HABITAT

IN THIS ISSUE: A Community of Sound • Upcoming Events • Naturalist HQ

The Sounds of Nature
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by Kristen Lindquist

A NOTE from the EDITOR

As winter draws in around us, and another season fills our senses, I’m reminded again of the benefits of living in a clearly defined four-season climate. The change from one season to the next forces us to mark the passage of time. We all have our own personal markers. It might be saying goodbye to a certain migratory bird or seeing a particular tree dropping its last leaf. Or it might be a change in the way things sound.

When the wildflowers aren’t showing off and the trees are shrinking back, embarrassed to be less than fully clothed, our visual senses take a back seat to all the others. Summer has a look; fall has a very specific smell. Winter, though—winter is all about the sounds.

It’s not an illusion; things really do sound different when it’s cold. When the ground hardens before the first snowfall, it absorbs less sound. Acoustic waves reflect off the ice of a pond but retain more of their energy so the hoot of an owl or the snap of a breaking branch will sound louder and crisper.

Once the snow has fallen, however, sound waves will be absorbed. The porousness of snow sucks in sound and gives the world that muffled sound, as if you’re wearing ear muffs all the time.

In this issue of Habitat, we’ll introduce you to people who are paying profound attention to the sounds of birds, frogs, trees, and nature. I hope it inspires you to listen more closely to the sounds of nature all around you.

Melissa Kim
Advocacy

NEW REPORT
Renewable Energy and Wildlife in Maine: Avoiding, Minimizing, and Mitigating Impacts to Wildlife and Habitat from Solar, Wind, and Transmission Facilities

Maine is poised to become a renewable energy leader. Recent legislation set statewide goals to dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, to be achieved in part through commitments to invest in renewable energy development. We’re thrilled. Climate change driven by carbon pollution is the biggest and most pervasive threat to Maine’s wildlife and habitat. Maine must move swiftly in our transition to clean energy, but we must also act strategically to avoid unnecessary impacts to wildlife and habitat from renewable energy development.

A new report from Maine Audubon, published in November, describes the potential impacts of a specific portion of new energy infrastructure—onshore and offshore wind power, solar power, and transmission lines—on wildlife and habitat. It outlines policy considerations based on a review of the current literature, conversations with experts in the field, and policies in neighboring states, that Maine Audubon recommends Maine regulators, developers, and policymakers adopt in order to avoid, minimize, and mitigate wildlife and habitat impacts. Our research shows that Maine can—and should—develop well-sited and well-managed projects that reduce our reliance on fossil fuels while conserving Maine’s beloved wildlife and unique habitat.

To view the report, visit: maineaudubon.org/energy

LEADING ON CLIMATE
The Maine Climate Council, the group tasked with outlining a detailed climate change action plan, began its work this fall. Maine Audubon is pleased to share that Sally Stockwell, Director of Conservation, and Eliza Donoghue, Director of Advocacy, will serve on two of the Council’s working groups, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Natural and Working Lands Working Group, respectively. Over the coming months, they’ll make recommendations to the Council on how Maine can meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction and carbon neutrality targets. We’re proud to bring our science-based, wildlife and habitat focused perspective to this essential work.

NEW DIRECTOR
In case you missed it: Eliza Donoghue was promoted to Director of Advocacy at Maine Audubon this summer in recognition of her work and dedication as well as the importance of advocacy to Maine Audubon. She joined the staff in 2017 as Senior Policy and Advocacy Specialist.
LOON COUNT: A YEAR OF CHANGES

More than 1,000 dedicated volunteers took to the water on July 20, fanning out on about 300 lakes and ponds across the state to collect valuable data used to track the status of Maine’s beloved loon population. The 36th annual Maine Loon Count efforts will contribute to one of the state’s largest community science datasets, which informs and supports loon conservation efforts statewide.

Out on the water, the Maine Loon Count looked much as it has for decades. But below the surface, 2019 marked a number of changes. For the first time in 20 years, a new coordinator was at the helm as Tracy Hart jumped in to assume Susan Gallo’s long-standing role as manager. Also, most loon counters didn’t receive count instructions in the mail, but instead retrieved information online. And topping it all off, coordinators and counters tried out a new online system for reporting loon data.

The data is still being entered with the help of volunteers. Anecdotally, many areas saw a rocky start to the nesting season, with reports of nest flooding from early rains and black flies thick enough to drive loons from their nests. But a number of lakes have since reported record numbers of both adults and chicks. So, until the final results are in, the loons are keeping us guessing! Updates will be posted at: maineaudubon.org/projects/loons/

TURTLE HELPERS NEEDED

It’s not too early to think spring! And with spring comes the need to monitor slow-moving turtles as they emerge from their wintering sites to breed and nest. If you are interested in being a community science volunteer to take part in a survey of pre-selected segments of roads, we’ll be running training sessions in the spring. Details and updates at: maineaudubon.org/projects/road-watch

EPIC YEAR FOR PLOVERS

Plover-lovers around the state are still staggered by an epic year for Maine’s Piping Plovers. Last year’s record highs of 68 nesting pairs raising 128 chicks to the point of fledging—capable of flight—were blown away by this year’s 89 pairs of plovers successfully fledging 175 chicks off Maine’s beaches. Incredible support from partners, municipalities, landowners, and volunteers made 2019 a success that we never could have imagined.

Least Terns also hit a new record of 293 pairs nesting in Maine, though our productivity of 60 fledglings fell far short of recovery goals. Still, our gradual increase combined with terns’ long lifespans have us optimistic that Least Terns have a solid future in Maine.

We cannot predict what plover numbers we will see next year, especially since unexpected events, like Hurricane Dorian, have decimated critical wintering areas. Regardless, we will count on support from members for what is certain to be a busy 2020.
JUNIOR DUCK STAMP PROGRAM TAKES FLIGHT

Maine Audubon is now officially the Maine coordinator of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Junior Duck Stamp program and competition, a federal program in which K-12 classrooms study wetland ecology and waterfowl. The program encourages students to explore their natural world, invites them to investigate biology and wildlife management principles, and challenges them to express and share what they have learned with others. Teachers can also enter student art in a state and national art competition. The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2020. For more information, links to curriculum guides, teacher guides, and entry forms, visit: maineaudubon.org/education/juniorduck

STUDENTS TAKE ON WATER STEWARDSHIP

Students from Bangor High School participated this fall in the Maine Lakes Stewardship Program at Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden. This ongoing program engages middle and high school students in water quality monitoring in habitat for Common Loons, diadromous fish, and other wildlife. The project is funded by the Onion Foundation and Bangor Savings Bank Community Foundation. Interested teachers should contact fieldspond@maineaudubon.org for 2020 program dates.

SPECIAL GUEST AT GILSLAND FARM

Richard Louv made a special visit to Maine Audubon’s Gilsland Farm Audubon Center in October, signing copies of his new book and speaking to a crowd of environmental educators and policy makers. Louv’s landmark book, Last Child in the Woods, inspired an international movement to connect children and nature and has now sold over half a million copies. Co-founder of the Children & Nature Network and winner of the Audubon Medal, Louv is a proponent of radically improving mental and physical health through our relationship to the natural world. His newest book, Our Wild Calling: How Connecting with Animals Can Transform our Lives—and Save Theirs explores our deep bonds with other animals and calls for a transformation in how we view, treat, and inhabit our environment. Signed copies are available at the Gilsland Farm Audubon Center Nature Store while supplies last.
OUR FISH FRIENDS

For the third year in a row, Maine Audubon will be taking part in Fish Friends, an educational rearing program overseen by the Atlantic Salmon Federation in cooperation with the region’s federal fish hatcheries and agencies. Maine has the last remaining wild population of Atlantic Salmon, so actions are underway to help this endangered species.

At our centers at Gilsland Farm and Fields Pond, we receive Atlantic Salmon eggs from hatcheries in January and raise them until they are ready to be released—in very specific spots—into the wild in the spring (usually some time in May). Hopefully, some of them will survive for a few years, and then head downstream toward the ocean. Like puffins, these salmon will go out to sea as adults and, with luck, return to where they came from to lay their own eggs.
MAST LANDING

One corner of the 101-acre Mast Landing Audubon Sanctuary is home to an historic dam and mill site that has been the subject of extensive research by David Coffin of the Freeport Historical Society. David grew up playing amongst this c1757 mill site known as Dennison’s Falls and wanted to share its history with the community. Sixteen months ago, the 150-foot-long, eight-foot-thick and twelve-foot-high granite structure was pretty much hidden in the underbrush. Thanks to an Eagle Scout project led by Thomas Mosier of Pownal, the dam is now in full sight and inviting to explore. On Oct. 19, a permanent informational kiosk was dedicated by the partners in this project, Maine Audubon, Freeport Historical Society, and Boy Scout Troop 45 (Freeport/Pownal). Mosier, who was 17 when he completed his Eagle Scout project, also constructed the fence where the new sign is mounted.

WELCOME TO MAINE AUDUBON’S NEWEST TEAM MEMBERS

Sophie DeMaio joined Maine Audubon this spring as an environmental educator based at Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden. Sophie, who is from northern Maine, earned her B.S. in Environmental Studies from Bates College and her M.S. in Forest Ecosystem Science from the University of Maine. She has worked in land stewardship for land trusts in Maine and Rhode Island and a retreat center in Colorado.

Jill Haas joined Maine Audubon last year as the Development Database Manager. She has more than 30 years of database management experience working in the development and membership departments of grassroots nonprofit organizations. Jill grew up in the hills of northwest New Jersey and moved to the mountains of northern Vermont 20 years ago, where she has worked for the Green Mountain Club, Vermont Public Radio, and Vermont Works for Women.

Melissa Kim was named Director of Communications and Marketing at Maine Audubon in August. She was most recently the editorial director at Islandport Press. The author of eight books, she has worked in communications, journalism, and publishing in Maine, New York, and London.

Stanley Sampson was recently named Visitor Services and Retail Associate. He first joined Maine Audubon in 2018 working as an environmental educator for the summer camps. He has worked previously in educational leadership and nature education.

Laura Seretta joined Maine Audubon as Development Assistant in June. Originally from Yarmouth, she has a B.A in History from Wheaton College and an M.S. in Arts Administration from Boston University, and has spent the past decade living in Boston and working at MIT.
Listening to Steve Norton’s soundscape composition *Requiem* is both peaceful and unsettling at the same time. Unusual bird songs mix with frog croaks here and there, sounds come together, then pause. “A lot of people think it’s relaxing and beautiful,” says Norton, “but some people tear up and cry.” The tears come when listeners read Norton’s introduction to the show, which explains that “the sounds you are hearing will never be heard again in the wild. All of the species—ten birds and two frogs—are now extinct.”

The installation, which premièred in 2018 and has been heard in several locations in Maine and Massachusetts, will be installed at Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden, Maine, in January 2020. Norton, who has been a birder since third grade, is an accomplished jazz musician, with dozens of recordings and improvisational performances in his resume. Now, with *Requiem*, many strands of his life have been pulled together.

In 2015, in Maine for an improvisation festival, he met someone who told him about Intermedia, an interdisciplinary program at the University of Maine Orono that focused on hybrid forms of art. Within a year, he had quit his corporate job, moved up from Massachusetts, and enrolled in the MFA program. As part of the program, he had to create a sound installation. It seemed inevitable that he would consider birds and extinction.

**Steve Norton**

**MUSIC MAKER**

Listening. It’s not as easy as it sounds. These three people are all interested in listening, and not just to one sound but to a community of sound—calls that have been lost, a network of trees, a forest neighborhood. Their work serves as a reminder that sound plays an essential role in our understanding of, and relationship with, the natural world.
What’s the book you keep in your bag, so you can read a few pages whenever you have extra minutes in the day? For Norton, it was *Extinction: A Radical History* by Ashley Dawson. “Extinction is definitely on my mind,” he says. “Study after study comes out, and people go about their business, and that seems insane. So that was my motivation.”

He started researching species that had gone extinct since around 1950, when tape recorders became generally available. He was open to all animals but in the end settled on ten bird species and two species of frogs, from the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, last confirmed seen in 1944, to the Rabbs’ Fringe-limbed Tree Frog, considered extinct since 2016.

He took the sound files and worked with them, pulling excerpts, cleaning the files, making loops, adding silences, and creating a mix of rising and falling density. The result, he says, “is completely unpredictable.”

Norton, who completed his MFA in 2019, is starting to move away from jazz and into acoustic ecology, which he defines as “a practice which uses soundscape composition to explicitly foreground ecological concerns.”

He says, “My hope for Requiem is that people hear it and realize that 100 percent of the extinctions that are happening are essentially due to human activity. I want people to wake up and see that we can’t proceed with business as usual. If we do, we’re pretty well doomed.”
“Songs are the sounds that emerge from trees and echo within their wood. Songs are also the stories behind these sounds, telling of life’s many interconnections.”

These are the lyrical words of David George Haskell, a biologist and author who is changing the world of nature writing, fusing science and observation with poetry and philosophy. His prize-winning books include *The Songs of Trees: Stories from Nature’s Great Connectors* and *The Forest Unseen: A Year’s Watch in Nature.*

In *The Songs of Trees,* Haskell visits regularly and repeatedly with a dozen trees around the world, listening to wind hiss through leaves, insects gnawing at wood, water pulsing through branches, drought crackling in twigs. He concludes that no tree sings alone, but in fact trees are living communities, part of a larger network, connected to all other creatures including humans. “All life,” he says, “is made from networked relations.”

Tree songs seem elusive. How does Haskell listen and hear so much? Hearing is not only aural, he says, when asked for advice on listening to trees. “There are many ways to listen, each one complementing the other. Attending to the ‘soundscape’ with our ears is the first step. Then, consider the other ways that our bodies sense vibrations. Our fingertips, the soles of our feet, and the nerves in our chests are all tuned to the sounds of the world and can reveal tremors and tones too subtle for our ears. Rest your hand on the trunk of a tree near a busy highway or in a gusting wind. You’ll feel the vibrations that course through the tree’s wood, waves of wood-borne sound that our ears cannot detect.”

Technology can help, too, and Haskell uses electronic sensors to pick up sounds. For example, he says, “an accelerometer (a sensor that detects motion) can, like a sensitive hand resting on the bark, pick out inaudible vibrations in wood. In winter, these vibrations come from the effects of wind and falling snow. Beech trees are especially talkative inside. Every one of its dried golden leaves shakes in the wind and these tremors flow into the tree’s wood. The beech trunk sounds, through an accelerometer, like a choir of shimmering leaves. In summer, the interior of twigs sing with the vibratory signals of insects that ‘talk’ to one another by sending pulses of sound through the wood.”

He uses a different sensor to record the thickness of twigs. When water flows through a twig in spring and summer, it contracts during the day, “like a straw pinching in as we suck on a milkshake, then expands at night. This is the daily ‘pulse’ of the twig.” It’s like listening to the heartbeat of a tree.

How might an average person become a better tree listener? Haskell offers these tips: “Tree-listening is free, easy, and limited only by our time and level of distraction. Try these two different approaches: a ‘sound walk’ and a ‘special tree.’ First, for the ‘sound walk,’ devote a small portion of a walk through town or the woods to tree listening. As you stroll, pour your attention into your ears. Send your sense of hearing on an exploratory adventure into the surroundings. Which sounds are the most obvious? Which sounds lie hidden behind these dominant ones? What are the tempos and textures of these sounds?

“You’ll find that trees have many voices. The architecture of each species is revealed by the wind, ice, and rain in its branches and needles. Can you identify each tree species by ear? Such discernment is possible, just as we can tell bird species apart by their songs. In the case of trees, though, the
sound is evoked by the varied ambient energies that pass through the tree, not by the exertions of a songster’s lungs. In listening, we learn not only about the trees, but about the dancing movement of wind and the many forms and movements of rain, snow, and ice. Tree sounds also reveal animal lives: the rustling of kinglets in fir cones, the varied acrobatics of squirrels, the thumps of a jay caching seeds, and the percussive signature of each species of woodpecker, nuthatch, and chickadee.”

Next, he recommends adopting a “special tree.” Return repeatedly to listen and observe, and ask yourself: “How does the tree’s vocal presence change from day to day? How does the wind find and stir this tree compared to others? Does your tree have a form that gives its voice and appearance a particular character? How many of the thousands of voices of water can you hear through this tree as rain turns to drizzle, then graupel, ice pellets, and the many varieties of snow?”

A professor of biology and environmental studies at The University of the South, in Tennessee, Haskell’s classes—like his books—combine action with contemplation. He says the main thing is to “bring no expectations. Enjoy the delight of giving your senses to the world, then see where this leads your mind and spirit. Sometimes the experience is sufficient unto itself, sometimes it leads to questions, insights, or a shift in feeling.”

Trees, it is obvious, have much to teach us.

HEAR THE LEAVES

David George Haskell is featured in an episode of “Nature Moments,” a series of short videos hosted by Bowdoin College professor and Maine Audubon board member Nat Wheelwright.

Watch it here: maineaudubon.org/songs-of-trees
GET INVOLVED

Tracy Hart is seeking volunteers to help with the song meter project. She needs experienced birders to assess the 2019 song meter recordings, and to collect data in the field in the summer of 2020. If you can help, please contact Tracy at 207.781.2330 x216 or thart@maineaudubon.org.

For more about the Forestry for Maine Birds Program, visit: maineaudubon.org/ffmb

Four of the 20 conservation priority birds in the Forestry for Maine Birds program (top to bottom): Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Woodcock

Tracy Hart
SONG RECORDER

Very early one morning this past spring, Tracy Hart and former Maine Audubon staff forester and birder Robert Bryan traipsed out to a location within the Sewall Woods Preserve in Bath. Standing still for ten minutes, they counted all the birds they could hear and see. They moved on and counted at seven more locations, all before most of us had had our first sip of coffee.

Hart, a wildlife ecologist at Maine Audubon, is leading a project to assess how various habitat management actions influence the types of breeding birds that frequent our forests. Part of Maine Audubon’s Forestry for Maine Birds (FFMB) program, the goal is to help woodland owners, foresters, and loggers create and maintain habitat for species of conservation concern through simple forest practices that support birds and other wildlife.

Hart’s goal is to have volunteer birders collect field data, but in order to help ensure that as many species and sites as possible are counted, Maine Audubon has also turned to technology for help. Thanks to grants from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, song meters recorded sounds before and after every sunrise for eight weeks, from the end of mud season through early summer, at multiple stations within two demonstration forests. Kennebec Estuary Land Trust consultant Anna Christie-Carnicella helped place and rotate meters at Sewall Woods, and staffer Amy Soper from the 7 Lakes Alliance helped place and rotate meters at the Kelley Woodlot in Vienna.

Now, computer software will process the data. Hart will then have volunteers listen to the recordings and identify which birds are singing. She’ll then compare who is better at identifying all the breeding birds—people or song meters. Though the meters record all of the sounds, they can’t tell you if birds are nesting, or what habitat they are in. On the other hand, the song meters don’t get tired and are always available.

Hart hopes the meters will help document changes in bird use in response to FFMB forest management activities, and help guide future recommendations. ☟
This holiday, give the gift of Maine Audubon

A Maine Audubon membership is the perfect gift for friends, family, coworkers, your babysitter . . . anyone who loves wildlife and nature!

Purchase a gift membership today and you’ll receive a card to give to your loved one telling them that an annual membership is on its way*.

Purchase at: maineaudubon.org/support/membership

or at the Gilsland Farm or Fields Pond Nature Stores, where you can find many other unique holiday gifts as well!

For more information, contact
Membership Manager Maureen Duggan
207-781-2330 ext. 230
mduggan@maineaudubon.org

* Gift memberships received by December 31 will be mailed to the recipients at the beginning of January.
CELEBRATING
Maine Audubon’s Corporate Partners

More than eighty Maine businesses support Maine Audubon through our Corporate Partners program, and it’s a win-win for all. Maine Audubon uses 100 percent of this support for our work right here in Maine, and the companies enjoy a range of benefits for their employees and customers.

“By offering guided nature walks on our properties and hosting talks about birding,” says Russ Phillips, Marketing and Community Engagement Manager, Martin’s Point Health Care, “our partnership with Maine Audubon has allowed us to engage with our employees and the community in exciting new ways.”

In addition to all the traditional benefits of a corporate partnership, Maine Audubon partners can take advantage of guided walks for employees or clients, create wildlife-friendly habitat, host us to lead lunch-and-learn educational sessions, or plan employee team days in the field or at our sanctuaries and nature centers.

FIND OUT MORE: maineaudubon.org/corporate

Portside Real Estate held its third annual Autumn Equinox fundraising event at Gilsland Farm in September. Several business sponsors and 300 attendees made this event a success, with all proceeds from tickets, auction bids, and a raffle going to Maine Audubon. Dava Davin (center) and Jessica Nason (right) presented Maine Audubon Executive Director Andy Beahm (left) with a check in October.

In October, Maine Audubon and Martin’s Point Health Care collaborated on a project at Martin’s Point’s Portland campus. Making use of an abandoned garden space, more than a dozen people got their hands dirty installing plantings that will benefit the staff and patients of Martin’s Point, as well as birds, bees, and butterflies.
Gray Foxes are a beautiful species, but getting a good look at them is difficult. Unlike Red Foxes, which are often seen out in the daytime, Gray Foxes are strictly nocturnal. During the day they hide out in dense brush, cavities in trees or stumps, or underneath remote buildings. They are active all winter, though, so look for tracks in the snow.

Gray Foxes have a diverse diet, preferring cottontail rabbits but also eating mice, voles, squirrels, birds, frogs, crayfish, and insects, as well as corn, nuts, berries, and fruit in the summer. Unlike any other North American canid, Gray Foxes frequently climb trees in pursuit of prey, earning them the colloquial name of Tree Fox.

These canids frequent hardwood forests, meaning their range in Maine is limited to the southwestern part of the state, and are often found along streams. Despite their reclusiveness, Gray Foxes are about as numerous as Red Foxes in southern Maine. So tell your kids: in Maine, F stands not for Fox but for Foxes.
Programs & Events

GILSLAND FARM AUDUBON CENTER (GFAC)
Falmouth, Maine

WEEKLY BIRD & NATURE WALKS
Thursdays, 8 am, GFAC
Note: New time for winter.

 FALL SEED SOWING WORKSHOP
December 7, 10 am–12 pm, GFAC
Co-sponsored by Wild Seed Project

EYES ON OWLS
December 15; Three sessions: 10:30 am, 1 pm & 3 pm
First session is shorter and most suitable for small children.

WINTER ECOLOGY
December 17, 7–8:30 pm, GFAC
Learn how Maine’s wildlife has adapted to survive
in our winter wonderland.

WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION with Evelyn
Rysdyk and Allie Knowlton from Spirit Passages
December 19, 7–9 pm, GFAC

FAMILY FUN Ages 2-5, siblings under 2 free
Wednesdays, 9:30-10:30 am and 10:45-11:45 am
January 8–March 11, GFAC
Young children and their grown-ups explore nature
through stories, songs, art, and play.
Advanced registration is encouraged. Drop-ins welcome if space.

VAN TRIP: January is FOYs
January 11, 8 am–12 pm, GFAC
Let’s find as many first-of-the-year birds as we can!

BIRDING BASICS
7–8:30 pm, GFAC
Identifying Birds – January 14
Finding Birds – January 28
Observing Behavior – February 11
Making it Count – February 25

Maine Environmental Education Association
ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION
January 22, 6 pm, GFAC

SPEAKER SERIES: Live Animals Presentation
January 23, 7 pm, GFAC
21+ Sponsored by Allagash Brewing Co.

BIRDS OF COSTA RICA
January 30, 7–8:30 pm, GFAC
A look back at the colorful, exotic wildlife seen on
our winter trip.

THE NATURE OF LOVE
February 12, 7–8:30 pm, GFAC
Find out about pair bonds and mate selection
in the natural world!

SPEAKER SERIES: Arctic National Wildlife
Refuge (ANWR) Journal featuring Michael
Boardman, artist-in-residence, ANWR
February 13, 7 pm, GFAC

VAN TRIP: Will you go out with me?
February 14, 8 am–12 pm, GFAC
A “Leader’s Choice” Van Trip.

Full event listings, prices, and registration at maineaudubon.org/events
A wildlife sanctuary provides a beautiful and natural setting for a peaceful and memorable event. Gilsland Farm Audubon Center and Fields Pond Audubon Center are both available for rentals of all kinds, from corporate events to retirement parties, reunions to weddings. What’s more, your rental fees help support Maine wildlife and habitat.

WINTER CARNIVAL
February 15, 10 am–2 pm, GFAC
Join us for a celebration of winter weather and wildlife! Learn, create, and play at a variety of indoor and outdoor activity stations, including a winter wildlife touch table, snow science and snowshoeing with L.L.Bean Outdoor Discovery Programs, and more! Event made possible by L.L.Bean.

FEBRUARY VACATION CAMP*
Preschool Camp Ages 3-5
Feb 18–21, 9 am–1 pm, GFAC
K-5 Camp
Feb 18–21, 9 am–3 pm
* Partial scholarships are available for Maine residents who need financial assistance. FMI: call 207.781.2330 x273 or email scholarships@maineaudubon.org.

LIVE ANIMAL SHOW: Winter Wildlife
February 21, 10:30–11:30 am, GFAC
Join our friends at Center for Wildlife for an up close look at several of their animal ambassadors. We’ll learn about the adaptations that help these creatures survive in the wild, how they became non-releasable ambassadors, and what we can do to live in harmony with wildlife.

WINTER TWIG ID WORKSHOP
with Arthur Haines
February 23, 1–4 pm, GFAC
Co-sponsored by Native Plant Trust

Are you looking for a venue for

A WEDDING?
A STAFF RETREAT?
A 40th BIRTHDAY BASH?

10% off January & February rentals in our indoor conference spaces.
FULL event listings, prices, and registration at maineaudubon.org/events

FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER (FPAC)
Holden, Maine

THE HISTORY (AND FUTURE) OF ATLANTIC SALMON in the Penobscot River with Catherine Schmitt, author of The President’s Salmon: Restoring the King of Fish and its Home Waters
December 4, 7 pm, FPAC

MEMBER DOUBLE DISCOUNT DAY
December 6, 9 am–6 pm, FPAC
Do your holiday shopping and support Maine Audubon at the same time! Members enjoy 20% discount.

LIVE OWLS OF BIRDSACRE
December 7
Two sessions: 10:30 am & 12:30 pm, FPAC
Reservations are required.

PACK-BASKET MAKING WORKSHOP
December 14, 9 am–5 pm, FPAC
Participants will leave with their very own pack-basket.

THE NIGHT TREE: A Winter Solstice Celebration
December 21, 3 pm, FPAC
Join us for a family-oriented celebration of nature in winter as we recreate Eve Bunting’s The Night Tree.

FAMILY FUN Ages 2-5, siblings under 2 free
Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 am, January 9–March 5, FPAC
Young children and their grown-ups explore nature through stories, songs, art, and play. Drop-ins welcome if space.

FULL MOON SNOWSHOW HIKE
January 10, 6–7:30 pm, FPAC
Snowshoes available by advance reservation only.

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES
January 14, 6:30–8 pm and February 11 6:30–8 pm, FPAC
Join us for a monthly environmentally-focused film and discussion. Call Fields Pond (207.989.2591) to find out what will be showing each month or check our Facebook page.

REQUIEM: A SOUND INSTALLATION PRESENTATION by Steve Norton
January 16, 7 pm, FPAC
Note: The Requiem sound installation will be open to the public from January 13 through February 13.

WINTER TREE IDENTIFICATION with Forest Ecologist Sophie DeMaio
January 18, 9–10:30 am, FPAC

NEXT GENERATION RECYCLING with Shelby Wright, Director of Community Services at Coastal Resources of Maine
January 22, 7 pm, FPAC

MOOSE, WINTER TICKS, AND CLIMATE with Lee Cantor, Moose Biologist with DIF&W
January 29, 7 pm, FPAC

GROUNDHOG EVE with Naturalist Lynn Havesall
February 1, 2–3:30 pm, FPAC
Discover fascinating facts about woodchucks.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: Journey to the Rooftop of Africa, a Kilimanjaro Trek with Maine climbers Betty Jamison, Kris Reid, and John Bryant
February 5, 7 pm, FPAC
A CELEBRATION OF WINTER FUN  
February 8, 10 am–2 pm, FPAC  
Indoor and outdoor activities for the whole family.

FEBRUARY VACATION CAMP Grades 3-5  
February 18–21, 9 am–3 pm, FPAC  
Partial scholarships are available to those who need financial assistance. Please call 207.781.2330 x273 or email scholarships@maineaudubon.org.

“WHO GOES THERE?” An Outdoor Tracking Walk with Maine Guide Sandra Mitchell  
February 22, 9–11 am, FPAC  
During this easy walk around the nature center we will look for evidence of winter critters in the landscape. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

AROUND THE STATE  
FMI on Chapter Events: maineaudubon.org/about/chapters

The Penobscot Valley Chapter  
HOLIDAY PARTY AND AUCTION and A Nature Photo Expo  
December 6, 6–7:30 pm, Fields Pond Audubon Center, Holden

The Downeast Chapter  
ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY and ’Round the World Birding Part II  
December 13, 6 pm, IOOF Hall, Main Street, Blue Hill  
Drinks/social time, potluck dinner at 6:30 pm, and a presentation by member Becky Marvil on her recent trip around the Southern Hemisphere.

The Merrymeeting Chapter  
FIELD TRIP: Waterfowl Walk, Giant Stairs, Bailey Island  
December 7, 8:30–11:30 am, Bailey Island  
Join John Berry for a look at the winter waterfowl of eastern Casco Bay from one of Harpswell’s most scenic locations. Visit hhltmaine.org for directions to the site. FMI: John Berry at 632.7257 or Berry.John@comcast.net.

The Merrymeeting Chapter  
FIELD TRIP: South Coastal Birding  
January 4, 6:30–11:30 am, Ogunquit  
Travel from Ogunquit to Biddeford Pool to see many of Maine’s wintering birds. Bring a lunch or a snack. FMI: Maurice Dauphin at 389.2585.

The Portland Society for Architecture  
ARCHITECTURE WITH BIRDS IN MIND  
January 9, 12 pm, Mechanics’ Hall  
519 Congress Street, Portland  
Learn which architectural features are most dangerous to birds, what affected species we are finding in greater Portland, and what architects and municipalities can do to reduce their impact. Registration is required: portlandarchitects.org/events

PROJECT WILD WORKSHOP  
February 8, 8:45 am–3 pm, Husson University, Bangor  
For K-12 educators. Participants will receive the curriculum guide filled with experiential, integrated STEM activities.

LOOKING TO Spring: ARIZONA BIRDING TRIP March 14–20
We’ve talked about the breeding component of the Maine Bird Atlas here recently, but now it’s time to kick off its companion piece—Winter Bird Atlas! While breeding bird atlases have a challenging (but fun!) component of documenting a bird’s behavior, winter atlasing is much easier and we just need people to report where they are seeing birds between 14 December and 15 March.

**Why?** Ecologists are increasingly realizing the importance of a complete, year-round, conservation approach, and there is a lack of knowledge of what birds are using Maine’s habitats in winter. It is easy to think of Maine as barren in the winter, but we host some amazing birds during those cold, short days. Seaducks and grebes can put on impressive shows. Finches, like redpolls and siskins, can irrupt and descend on our feeders in massive flocks. And some hearty insectivores can switch their diets, like Yellow-rumped Warblers who survive on pockets of bayberry in the winter. There are a few community science projects that look at winter birds, like the long running Christmas Bird Counts, or backyard intensive Project Feeder Watch, but the Winter Bird Atlas will be the first to take a statewide snapshot of Maine’s wintering birds.

**Trends:** One recent remarkable trend has been of Eastern Bluebirds wintering in Maine. Using Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data, we’ve seen a steady increase since around 1995. Beginning at that time, bluebird sightings went from single birds to double-digit by 2000, and triple digit counts by 2010. In 2018, 432 Eastern Bluebirds were counted in Maine during CBCs.

Bluebirds are also moving northward, following a warming climate. These birds were reported from just a single Christmas Bird Count in southernmost Maine in 1995, but were subsequently reported farther and farther up the coast. Eastern Bluebirds were reported on five CBCs in 2002, more than ten in 2012, and 15 by 2016.

**More to explore:** The atlas uses a roughly 3 mile by 3 mile block grid of the state, providing a fine scale sampling that could help identify other trends or factors leading to changes in our wintering birds. Continuing with our bluebird example, perhaps we’ll see that most of them are following suburban sprawl. With suburbia we’ve seen an increase in ornamental fruit-bearing trees as well as bird feeders with mealworms being a more and more popular offering—two commonly used food sources by wintering bluebirds.

**Learn more:** The Maine Bird Atlas relies on community scientists like yourself to contribute sightings and make this statewide project a success. Every chickadee, Mallard, gull, and even House Sparrow counts! Look for more information about this in the Maine Bird Atlas newsletter, blog, and Facebook page. Full details at: maine.gov/birdatlas
14  Christmas Bird Count season has returned! Check our website for count dates in your area across Maine.

18  The Tamarack is one of Maine’s few deciduous conifers, meaning it grows needles and cones but also sheds those needles every fall.

22  The Winter Solstice is a welcome sign that, believe it or not, spring is on its way.

10  Maine’s Gray Seals gather in large groups in December and January to give birth.

15  Moose shed their antlers each winter, dropping as much as 60 pounds; this allows them to forage more easily and to store more energy for the winter.

19  Finding animal droppings in the woods? Herbivores leave piles of small, round droppings while carnivores leave scat piles that are larger, in clumps or cords, and may contain hair and fur.

31  Maine’s famous Great Black Hawk passed away a year ago today. Rest in peace!

10  Mercury is at its greatest eastern elongation, making it the best time to view the planet. Look for Mercury low in the western sky just after sunset.

14  The Great Backyard Bird Count begins today, so keep those feeders stocked!

21  Look out over the ocean on a cold morning and you may see “sea smoke,” a fog produced by cold air moving over relatively warmer water.

25  An overlooked spring migrant, the Turkey Vulture begins returning to the state in late February, with numbers peaking in May.
WINTER HAIKU

By Kristen Lindquist

milkweed pod
an empty boat drifting
to winter’s end

snowy trail
my only companions
fly away

moon-viewing
zig-zag of a stream
under snow

frozen in place
string of prayer flags
blessing the icicles

fresh fallen snow
still the river
doesn’t hesitate

snow moon
plum branch blooming
in my kitchen

snow disappearing
on the egret’s back
white magic

winter finches
again the crabapple
in blossom

arranging
the grocery store tulips
fresh snow

Kristen Lindquist is a poet, writer, birder, and Maine Audubon member who lives in Camden, ME.

Photo by Paul Cyr, photographer and Maine Audubon member from Presque Isle. Ninety-nine percent of his photographs are taken in northern Maine, most within 10 miles of his home.

For consideration, please submit original poems to habitat@maineaudubon.org
February 18-21 and April 20-24

School Vacation Camp

at

Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, Falmouth
Fields Pond Audubon Center, Holden

Outdoor fun and nature education for children!
Join for one day or the whole week.

FMI and Registration:
maineaudubon.org/camps