



# *the* ***Pileated Press***

Western Maine Audubon, *a chapter of Maine Audubon*

Box 832, Farmington, ME 04938

## **- Our Fall Talks 2020 -**

All talks will be at the usual time and date (the second Wednesday evening of the months of September, October and November at 7:00 PM). They will be live but will probably need to be by Webinar. We hope the set up is such as to allow you to ask questions of the speaker. The link to sign into each Webinar will be posted on our website one week before the talk, and, if we have your email address, you will receive a note from us with the sign in information. At some point we hope to be able to return to live, in person, presentations. Please check our website prior to each talk to confirm the link to the webinar or to find notice as to where at UMF the talk will take place. Website: [western.maineaudubon.org/events/](http://western.maineaudubon.org/events/)

### **September 9 - What's Happening to Our Birds?**

**Speaker: Sally Stockwell**

The numbers are staggering. A recent article in the journal *Science* documents declines among 64% of all eastern forest bird species—a loss of 167 million birds—and among 50% of all boreal forest species—a loss of 501 million birds—in North America alone. That means nearly one in four of all eastern forest birds and one in three of all boreal forest birds that were coloring the forest with their flashy feathers and cheerful songs in 1970 are no longer with us.

There are many reasons for these declines. Some of the more persistent are habitat loss on both breeding and wintering grounds, loss or degradation of migratory stopovers, decline or contamination of insect food from overuse of pesticides, collisions with windows and other human structures, and predation from cats. Individuals can take simple steps to steward birds and habitat, and every little bit helps. Maine can do more than a little bit; in fact, we can play an outsized role in helping to stem the decline.



*Savannah Sparrow, a grassland bird, by Jennifer Brockway*

Our state has the largest remaining block of forest in the eastern U.S. and these forests are vital to the breeding success of millions of forest songbirds every year. We are the “baby bird factory” for the entire Atlantic Flyway.

Because of that, much of northern and western Maine has been designated as a globally significant Important Bird Area by National Audubon and BirdLife International. We have both an opportunity and a responsibility to help these declining birds.

Find out what you can do to help stem the declines. All landowners in the region with grasslands or forestlands can help by creating or improving habitat for birds in Maine. Your efforts to care for your woods, fields and waters can make a big difference!

Sally Stockwell is a wildlife ecologist with experience in conservation of nongame, rare, and endangered species in freshwater wetlands, coastal beaches and marshes, and northern forests. She has additional experience as an interpretive naturalist, environmental education instructor, and outdoor adventure leader. Sally holds a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology and an M.S. in wildlife management from the University of Maine and a B.S. in biology from The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington.

In 2008, Sally was the recipient of the UMaine Department of Wildlife Ecology Award for Professional Excellence for long-term career service to wildlife conservation. Sally serves on numerous state committees and has been actively involved in town planning, open space planning



*Wood Thrush, a woodland bird, by Doug Hitchcox*



*Great Auks by John James Audubon, from The Birds of America*

Herb Wilson is a Professor Emeritus of Biology at Colby College where he taught Ornithology, Evolution and Diversity, Marine Ecology and Marine Invertebrate Zoology. His primary ornithological interests are the impacts of global climate change on bird migration and the foraging behavior of winter birds in Maine. He is also keenly interested in the odonates and butterflies of Maine.

## **November 11 – Centuries of Change in Maine’s Forests: Looking Back and Striving Forward**

**Speaker: Andrew Barton**

Andrew Barton will describe how Maine forests have changed over the past several centuries in terms of tree species, forest structure,

## **October 14 - Changing Bird Populations in Maine**

**Speaker: Herb Wilson**

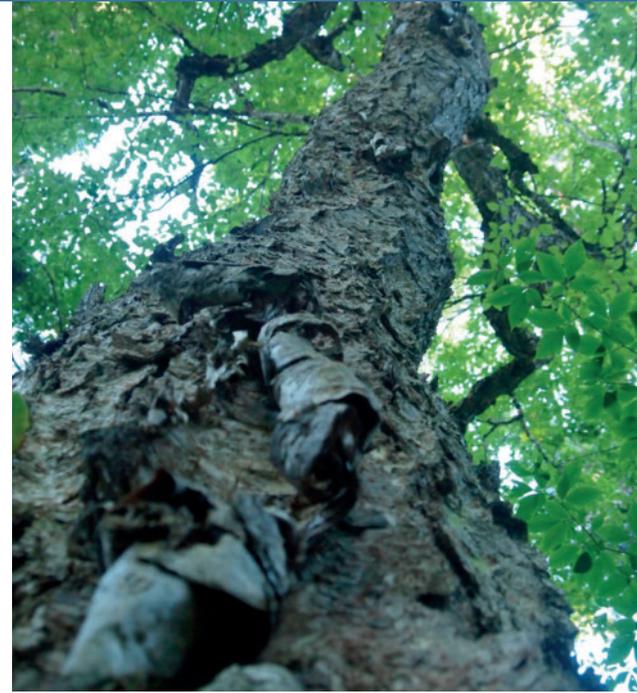
Since Maine became a state in 1820 there have been many changes in our bird fauna. Some species have immigrated into the state to become a part of our avifauna. Sadly, others have declined and, in some cases, disappeared. We’ll explore the changes in Maine’s birds over the past two centuries, using a variety of resources.



*Canoeing in Big Reed Forest Reserve, by Andrew Barton*

and the replacement of old growth with younger forests. He'll highlight the ecological importance of older forests and some of the exciting strategies for conservation and restoration of these important habitats.

Andrew Barton is a forest ecologist, science writer, and professor of biology at the University of Maine at Farmington. His research focuses on how forests are responding to changing climate, and wildfires in the mountains of the USA-Mexico borderlands. His current projects focus on an endangered plant species in the region, and the employment of the new ECOSTRESS instrument on the International Space Station to predict vegetation drought stress and recovery after wildfires. Drew is the author of the award-winning book, *The Changing Nature of the Maine Woods*, and *Ecology and Recovery of Old-growth Forests in Eastern North America* from Island Press. Drew co-founded the Michigan National Forest Watch and the UMF Sustainable Campus Coalition and was a key player in the Mt. Blue-Tumbledown Conservation Alliance, which protected 30,000 acres of forestland in western Maine. He teaches courses on ecology, conservation, plants, and forests, as well as a travel course on the ecology of Costa Rica.



*Old growth yellow birch in Big Reed Forest Reserve, by Andrew Barton*

## - President's Column - Nancy Knapp

*Photo Credit: Burt Knapp*

Greetings Everyone,

There is no need to say this has been a strange and challenging time for all of us. Our board decided recently to have a real in person meeting to discuss how or whether to move forward. We met outside, all spaced well apart, on a windy June morning in front of our big barn. It was wonderful to see everyone after several months of e-mails and to hear people speak enthusiastically about continuing our talks, whether in person or by webinar depending on how the state is doing and what the rules are come September. So we have planned the usual 3 talks starting with Sally Stockwell now in Sept. She can do either format. We had wanted to bring the bicentennial celebration into the series and will still do some of that with Herb Wilson in Oct. discussing how bird populations have changed over 200 years and then Drew Barton in Nov. discussing how the forests have changed in our area. As mentioned above, please check the web site to get up dated information on delivery mode close to the date. Our goal is to have the webinar, if that is the delivery mode, at the usual time as the talks, 7:00 PM on the 2nd Wed. of each month.

In the meantime, enjoy the beauty around us. At times like these the natural world has so much to offer us with a unique ability to calm, to reassure and to re-ground us. Sit quietly and really listen to the songs of our birds, enjoy the wondrous flight of butterflies and the healing power of our fields and forests. Aren't we fortunate to live surrounded by the solace we can find right outside our doors! The catbird outside the window seems to agree!

I hope to actually see everyone sometime this fall but that remains uncertain. We will bring you our 3 fall "talks" -one way or another.

*Nancy Knapp*

## - Article -

### *Photos and article by Jason Hawkins, board member*

I am so thankful to live in the beautiful Western Mountains of Maine where we can experience so many wonderful opportunities to enjoy Nature! It is so good for our health and wellbeing to get outside and explore the hidden spaces in the meadows, woods, brooks and streams, ponds and lakes, hills and Mountains where you are sure to find many interesting sights, sounds, smells, tastes and interactions. I wanted to share some highlighted experiences that I have had so far this spring and early summer.

When I am out in Nature, I always keep an eye, ear and even nose out



*Fallen Branch with lichen and fungi*



*Reishi mushrooms*

for natural manifestations that might cross my path and I am never disappointed. Fungi finds are always

amazing in any season and the colors that they sometimes reveal can make quite an impression. On one fallen branch there may be over a half dozen fungi and lichen inhabiting together in a colorful community. Just behind where I live there has been a faithful bursting forth of lovely lady slippers each spring, both white and pink, they are quite amazing. They rely upon a mycorrhizal relationship with fungi in the soil. There are also Reishi and other mushrooms that have been manifesting themselves each year at spots I have discovered just being out and about in Nature with my eyes and ears open. Wildlife continues to be an important reminder of how we are all connected in this biosphere and what we do has consequences, so we should be mindful of our circle of Life. I saw a moose out



*Lady Slipper*



*Luna Moth*

in the woods. These majestic creatures deserve respect and protection. I also got to catch a glimpse into the reptilian world when a green snake was discovered out back by a vernal pool in the process of consuming a frog! The Luna Moth I spotted was resting on a beech tree and it is amazing how big and beautiful some moths can get!

In summary, it is always good to get out into Nature because you never know what might happen unless you do! My family and I have reference and resource books on mushrooms, trees, ferns, birds, wild edibles, medicinal plants and a new book on insects. Did you know Maine

has 27 different dragonflies and damselflies!?! Wow! There is so much to see, do and learn in Nature, so get your family, friends and community involved in the adventures! Be safe and be well!

## - Nature Watch -

*Photos and article by Burt Knapp, board member*

Nature Notes from Porter Hill Farm,  
While a black bear took down our post mounted feeder and enjoyed a feast of black oil sunflower seeds, a much smaller critter has been responsible for daily predation at our new hanging feeder – see photo. Purple Finches are regular visitors with occasional visits by a Downy Woodpecker. Most interesting was a visit by the Downy and a Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. The smaller Downy actually fed seeds to the bigger Sapsucker.

We have enjoyed an increased number of Barn Swallows nesting in the barn. The juveniles have been a noisy bunch and have been fun to watch as they learned to fly.



*Chipmunk*



*Downy Woodpecker*



*Yellow Bellied Sapsucker  
with Downy*



*Purple Finch*



*Bobolink*



*Blue Bird*



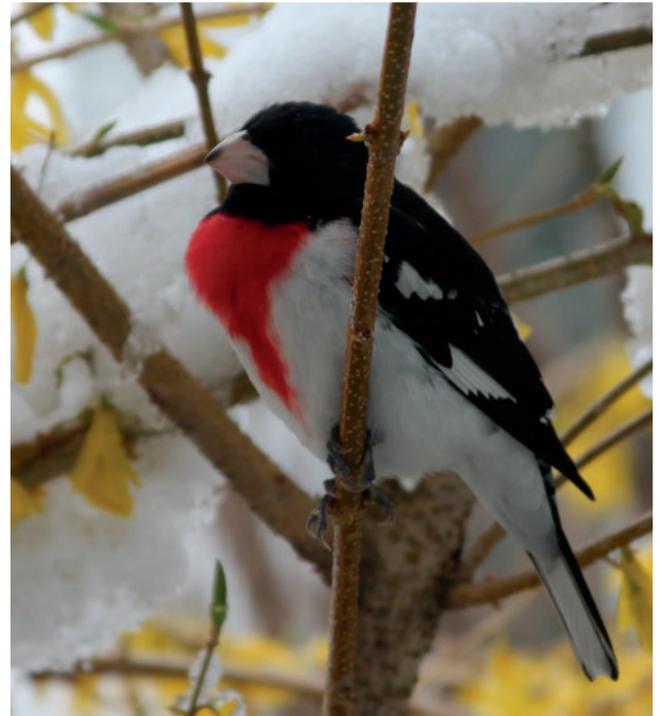
*Tree Swallow*

The parents are amazing as they skim low over the field at lightning speed, catching insects on the fly, never stopping long enough for me to catch a picture of one.

Other residents at the farm have been Bobolinks, Blue Birds, Robins, and Tree Swallows. A Rose Breasted Grosbeak and his lady friend joined us for about a month. I'm not sure they liked the late spring snow! A Ruby Throated Hummingbird arrived on cue when the Quince was in bloom and Cedar Wax Wings arrived with the ripening of the strawberries and raspberries. A Red Eyed Vireo stunned himself by flying into our storm door. Song Sparrows entertain us with their lovely song and Cat Birds with their chatter.

Altogether it has been a fun spring and summer of bird watching on the farm.

*Burt Knapp*



*Grossbeak - Rose Breasted*



*Red Eyed Verio*



*Cedar Wax Wing*

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**Thank you!**



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