

Fields Pond Journal

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon
and the Fields Pond Audubon Center



January-March 2009

Nature's Highlights... and Challenges

In January:

Chickadees at our feeders are likely from Canada, not the same individuals we saw in summer and fall. (Banding studies show this.) Chickadees have a layer of down under their wind and water-resistant outer feathers. Once they settle in on a winter home range, they feed on insect eggs on the crevices in bark, on twigs, and on the foliage of pine, spruce and fir trees. Insect eggs are very nutritious food, full of oil and calories. Many chickadees spend the winter in the forest without coming to bird feeders at all.

At night, they perch together on an evergreen branch. A tendon on their legs tighten when they crouch on the branch; their feet automatically hold tight around the branch while they sleep. When it's very cold, they huddle together in a tree cavity.

Chickadees that come to our feeders find sunflower seeds and suet—an easy source of oils, fats, and calories. They still make the rounds of their home range, feeding on insect eggs, visiting several feeders, and don't become dependant on any one feeder.

All fall, deer have been fattening up for winter. Their winter pelt is gray-brown, in contrast to the red-brown of summer. The hairs in winter are longer and thicker and each hair is hollow—better insulation.

In winter, they need shelter and food. If the snow is deep, they create a network of paths with their feet. They like to “yard up” in an area with lots of spruce. Because of the configuration of needles on the spruce's branches, snow stays on spruce branches. If you look carefully at fir or hemlock trees, you can see how the snow slides off sooner. Spruce holds the snow. A grove of spruce makes good shelter; the snow is less deep there.

Deer make paths from shelter to food, such as last summer's growth of maple twigs and cedar foliage. Bring your snowshoes or rent ours at Fields Pond; you'll see many deer tracks. Those tracks tell the story.

We offer many weekend tracking and birding explorations in winter; you'll enjoy the comradie, the learning, the exercise, and the fresh air. Join us!

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Deer captured on a wildlife camera in Orrington FILE PHOTO

FieldsPondJournal

The Fields Pond Journal is published four times a year by the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon. Maine Audubon members living in the Penobscot Valley region automatically become chapter members and receive The Fields Pond Journal at no additional charge. Membership in Maine Audubon costs per year:

- \$45 household; \$35 individual
- \$25 student/senior/volunteer

Membership benefits include a discount on programs and purchases at all Maine Audubon Stores as well as a subscription to the quarterly periodical Habitat. For membership or change of address information, telephone at 207-781-2330 or contact:



Maine Audubon Society
20 Gilsland Farm Road
Falmouth, Maine 04105

Visit Maine Audubon and the Fields Pond Audubon Center on the Web at: www.maineaudubon.org
www.pvcaudubon.org.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Judy Kellogg Markowsky PVCA PHOTO

I have been thinking about when to retire. I'd rather taper off working in a job I have loved, for an organization that is as loyal to me as I have been to Maine Audubon. I think that's greatly preferable to working hard and harder forever, until an advanced age, and suddenly stop working.

Therefore, I'm stepping down from my job as director, and Maine Audubon is now looking for a new director for Fields Pond Audubon Center. I will still be working, but fewer hours per week, at the Fields Pond Audubon Center as a naturalist. If all goes well, the transition will be taking place this winter.

Thank you so much for supporting the Fields Pond Audubon Center for the last ten years; let's go into the next decade together!

— Judy Kellogg Markowsky

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In February:

The days are somewhat longer; the hormones of chickadees respond. They start singing their spring song!

Whenever bird songs are the topic of discussion, people ask this question: "What bird sings this song? I can never see it. It's always hiding in the trees." Then, they whistle to the intonations and rhythm of, "fee-bee." They are always delighted to learn that it's their friend, the chickadee.

Other birds are responding to the length of days, too. Woodpeckers start to drum now. Drumming—rapidly hammering on wood—is related to courtship. It's not the same as pecking or drilling into wood for food. Drumming reinforces the relationship of male and female woodpeckers. Drumming also announces a male's territory.

Songs reinforce the relationship of males and females for chickadees and other songbirds; singing also claims and maintains a territory.

In March:

The days are yet even longer; the solstice approaches. New birds arrive—red-winged blackbirds, grackles, and a song or fox sparrow at the feeder. Don't believe people who say "we don't have a spring in Maine."

Spring has been starting for awhile already!

NATURE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Programs are located at Fields Pond Audubon Center unless otherwise specified. For registration, when necessary, please call 989-2591 (unless otherwise specified). If you need to cancel a program reservation, please call at least three days ahead of the scheduled event to assure a refund.

Nature Time for Children: Winter Session

Parents with children ages 2 to 4, come and join us for a nature-based program with stories, creative play, hands-on activities, or an art project. Parents participate too. Be prepared to be outside for a portion of each program.

Every other Thursday, January 8–April 2

11:00 a.m.- 12noon

Cost: \$24/member, \$28/nonmember. Advance registration required.

Children's Drawing Class for Ages 4-10

This class will introduce children to nature drawing by recognizing basic shapes as the building blocks to creating

artistic forms found in nature. Parents participate too. Bring your favorite art supplies and enjoy our group of budding artists.

Saturdays, January 10, February 7, March 7
1:30-2:30 p.m.

Teacher: Carolyn Wallace-Zani of
Main Street Studio

Cost: \$10/member, \$12/nonmember
(1 Adult/1 Child)



Partridgeberry, Redberry, Lingonberry, Too: a presentation & nature walk for all ages

Co-Sponsored by Friends of Sunkaze Meadows NWR

Maine author, Ellen Bryan Obied, will present her new book, *Partridgeberry, Redberry, Lingonberry, Too* - the story of the partridgeberry of Newfoundland and the mountain cranberry of New England.

Told by a moth that spends part of its life as a fruitworm inside the berry, the book is a first-ever look at the seasons of the moth, the seasons of the partridgeberry and the seasons of the people who harvest it.

Saturday, March 21
1:00-3:00 p.m.

Presenter: Ellen Bryan Obied,
author of several books,
including "Borrowed Black,
a Labrador Fantasy"

Cost: \$5/member,
\$6/nonmember; children free

NATURE PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

2009 Nature Classes for Home-Schoolers

The nature center will be offering the following 2-hour programs for home schooled children. Advance payment is required. Please call 989-2591 for more information.

Nature Walk:

Exploring Winter Animal Tracks Ages 6-14

Wednesday, January 21, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Cost: \$4.50 per participant, including parents

Nature Walk: Signs of Spring Ages 6-14

Wednesday, April 1, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Cost: \$4.50 per participant, including parents

Our Feathered Friends: A Birding Series Ages 8 - 14

Wednesdays: January 28, February 11 & 25,
March 11 & 25, April 15
12:30-2:30 p.m.

Cost: \$62/member, \$75/nonmember

Instructors: Judy Kellogg Markowsky, Ruth Perry, and Priscilla Sawyer.

Contact the center for multiple children rates.



February School Vacation Camp

for children ages 7 to 13

February 17, 18, 19, 20

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Leader: Ruth Perry

Cost: Member \$36/day; \$130/4 days

Non-members \$40/day; \$140/4 days

Advance registration required.

Each day of Vacation Camp features a unique highlight of nature in winter. Tuesday features snowshoeing in search of animal signs and tracks; Wednesday will involve maple syrup; Thursday is for the birds; and Friday will be spent on Fields Pond fishing and making snow sculptures. Parents can register children for one, two, three, or all four days.

Girl Scout Badges Program

The following Girl Scout badges are being offered at Fields Pond Audubon Center. Contact the Girl Scouts of Maine council office at 1-800-464-3858 for information and registration.

Frosty Fun for Juniors

Sunday, January 11, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Eco-Explorers for Brownies

Sunday, February 8, 1:30- 4:00 p.m.

Your Outdoor Surroundings for Juniors

Sunday, March 8, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Water Everywhere for Brownies

Sunday, April 19, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Water Wonders for Juniors

Sunday, May 17, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Watching Wildlife for Brownies

Sunday, June 14, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

NATURE PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

Programs are located at Fields Pond Audubon Center unless otherwise specified. For registration, when necessary, please call 989-2591 (unless otherwise specified). If you need to cancel a program reservation, please call at least three days ahead of the scheduled event to assure a refund.

Africa's Wildlife and Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro

Jim Hinds will show his photos from East Africa: An Aging Birder/Naturalist's Account of his Climb of Kilimanjaro and his Travels to the Serengeti Plains. Wildlife include cheetah, elephant, zebra, lions and the most dangerous one, the cape buffalo. Hinds is well-known at Fields Pond, participating in Penobscot Valley Chapter's events since the 1980s and successfully chairing the committee to develop Fields Pond Audubon Center and its Capital Campaign.

Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m.

Snow date: Thursday, January 8

Presenter: Jim Hinds

Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember



Common Zebras

JIM HINDS PHOTO

Art Lessons for Adults: Drawing from Nature

Learn drawing techniques to capture the essence of the local fauna and flora species with pencil on paper. Bring a regular school pencil, sketch pad, eraser and your enthusiasm for drawing and nature.

Saturdays: January 10, February 7, March 7
11:00 a.m.-12 noon

Teacher: Carolyn Wallace-Zani of
Main Street Studio

Cost: \$10/member, \$12/nonmember

Penobscot Valley Ski Club Meeting

Come to the January meeting to hear a coach from the Maine Winter Sports Center discuss the PVSC mission of re-establishing skiing as a lifestyle in Maine. Success stories in Aroostook County will be highlighted and as well as their application to communities all over the state. Try out your marksmanship with laser biathlon rifles after the brief talk!

Tuesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

Winter Birds in Greater Bangor Field Trip

Join Jerry Smith for a four-hour excursion around greater Bangor looking for wintering feathered friends. Pre-trip scouting will determine where we go, and what we might see. We'll hope for waxwings, winter finches, and waterfowl. Be prepared to carpool — fewer vehicles make a better trip.

Location: Meet at Fields Pond Audubon Center at 8:00 a.m. for carpool

Saturday, January 17, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon

Trip Leader: Jerry Smith

Cost: Free

Coping with Winter: How Chickadees and Other Maine Birds Survive

Many birds found in Maine during the summer migrate to southern climates or to open water along the coast. Against all odds some tiny birds like kinglets and the slightly larger chickadees persist here all winter. To cope with drastic change in weather, chickadees and other birds have special adaptations to help them survive.

We will explore that fine-tuning to gain a new appreciation of these feathered wonders.

Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 p.m.

Snow date: Thursday, January 22

Presenter: Dick Andren

Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember

Tracks in the University Forest – A Snowshoe Trek

With 30 years experience of tracking animals in Maine, Barry Burgason has used tracking to identify animals and their habitats on the winter landscape. Participants will get coaching in finding and identifying tracks, and reading the stories they tell.

Location: University Forest, Old Town
(directions provided with sign up)

Saturday, January 24, 1:30 p.m.

Snow date: Sunday, January 25

Leader: Barry Burgason, wildlife biologist

Cost: \$10/member, \$12/nonmember.

Advance registration & snowshoes required.

Tracks and Scat Class

Want to decipher the language of tracks in the snow? It's a fascinating study. This class will get you started on your way with visual aids, a brief slide show, demonstrations, ways to identify tracks, and ways to read the "story in the snow."

Saturday, January 31, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Instructor: Judy Kellogg Markowsky

Cost: \$18/member, \$20/nonmember

Advance registration required

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✂ CLIP & SAVE ✂

Evening Programs

- ✓ **Wednesday, January 7**
Africa's Wildlife and Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro
- ✓ **Tuesday, January 13**
Penobscot Valley Ski Club Meeting
- ✓ **Tuesday, January 20**
Coping with Winter: How Chickadees and Other Maine Birds Survive
- ✓ **Wednesday, February 18**
Maine's Mysterious Marsh Birds
- ✓ **Thursday, February 26**
Unique Wildlife Surveillance
- ✓ **Thursday, March 5**
Coyotes: America's Song Dog
- ✓ **Tuesday, March 17**
Nature Poetry Reading
- ✓ **Thursday, March 26**
Bear, Loons, Moose and More

NATURE PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

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Big Fields between the Kennebec River and I-95

We'll drive along the Kennebec River and its big fields with Osprey nests visible from I-95. Potential trip birds include: Barrow's goldeneyes, snowy owl, horned larks, snow buntings, Lapland longspurs, bald eagles, a goshawk or rough-legged hawk, and "white-winged" gulls. Bring binoculars and a bird book. Dress warmly. Bring a hot drink and a snack.

Location: At Bangor, meet at the Carpooling Parking Lot between 395 and Howard Johnson's at 8:15 a.m. (right off I-95), and at 9:30 a.m. at Winslow's Fort Halifax Saturday, February 7; Snow date: Sunday, February 8

*Leader: Ron Joseph, Wildlife Biologist
Cost: \$10/member, \$15/nonmember
Advance registration required*

Book Discussion Group: World Without Us

by Alan Weisman

If a virus depopulated Earth overnight, how long before all trace of humankind vanished? That's the provocative question posed by Weisman in this hybrid of science reporting and speculation. From a primeval forest in Poland to underground villages in Turkey, he explores what little will remain while anticipating what a planet without us would be like.

Location: Dirigo Pines in Orono

*Call 866-3400 for directions
Thursday, February 12, 7:00 p.m.
Leader: Joyce Rumery
Cost: Free*

Maine's Mysterious Marsh Birds

Maine is home to several species of secretive marsh birds: rails, bitterns, herons, and snipe. Even the most focused birder may have trouble finding them amongst the cattails and reeds. Learn what makes these birds unique, why they still remain a mystery to most scientists, and how to increase your chance of hearing and seeing one the next time your feet are wet.

Wednesday, February 18, 7:00 p.m.

*Snow date: Thursday, February 19
Presenter: Danielle D'Auria, Wildlife Biologist, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember*



Binoculars aid last year's participants of the Big Fields road trip

HOLLY TWINING PHOTO

Field Trip to Schoodic Point

Schoodic Point, part of Acadia National Park, is spectacular in winter. It protrudes far into the ocean, surf is high, and many birds ride the high waves: Eider Ducks, Red-necked Grebes, Scoters, Great Cormorants, Loons, Red-Breasted Merganser and Long-tailed Ducks. We'll look for Crossbills, too, going around the whole point, making short stops to keep warm. Bring binoculars, lunch and a hot drink.

Saturday, February 21, 8:30 a.m.

*Storm date: Sunday, February 22
Meet at Fields Pond Audubon Center to carpool*

Leaders: Julie Keene, Judy Kellogg Markowsky

*Cost: \$10/member; \$15/nonmember
Advance registration required*



American Bittern

DANIELLE D'AURIA PHOTO

A Kripalu Yoga Retreat: Sitting at Your Own Hearth

Sandy Cyrus has been practicing yoga for the past 15 years. In this day-long retreat, Sandy will lead participants in the practice of inner awareness. Through guided meditation, breath awareness, sound and restorative poses, students will experience opportunities for deep surrender. The day includes a snowshoe trek into the winter beauty of Fields Pond. Beginners welcome.

Sunday, February 22, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

*Leader: Sandy Cyrus, Full Circle Yoga
Cost: \$60/member, \$70/nonmember
Advance registration required.*

Unique Wildlife Surveillance

Bryan Wells has spent hundreds of hours perfecting the use of remote sensing cameras to record wildlife in Maine. In the fall of 2007, he began a project using new high-tech video technology with a custom-made lighting system. Bryan will share some video clips, field methods and his camera system where program attendees can get hands-on experience.

Thursday, February 26, 7:00 p.m.

*Snow date: Friday, February 27
Presenter: Bryan Wells
Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember*

Coyotes: America's Song Dog

Who is this wild canine that we hear "singing" in the diverse landscapes of Maine? Join Geri Vistein to learn about coyote's long history on this North

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NATURE PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

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American continent, Native American and European American's relationship with this amazing survivor, and coyote's undaunted journey back to the East. At this interactive gathering, come hear coyote sing!

Thursday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.

Snow date: Wednesday, March 11

Presenter: Geri Vistein, Conservation Biologist

Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember

Book Discussion Group: Wanderlust: A History of Walking by Rebecca Solnit

This enlightening history of pedestrianism unfolds like a walking conversation with a well-informed companion of wide-ranging interests. Solnit looks at pilgrims, poets, streetwalkers and demonstrators, and ends up, surprisingly, in Las Vegas. Her book captures, in the ease and cadences of its prose, the rhythms of a good walk.

Location: Dirigo Pines in Orono

Call 866-3400 for directions

Thursday, March 12, 7:00 p.m.

Leader: Joyce Rumery

Cost: Free

Nature Poetry Reading

Join word enthusiasts at the nature center for an evening for poetry. Share your favorite nature or environmental poem. Your poem could be obscure, well-known, or one you wrote yourself. Or, if you prefer, just come to listen to the beauty of poetry about nature.

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m.

Leader: Christina Diebold

Cost: Free

Partridgeberry, Redberry, Lingonberry, Too: a presentation & nature walk for all ages

Co-Sponsored by Friends of Sunkhaze Meadows NWR

Maine author, Ellen Bryan Obed, will present her new book, *Partridgeberry, Redberry, Lingonberry, Too* - the story of the partridgeberry of Newfoundland and the mountain cranberry of New England. Told by a moth that spends part of its life as a fruitworm inside the berry, the book is a first-ever look at the seasons of the moth, the seasons of the partridgeberry and the seasons of the people who

harvest it.

Saturday, March 21, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Presenter: Ellen Bryan Obed, the author of several books, including "Borrowed Black, a Labrador Fantasy"

Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember; children come for free

Bears, Loons, Moose and More

Within Baxter State Park, in the shadow of Mt. Katahdin, come enjoy a kayaking experience. Share laughs and mishaps out in nature. Laurie will reveal fascinating creatures she has met along the way. She'll be your guide as you watch wildlife, always fascinating, always surprising, on the screen.

Thursday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.

Presenter: Laurie Rich

Cost: \$5/member, \$6/nonmember

Birds Nests

Bird nests are fascinating; they are made from sticks, twigs, grass, hair, pine needles, leaves, moss, spider webs, feathers, and more! You'll learn how to



Birds nest

HUNTER PATE PHOTO

identify which bird made its nest through visual aids, a brief slide show, samples from our collection, and a thorough search through the grounds of the center.

Saturday, March 28, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Instructor: Judy Kellogg Markowsky

Cost: \$18/member, \$20/nonmember

Advance registration required.



Black Bear relaxing at the meadow's edge

LAURIE RICH PHOTO

Volunteers Needed to Lead Nature Walks for Schools

Have you wanted to be a naturalist or park ranger? Here's your chance. Volunteers are needed to lead small school groups through fields and forest, teaching animal tracks and signs of spring. All trainings begin at 10:00 a.m. and last for 2 hours. Please call Ruth Perry at 989-2591 with any questions.

Animal Tracks training: Tuesday, January 6; Wednesday, January 7; Friday, January 9.

Signs of Spring training: Tuesday, February 24; Thursday, February 26; Wednesday, March 4; Friday, March 6.



Nature Time participants made Bee My Valentine cards at Fields Pond Audubon Center RUTH PERRY PHOTO

Visit the New Winter Art Show: ECOTONE: Photos of The Penobscot River

Images of the Penobscot River, and water's edge will highlight the wild character that persists along the river and tributaries, and offer contrast to the images of the built environment.

In places, nature is showing signs of reclaiming her

space. Cheryl Daigle is the community outreach coordinator for the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, and lives with her family in Old Town, Maine.

Please stop by and see Cheryl's wonderful work

The Mission of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon

Conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat by connecting people to our regional natural heritage, through enjoyable and meaningful activities that educate and promote greater environmental awareness.



Fields Pond Audubon Center

216 Fields Pond Road
Holden, Maine 04429
207-989-2591

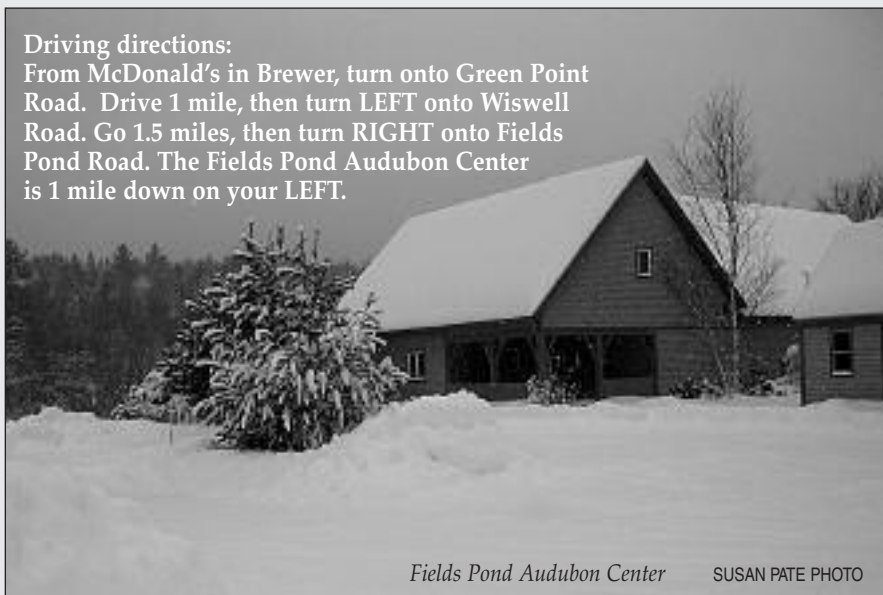
On the Web

www.pvcaudubon.org
www.maineaudubon.org

Building hours

L. Robert Rolde Building
Thursday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Driving directions:
From McDonald's in Brewer, turn onto Green Point Road. Drive 1 mile, then turn LEFT onto Wiswell Road. Go 1.5 miles, then turn RIGHT onto Fields Pond Road. The Fields Pond Audubon Center is 1 mile down on your LEFT.

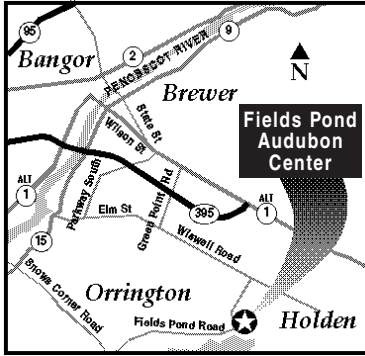


Fields Pond Audubon Center SUSAN PATE PHOTO

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Maine Audubon Membership Form

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Bld Eagle along the Penobscot
JERRY SMITH PHOTO

*Please make your check payable to **Maine Audubon** and send with this form to:
Fields Pond Audubon Center, 216 Fields Pond Road, Holden, ME 04429*