

# Natural Selections

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon



December 2022–February 2023

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

### Cranberry Musings

BY GORDON RUSSELL, PRESIDENT  
PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER OF MAINE AUDUBON

Earlier this fall, my wife and I headed over to Fields Pond with a close friend from Bangor to pick wild cranberries in the boggy wetlands surrounding the pond. We've been doing this together for years, not always in the same location. Sometimes it requires hiking for a couple of miles, or using a canoe to access the berries. Quite often we wind up with wet feet, but it's worth it in the end. This year we used canoes to paddle across Fields Pond to a patch that contained a bonanza of ripe cranberries. To make it even better, we had unusually warm weather and calm winds for paddling. (And we got very wet feet, but didn't really care.)

We always look forward to the ripening of cranberries in the fall. It's just one of many events that predictably happen around us in the natural world, giving us something to anticipate and enjoy each year when the time comes. The same can be said for tapping maple trees as the sap begins to flow in the spring, or leading bird walks a few weeks later to celebrate the return of migrating songbirds. In this fast-paced and rapidly changing world around us, it is comforting to be able to count on a few things that are out there for us to experience year after year, hopefully with close friends or family.

To be sure, the natural world around us is rapidly changing due to climate change, habitat loss and other factors. Still, there is a lot to discover and learn by getting outdoors, whether it's on one of our popular bird walks in spring, seabird field trips in winter, or on your own. We look forward to these outings each year, marking our calendars and mentally acknowledging the natural processes that continue to be out there for us to enjoy. We hope to share what we know, and learn from some of you as well. (We

may even tell you where to find wild cranberries.)



Photo credit  
Jane Rosinski

## NATURE NOTES: BUTTERFLY NAMERS HAVE MORE FUN!

BY GLORIA VOLLMEYERS

In the Fall 2022 newsletter, Bob Duchesne wrote humorously about the naming of birds. For example, why Northern Mockingbird when there is no corresponding Southern Mockingbird? To continue that line of questioning: what is it with the Rock Pigeon? Why Rock? No obvious answer. They used to be called Rock Doves, according to my shallow research, but that leaves open the "Rock" part. If you're looking for a black bird with a RED wing—you won't find it. The male Red-winged Blackbird merely has a small red-and-yellow patch on the shoulder of his wing—so why not Red-shouldered Blackbird? My personal beef is with the Common Yellowthroat. Take one look at that bird, and you must agree that it should be called the Masked Warbler, or maybe the Masked Yellowthroat. Common Yellowthroat is such a pathetic name. Tons of birds have yellow throats. And, while we're at it, why not rename the Blue-headed Vireo (which doesn't have a blue head) the White-spectacled Vireo?

In my opinion, the namers of common Maine butterflies have had much more fun with it than those who named birds. Many choices are fanciful, others more descriptive. The Admirals (White and Red), the Monarch, the Viceroy (there are also Queen, Commander, Arch Duke, Sergeant, and Colonel butterflies, but not in the US)—these British-sounding names are all related to ranks, not to field identification marks. Indeed, the butterflies were named by British military people stationed in various places in the British Empire. Conversely, the Cabbage White, Spring Azure and Clouded Sulphur accurately describe the color of each species. In fact, they could have been simply been called White, Azure and Sulphur. But adding those adjectives enlivens the names. (And yes, the Cabbage White butterfly does eat cabbage, while in its caterpillar stage.)

How about Fritillaries? In Latin, Fritillus means a dice-box—a cylindrical container for throwing dice, like in Yahtzee. Interesting, but how does it relate? Fritillaries (there are many butterflies in this family) are almost all orange, and all have lots of spots. Maybe the same way dice have spots...? Why are Maine's common fritillaries named Great Spangled and Aphrodite? Likely these are two more examples of whimsical choices by the original namers. Perhaps the conversation went something like this:

"She's pretty – Let's call her Aphrodite." "Aphrodite didn't have spots!" "I know Aphrodite didn't have spots. But she was pretty." "Aphrodite it is!"

How about another pair of non-descriptive, fanciful butterfly names? American Lady and Painted Lady. Why "Lady," anyway? There's nothing about either butterfly that might suggest a female face or figure. My guess is that someone on the naming task-force pointed to the underside of the back wings of each, where there are round spots that look like eyes outlined in black. He said "Hey, that looks like eyeliner. Ladies like eyeliner—especially Americans!" In fact, to the extent of my limited research, the origin of these names is either lost or purely hypothetical.

The Mourning Cloak was named for the cloaks worn to funerals in Victorian times, dark draped capes with white trim at the trailing edge. The Crescent, Question Mark, Hairstreak and Comma are obviously named for the distinctive shapes on their wings. Unfortunately these marks are small and very hard to pick out on a live butterfly, so they are not great aids in field identification. Nonetheless, they are darn cute names. I can imagine a committee having some fun coming up with them. (It reminds me of Boaty McBoatface – look up that reference for yourself!) The American Ornithological Union, the naming group for birds, needs new blood for sure.

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

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

President.....Gordon Russell  
Vice President.....Sean Trahan  
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, Matt D'Angelo, Bob Duchesne, Tim Dunlea, 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](https://www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon)

## FIELDS POND JOURNAL

BY DAVID LAMON, FPAC MANAGER  
FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER

### Educational Resources

This past fall was one of our busiest seasons for school visits in recent years. Educators throughout the greater Bangor region were able to engage their students in field-based environmental science at the Fields Pond Audubon Center. Classes ranging from Grade 2 through the undergraduate college level came to Fields Pond to learn about forest ecology, stream and lake ecology, ecosystem interactions, and environmental stewardship.

Some of the programs we offer to educators at Fields Pond include the following.



**Lake Stewards.** Lakes are an integral part of Maine's landscape. They provide drinking water for nearly two-thirds of our population. Lake Stewards students learn about the importance of lake habitat and water quality as they sample and collect data from Fields Pond. This curriculum is designed for high school and college students.

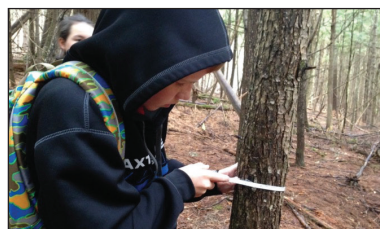
**Stream Explorers.** Streams, and the animals that live in them, can tell us a lot about the health of a watershed. Stream Explorer



students (Grade 4 and above) sample a stream habitat for aquatic insects that are good indicators of water quality. This program can be based at FPAC or at other area streams, and all collected data is sent directly to Maine's Department of Environmental Protection for further analysis.

**Secrets of the Forest.** Maine's forests are considered globally-significant habitat for breeding forest birds. Based on Maine Audubon's "Forestry for Maine Birds" conservation initiative, this program gives elementary-level students the tools to understand forest ecosystems, and how healthy forests can support healthy wildlife populations.

If you are an educator looking for opportunities to engage your students in outdoor-based environmental science projects, please contact us to learn more about these popular programs. Our education staff can also custom-design a field-based experience specifically for your students. For more information, please call FPAC at 989-2591 or email: [fieldspond@maineaudubon.org](mailto:fieldspond@maineaudubon.org).



Fields Pond File Photos



## Going Digital in Spite of Myself

by Bob Duchesne

It took me a long time to catch up to the 21st century. I was in no rush to embrace new technology. I'm still not. Nonetheless, I've slowly and grudgingly allowed technology to improve my birding life.

Was it really so long ago? In the 1980s, Maine Audubon recorded rare bird sightings on a telephone answering machine. The outgoing message was updated weekly, generally after the rare bird of interest had long since disappeared. Today, email listservs spread word of rare sightings as fast as they can be posted. Maine Audubon runs the primary alert for our state. You can review previous postings and sign up for ongoing email alerts at <https://groups.google.com/u/1/g/maine-birds>.

The Penobscot Valley Chapter operates its own email listserv, alerting members weekly about upcoming events and opportunities. Most members are already on the mailing list. If you're not, just email me at [duchesne@midmaine.com](mailto:duchesne@midmaine.com). Before the listserv, the chapter's only outreach tool was this newsletter, published quarterly. It still works, of course. You're reading it, aren't you? But sometimes opportunities arise after the newsletter goes to print. Email announcements are one way to overcome that drawback. Facebook is another way. I'm not keen on most social media, but PVC's Facebook page has helped us keep members well-informed and up-to-date. There's also a Facebook Group page where members share their posts, photos, and videos, all at <https://www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon>.

COVID-19 compelled PVC to try out new online communications tools for serving our members. Maine Audubon generously shared its commercial Zoom license with PVC and other chapters during the height of the pandemic, so we could continue delivering high-quality programs despite being physically isolated. Moving forward, Zoom will never be able to replace the camaraderie of an in-person chapter meeting. But the technology can certainly enhance our ability to deliver programs our members want, in the ways our members want

to receive them. Internet-delivered programs are more accessible for folks who are reluctant to travel to live events at Fields Pond, especially at night and in bad weather. They might allow PVC to recruit geographically distant experts as guest speakers, without having to pay travel costs. Finally, Zoom programs are easier to schedule, set up and deliver for FPAC staff and chapter volunteers, without all of the logistical challenges of arranging an in-person meeting.

The digital world offers a wealth of resources to enhance the birding skills of beginners and experts alike. Check out the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, online at <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/>. Their eBird app is very popular worldwide. The app easily manages all of your trip lists, and in most cases shares your listed species and their locations with all other eBirders. Last century, I kept track of my "life list" by merely scribbling sighting dates onto the appropriate field guide pages. Later, I upgraded to an Excel spreadsheet. Now all that data is automatically saved for me, in a place I can't possibly lose it. Plus, the eBird database produces the most awesome avian distribution maps ever.

The Cornell Lab also runs my favorite birding website, [AllAboutBirds.org](http://AllAboutBirds.org). Many home-nesting birders enjoy participating in Cornell's Project Feederwatch, and the Great Backyard Bird Count. Cornell offers online courses to help you develop your birding knowledge and skills. And then there is Merlin.

Merlin is an app that can help users identify birds by sight and sound. I've been having fun recently with the bird sound tool. I record a bird on my smart phone, and Merlin instantly analyzes the sound and make its best guess about the species. It's not 100% accurate – birds don't always sound the way they're supposed to – but Merlin's suggestions are way better than any other sound-ID app I've ever tried.

I've come a long way since dialing up that weekly answering machine message on my rotary telephone. Welcome to the 21st century, Bob.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) enlists thousands of volunteers across the western hemisphere to count every bird they see and hear on a given day. For more than a century, the CBC has provided invaluable community science data that helps ornithologists identify long-term trends, migration patterns, and overall sustainability in bird populations. It's an annual winter tradition for hundreds of Audubon chapters and organizations.

This year, all CBC counts will be scheduled between December 14, 2022 and January 5, 2023. You can learn more about the CBC, and view historical species data, at the Audubon Christmas Bird Count site.

Here are the scheduled CBC count regions, dates, and coordinators in the Penobscot Valley Chapter region and nearby areas in central Maine. Please contact the coordinator in your desired area for more detailed information, if you would like to help out.

**Bangor/Bucksport**, Saturday, 12/31 – Jerry Smith, [jerrya\\_smith@yahoo.com](mailto:jerrya_smith@yahoo.com)

**Hartland**, Saturday, 12/24 – Tom Aversa, [tom.aversa@gmail.com](mailto:tom.aversa@gmail.com)

**Dover-Foxcroft**, date TBA at press time – Kate Wetherby, [kweatherbycbc@gmail.com](mailto:kweatherbycbc@gmail.com)

**Orono/Old Town**, Saturday, 12/17 – Jerry Smith, [jerrya\\_smith@yahoo.com](mailto:jerrya_smith@yahoo.com)

## WELCOME TO PVC NEW AND REJOINING MEMBERS!

Sam and Wendy Bland, Orono  
Efreem Kann, Orrington  
Patricia Lad, Glenburn  
Bryan and Faith MacLaren, Winterport  
Karen S. Marysdaughter, Bangor  
Nadia Mendiola, Hampden  
Denise Rocker, Hampden  
Paul Schneider, Bangor  
Susan Warner, Carmel  
Thomas F. Watson, Dixmont

## FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER PROGRAMS - WINTER 2022-23

Please pre-register online at [maineaudubon.org/events](http://maineaudubon.org/events)

### **DOUBLE the Double Discount Days at Fields Pond this year!**

*Two Fridays in a row, December 9 and Dec. 16, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.*

Drop in to shop for your holiday gift list at reduced prices, and support Maine Audubon at the same time! We'll have a wide selection of nature-related gifts on hand, and Maine Audubon members receive a double discount of 20% instead of the usual 10%.

### **The Night Tree: Annual "Welcome Winter" Celebration at Fields Pond**

*Friday, Dec. 16th, 4 p.m.*

Join us for a family-oriented celebration of nature in winter as we recreate Eve Bunting's classic story *The Night Tree*. Starting with a read-aloud of this enchanting story, we'll then create wildlife-friendly ornaments to decorate our own night tree to share with Maine's winter wildlife. Come relax and spend time with your loved ones, as we get ready to welcome the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. Warm cider and snacks await! Pre-registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space is available.

Cost: Member families: \$10, Nonmember families: \$12

### **Seed Sowing Workshop**

*Saturday, Dec. 17, 9 a.m. to noon*

In this hands-on workshop, co-sponsored by the Wild Seed Project, Maine Audubon staff will lead a walk to identify native plants, demonstrate ecologically responsible seed collection, and describe the basics of seed propagation. Back inside, you'll learn how to grow your own native wildflowers and other plants from seed. Participants will leave with several pots sown with seeds, ready for maintenance-free outdoor germination. Cost: \$40 Members, \$50 Nonmembers

### **FOY (First Of Year) Birding Van Trip**

*Sunday, Jan. 8, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

Join Doug Hitchcox, Maine Audubon Staff Naturalist, for a half-day van trip to kick-off your 2023 bird lists! We'll travel around to local hotspots, and rack up as many species as possible.

Cost TBA at press time; will be provided online when you pre-register.

### **Family Fun at Field Pond Winter Session:**

*Thursdays, Jan. 12 – Mar. 2  
(8 weeks), 9:30-10:30 a.m.*

Children ages 2-5 and their grown-ups are invited to spend an hour each week exploring nature together through stories, songs, art, and play. Each week will include outdoor activities and adventures designed to foster a lifelong connection to nature, encourage stewardship, and provide an introduction to group learning settings.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged! Drop-ins are welcome if space is available. Cost: \$96/member child, \$120/nonmember child, siblings under 2 free

### **Painting Class: Exploring Seasonal Landscapes at Fields Pond**

*Tuesday, Jan. 10, 9:30am-11:30am*

Join Valerie Wallace, a local artist, art teacher and graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, to paint a landscape inspired by the gorgeous Fields Pond sanctuary! Instruction will be broken down into simple steps that even an absolute beginner can follow. Tips and tricks will be offered for more experienced landscape artists. All materials will be provided. Preregistration is required. Class size is limited. All participants must be at least 12 years old, and anyone under 16 must be accompanied by a participating adult who is also registered for the class.

Cost: \$30 members, \$35 nonmembers.

### **Read & Ramble**

*Fridays, January 13, February 10, and March 10, 11-11:30 a.m.*

Join us for an entirely outdoors, interactive story time in the outdoor pavilion, geared towards children ages 2-5 and their grown-ups. Afterwards, we'll set you up with a related, self-guided activity to enjoy on the trails. Please note that the pavilion has a roof covering, but is otherwise exposed to the elements. After the 20-30 minute story, we encourage each family to explore the Fields Pond sanctuary at a pace and for a length of time that feels comfortable. The Nature Center will be open beginning at 10 a.m. for those who wish to warm up, use the restroom, or shop for nature-related items (Maine Audubon members get a 10% discount).

Pre-registration required. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Cost per child: \$5/member, \$7/nonmember, siblings under 2 free.

### **Birds of Penobscot County**

*Wednesday, Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m.*

Join Doug Hitchcox, Maine Audubon Staff Naturalist, for an evening program to learn about the common, uncommon, and rarest of birds that can and have been seen in Penobscot County.

Cost TBA at press time; will be provided online when you pre-register.

### **Monarch Butterfly Research at the Fields Pond Audubon Center**

*Wednesday, January 25, 6 p.m.  
(free, online; pre-register for Zoom link)*

Each fall, millions of monarch butterflies leave their summer breeding grounds in the northeastern U.S. & Canada, and travel 3,000 miles to reach overwintering grounds in southwestern Mexico. In this program,

Wesley Hutchins from the University of Maine will talk about his research with tracking monarch butterflies using a new technology designed to help researchers track very small animals, particularly insects. Hutchins will also go over some of the natural history and lifestyle of monarchs. Wesley Hutchins is a wildlife ecology major at the University of Maine at Orono. A native Mainer (from Swanville), Wesley has had a passion for wildlife as long as he can remember. His main focuses are insects and birds.

### **Winter Ecology Hikes at Fields Pond**

*Two Saturday sessions: January 21 and February 25, 10 a.m. to noon*

Join Maine Audubon staff for outdoors learning about winter ecology. Both plants and animals have unique strategies to survive this challenging season in Maine. Be prepared for a moderate amount of physical activity, and dress appropriately for the weather of the day. If conditions allow, bring snowshoes (or call ahead to reserve a pair of ours). Pre-registration required; group size is strictly limited to 12 participants per session. Cost per session: \$8 members, \$10 nonmembers

### **Improve Your Gull-Ability!**

*Wednesday, Feb. 1, 6:30pm (online;  
pre-reg for Zoom link)*

*Sunday, Feb. 5 (local field trip)*

Gulls can be one of the most intimidating groups of birds to learn, but we'll teach you how quickly identify them in an online webinar...and then in the field! Leader, Doug Hitchcox, Maine Audubon Staff Naturalist.

Cost and field trip schedule TBA at press time; will be provided online when you pre-register.

## Groundhog Day Celebration & Trivia

Thursday, February 2, 6-7 p.m. (free, online; pre-register for Zoom link)

It's here again! Discover fascinating facts about woodchucks, the only rodent with its very own holiday! Unravel Groundhog Day lore and learn how differently this holiday was celebrated in the old days. Test your knowledge on all things groundhog (including the infamous movie) with a fun trivia game! This is a family friendly event.

## Moonlight Snowshoe walk at Fields Pond

Friday, February 3, 7 p.m.

Join us for a peaceful winter night hike. Pre-registration is required. These special treks will be limited in group size. If you don't own snowshoes, a limited number of pairs may be rented (by advance reservation only) for an additional \$2 fee.

Cost: \$8 members, \$10 nonmembers

## Winter Fun Day at Fields Pond

*Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

A day to celebrate winter and wildlife in Maine! Both indoor and outdoor activities for the whole family. A complete schedule of activities will be available closer to the event date. Free and fun for all!

## Bringing Nature Home Design Workshop

*Saturday, February 18, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

Learn the fundamentals of ecological garden design & draft a masterplan for your space, using the principles described in Doug Tallamy's best-selling book, *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. Copies are available for purchase in the Fields Pond Nature Store, and Maine Audubon members get a 10% discount! Cost: \$25 members, \$30 nonmembers

## School Vacation Camp

Tuesday through Friday, February 21-24, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Maine Audubon winter vacation camp is an opportunity for children in Grades 1-3 to learn about winter wildlife through hands-on activities and outdoor adventure. Our daily schedule includes time for art, hiking, science, games, and stories. Each day will have a different theme, and includes topics like animal adaptations, snow science, tracking, and winter ecology. Scholarships are available! Cost TBA at press time; will be provided online when you pre-register.

**Snowshoes** are available for rental at Fields Pond this winter! Just stop in at the Nature Center during open hours, or call 989-2591.

## PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER WINTER PROGRAMS

*We invite you to join us as we explore Maine's natural history and environmental concerns, with special attention to the abundant wildlife and diverse ecosystems within the Penobscot Valley region. Free monthly programs that follow the school year calendar (October-May, no January) are one of the many benefits of your membership in the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon. All chapter programs are open to the general public, so feel free to bring a friend or an out-of-town guest!*

*At press time (November 2022), we made the difficult decision to once again cancel our annual **Holiday Party**, originally scheduled for December 9 at Fields Pond Audubon Center. We will deliver items in this year's online auction directly to winning bidder's homes, unless you make special arrangements in advance to pick them up at FPAC. We wish you all a warm, happy, and healthy holiday season, with plenty of opportunities to get outdoors and experience the wonders of the natural world.*

## Chemical Toxicity in Maine Wildlife and Humans

Friday, February 3, 7 p.m.

Free and online; pre-register at

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEuce6sqDMtGdGPq7AoQuEvbiivnOasO287](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?from=addon=register&url=https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?from=addon=register&url=https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEuce6sqDMtGdGPq7AoQuEvbiivnOasO287)

*Silent Spring* was first published over 60 years ago. Rachel Carson warned her readers that DDT, a widely-used insecticide, was disrupting ecosystems and endangering native species. DDT accumulates in the tissues of any creature that consumes it, so it builds up over time as more and more DDT-contaminated prey are eaten. Thus the toxicity gets biomagnified at each successive level of the food web, compromising the health and reproduction of the top predator species. The bald eagle population was reduced to just 417 known nesting pairs, before DDT was outlawed in this country.

Maine's native wildlife (and humans!) are still threatened by substances that contaminate our natural resources, and then biomagnify up the food chain. Industrial mercury, blowing downwind and then settling out from smokestack emissions in the Midwest and Canada, continues to poison animals that forage in lakes and rivers throughout the state. Extremely high mercury concentrations in tested birds and fish in the lower Penobscot River estuary led to a public health advisory against consuming waterfowl from Mendall Marsh south to Verona Island, plus a closure of seven square miles of the lobster fishery in upper Penobscot Bay. Synthetic "forever chemicals," known collectively as PFAS, have leached into Maine's groundwater and soil in areas where

PFAS-contaminated wastewater sludge was used to fertilize farm fields. The chemicals are taken up by plants, including crops eaten by both humans and livestock. Hunters in the Fairfield area were first warned last fall to avoid eating deer meat, due to unsafe levels of PFAS found in nearly all of the deer tested in that region. PFAS monitoring of wildlife in other areas of Maine is ongoing. And then there are the neonicotinoid pesticides, fungicides, and the herbicide glyphosphate (Roundup), all linked to the loss of honeybees and other pollinators.

Your speaker for this program, Dr. Dianne Kopec, is a Research Fellow at the George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions at the University of Maine, and a Maine Audubon Trustee. Dianne is a wildlife biologist who studies the accumulation of toxic contaminants in native species. She will describe the results of her several decades of field research on mammals, fish, and birds, and take you on a whirlwind tour of the studies prompting concern about mercury, PFAS, neonicotinoid pesticides, and the herbicide glyphosphate. Please join us to learn the stories behind the headlines on introduced toxins that continue to poison native Maine wildlife...and humans.



# 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.*

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



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

## STILL A FEW DAYS LEFT TO BID...AND TWO GREAT DAYS TO BUY!

The **PVC annual online auction** will end at noon EST on Friday, December 9. It's easy to place your bids on a wide variety of interesting items, services, and events, at all price points! You can feel great knowing that all proceeds from the online auction will be used to promote grass-roots environmental outreach and programming in the Penobscot Valley. We would like to thank all the generous individuals and companies that donated items for this year's auction, and we encourage you to patronize participating local businesses.

You can check out the auction page at [pvc.maineaudubon.org](http://pvc.maineaudubon.org), and feel free to share it widely with family and friends. Unfortunately we will not be able to hold our traditional holiday party this year due to ongoing health concerns, so all winning items will be delivered directly to the winning bidders' homes unless special arrangements are made to pick up the items at Fields Pond Audubon Center.

Please note that Double Discount Day at the Fields Pond Nature Store is still scheduled for Friday, December 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. In fact, Fields Pond is hosting a **DOUBLE Double Discount Day** this year, so Maine Audubon members can also get a 20% discount on store merchandise on Friday, December 16, same hours. On both days, you'll be able to browse through a wide assortment of nature-related items and books, suitable for everyone on your gift list! Happy holidays, all!

## 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 [rumery@maine.edu](mailto:rumery@maine.edu) to be added to the mailing list for the Zoom meeting links and any in-person meeting updates. Here is the title and synopsis for February. The group will not meet in December or January.

February 9, 2023

Stotts, Rodney and Pipkin, Kate. **Bird Brother: A Falconer's Journey and the Healing Power of Wildlife.** 2022. 211 pages. To escape the streets of Southeast Washington, D.C. in the late 1980s, young Stotts would ride the metro to the National Zoo. There, the bald eagles and other birds of prey captured his imagination. Rodney shares his journey to becoming a conservationist and one of America's few Black master falconers. He took a position in 1992 with a new nonprofit, the Earth Conservation Corps. Gradually, Rodney fell in love with the work to restore and conserve the polluted Anacostia River. As conditions along the river improved, he helped to reintroduce bald eagles to the region and befriended an injured Eurasian Eagle Owl named Mr. Hoots, the first of many birds whose respect he would work hard to earn. He began to train to become a master falconer and to develop his own raptor education program and sanctuary.

# Happy Holidays!