consume the contents of the old web in the evening, and then spin a new web trap in the same general location.



Many thanks to everyone who came out to enjoy the fantastic weather and food at our Lobster Bake fundraiser on Hog Island on August 30. And... to everyone who stopped to visit our table at the Wild Ones Midcoast Maine native plant sale on September 14 in Camden!



Field Trips

Join Us!

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

Program Coordinator:
Will Broussard 837-9520

Field Trip Coordinator:
Mael Glon 801-864-2316



Recycle your bird seed bags!

Now you can keep your empty seed bags out of the landfill. Blue Earth Bags (www.blueearthbags.com), a local Lincoln County business, collects empty seed and feed bags and turns them into reusable bags and totes. They have collection boxes at the Nobleboro transfer station and at Lindscott's in Washington.

From the Field Trip Coordinator

We've had a really good year of field trips, and it's been great to share them with both new faces and familiar ones. As fall settles in and winter edges closer, it feels a bit like we're heading into the off-season. Most of the migrants have moved on, the days are shorter, and it takes a little more willpower to get up and out in the cold mornings. But this season also marks a beginning. With the chill come ducks, American Tree Sparrows, Northern Shrikes, Snow Buntings, and winter finches. Maybe we will even see a big redpoll year if we are lucky. Joining a field trip can be the perfect excuse to get outside, enjoy the birds, and step away from the holiday rush for a while.

—Mael Glon
Field Trip Coordinator

NOVEMBER

Chickawaukie Pond (Rockland) Saturday, November 15, 8:30-10:30am

Join us for a late fall visit to Chickawaukie Pond in Rockland. This pond attracts a good variety of migrating waterfowl including Ruddy Ducks, Ringed-neck Ducks, American Coots, scaup, goldeneye, merganser, and Buffleheads. After freeze up, these species will be gone.

This trip will be led by Jeff Cherry. We'll meet at the public boat launch on Route 17 at 8:30. Try using 148 Lake View Drive on your GPS.

We may make an additional stop on Meadow Brook, the outfall stream from Chickawaukie, where the fresh water marsh habitat can produce an interesting diversity of birds.

To sign up, please send an email to Mael Glon (midcoastfieldtrips@maineaudubon.org) with your name and phone number.

DECEMBER

Salt Bay Saturday (Damariscotta) Saturday, December 13, 8:00-10:30am

For this early winter field trip, we'll brave the cold and venture back out to Salt Bay Farm. We'll scope the Salt Bay for Barrow's Goldeneye and carefully scan the hedgerows in search of Northern Shrikes. We should also see American Tree Sparrow, finches, and a variety of ducks.

Directions: We'll meet in the Coastal Rivers Salt Bay Farm parking lot located at 110 Belvedere Rd, Damariscotta, ME 04543. This property has a good amount of parking available, but please consider carpooling if possible. For more information about this preserve, visit the following link: <https://www.coastalrivers.org/trail/salt-bay-farm/>

This trip will be led by Jeff Cherry and Mael Glon. To sign up, please send an email to Mael Glon (midcoastfieldtrips@maineaudubon.org) with your name and phone number.

Christmas Bird Counts 2025

It's that time again! If you'd like to participate in this annual rite of winter birding, contact the Compiler for each CBC Circle.

Thomaston/Rockland: December 14
Delia Mohlie: mohlie295@yahoo.com

Bunker Hill: December 16
Jeff Cherry: jeffcherry57@outlook.com

Pemaquid/Damariscotta: December 20
Jeff Cherry: jeffcherry57@outlook.com



Monthly Nature Programs

Mid-Coast Audubon's Third Thursday programs are presented in partnership with the Camden Public Library.

Please note that some programs will be live and others via Zoom.

Visit the Mid-Coast Audubon Events page for more event details: <https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/events/>

Mount Washington Observatory, Home of the World's Worst Weather

ONLINE only
Thursday, November 20
6:30-7:30pm

In the northeastern United States, a unique combination of topography, geography, and geology creates one of the world's

most extreme environments—the summit of Mount Washington. Nowhere else on Earth experiences such consistent sub-zero temperatures, hurricane-force winds, freezing fog, and driving snow. These extreme conditions have earned Mount Washington the title, "Home of the World's Worst Weather."

This **virtual tour**, via Zoom, allows you to meet and interact with the summit weather team, learn how they create forecasts, see the instruments they use to capture Mount Washington's legendary extremes, and experience the unique facility—all from the comfort of home!

Presenter Amy Cotter, Weather Observer and Education Specialist, grew up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Amy's love for the outdoors took her out west to study Environmental Science at Colorado College. While there she had the opportunity to research at the high-elevation Storm Peak Laboratory in Steamboat Springs, which confirmed her desire to work at a mountaintop observatory.

Amy moved back to Mount Washington Valley following her college graduation. She is thrilled to return to the summit as a Weather Observer and to continue her educational work.



Strata: Stories from Deep Time

In Person at Camden Library
Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:30-7:30pm

Join us **in person** at the Camden Public Library for a revelatory journey through four moments in Earth's deep past, and their lessons for our future.

The epic stories of our planet's 4.54-billion-year history are written in strata—ages-old remnants of ancient seafloors, desert dunes, and riverbeds striping landscapes around the world. In this original debut work, **science writer Laura Poppick** decodes strata to lead us on a journey through four global transformations that made our lives on Earth possible: the first accumulations of oxygen in the atmosphere; the deep freezes of "Snowball Earth"; the rise of mud on land and accompanying proliferation of plants; and the dinosaurs' reign on a hothouse planet.

Poppick introduces us to the researchers who have devoted their careers to understanding the events of deep time, including the world's leading stegosaur scientist. Ultimately, she demonstrates that the planet's oceans, continents, atmosphere, life, and ice have always conspired to bring stability to Earth, even if we are only just beginning to understand how these different facets interact.

Laura Poppick is a science and environmental journalist whose writing has appeared in the New York Times, Smithsonian, Scientific American, Wired, Audubon, National Geographic, Science, and elsewhere. She has been listed as a finalist for the National Association of Science Writers Science in Society Journalism Award and the Maine Literary Awards Short Works Competition in Nonfiction, among others. She lives in Portland, Maine.

Notes from the Hummingbird Corridor

In Person at Camden Library
Thursday, February 19, 2026, 6:30-7:30pm

In October of 2021, a month after the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds left her gardens in Maine, **herbalist and author Deb Soule** felt a compelling nudge. The hummingbirds asked Deb to follow their eastern migration route south the following autumn. Without hesitation, she said yes, and asked her friend, **poet Laura Brown-Lavoie**, to join her.

Join us in person at the Camden Library to hear about *Notes from the Hummingbird Corridor*, a record of their pilgrimage, following these small birds on their thousands-mile migration journey, and connecting with fellow humans along the way. Through poetry, prose, and practical gardening advice, Deb and Laura offer readers an invitation into relationship with these iridescent interdimensional beings who whiz from bloom to bloom across meadows, mountains, and the Gulf of Mexico.

"How lucky that the cross-pollination of Deb Soule and Laura Lamb Brown-Lavoie's thoughtful, caring, curious minds and hearts has sprouted this beautiful book. Cohesive and innovative, *Notes from the Hummingbird Corridor* is a wonderful reminder that wisdom can be found and carried in so many differently-shaped vessels—poem, prayer, essay, seed, hummingbird, cross-country roadtrip. I am so moved by this multi-modal collaboration, which is as splendid to read and look at as it is to learn from."

—Sarah Kay, author of *A Little Daylight Left*,
kaysarahsera.com

Injured Bird?

Contact **Avian Haven**
Avian Haven accepts all bird species year-round.
207-382-6761
avianhaven.org

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Mid-Coast Audubon is a chapter of Maine Audubon.

If you live in Lincoln, Knox, or Waldo County, your Maine Audubon membership will automatically make you a member of the Mid-Coast chapter! If you live outside our catchment area and would still like to be “assigned” to the Mid-Coast, you can indicate this when you submit your Maine Audubon membership.

New membership and membership renewal information can be found online at <https://maineaudubon.org/support/donate/>

Gifts for your favorite birders...

Mid-Coast Audubon builds **nest boxes** tailor-made for a variety of bird species including bluebirds, swallows, titmice, nuthatches, chickadees (\$25); Saw-whet Owl and American Kestrel (\$30); and Wood Duck (\$35). We also make **bat boxes** (\$20). Boxes can be purchased at Louis Doe Home Center on Route 1 in Newcastle, or by calling Lew Purinton at (207) 549-5257.

Grab your binoculars, put on your boots and your new **Mid-Coast Audubon hat** – and come birding with us! Khaki hat sports our Mid-Coast Audubon merganser logo and comes in your choice of three brim colors. More information available on our website: <https://midcoast.maineaudubon.org/shop/>

Still can't decide? How about a Maine Audubon **membership**? Details at maineaudubon.org



Bird-friendly Coffee + Discount? Yes, please!

Order online at birdsandbeanscoffee.com. Use the code FOHI25 for 5% off your order. At the end of the year, Birds and Beans will donate 5% of sales using this code to the Friends of Hog Island, the volunteer organization providing support to Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen. Win-Win!