

Natural Selections

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon



Fall 2015

New Name, New Direction

BY GORDON RUSSELL, PRESIDENT
PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER OF MAINE AUDUBON

Welcome to the new edition of the Penobscot Valley Chapter (PVC) newsletter, Natural Selections. Beginning with this issue, we will try to focus more on our regional identity as Maine Audubon's northernmost chapter. PVC was also the flagship chapter of Maine Audubon, established 45 years ago to provide local programs and field trip options for Audubon members living in the greater Bangor region. We are especially interested in publicizing and sharing the ideas and interests expressed by you, our dues-paying members.

For the past two decades, we have used our chapter newsletter to serve two distinct purposes and audiences: firstly as a member benefit to keep you well-

informed about upcoming programs, field trips, and regional environmental concerns, and secondly as a public outreach and marketing tool to promote the many fine activities offered at the Fields Pond Audubon Center (FPAC) for children and adults in our region.

Moving forward, the PVC Board of Directors has agreed with Maine Audubon senior staff that FPAC now requires a more professional and focused approach to its marketing campaign. As a result, the PVC newsletter will revert to being an all-volunteer publication, written and edited by and for its membership, while the experienced promotional staff in Maine Audubon's communications department will take over the work of getting the word out about FPAC activities to the general public.

Because our chapter has strongly supported FPAC with generous donations of money and time ever since it was first established in 1994, we will also continue to provide space in this newsletter for a brief cross-listing of upcoming FPAC activities and even a regular column, so Maine Audubon staff can keep you up to date about FPAC. We've named that column the "Fields Pond Journal" as a nod to our shared traditions of the past.

Please let me know what you think of the changes, and what you'd like to see us publish in the future. One-time or regular contributions by members are always welcome! You can reach me via e-mail at gruss@roadrunner.com, or via snail mail at 503 Wiswell Road, Holden, ME 04429.



Natural Selections

Natural Selections 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 Natural Selections at no additional charge. Membership in Maine Audubon costs per year:

\$45 household; \$35 individual
\$25 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*.

The chapter offers a weekly email service to remind members about upcoming events in our region plus electronic delivery of this newsletter upon request. Please email Jim Zeman, kjzeman@myfairpoint.net to sign up for these services.

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Communications & Education ... Gloria Vollmers
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Natural Selections

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Visit us on the Web

 www.maineaudubon.org/pvc
www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon



Fall Family Fun along the Fields Pond trails

HOLLY TWINING PHOTO

FIELDS POND JOURNAL

BY CHARLES GAUVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAINE AUDUBON

Welcome to the new “Fields Pond Journal,” now a regular column in the Penobscot Valley Audubon Chapter’s quarterly newsletter. In this column, you’ll find a seasonal update from Maine Audubon’s staff at the Fields Pond Audubon Center. If you’ve never visited this stunning 210-acre wildlife sanctuary and education center in Holden, please come see us for a program or a hike this fall!

As many of you know, the Fields Pond center is one of two year-round Audubon Centers owned and managed by Maine Audubon. Gilsland Farm in Falmouth is our other year-round center and the headquarters of our statewide conservation, education and advocacy work. Maine Audubon also operates two seasonal Audubon Centers at Scarborough Marsh and Borestone Mountain, as well as four wildlife sanctuaries along the Southern and mid coast, all open to the public for enjoying the outdoors and wildlife.

This fall we will announce a new strategic plan for Maine Audubon, and our centers and the locally-led chapters play a critical role in helping us achieve our goals of engaging more people in wildlife conservation, conserving threatened species and habitats, and enhancing habitat connectivity. Please stay

tuned for upcoming member communication related to Maine Audubon’s new ambitions and signature programs.

Today’s Fields Pond features expanded property, improved trails and countless ways to explore and engage. Cyndi Kuhn manages the center and a robust array of programs for audiences from preschool to mature adults. Thanks to a contribution from longtime PVC members Ron & Lee Davis, Fields Pond also hosts a paid internship for aspiring environmental educators focused on youth outreach and environmental literacy. You will find many Fields Pond programs listed here and online at www.maineaudubon.org. Please contact the center staff if you have a program idea or to connect us with a school, program or facility whom might benefit from Audubon programming.

Lastly, in June we said farewell to Holly Twining, the long-time naturalist and communications coordinator at Fields Pond. We have reassigned Holly’s duties within Maine Audubon. We thank Holly for her positive spirit, loyalty and creativity, and we wish her the best of luck in her many upcoming adventures.

Many thanks for your membership and support for Maine Audubon!



GOINGS-ON AT FIELDS POND

.All of these events take place at Fields Pond Audubon Center, 216 Fields Pond Road in Holden. For detailed information, additional program listings, and to register, please call 989-2591 or visit www.maineaudubon.org.

School Programs 2015-2016

We are already booking fall field trips for our Secrets of the Forest sequence. Call to book your class visits and field trips as soon as possible! Call Cyndi Kuhn 989-2591 for pricing and more information.

Volunteer Naturalist Training

September 10, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
September 12, 12 p.m. - 2 p.m.
FREE

Digital Fall Photography Workshop

September 15, 5-6:30 p.m.
\$5 member/\$7 non-member

Family Fun/Fall Session

(children ages 2-5, formerly Nature Time)
Wednesdays, September 23 - November 4
\$70 member/\$105 non-member

E.Y.E.S Emerging Youth Ecology Squad/Fall Session

(children grades 2-5)
2nd and 4th Saturday of each month,
September 12-December 12
\$40 member/\$50 non-member per day, or
\$225 member/\$275 non-member for the entire series

Signs of the Seasons: Loon Counters Training

September 22, 4-6:30 p.m.
Class filled. Stay tuned for additional training dates.

Wild Mushroom Workshop with David Spahr

September 26, 1-4 p.m.
\$18 member/\$24 non-member

Night Paddle and Blood Moon Eclipse Event

September 28
Self-guided evening paddle
6:30-8:30 p.m. Canoe rental \$25
Eclipse viewing
8:30-10 p.m.

\$5 member/\$7 non-member
Flashlights encouraged.

Volunteer Work Party

October 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
FREE

Women's Day Retreat

(ages 21 and over)
October 17, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
\$50 member/\$60 non-member
Family discounts available

The Top of Africa: Ethiopia

with Ron & Lee Davis
October 22, 7 p.m.
\$5 member/\$7 non-member



Barred Owl

JERRY SMITH PHOTO

Owl Prowl

October 29, 6-8 p.m.
\$10 member family/\$20 non-member family

Guided FPAC Boundary Hike

October 31, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
FREE, donations accepted

Urban & Suburban Meadows, Bringing Meadowscaping to Big and Small Spaces

Film & discussion
November 5, 7 p.m.
\$5 member/\$7 non-member

Volunteer Appreciation Gathering

November 19, 7-9 p.m.
FREE

Live Owls Show

with Birdsacre Naturalist
November 21, 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
Same program, your choice of show times.
\$10 member/\$15 non-member

Homeschool Field Trip: Forces in Nature

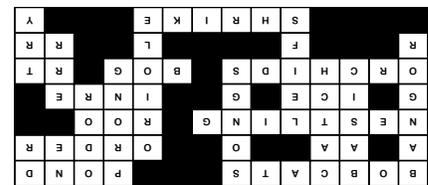
November 25, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
\$50 member/\$75 non-member

Schoodic Peninsula Van Trip

December 5, 9 a.m.
\$20 member/\$30 non-member

Counting On Birds

Film & discussion
December 10, 7 p.m.
FREE, donations accepted



Solution to Crossword Puzzle on page 5

Fields Pond Book Group Meets Monthly

The Fields Pond Book Group meets monthly on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the Orono Public Library, facilitated by professional librarian Joyce Rumery. Here are the titles that the group will read and discuss over the next few months. Please visit our website at maineaudubon.org or call FPAC at 989-2591 to read a short overview of each book.

September 10: *The Social Conquest of Earth.* by Edward O. Wilson, 2013, 352 pages.

October 8: *Pepper: A History of the World's Most Influential Spice* by Marjorie Shaffer, 2013, 302 pages.

November 12: *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald, 2015, 322 pages.

December: No book group meeting this month. Happy Holidays!

The Penobscot Valley Chapter offers FREE monthly programs on natural history and conservation-related topics that reflect the interests of our membership. We hope you will be able to join us each month for an evening of camaraderie, learning, and FUN. All programs are open to the general public, so please feel free to bring a friend!

Wildcats of the Northern Forest: Canada Lynx in Maine

*Fields Pond Audubon Center
Friday, September 18, 7:00 p.m.*

Maine is at the southern edge of the breeding zone for the beautiful, elusive Canada lynx. Most of our lynx population occupies dense, conifer-rich forests in the most undeveloped portions of our state, and very few Mainers have ever had the privilege of seeing this species in the wild. Jennifer Vashon, wildlife biologist for lynx at Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, will present a slideshow describing the natural history of the Canada lynx, her department's efforts over the years to reach a firm estimate of the actual size and status of Maine's breeding population, and the challenges involved in managing a

federally threatened species whose breeding habitat overlaps with Maine's industrial forestlands.

Mercury Toxicity in the Southern Penobscot River

*Fields Pond Audubon Center
Friday, October 16, 7:00 p.m.*

Wildlife research biologist Dianne Kopec, Ph.D., will present findings from her seven years of work on the court-ordered Penobscot River Mercury Study, measuring the accumulation of mercury in fish, birds, sediments and water. The findings of the study led to a posted state health warning for hunters about human consumption of black ducks taken from Mendall Marsh in Frankfort and Prospect, as well as a complete closure of the lobster and crab fishery at the river's mouth north of Fort Point. Dianne's prior academic research focused on mercury contamination in harbor seals off Maine's coast, and she will share sobering facts about the effects of mercury poisoning, its biomagnification in the food web, and the implications for human health as well as for all wildlife that live and forage in the lower Penobscot River basin.

Winter Birding 101

*Fields Pond Audubon Center
Friday, November 20, 7:00 p.m.*

Too many Maine birders hang up their binoculars for the year after the last waves of late-migrating shorebirds and raptors pass through in October. They don't know what they're missing! Bird guide and author Bob Duchesne reveals where to look, how to look, and what to look for in Maine from November to April. When birds of the subarctic head south for the winter, Maine is the south they head for. Winter birding can be fabulous, and, unlike warbler watching, it's wicked easy. Bob will present photos, maps, and tips to help you plan your own winter birding adventures.



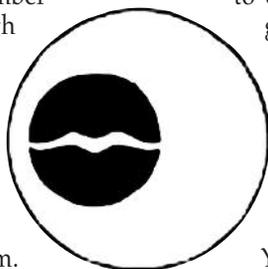
Annual Holiday Party and Nature Photography Expo

*Fields Pond Audubon Center
Friday, December 6, 6:00 p.m. (Nature Store opens at 4:00 p.m. for Early Birds)*

Tis the season for PVC's annual Holiday Party! "Heavy" (supper-worthy) hors d'oeuvres will be served, along with an assortment of party beverages to put everyone in the holiday spirit. Winning bidders in PVC's Online Auction can pick up and pay for their items, and additional items will be available at the party for silent auction bidding. The Fields Pond Nature Store will be open for business from 4:00 p.m. until the party ends, and Maine Audubon members get a double discount (20 percent) off normal retail prices for unique gift items, including many new items brought up from the larger Falmouth store. The evening's highlight will be a nature photography expo. Professional and amateur photographers will have the opportunity to showcase and describe 10-15 of their favorite wildlife and outdoor travel photos from 2015. Bring along your own digital photo files on a thumb drive or laptop if you'd like to participate in the expo, or just come to appreciate the natural wonders captured on camera by other PVC members.

PVC Annual Benefit Auction Set For November 2 to December 4

It is almost time for the Penobscot Valley Chapter's Annual Benefit Auction! Bidding will be conducted online at www.maineaudubon.org/pvc starting on Monday, November 2, and continuing through 12:00 p.m. EST on Friday, December 4 (this is also the date of the annual PVC Holiday Party). A few items will also be offered for silent auction during the Holiday Party, which starts at 6:00 p.m.



Please share the auction website link with family and friends far and near, so they can join in the fun! Chapter board members are

currently soliciting auction donations from local merchants, artisans, and nature lovers in our community. If you have items or services you would like to contribute to help promote grass-roots environmental outreach and programming in eastern Maine, please call Auction Chair Ellen Campbell at 843-5858 or e-mail her at ellenrc@myfairpoint.net. Your donations are fully tax-deductible, and we will provide you with a receipt so you can document the estimated value. Thank you for your support!

FALL FIELD TRIPS

Penobscot Valley Chapter field trips are fun ways to meet like-minded people, while enjoying the rich natural heritage of our region. We hope you will come outside and join us!

Greater Snow Goose Migration in Quebec

Saturday, October 10, 8 a.m. to Monday, October 12 (Columbus Day), 6 p.m.

Cost: \$360 PPDO for Maine Audubon members/\$400 non-members. Single supplement: \$100 (we will try to match you with a roommate upon request)

Snow geese! Tens of thousands of them, as far as the eye can see, nestled along the fabled St. Lawrence River, against a backdrop of peak fall foliage. This is one of the world's grand birding spectacles, just a half day's drive to the north. We'll spend the first afternoon browsing around the charming walled city of Old Québec and the Plains of Abraham, ending the day with a gourmet dinner at one of Québec's many fine restaurants. On Sunday and Monday, we'll tour (mostly on foot) around the Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, site of the annual Snow Goose Festival. The arrival of the snow geese coincides with the migration of many other species, including raptors that soar along the ridgeline above the

refuge. On the way home to Maine, we'll stop to picnic at a spectacular waterfall park on the Chaudière River. All-inclusive trip cost covers all meals from Saturday lunch through Monday lunch, snacks, lodging, entrance fees, and transportation in a 15-passenger van. Trip is limited to 10 participants, with a **registration and full payment deadline of September 28** so we can confirm hotel and restaurant reservations. This trip has filled very quickly in the past, so please don't wait to sign up! Call FPAC at 989-2591 to register.

Westside Waterbirds

Saturday, November 21, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Cost: FREE

Join trip leaders Jerry Smith and John Wyatt for a six-hour round trip from Bangor to Belfast, with stops in Hampden, Winterport, Frankfort, Stockton Springs, Searsport, and Belfast, checking for waterfowl in open water and later autumn passerines throughout. Meet at the Bangor Waterfront parking lot on Front Street at 8:00 a.m. Leave your vehicle and ride with Jerry or John. We'll stop to stretch our legs, but little or no walking involved. Bring beverage and snacks/lunch, or eat at the Belfast Food Co-op. Call the Fields Pond Audubon Center at 989-2591 to let us know you are coming.

Downeast Island Boat Trip

Sunday, November 15

Cost: \$20 Maine Audubon members/\$30 non-members

Join trip leaders Norm Famous, Bob Duchesne, and Sandi Duchesne for a seaborne exploration of the island archipelago between Roque Bluffs and Jonesport. We will cruise slowly in a small boat past flocks of common winter seabirds, helping novices improve their winter coastal birding skills while also helping Norm to conduct a seabird census in the sheltered waters around the islands. We will also get the chance to land and hike on a scenic, family-owned island that is off-limits to the general public. Participants have the option of traveling via 15-passenger van, departing from FPAC at 6:30 a.m., or driving to the pier in Roque Bluffs prior to the boat's departure time of 9:00 a.m. We expect to return to FPAC around 6:00 p.m. Don't delay in signing up; this trip is limited to just 12 participants, and it usually fills very fast! Wear warm layered clothing, and bring a brown-bag lunch to eat on the island. Call FPAC at 989-2591 to register. We will call you the night before if the boat captain cancels the trip due to bad weather.



Science & Nature by Sandi Duchesne

ACROSS

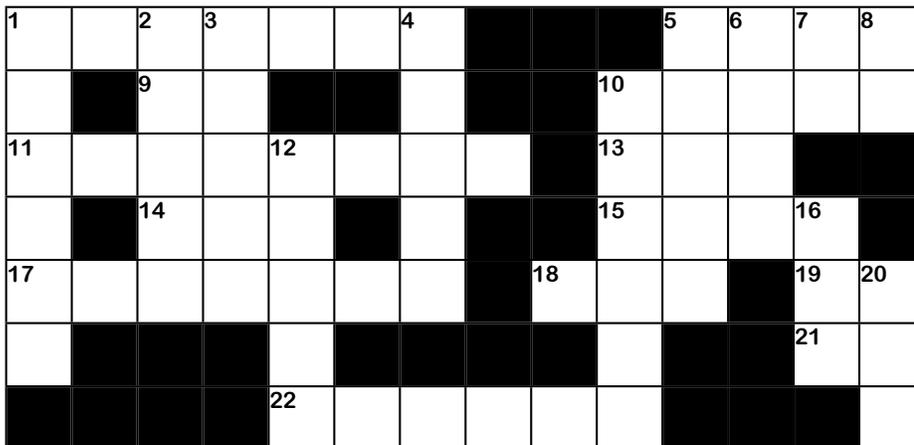
1. Furtive forest felines
5. Fields _____ Audubon Center
9. One type of volcanic lava
10. It's between "class" and "family," taxonomically speaking

11. Baby bird
13. Shortened name for an Aussie marsupial
14. Primary component in the glaciers that covered Maine during the Ice Age
15. Latin term often found at the start of a legal letter or memo (2 words)

17. Rare and beautiful wildflowers
18. Good habitat in Maine to look for some species of 17-Across
19. The Ideal Gas Law: $PV=n$ _____
21. U.S. Post Office abbreviation, widely used in Maine before zip codes
22. Northern _____, a songbird that eats smaller birds (also the former name of the Penobscot Valley Chapter newsletter)

DOWN

1. Largest city in the PVC membership region
2. Opposite of acidic (also an early computer programming language)
3. _____ and release fishing
4. Good way to ID warblers in breeding season
5. _____ horn, American species often mistakenly called "antelope"
6. Distinguishing feature of the species Mephitis mephitis
7. Element 10 on the periodic table
8. Physician (abbr.)
10. Baltimore _____, both a bird and a baseball player
12. _____ "The Lucky," son of Erik the Red, and his namesakes
16. Make a mistake
20. I'm sure you can complete this crossword if you _____!



c/o Fields Pond Audubon Center
216 Fields Pond Road
Holden, Maine 04429

Mission of the Penobscot Valley Chapter: 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.



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper



Maine Audubon

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Penobscot Valley Chapter

YES! I would like to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in my community and
 join renew my membership with Maine Audubon and the Penobscot Valley Chapter.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Seasonal Address: _____ from _____ to _____

City/State/Zip: _____

I'm enclosing an additional \$10 to receive *Audubon*, National Audubon's magazine
(free for Patron members and above)

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

Charge my monthly Frequent Flyer gift of \$ _____ to Visa MC AMEX Discover

Charge my annual membership of \$ _____ to Visa MC AMEX Discover

Card # _____ Exp. _____ CSV _____

Membership Level

Annual:

\$25 Senior/Volunteer

\$35 Individual

\$45 Household

\$65 Contributing

\$100 Patron

\$250 Sustaining

\$500 Benefactor

Monthly:

Frequent Flyer (\$5 min.)