

the ***Pileated Press***

Western Maine Audubon, a chapter of Maine Audubon

Box 832, Farmington, ME 04938

- Our Spring Talks 2021 -

All talks will be at the usual time and day - the second Wednesday evening of the months of March, April, and May, at 7:00 PM. They will be done by live webinars. To register, please sign onto our webpage, western.maineaudubon.org/events, and click on the register button for your selected talk. This will bring you to the Maine Audubon registration page. After registering you will receive a confirmation by email and the necessary link to the talk.

Website: western.maineaudubon.org/events/

March 10 - Chewonki Presents “Predators: The Balance of Nature”

Scary, disgusting, wicked, vicious: predators have a rough reputation in our society. Chewonki’s program, “Predators: The Balance of Nature,” explores the many commonly held myths about predators and works to dispel them. Highlighting the remarkable adaptations that help predators find and consume their prey, the presentation will engage participants with a vivid slideshow and lively discussion.

Chewonki’s presenter will use the lens of food webs and natural cycles to explore problems faced by predators in our world, including examples of their decline throughout history due to habitat loss and human interference. A discussion of current events will emphasize the importance of predators in maintaining the world’s ecological balance.



Great Horned Owl, by Anne Berleant

April 14 - Saving Seabirds: New Lessons From Puffins

Speaker: Dr. Stephen W. Kress

Worldwide, about one third of all seabird species are now globally threatened because of effects of invasive predatory mammals, marine pollution, coastal development and effects of climate change. Against this grim background, Dr. Kress's presentation about the restoration of Maine seabirds offers hope and inspiration that people also have the capacity to bring seabirds back to some of their historic nesting places and to be better stewards of nesting islands and the essential forage fish which seabirds require. The methods used to bring puffins and terns back to Maine islands are now used worldwide and he will share a few of these exciting restoration projects.



Stephen W. Kress



Puffin, by Stephen W. Kress

Dr. Kress will also discuss insights into the changing marine climate of the Gulf of Maine as revealed by Maine seabirds. His research has shown the connections between warm water and the plankton blooms that nourish forage fish, seabirds and all other coastal life. He will also share the discovery of where the puffins that nest in Maine spend their winter and how this helped to establish the first marine national monument on the east coast—the 'Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument.'



Peregrine Fledgelings, by Will Greene, Friends of Acadia, NPS

May 12 – Peregrine Falcon restoration in Acadia National Park and Highlights of the Cadillac Mountain Hawk Watch Speaker: Ranger Patrick Kark

As one of the first locations chosen to recover peregrine falcons, Acadia National Park has a storied history in the recovery of peregrine falcons. Join Ranger Patrick Kark as he discusses the success of the recovery project within the park and the reach

Acadia's falcons have had far outside Acadia's borders. Acadia also hosts the Cadillac Mountain Hawkwatch which will be entering its 27th counting season in 2021. Learn more about the experience of hawkwatch on the highest mountain on the eastern seaboard and how Cadillac fits into the larger network of hawk migration monitoring sites across the continent.

Ranger Patrick Kark came to Maine in 2014 as Acadia's raptor intern. He has worked seven seasons at the park as an ornithology park ranger and is currently working as a visual information specialist for the park.



Ranger Patrick Kark, by Yehyun Kim, Friends of Acadia, NPS

- President's Column - Nancy Knapp

Photo Credit: Burt Knapp

Greetings Everyone,

Thank goodness for chickadees! We have quite a large active flock with us this winter and have noticed some are a bit larger in size than others, but we are not yet sure if they have priority at the feeder. We also have male and female hairy woodpeckers. She visits frequently and he comes occasionally with his flashy red patches on the back of his head. Fortunately, the Audubon Loon Count this past year showed loons doing well and the Christmas Bird Count took place as well. More info on the Maine Audubon's website: maineaudubon.org

To pass this winter of continued pandemic restrictions we have been spending a lot of time skiing or walking on back woods trails. With occasional flurries of fresh snow, we have been treated to lots of fresh and clear animal tracks. The coyotes love running along in our old ski tracks for miles while the deer tend to crisscross the trail. The moose make quite a mess when they show up. We have also seen Bobcat prints, wing marks followed by footprints of a grouse, and turkey prints along with a multitude of tracks of the small folks who scamper around. Recently near Vienna we witnessed ravens calling loudly as they chased a hawk (broad wing ?) while 2 baldheaded eagles soared overhead. A coyote watched us briefly before loping off into the woods. I hope you are all getting out at times into the winter woods, but I have one word of caution. Late fall as we hiked into the hills on 1" of fresh powder my husband hit unseen black ice and fell dramatically. Fortunately, the only damage was several lacerations around his eye but this was a reminder to us that cold and snow can be dangerous. We had a lesson on shelter building and fire starting from our son Chris and now head out for the day with a sleeping bag, pad, birchbark and matches and a new GPS device which can track us and call for help.



Male Hairy Woodpecker and Chickadee on wing, by Burt Knapp

We hope we will never need to use any of this but encourage all who venture far into the wonderful and healing woods to do likewise.

We have 3 webinars planned for the spring as listed above. In March Chewonki will do a presentation on predators. They usually do this live with real creatures but have adapted their program for us. In April Steve Kress who is well known for his work with the puffin restoration project off the Maine Coast will talk about the success of that program. In May we will have another success story about the Peregrine Falcon Restoration Program in Acadia along with an update on the yearly Hawkwatch given by a Ranger Ornithologist from Acadia.

We all need to try to stay positive and look forward to a brighter tomorrow. The natural world of wonders which surrounds us continues, free of pandemics and politics, thank goodness!
Lean on it.

Nancy Knapp

- Article -

Webcams for pleasure and learning – by Camilla Cai, board member

The California baby condor, Iniko (i-NI-ko), made a strident call to the nation demonstrating the severity of last summer's California fires. Baby Iniko crouched 60 feet up in a redwood-tree-hollow nest, breathing smoke in a darkening world. Then, the webcam went off, melted by fire, and Ventana Wildlife Society began reporting to the world. Big Sur was on fire -- the Dolan fire meant no one could check on Iniko and other endangered birds. When, many days later, permission was given for the wildlife team to go back in, they had little hope of finding a live chick. The miracle was that, though the flames had licked 50 feet up on the redwood, Iniko in the nest 60 feet up was still alive and well. Better yet, its mother was circling the area with food. Its father was missing and later determined to have perished in the fire.

What a story. The webcam gave an unusual view of our world, from the animals' point of view, and yet the bird was respectfully monitored by an unobtrusive human camera.

The webcams let us learn about other animals without endangering them. Seeing into a wild raptor's nest, the raising of chicks from egg to fledging and beyond becomes visible with just a few clicks. Webcams for eagles in Decorah, Iowa, are followed by an osprey nest in South Cape May Meadows, New Jersey, and a later nest in Charlo, Montana. Sometimes nothing happens, other times the nest is full of wild activity. Patient viewing is always rewarded: dangerous visitors come to the nests, weather events challenge with snowstorms, ice-cold rain, wind events, and smoking fires. To see an osprey chick pant in the burning Montana sun (114 degrees) while his mother fans him with her wings is fascinating. The chick survived and flourished.

One-hundred or so sites are consolidated on explore.org without extra advertising. These non-profit sites have a wide range, from wild-animal societies to protective sanctuaries and to breeding homes for service animals. Explore.org has a clear mission statement and an effective monitoring policy for public comment. Thus, the tone and content of public comments range from a simple "Wow" to helpful explanations by long-time watchers. Staff members also join

in. The public is invited to post screen shots of interesting moments. Also, if no animal is visiting within the camera's range, a click at the bottom of the screen will move the video back to earlier moments in the day.

Especially interesting sites in the fall are the Mississippi River Flyway in Wisconsin and the brown bears at Katmai, Alaska. Birds are everywhere on both sites and the bears are fattening up on the ever-abundant salmon. Those sites are relatively quiet in winter, but by February eagles in Decorah begin their nesting although there is still snow on the ground. In early April, the ospreys should come back to Hog Island, Maine (an Audubon site), and, of course, the puffins will be there too.

Wild elephants, walruses, and seals are there for the viewing. Visit the baby panda born at the Washington Zoo August twenty-first, 2020, or visit the lumbering European brown bears snuffling around for food in remote Transylvania, Romania. There are many more sites. Webcams safely bring our fellow animals to us. Most of all, this way of viewing respects the animals' home spaces and their unique ways of living.

Sites:

<https://explore.org/livecams> [a non-profit consolidator of sites]

<https://mangolinkcam.com> [a commercial consolidator, lots of advertising]

<https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/romanian-bear-sanctuary-live-feed> [European brown bears]

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams> [for the baby panda and other animals]

- Nature Watch -

*Photos and article by Burt Knapp,
board member*

Nature Notes from Porter Hill Farm,

Winter offers a wonderful time for tracking. A few pictures and tips:

Turkey- large three toed track with small imprint of posterior spur. As turkeys are often found in large flocks you will often see many tracks in an area. The grouse is similar but smaller, usually there is only one set of tracks, sometimes with wing marks as the bird takes off.

Black Bear – The picture is of the left hind foot. It looks much like a person's bare footprint. This one was seen after an early season snow before the bear went into hibernation.



Turkey



Black Bear



Mouse



Bobcat



Coyote

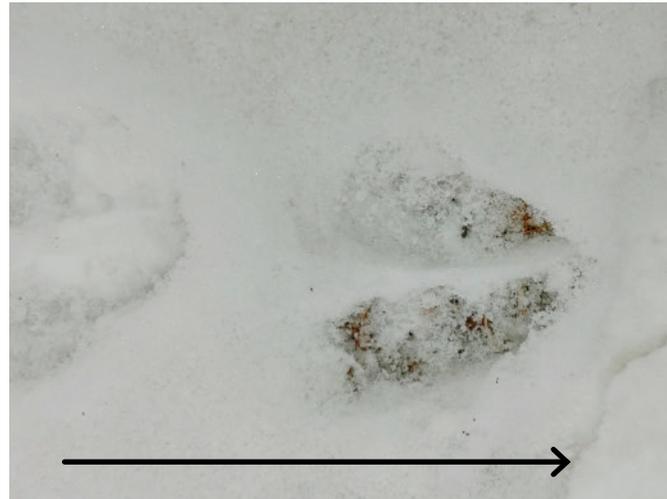
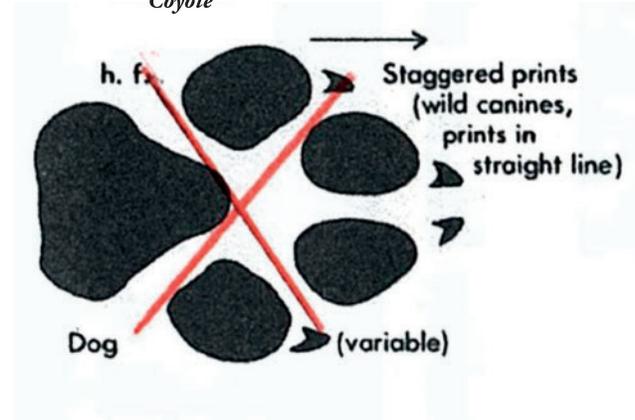
Mouse – with its tell-tale tail marks.

Bobcat – I am always on the look out for a feline track, which is uncommon compared to the more common canine coyote track. Note the round nature of the track and lack of claw marks.

Coyote – most canine tracks are similar, and distinguished from a feline track, in that one can draw an X through the track without encountering a toe or heel pad – see diagram. Coyotes usually travel in straight lines - they mean business and waste no energy by wandering here and there as a domestic dog does.

Deer – people are often confused by deer tracks – which direction is it going? The sharp part of the cloven hoof points in the direction of travel.

Burt Knapp



Deer

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