

Natural Selections

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon



September - November 2020

Stepping Up for Maine Audubon

BY GORDON RUSSELL, PRESIDENT
PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER OF MAINE AUDUBON

Despite its being closed to the public due to coronavirus over the past several months, Fields Pond Audubon Center (FPAC) continues to attract many visitors who are looking to walk the trails, paddle the pond, and otherwise get outdoors to enjoy nature. Many are visiting FPAC for the first time this summer. Although it is only a 15-minute drive from Bangor, FPAC remains largely unknown as a local environmental and recreational resource. We hope that many outdoor enthusiasts will continue to visit Fields Pond and become dues-paying members of Maine Audubon, if they are not already.

We also hope that you'll take an additional step and consider becoming a volunteer. Environmental organizations, like Maine Audubon, do best when the public gets involved, whether it's helping to build and maintain trails at its nature facilities, assisting with educational programs, or volunteering to lead bird walks or field trips. The rewards can be substantial, not only for Maine Audubon, but also for the individuals who donate their time and energy to help get the job done.

The Penobscot Valley Chapter is one of several regional chapters of Maine Audubon that help to provide member services, create public awareness, and assist in carrying out the organization's mission. Chapter officers and board members serve as volunteers, meeting regularly throughout the year to plan the walks and talks enjoyed by the public. We also offer a research scholarship each year

to enrolled students at the University of Maine, helping not only to accomplish valuable academic research, but furthering ties between Maine Audubon and the University of Maine. *Natural Selections* is written, edited, and published by chapter volunteers, as is the chapter's website and Facebook page.

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 of our 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 sustainable diversity of members in order to fulfill its mission. So, if you're interested in helping to plan events, review research proposals, or write a short piece for our newsletter, we'd love to have you on board. Check out Penobscot Valley Audubon on Facebook, or e-mail me at penobscotvalleyaudubon@gmail.com, and let us know if you'd like to join us.



Canada Warbler photo by Ron Logan

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:

\$50 household; \$40 individual

\$30 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 to sign up for these services.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President.....Gordon Russell
Vice President.....Ellen Campbell
Secretary.....Sean Trahan
Treasurer.....Jim Zeman
Chapter Representative, Maine Audubon Board of Trustees.....Sandi McRae Duchesne

AT-LARGE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Bowden, Timothy Conmee, Bob Duchesne, Bob Milardo, Gloria Vollmers, and ex-officio board member David Lamon.


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.....Jane Rosinski

Visit us on the Web

 <https://pvc.maineaudubon.org>
www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon

FIELDS POND JOURNAL

BY DAVID LAMON, FPAC MANAGER
FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER

As we all continue to face the challenges of living through a pandemic, it's been heartening for me to see so many of you finding a bit of solace and refuge here at Fields Pond. Whether it's families with children heading out to solve the week's "Mystery Animal Trail," individuals looking for relief from the heat in the pond, nature photographers trying to capture that "magic moment," or community science volunteers collecting data for our phenology trail, it's nice to know that although the building's doors are temporarily closed, the community continues to embrace Fields Pond Audubon Center as an essential place in their neighborhood.

I hope that you'll continue to find reasons to engage with FPAC this fall season. We have a number of programmatic options that offer both virtual and in-person (practicing necessary safety precautions) educational opportunities. Our trails are always open from dawn to dusk and provide a beautiful glimpse into the variety of wildlife habitats protected in this sanctuary. Research studies have shown that time spent in nature reduces stress levels, and enhances our well-being. So I invite you to take a walk this fall, and step through our "doorway" into the ever-changing landscape of nature.



Volunteers John Bryant and Betty Jamison, from the Holden Land Trust, helped Fields Pond staff create a new trail at the Sanctuary. This new trail, still unnamed, has connected our Lakeshore Trail with the new Ravine Trail Connector and Holden Land Trust property to open up more miles of hiking paths for visitors. It's a beautiful trail; come check it out this fall!



Two photographs taken by students in the Jack Zievis (Red Sail Photography) Nature Photography workshop held at Fields Pond Audubon Center on August 15, 2020. Top photo by Pat Cough and bottom by Diane Woodworth.

Welcome to PVC New and Rejoining Members!

Erik and Sharon Crocker
Gregory and Lara Dorr
Jenny and Chloe Hart
Mary Hartt
Richard Rosa

FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER PROGRAMS - FALL 2020

NOTE: Some of these events are contingent on COVID-19 restrictions. Please call FPAC at 989-2591 for more information. To register, please go to www.maineaudubon.org.

Foraging Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants in Maine with David Spahr

Thursday, September 24

7 p.m.

(Online via Zoom; registrants will be sent online access information.)

Learn about wild plants, mushrooms and other natural treasures that can be foraged for food, medicinal use, and other purposes. Presenter: David Spahr, author of *Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms of New England and Eastern Canada*

Free for members; \$7 for nonmembers

Mushroom Walk

Saturday, September 26

10 a.m. to noon

A journey through the world of fungi! Join Maine mushroom expert David Spahr for outdoors learning about mushroom identification, folklore, collecting, and cooking. Be prepared for a moderate amount of physical activity. Group size is strictly limited, and COVID-19 safety precautions will be followed. Presenter: David Spahr, author of *Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms of New England and Eastern Canada*

\$25 for members; \$30 for nonmembers

Fall Foliage 5K Fun Run at Fields Pond

Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m.

Join us for our second annual Fields Pond 5K fun run/walk. This challenging course will take you up through our beautiful wooded trails and down scenic backroads for the perfect foliage tour! For registration information please call 989-2591.

Fall Stewardship Day

Saturday, October 17

9 a.m. to noon

Join the FPAC Staff for a morning of stewardship activities focused on improving our trails and public access spaces. Bring work gloves and sturdy footwear. Snacks provided! Call 989-2591 to register.

Backyard Spiders of Maine with Dana Wilde

Friday, October 23, 7 p.m.

(Online via Zoom; registrants will be sent online access information.)

Join us for fascinating facts about spider families found in Maine and the Northeast.

Presenter: Dana Wilde, author of *Backyard Book of Spiders* and the "Backyard Naturalist" column for the *Kennebec Journal* and *Morning Sentinel*. Free for members; \$7 for nonmembers

Fall Native Seed Sowing Workshop at Fields Pond

Saturday, November 21

10 a.m. to noon

(Live and/or Zoom, TBD near time of presentation)

Grow your own native plants from seeds! Propagating your own plants is the cheapest and most sustainable way to restore habitat for birds and other wildlife at home. This hands-on workshop (yes, your hands will get dirty) will introduce participants to the plants, practices, and perks of sowing native plants in small outdoor pots over the winter. In the live presentation, each participant will go home with several pots sown with native seeds. Please call 989-2591 for more information.

FIELDS POND BOOK GROUP

The Fields Pond Book Group meets monthly on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. At press time, all meetings were still being conducted via Zoom, facilitated by professional librarian Joyce Rumery. Please contact Joyce directly at rumeryj9@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list for the Zoom meeting links and any in-person meeting updates. Here are the titles and synopses for September through November.

September 10, 2020

Williams, Terry. *Tempest. Erosion: Essays of Undoing*. 2019. 336 pages.

tameness and close contact he experiences with his nesting birds.

Williams's fierce, spirited, and magnificent essays are a howl in the desert. She sizes up the continuing assaults on America's public lands and the erosion of our commitment to the open space of democracy. She asks: "How do we find the strength to not look away from all that is breaking our hearts?" Williams explores the many forms of erosion we face: of democracy, science, compassion, and trust. She examines the dire cultural and environmental implications of the gutting of Bear Ears National Monument—sacred lands to Native Peoples of the American Southwest; of the undermining of the Endangered Species Act; of the relentless press by the fossil fuel industry that has led to a panorama in which "oil rigs light up the horizon." And she testifies that the climate crisis is not an abstraction, offering as evidence the drought outside her door and, at times, within herself.

October 8, 2020

Heinrich, Bernd. *White feathers, the nesting lives of tree swallows*. 2020. 218 pages

Heinrich is sparked one early spring day by a question: Why does a pair of swallows in a nest-box close to his Maine cabin show an unvarying preference for white feathers—not easily available nearby—as nest lining? He notices, too, the extreme aggressiveness of "his" swallows toward some other swallows of their own kind. And he wonders, given swallows' reputation for feistiness, at the extraordinary

November 12, 2020

Gaudet, John. *Papyrus: The Plant that Changed the World: From Ancient Egypt to Today's Water Wars*. 2014. 271 pages.

From ancient Pharaohs to 21st Century water wars, papyrus is a unique plant that is now the fastest growing plant species on earth. It produces its own "soil"—a peaty, matrix that floats on water—and inspired the fluted columns of the ancient Greeks. In ancient Egypt, the papyrus bounty from the Nile delta provided not just paper for record keeping—instrumental to the development of civilization—but food, fuel and boats. Disastrous weather in the 6th Century caused famines and plagues that almost wiped out civilization in the west, but it was papyrus to the rescue. Today, it is not just a curious relic of our ancient past, but a rescuing force for modern ecological and societal blight. In an ironic twist, Egypt is faced with enormous pollution loads that forces them to import food supplies, and yet papyrus is one of the most effective and efficient natural pollution filters known to man. Papyrus was the key in stemming the devastation to the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River from raging peat fires, and the papyrus laden shores of Lake Victoria—which provides water to more than 30 million people—will be crucial as the global drying of the climate continues.

MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

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.*

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

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS, FALL 2020

Ordinarily we would be using this space to invite you to join us in exploring Maine's natural history and environmental concerns, with a focus on the abundant wildlife and diverse ecosystems that exist within the Penobscot Valley region. However, due to the COVID-19 crisis, we are declaring a temporary moratorium on all in-person presentations and field trips for this fall. The PVC Board of Directors is currently discussing alternative ways to serve our membership and increase public awareness, while continuing to wait patiently for that wonderful day when medical researchers announce the availability of a safe, affordable, and effective treatment or vaccine.

In the meantime, we encourage you to explore the greater Bangor region on your own this fall, using our website and previous newsletters – available at www.pvc.maineaudubon.org – for inspiration

on good spots to check out for birding and general outdoor recreation within the Penobscot Valley.

Also, please check out our parent organization's website, www.maineaudubon.org/events for upcoming Zoom presentations and webinars that will appeal to all Maine environmentalists. Most are free, and you can always trust Maine Audubon to provide you with science-based perspectives on issues that affect Maine's native wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Stay safe out there! We will all get through this, together!



Silene latifolia is a common wildflower that blooms mid to late summer in fields and on roadsides. Another name for it is white campion. This photo shows the fancy striped calyx underneath its white petals. Photo by Donne Sinderson