

# Natural Selections

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon



July-September 2017

## An Eye on Great Blue Herons

BY GORDON RUSSELL, PRESIDENT  
PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER OF MAINE AUDUBON

Like many other species of wildlife these days, great blue herons have been on the decline in Maine. Reasons for the drop in numbers include predation, disturbance of nesting birds, reduced food supply, and loss of habitat, both nesting and wintering. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) considers great blue herons to be a "Species of Special Concern" due to their decline in numbers. Herons are found over a large part of the state, making it difficult for state biologists to keep watch over these birds and evaluate nesting success. So, beginning in 2009, IF&W set up the Heron Observation Network, a citizen-science initiative involving volunteer monitors. Their job is to adopt one or more colonies and make periodic observations of the birds as they nest and fledge their young. Observations are recorded and sent to IF&W at the end of the season.

My wife and I have been monitoring two great blue heron rookeries for the past few years. Like most people, we enjoy watching wildlife, especially nesting birds. Heron monitoring can be challenging, and in our case requires trekking or bushwhacking to reach the colonies, often accompanied by clouds of black flies and mosquitoes. But it's always a thrill to finally reach the rookery and check on the progress of the birds – who has young ones and how many little heads you can count using binoculars or spotting scope. Of course, reaching the colony and finding nobody home during the middle of the nesting season can be devastating. Fortunately, our two adopted colonies are doing well, each with five active nests this year.



Last summer, IF&W captured and subsequently tagged five adult great blue herons with solar-powered GPS transmitters to learn more about the birds when they're not in Maine. They invited several local elementary schools to help out with some of the field work leading up to the capture of the birds. Two of the five tagged herons, named Snark and Sedgely by the students, have returned from their winter sojourn to Florida, and are now nesting in our adopted colony

in Brewer. (Other tagged birds went to the Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti.) The GPS tracking made it possible to determine where they went in winter, unknown until now, and when they returned to Maine, including stops along the way. We could monitor the progress of Snark and Sedgely using a website supplied by IF&W. We could also see where they went to feed after returning to the rookery. All of this boosts our knowledge of the herons, including conditions that may affect their health and survival.

Citizen-science projects like the Heron Observation Network are increasingly important these days. Unfortunately, many wildlife populations are in decline for various reasons. Due to shortages in staff and budgets, wildlife agencies could use a hand. If interested in becoming a volunteer heron monitor, contact Wildlife Biologist, Danielle D'Auria, at [danielle.dauria@maine.gov](mailto:danielle.dauria@maine.gov). The herons need our help.

### Comment Period for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Still Open

The public has until July 10, 2017 to comment on the US Department of the Interior's review of 27 national monument designations, including the one for the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KWWNM). It is unclear whether a presidential executive order creating a monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906 can be rescinded in a subsequent order. However, given the KWWNM's ecological and recreational values, along with its demonstrated boost to the local economy, you can show your support by commenting online ([www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), then enter DOI-2017-002 in the search bar) or writing to Monument Review, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

# MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

## 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@hotmail.com](mailto:kjzeman@hotmail.com) to sign up for these services.

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

President.....Gordon Russell  
Vice President.....Bob Duchesne  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Jim Zeman  
Chapter Representative, Maine Audubon Board of Trustees.....Sandi McRae Duchesne

### AT-LARGE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Bowden, Timothy Conmee, Ellen Campbell, Katelin Craven, Gloria Vollmers, and ex-officio board member Eric Topper.

### CHAPTER COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Programs & Field Trips.....Ellen Campbell  
Communications & Education.....Gloria Vollmers  
Advocacy.....Sandi Duchesne, Tim Conmee  
Stewardship.....Tim Conmee

### *Natural Selections*

Editor.....Sandi McRae Duchesne  
Design & Layout.....Donne Sinderson  
Webmaster.....Bob Duchesne  
Facebook Coordinator.....Katelin Craven

### Visit us on the Web

[www.maineaudubon.org/pvc](http://www.maineaudubon.org/pvc)  
[www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon)



## FIELDS POND JOURNAL

### BY STAFF

FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER

Summer is the busy and fulfilling field season for all of us in conservation and environmental education. This year, Maine Audubon is pleased to announce several new programs, staff and initiatives at Fields Pond over the coming weeks and months. We hope you will join and/or visit us this summer.

### New Summer Programs & Events

On the program page, you will notice several new additions to the usual diverse array:

Emergent Youth Ecology Squad (EYES) welcomes older campers (ages 11-13) with a particular interest in wildlife, habitat and citizen science for a deeper experience with our work.

Heather McCargo, founder of Wild Seed Project, will lead a native plants walk during the height of the Canada lily bloom at Fields Pond. This program is part of Maine Audubon's "Bringing Nature Home" native plants restoration program.

Maine Audubon's development staff will help us host two new community outreach events this summer. Bangor Area Chamber of Commerce and Bangor Green Drinks events at Fields Pond Audubon Center, in July and August respectively, will allow largely new audiences to experience Fields Pond as a social evening venue.

More details on these events and programs can be found at [www.maineaudubon.org](http://www.maineaudubon.org).

### Launching New Phenology Walk in partnership with Schoodic Institute

Hannah Webber will be equipped with a team from Schoodic Institute to lay out our phenology walk on June 12. All Fields Pond visitors will be encouraged this summer and fall to make observations along our short perimeter walk from the parking lot and around the building and submit them to Maine Audubon staff or volunteers, or learn to submit them directly using iNaturalist. We also need volunteer birders to record bird species along this walk regularly, and upload to eBird.

### Properties Update

Peter Baecher, Maine Audubon's properties manager, has been

hard at work overseeing many improvements and upgrades to the waterfront, trails and facilities at Fields Pond. New signage along the Fields Pond landing and Lakeside Trail will help deter prohibited uses such as fires, camping and dogs. A new mowing contract and regimen will improve space and access to our trails and plantings. Several "curbside" projects, including a planned planting around the FPAC signage on Fields Pond Road, await. Join us for a stewardship day this summer!

### Introducing Kiley

Kiley Davan hails from South Freeport and is a current Wildlife Ecology Major at the University of Maine Orono campus. She will be filling the role of Outreach Intern for the summer season. Some of her prior experience working with teens will be a welcome asset as she strives to deliver a robust line of programs and education that will inspire youth of all ages to increase their environmental awareness and passion for nature. Please stop in and welcome Kiley to the Maine Audubon community.

*Thank you -* Bruce and Jeremy Grey for the tremendous trail improvement on the Ravine Trail and assistance grooming it, keeping it safe and making it beautiful and better than ever. Richard Spinney for grabbing bird seed in a pinch. Maggie Guthrie for maintaining the birdfeeders during the temporary relocation this spring. Sandy Serpell for her continued work with Maine Audubon's Development Department to assist in gathering corporate sponsors. Jerry Smith and John Wyatt for putting up our canopy to cover the picnic table. Glenice Sibley for being a prompt and reliable front desk docent and for putting up the calendar in the lobby this May. Greg Carter and Sarah and Tanner Smith for tackling some important spring clean up around the building. Maggie Guthrie and Sandy Serpell for running the table at this year's Chamber of Commerce Biz Expo. Sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of the Education Volunteers who made this field trip season great: Sally Jones, Trish and Wes Hutchins, Grace Bartlett, Donne Sinderson, Clare Cole, and the Baron Family: Alex, Nick and Amy.

## FIELDS POND CENTER PROGRAMS

## FIELD TRIPS

Summer Program Offerings  
at Fields Pond Audubon Center

For more information about these programs, please visit the Maine Audubon webpage ([www.maineaudubon.org](http://www.maineaudubon.org)) or contact FPAC, 989-2591 or [fieldspond@maineaudubon.org](mailto:fieldspond@maineaudubon.org).

### Family and Youth

#### Family Discovery: Dragonfly Walk

Saturday, July 15, 1-2:30 p.m.  
\$15/family

#### Summer Camp

**Where the Wild Things Are**  
July 10-14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily  
\$250/week ages 6-10

#### Summer Camp

**Bringing Nature Home**  
July 17-21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily  
\$250/week ages 6-10

#### E.Y.E.S. Camp - Emergent Youth Ecology Squad

August 14-18, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily  
\$250/week ages 11-13

#### Family Discovery: Pollinator Walk

Saturday, August 19, 1-2:30 p.m.  
\$15/family

#### Family Fun Preschool

July 12-August 23, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
\$70/Seven Wednesdays

### Adult Workshops & Trips

#### Butterfly Walk

Saturday, July 1, 1-3 p.m.  
Donations accepted for North American Butterfly Association

Free

#### Night Hike

Friday, July 7, 7:30-9 p.m. \$5

#### Native Plant Walk with Heather McCargo

Thursday, July 20, 5-7 p.m. \$5

#### Bangor Chamber of Commerce Event

Thursday, July 20, 7:30-9 p.m.

#### Bangor Greendrinks

Tuesday, August 8, 5-7 p.m.

#### Stargazer's Walk

Friday, August 11, 8:30-10 p.m. \$5

#### Mushroom Workshop with David Spahr

Saturday, September 23, 1-4 p.m. \$20

#### Autumnal Equinox Evening Paddle

Friday, September 22, 6-7:30 p.m. \$10  
Canoes available for rent with paddles and lifejackets, additional \$10

### Volunteer & Practitioner Training

#### Teacher Workshop - Flying WILD!

Friday, August 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$25

#### Stewardship Days

Saturday, July 8, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Saturday, August 5, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

#### Volunteer Meeting

Wednesday, September 13, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Canoe Rentals  
available at Fields Pond  
Call 989-2591**

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!

Saturday, September 9

### INTO THE WOODS: BOREAL BIRDING IN SHOULDER SEASON

Time: 6 a.m. to (roughly) 6 p.m.

Depart: Large parking lot behind Wendy's Restaurant on Stillwater Avenue, Old Town (just off I-95 Exit 193)

Cost: \$15 member/25 non-member to benefit Fields Pond Audubon Center  
Trip limited to 10 participants.  
Call 989-2591 to preregister.

Join Sandi and Bob Duchesne for a day-long van trip into the North Maine Woods, northwest of Millinocket. We will search for boreal species including black-backed and three-toed woodpeckers, spruce grouse, evening grosbeak, boreal chickadee, and gray jay, as well as any lingering warblers, familiar year-round species, and migrating hawks. Bring your own brown-bag lunch, beverages, and snacks, or plan to buy them at a convenience store in Millinocket on the way into or out of the vast spruce-fir forest we will explore. There are NO eateries, stores, or flush toilets where we are headed! If time permits and participants are willing to extend the adventure, we will also explore a portion of the new Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument before heading for home. We will still go if sprinkles are predicted, but cancel in the event of predicted hard rain or thunderstorms; call Sandi at 827-3782 between 6 and 9 p.m. on Friday night if in doubt.

## INTERESTED IN SOLAR ENERGY?

By Karen Marysdaughter

Greater Bangor Solarize is a solar photovoltaic (PV) group purchasing program that lowers installation costs and provides a cost-effective way to invest renewable energy. Through the summer of 2017, interested home and small business owners in the greater Bangor area will have the opportunity to sign up for a bulk purchase with a selected solar installer.

Across the country, Solarize campaigns have been introduced at the neighborhood, municipal, county, and regional level, creating jobs, lowering energy bills, and decreasing carbon

footprints. Solarize campaigns have taken place in Freeport, central Maine, mid-coast Maine, and Mt. Desert Island.

Want to learn more? Interested in a quote for your home or business? Contact: Greater Bangor Solarize, 96 Harlow St, Suite 100, Bangor, ME 04401, [greaterbangorsolarize@gmail.com](mailto:greaterbangorsolarize@gmail.com), 207-930-5440. Look for us on Facebook!

Local Solarize partners:  
City of Bangor & Eastern  
Maine Development  
Corporation.



# MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

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

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit 46  
Bangor, ME

*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.

## Green Your Summer: Join the PVC Board!

The Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon has several current vacancies on its all-volunteer Board of Directors. We are requesting self-nominations from Audubon members who can contribute their ideas and energy to help keep the chapter thriving and relevant in its activities and programming. If you are a dues-paying member of Maine Audubon and currently live year-round in the Penobscot Valley region, we may be looking for YOU!

Many people think they lack the time and talent to serve on the board of a non-profit organization. It does require time and commitment to serve on a board; however, most board members tend to contribute more within their areas of interest and somewhat less to other projects, so the workload is generally both predictable and manageable. In terms of talent, you may have more to offer than you think. Like a healthy ecosystem, the Penobscot Valley Chapter requires a

diversity of species as well as a sustainable population in order to fulfill its mission.

For example, our board can always use more Owls – people with special expertise, gained through education or experience or both, that they are willing to share to help the organization grow and prosper. We rely on a good supply of Beavers, enthusiastic folks who are willing to roll up their sleeves and work hard to build programs and events for the membership. We are always looking for Ants, natural leaders who can organize others and get them all moving toward a common beneficial goal. And we highly value Grasshoppers, people who find their fun in the natural world and are willing to share their favorite wild places and passions with others.

We would like to develop more generational diversity as well. Our current board is mostly comprised of individuals in the 40+ age range. A few more 20- and 30-somethings on the board could provide us with fresh perspectives on how to appeal to younger adults

and help to build our volunteer network. However, committed environmentalists of any age are welcome.

We're optimistic that a few PVC members are ready to step up and make a more meaningful contribution toward habitat conservation and environmental awareness throughout our region. If you've been waiting for the right opportunity to come along, this may be it! Please consider increasing your volunteer participation with Maine Audubon this year, ideally as a chapter board member. Whether you are an Owl, a Beaver, an Ant, a Grasshopper, or some other interesting creature dwelling within our PVC forest, we look forward to hearing from you. Please contact Gordon Russell, Chapter President, either by phone at 989-2491 or by e-mail at [grusss@roadrunner.com](mailto:grusss@roadrunner.com). Thank you!