

the ***Pileated Press***

Western Maine Audubon, a chapter of Maine Audubon

Box 832, Farmington, ME 04938

- Our Fall Talks 2022 -

All talks will be as usual, 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday Evenings of September, October, and November. The specific room is uncertain at this time. The talks will be recorded as usual.

Some talks may be by “live” Zoom with you, the audience, in the classroom and the speaker Zooming in. This will allow us to be together while allowing a Q&A time with the speaker. We will continue to follow University policy about masking. Please check the website close to the time of the meeting to find out about location and the current policy about masking. An email will also be sent prior to each talk to update you as to location and masking policy. As always, vaccination with boosters is recommended.

September 14th- Loons

Speaker: Dr. Mark Pokras

Dr. Pokras, a graduate of Cornell and Tufts University will be speaking on new research findings concerning loons: their behaviors, their reaction to environmental stress, and threats to their well-being. A retired member of the faculty at Tufts, he regularly consults for a variety of private, state, and federal wildlife and environmental agencies. He has been doing mortality research on loons since 1987 and is widely recognized for this work on lead poisoning.



Photo Credit - Margaret Gompper/Audubon Photography Awards

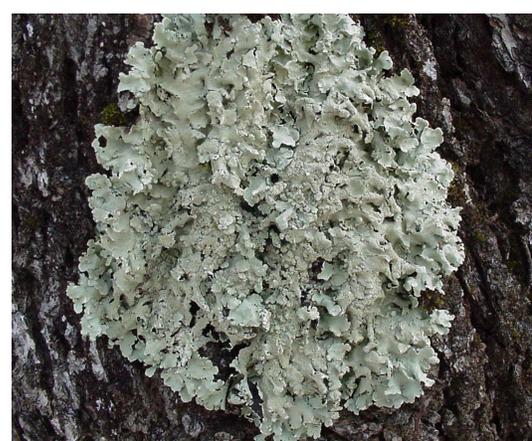
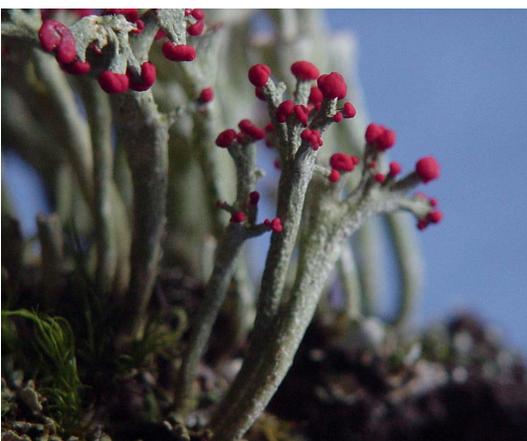
Please bring questions you might have concerning one of Maine’s favorite waterfowl.

October 12th - Maine Lichens

Speaker: Dr. Ron Butler

This presentation will provide a general overview of the evolution, morphology, and physiology of lichens. The ecological role of lichens in terrestrial ecosystems will be discussed, and the uses of lichens by animals (including humans) will be explored. A brief survey of some common Maine foliose, fruticose, squamulose, and crustose lichens will be presented, and some key references for lichen identification will be highlighted.

Dr. Ron Butler retired in 2021 as Emeritus Professor at the University of Maine at Farmington after 40 years of teaching.

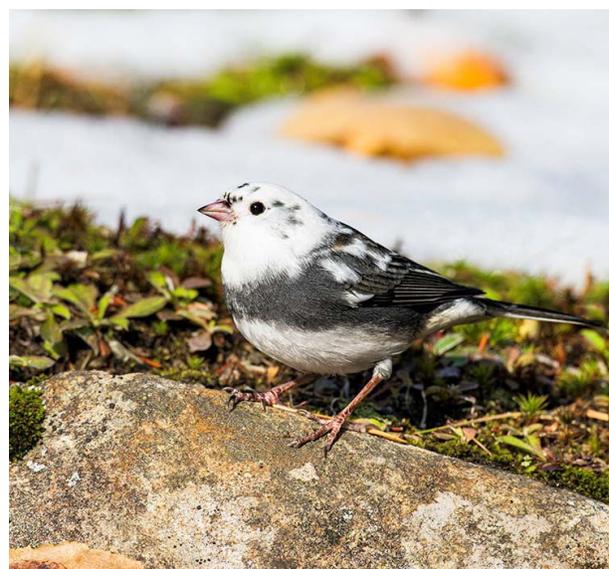


Photos Credit – Dr Butler

November 9th - Snowbirds: Following our Winged Friends in Winter

Speaker: Dr. Sally Stockwell

Are you a snowbird? Do you head south during the winter in search of sunny, warm weather with plentiful fresh local fruits and vegetables? Just like human snowbirds, many of “our” birds head south for the winter as well. Come join Sally Stockwell, Director of Conservation at Maine Audubon, to learn about the travels and winter homes of some of our breeding birds. As a bonus you’ll also learn about the migratory pathways of several bats and insects, and learn about the true snowbirds - those that visit us each winter from the Canadian taiga and tundra.



*Snow Bunting, Photo Credit – Nick Leadley,
www.touchthewildphotos.com*



-President's Column-

Photo Credit - Burt Knapp

Greetings. The world around us is green again, crops are growing and the birds are back. We were fortunate to have had some wonderful bird sightings right on our property through the spring and early summer this year. We started with a snowy owl sitting on a post and our house roof for a whole day, impressing everyone with his white majesty. He was gone the next morning reassuring us he was OK. We next had a towhee spend a day in the bushes right outside the window, a new visitor here. We have a chestnut sided warbler who has been here for a few weeks so he must be nesting. He has taken to pecking at his image in the kitchen window but fortunately he doesn't make as much noise as the cardinal who has been doing that for over a year now.

The fields are full of bob-o-links singing as we work in the gardens. An indigo bunting briefly visited to join our host of finches. We have heard both wood thrushes and a cuckoo in the woods nearby. A masked common yellowthroat warbler sits in a tree and sings between our two greenhouses and I finally caught sight of him one day. The barn swallows swoop in and out of the barn (making an awful mess!) and the tree swallows use the nest boxes and swoop around as well. The most exciting event was hearing a whip-poor-will for 2 nights. We have never heard one here before although like many older folks, I grew up with them keeping me awake at night.

Maine Audubon continues to promote environmentally important proposals in the legislature with good success in many areas. We should each continue working as individuals towards our own goals to help our planet survive. One issue worth careful consideration is whether or not to travel to see birds. A long drive or even an airplane trip to check off the sighting of a rare bird-is this worth adding pollution to the air contributing to global warming? I have read that some very serious birders are actually saying "no." The goal is no longer justifiable. Most of us here have the opportunity to be near woods and fields without traveling very far so let the birds come to you and you may be amazed how many you will see and hear. Let them do the traveling, pollution free!

We are working on fall programs. We will have an update on the status of loons by Mark Poitras in September; Lichen identification with Ron Butler in Oct ; and find out where our birds go in the winter with Sally Stockwell in November. Hope to see you all in the fall.

Nancy Knapp, President

Nature Watch - by Burt Knapp

We have had a sweet, pretty little Chestnut Sided Warbler throw himself at our kitchen window. That window looks out on a lilac bush, so the Warbler is able to regroup himself between attacks. Presumably he is asserting himself and claiming territory. He is so small, however, that his window attacks are mere taps rather than the louder thumps from his more aggressive feathered friend – our demented Cardinal (yes, the Cardinal has continued to throw himself at our windows).



Chestnut Sided Warbler, Photo Credit – Nick Leadley

In addition, we were excited to hear a Whip-poor-will two evenings in a row early in July! We have not heard one in years! The Whip-poor-will is a drab colored bird which is well camouflaged in leaves on the forest floor where it rests during the day. It is a Nightjar who hunts insects in the night hours and is most active and sings at dusk and dawn. For a good discussion of Nightjars, see the recording of a talk by Logan Parker in May of 2020. It is on our webpage: www.western.maineaudubon.org/videos.

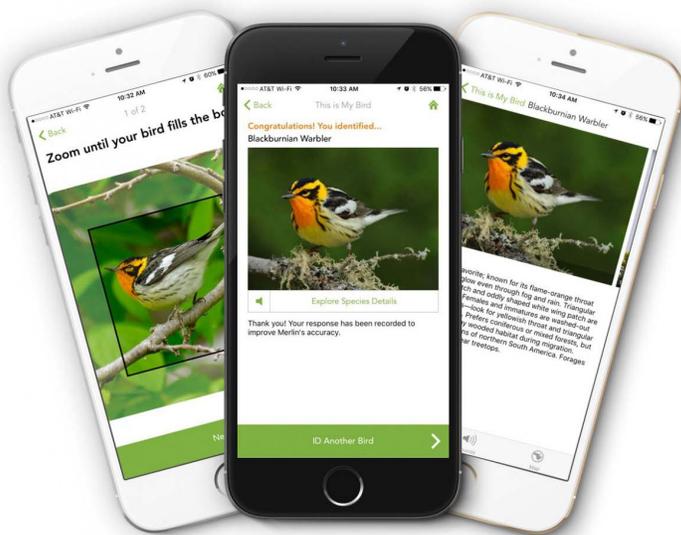


Photo Credit – Cornell Lab of Ornithology

At last, A Good Aid for Birding by Ear by Burt Knapp

Consider downloading the Cornell Lab of Ornithology app – *Merlin*.

“Each sound recording a user makes gets converted from a waveform to a spectrogram—a way to visualize the amplitude [volume], frequency [pitch], and duration of the sound...so just like Merlin can identify a picture of a bird, it can now use this picture of a bird’s sound to make an ID” *

To find out more consult Cornell’s website discussion of Merlin at: www.allaboutbirds.org/news/whats-that-bird-song-merlin-bird-id-can-tell-you

It does work and is fun to use!

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Thank you!



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