

# Natural Selections

The Penobscot Valley Audubon Newsletter



September–November 2024

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

## Slipping Toward Fall

BY SEAN TRAHAN, PRESIDENT  
PENOBSCOT VALLEY AUDUBON

As summer quickly comes to an end, I hope you have had the chance to enjoy the beautiful weather we've had. Fields Pond has been bustling with activity, from kayakers and canoers to fishermen. Additionally, we have been blessed with the arrival of two baby loons this summer. While it is always a bit nerve-wracking to see them navigate the pond while avoiding boaters and natural predators, I am happy to report that they have been doing well. I have been keeping a close eye on them, either with binoculars from my dock or by taking a quick (and careful!) boat ride. Just last week, I witnessed the chicks diving, a positive sign! Please be cautious and keep your distance if you spot them, as loon families are still quite vulnerable.

I am pleased to announce that our Board of Directors has recently expanded with the addition of two new members. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Arlene "Lene" Campoli and Mary Conmee. Their fresh perspectives will undoubtedly contribute to our board discussions, as we continue to grow our programs and strengthen our regional presence.

Penobscot Valley Audubon volunteers work collaboratively with the Maine Audubon staff at Fields Pond Audubon Center. We have all been working hard to plan and schedule programs that appeal not only to our valued members, but also to the wider regional community. We are eager to expand our membership and reach more individuals who can help us in our mission to conserve native wildlife and wildlife habitat within the Penobscot Valley region.

To stay updated on our upcoming events, please visit the Penobscot Valley webpage at <https://pvc.maineaudubon.org> and the Maine Audubon Events page at <https://maineaudubon.org/events/>. You can also follow our Penobscot Valley Audubon Facebook posts, and subscribe to our weekly emails. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about our chapter and programs, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at [Sean.Trahan@gmail.com](mailto:Sean.Trahan@gmail.com).



*Photograph by Wayne A. Foote*

Photo credit: Wayne Foote

### WELCOME TO PVC NEW AND REJOINING MEMBERS!

Melinda Blake, Hampden  
Susan Bonzey, Dedham  
Madison Brown, Veazie  
Lee Caren, Brewer  
Daryle Carter, Hampden  
Grace & David Coffe, Brewer  
Sybil Coombs, Greenville  
Anthony DeFeo, Newburgh  
Douglas Depew, Milford  
Elizabeth Duncan, Winterport  
Gladys Ewing, Orrington  
Cara Fox, Bucksport  
Gabriella & Cody Fryer, Orono  
John Groleau, Winterport  
Michael Guare, Bangor  
Chelsea and Kirk Johnson, Bucksport  
Efrem Kann, Orrington  
Wendy Pace & Marianne Stratton, Winterport  
Hannah Roy, Hermon  
Jeannette Ruhl, Lincoln  
Arnold L. Snyder, Stockton Springs  
David Tapley, Stillwater  
Valerie Watson, Old Town  
Suzanne Weller, Bucksport

# MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

## Natural Selections

Natural Selections is published four times a year by Penobscot Valley 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, [PVCAudubon@gmail.com](mailto:PVCAudubon@gmail.com) to sign up for these services.

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

President..... Sean Trahan  
Vice President ..... Gloria Vollmers  
Secretary ..... Sean Trahan  
Treasurer ..... Jim Zeman  
Chapter Representative, Maine Audubon Board of Trustees ..... Sandi McRae Duchesne

### AT-LARGE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Bowden, Ellen Campbell, Lene Campoli, Mary Conmee, Timothy Conmee, Bob Duchesne, Bob Milardo, Gordon Russell and ex-officio board member David Lamon.

### CHAPTER COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Programs & Field Trips ..... Bob Milardo  
Auction Committee..... Ellen Campbell

### Natural Selections

Editor..... Sandi McRae Duchesne  
Design & Layout..... Donne Sinderson  
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<https://pvc.maineaudubon.org>  
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## Fields Pond Journal

BY DAVID LAMON

DIRECTOR, NORTHERN PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

### Expanding River In My Backyard!

The River In My Backyard (RMB) program was launched in 2020 to help students in the Bangor School District understand the significance of the Penobscot River watershed as vital habitat for endangered Atlantic Salmon and other wildlife. This fall, a new NOAA/NAAEE grant award will enable Maine Audubon staff to expand the RMB program to the Piscataquis River. Partnering with RSU 68 in Dover-Foxcroft, students from the rural communities of Sebec, Dover-Foxcroft, Monson, and Charleston will take part in the RMB program. The Piscataquis River is a major tributary within the Penobscot River watershed. It provides one of the highest quality cold-water habitats available for native Atlantic Salmon in the northeast United States. The RMB program will provide students with learning experiences that are grounded in their local community, helping them understand the human and ecological impacts to their watershed, so they can better respond to current and future environmental challenges.

### New Face at Fields Pond!

I am pleased to announce that Val Watson (she/her) has joined Maine Audubon's Northern Programs and Operations team as a Naturalist and FPAC Manager. Val earned her BS degree in Ecology and Environmental Sciences in 2018 from the University of Maine. Seasonal field research and environmental education positions in Georgia, Colorado, and Washington preceded her return to Maine in 2020. She received her MS in Ecology and Environmental Sciences in 2023, with a focus on river restoration work on the Narraguagus River. Val cares deeply about good science communication, relationship-building, and not taking herself too seriously. She lives in Old Town, and spends her free time gardening, canoeing, and playing with clay. Please join me in welcoming Val, and check out the exciting new nature programs and walks she will be leading this fall. Val will take over from me as the regular author of this column, starting with the Winter 2024-25 issue of Natural Selections.



Val Watson, Naturalist and FPAC Manager

## FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER FALL 2024 PROGRAMS

Please register online at [www.maineaudubon.org/events](http://www.maineaudubon.org/events) for listings and program fees. Programs are in-person at FPAC, unless otherwise noted.

### Nature Journaling

Wednesday, September 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Karen O. Zimmermann, Maine Master Naturalist, Registered Maine Guide, watercolorist, and nature journal instructor, will discuss different ways to journal and lead us through warm-up exercises. We'll then spend time observing and recording, using all our senses. No art skills required; supply list will be provided following registration.

### Home School Naturalists

Thursdays: September 19, October 3, 17, 31, 10 a.m. to noon

We will explore, observe, and track phenological variations in plant and animal life across the season, right here on the FPAC sanctuary. Parents, this program can be an integral part of your child's science curriculum for ages 8-12 (Grades 3-6). Drop ins are welcomed on a space-available basis; please call ahead to confirm availability.

### Bats!

Thursday, Sept 12, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Meet our neighbors in the night sky: bats! This program will start with an indoor presentation on why bats are such important members of our natural community, and how we can do our part to help them thrive. Then we'll go for a stroll through the meadow, to see what bat species we can find!

### Mushrooms of Maine

Saturday, September 21, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Join local favorite David Spahr, author of *Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms of New England and Eastern Canada*, on a journey through the world of fungi. Time will be spent both indoors and outdoors, learning about mushroom identification, folklore, collecting, and cooking.

### Bangor GreenDrinks

Tuesday, September 10, 5-8 p.m.

FREE (BYO glass or mug recommended) Maine Audubon is partnering with Bangor GreenDrinks and Geaghan's Brewery for an event focused on sustainable local businesses and local environmental projects. It's a great opportunity to network with professionals from throughout the greater Bangor region. GreenDrinks is a free, family-friendly

event - but please bring your ID, if you plan to have a beer!

### Fields Pond Hiking Club

Tuesdays, September 17, 24, October 1, 8, 15, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

NEW THIS FALL! Join a Fields Pond naturalist on a guided hike for adults. Meet like-minded people, spend time being active outdoors, and note the differences you see from week to week. Together we'll observe the changing of the season, and learn how regular observations of nature can contribute to scientific understanding worldwide. Hikes will be kept at a pace manageable for the whole group.

### Fall Bird Walk Series at Fields Pond

September 13, October 4, 11, 18, 25, 7:30 a.m.

Maine Audubon Naturalist Val Watson will lead weekly walks during fall migration. These walks provide an excellent opportunity to see birds you may not otherwise get a chance to see. Add to that the challenge of identifying birds that have molted from their breeding plumage, and you have an exciting mix.

### Curious by Nature

Online Thursdays, September 19, October 3, 17, 31, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join a naturalist online to learn about one Maine species each week. We'll explore everything from scientific names to extreme adaptations and odd morphology. Strengthen your knowledge of Maine's flora and fauna in a fun and informal setting.

### Stream Explorers Workshop

Saturday October 19, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Come and practice your sampling methods and macroinvertebrate identification skills at this in-person training workshop. Stream Explorers is our ongoing community science project, featuring aquatic insects and what they can tell us about wildlife habitat and water quality. Educational resources for classroom teachers will be available; sign up today!

### Fall Stewardship Day

Saturday, October 5, 9 a.m. to noon

Join the FPAC staff for a morning of stewardship activities focused on improving our trails, the Nature Center, and other public use spaces on the sanctuary. Bring work gloves and sturdy footwear. Snacks provided!

### Family Bug Blitz

Saturday, October 5, 6:30 p.m.

Get up close and personal with our crawling and flying insect neighbors! Following a short indoor presentation, we'll head outside to attract insects using special lights. Insects will be identified and released, and we'll record everything we find in a community science database. A fun and educational experience for the whole family.

### 2024 Fall Foliage 5K Trail Run at Fields Pond

Saturday, October 12, 9 a.m.

Cost: \$25 member, \$30 nonmember

Join us for our annual trail running event. This challenging course will take you up through our beautiful, wooded trails and onto the adjoining Holden Land Trust trail system, for the perfect fall foliage tour! Kids are invited to participate in a FREE, short fun run at 10:30 a.m., following the 5K Trail Race.

### Small Wild Basketry Workshop

Friday, November 8, 5-9 p.m.

Wild basketry is an ancient craft that transforms natural materials like grasses, vines, and tree bark into functional containers. Jessica Steele will guide participants in learning how to collect, process, and weave locally sourced plants such as cattail, pine needle, birch bark, and more. Workshop will feature a presentation and basket-making demonstrations by Jessica, followed by hands-on work to create your own baskets. Over the four-hour class, students can choose to weave a larger basket or several smaller ones.

### Training Avian Ambassadors of Birdsacre

Tuesday, November 12, 6 p.m.

Raptors are ultimate athletes that need nearly perfect bodily function to survive in the wild. Despite expert medical care by wildlife rehabilitators, some injured raptors remain too physically compromised to release. Permanently incapacitated raptors at Birdsacre in Ellsworth are occasionally trained to serve as Avian Ambassadors. Join the Director of Birdsacre, Grayson Richmond, for an insider's look at what it takes to prepare a wild bird of prey for public education appearances. Whether it's an owl, vulture, or hawk, each bird has its own unique journey. This is their story! Please note, there will be no live animals at this presentation.

**Natural History and Human Impacts at Fields Pond**

*Saturday November 16, 10-11:30 a.m.*

Have you ever wondered about stone walls out in the woods, or why some parts of the forest floor are smoother than others? What can a big oak or a multi-topped pine tell us about the history of a landscape? FPAC staff will lead this guided hike to show how current-day forest conditions reflect its long history of human use and natural disturbance. We expect to cover a slow 1-2 miles over uneven forested terrain.

**FIELDS POND BOOK GROUP**

*The Fields Pond Book Group meets monthly on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m., in-person at the Orono Public Library and online via Zoom. If you would like to participate, please contact Joyce directly at rumery@maine.edu to sign up for the Zoom link, which she will send out shortly before the meeting. Here are the book listings for September through November.*

**September 12, 2024**

Ackerman, Jennifer. *What an Owl Knows: The New Science of the World's Most Enigmatic Birds*. 2023. 352 pp.

The latest in her series detailing our current understanding of birds, this time with a focus on owls. "Now, with the help of new tools and technology, researchers are revealing the secrets of these enigmatic birds—how they talk to one another, how they 'see' sound, and how they fly as quietly as moths; how they court their mates in wild and outlandish ways, fiercely protect their nests, migrate huge distances, and survive the radically changing conditions of our planet."

**October 10, 2025**

Goldfarb, Ben. *Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of the Planet*. 2023. 384 pp.

Some 40 million miles of roadways encircle the earth, yet we tend to regard them only as infrastructure for human convenience. While roads are so ubiquitous they're practically invisible to us, wild animals experience them as entirely alien forces of death and disruption. Goldfarb travels throughout the United States and around the world to investigate how roads have transformed our planet. A million animals are killed by cars each day in the U.S. alone, but as the new science of road ecology

**BRINGING NATURE HOME SERIES**

**Collecting Seeds from Native Plants**

*Online, Wednesday, October 9, 6:30-7:30 p.m.*

Fall is a great time to collect seeds from many of the native plant species in Maine. This program will explain how and when to effectively collect seeds from native plants. We'll also discuss the ethics of sustainable seed collection, and how to be sure we're not causing more harm than good. For hands-on practice, come to our seed collection field workshop on October 19!

**Seed Collecting Field Workshop**

*Saturday, October 19, 10 a.m. – noon*

Learn how to collect native seeds from a variety of species found on the FPAC sanctuary. We'll also discuss seed collection techniques and timing for popular species that produce seed at other times of year, and how to collect seeds ethically, without causing harm to the ecosystem. Throughout this program, you'll have the opportunity to collect wild seeds yourself. At the end you'll go home with your own seed packets, ready for planting!

**The New Fall Garden Checklist**

*Online, Wednesday October 23, 6:30-7:30 p.m.*

Preparing our gardens for winter traditionally has involved tidying up: removing brush, raking out leaves, making things look nice and clean. But is that really what's best for our garden, and for the wildlife that lives and forages there? In this program we'll create a new fall checklist, designed to ensure that our gardens can provide high-quality habitat all year round.

**Sowing Native Seeds**

*Online, Wednesday, November 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m.*

Learn more about how and when to sow native seeds to get them ready for the growing season. Then come to the follow-up in-person workshops, November 9 at Fields Pond and November 23 at Gilsland Farm. (Same workshop at both locations)

**Seed-Sowing Workshop**

*Saturday, November 9, 10 a.m. to noon*

Winter is a great time to sow native seeds, so they'll be ready for a strong start come spring. In this hands-on workshop, Maine Audubon staff will show you how to propagate native seeds to grow your own wildflowers and other plants. Participants will leave with several pots sown with seeds, ready for maintenance-free outdoor germination.

**Native Plant Success Stories**

*Online, Wednesday, November 20, 6:30-7:30 p.m.*

In this program, you'll learn about regional projects that focus on reintroducing native plants to the built environment. We'll hear about how native plantings are replacing popular exotic species in public spaces, and how the people leading these projects are fostering public acceptance of native plants in the landscape.

shows, the harms of highways extend far beyond roadkill. Creatures from antelope to salmon are losing their ability to migrate in search of food and mates; invasive plants hitch rides in tire treads; road salt contaminates lakes and rivers; and the very noise of traffic chases songbirds from vast swaths of habitat. Yet road ecologists are also seeking to blunt the destruction through innovative solutions. Goldfarb meets with conservationists building bridges for California's mountain lions

and tunnels for English toads, engineers deconstructing the labyrinth of logging roads that web national forests, animal rehabbers caring for Tasmania's car-orphaned wallabies, and community organizers working to undo the havoc highways have wreaked upon American cities. Today, as our planet's road network continues to grow exponentially, the science of road ecology has become increasingly vital.

## PENOBSCOT VALLEY AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS FALL 2024

Penobscot Valley Audubon 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! Trips are free and open to the general public, although we hope you will consider joining Maine Audubon if you are not already a member. Your membership supports science-based education, conservation, and advocacy work for native wildlife and wildlife

### CARIBOU BOG CONSERVATION AREA

Sunday, September 15, 8-11 a.m.

Rain date: Sunday, September 22, 8-11 a.m.

Leader: Todd Miller

The restored wetlands in Boulder Pond and Black Pond (formerly known as the Taylor Bait Ponds) are actively managed to attract migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. Late summer to early fall is the best time to come for shorebirds, as this is the height of their migration through our region. CBCA can often be a good spot for mammal sightings as well.

Directions: From Forest Avenue in Orono, take Taylor Road (aka the "Dump Road") 0.3 miles to a slight left onto Putnam Road. We will meet in the trailhead parking area in front of the gate.

### CARIBOU BOG CONSERVATION AREA

Sunday, October 11, 8-11 a.m.

Leaders: Gordon Russell and Jane Rosinski

Same program description as above.

### FALL MIGRATION IN CENTRAL MAINE

Sunday, October 22, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Bob Milardo, Sharon Wilson Barker, & Shane Barker

Join us for a fall migration tour of productive birding hotspots in central Maine, focusing on species that rest and refuel around ponds, rivers, and lakes. We will make multiple stops to survey birds at Plymouth Pond, Sebasticook Lake-Durham Bridge, Sprague's Mill, and Corinna Bog/Corundel Lake. We're likely to spot a wide variety of waterfowl, along with smaller numbers of late-migrating shorebird species - and possibly a few unexpected delights. Bring binoculars and/or camera, and a spotting scope if you have one; the guides will also share theirs with participants.

Directions: Meet at the commuter Park-and-Ride lot east of I-95 Exit 174 (Carmel-Newburgh), directly across from the Dysarts convenience store. PLEASE NOTE: parking along the route is very limited, so carpooling is a must.

### WEST SIDE WATERBIRDS

Sunday, November 10, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Rain date: Sunday, November 17, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Bob Milardo, Val Watson, & Rachel Darling

Join us for the first post-COVID revival of our most popular annual fall birding trip. We will carpool along the tidal Penobscot River out to Penobscot Bay, with stops in Frankfort, Searsport, Sears Island, and Belfast. This trip usually offers good opportunities for spotting waterfowl and sea ducks, along with late fall migrants and year-round resident species.

Directions: Meet in Hampden at the "Historic Hampden Academy" parking lot (on US-1A, immediately south of the intersection with US-202/State Route 9) to form carpools.



Male and Female Buffleheads  
Photo credit: Bob Duchesne

## FIELDS POND BOOK GROUP CONT'D.

### November 14, 2024

Schaub, Eve O. *Year of No Garbage: Recycling Lies, Plastic Problems, and One Woman's Trashy Journey to Zero Waste*. 2023. 270 pp.

Schaub, humorist and stunt memoirist extraordinaire, tackles her most difficult challenge to date: garbage. Convincing her husband and two daughters to go along with her, Schaub attempts the seemingly impossible: living in the modern world without creating any trash at all...for an entire year. In the process, Schaub learns some startling things: that modern recycling is broken, and single stream recycling is a lie. That flushable wipes aren't flushable, and compostables aren't compostable. That plastic drives climate change, fosters racism, and is poisoning the environment and our bodies at alarming rates, as microplastics are being found everywhere, from the top of Mount Everest to the placentas of unborn babies.

# MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Audubon  
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.*

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## BOB TALKS BIRDS

### A Few Things I've Learned

BY BOB DUCHESNE

I've been a birder for over 60 years. In all that time, I've learned a thing or two. Here's a partial list.

- The prettier the bird, the less likely it will sit still for a photo.
- If I travel a long way to see a rare bird, it will turn up moments after I leave to go home.
- Birding generates more vanity plates than any other hobby.
- No matter how clever I think my bird feeder protection strategy is, the squirrel has all day to prove me wrong.
- Really, I should be more excited about gulls than I am.
- Is there anything sadder than a bald eagle with a combover?
- Maybe I shouldn't admit this, but I know what a ruffed grouse looks like, sounds like, and tastes like.
- Chicken soup is good for your health...unless you're the chicken.
- Purple finches and purple sandpipers aren't purple, but they're close enough.
- What if we named birds like we name hurricanes? Instead of naming it a red-eyed vireo, we'd just call it Alice.
- One vulture says to the other: "Does this clown taste funny to you?"
- 90% of birders walk underneath 90% of birds without knowing they're there. Bird noises matter.
- The active ingredient in Dove soap is not what I thought it would be.

- Whenever I stop on an abandoned roadside in the wilderness to listen for an unusual bird, a car or truck will come along.
- They will assume I'm looking at a moose, and stop.
- When they discover I'm birding, they will tell me where they saw an eagle.
- Owls aren't as wise as college graduates. But they're not \$37,000 in debt either.
- There is almost no difference between the length of the bills on a short-billed dowitcher and a long-billed dowitcher. This annoys me.
- I'm surprised at how many people don't understand how their binoculars work.
- Global warming will eventually eliminate Atlantic puffins from Maine.
- The same is true for lobsters.
- When barred owls call "Who cooks for you?" I think it's none of their business.
- OK, I think Maine has enough wild turkeys now.
- I always feel uncertain about how to pluralize titmouse.
- It's unfair that the West gets all the hummingbirds.
- Everything about a woodcock is funny.
- You can never have too many field guides.
- For the last time, it's a Canada goose, not a Canadian goose!