



the ***Pileated Press***

Western Maine Audubon, a chapter of Maine Audubon

Box 832, Farmington, ME 04938

- Our Fall Talks 2024 -

All talks this Fall will be in person at 7:00 PM in the Thomas Auditorium of Preble Hall on the UMF campus. For those who cannot attend in person, you may attend via Zoom. The link for the sign in will be posted both on the website under the event, or on the Western Maine Audubon Facebook page on the day of the talk. The Zoom session will be recorded and posted on the website's video page.

September 21 – Maine Audubon's Legislative Summary

Speaker: Nick Lund

Maine Audubon's Nick Lund will cover the organization's legislative victories for the 131st Maine Legislature, including issues like endangered species, native plants, bird-safe architecture, aquatic invasive species, Common Loons, and many more. Learn about the ways in which Maine Audubon members across the state, including those in the Farmington area, helped bring about positive change for Maine wildlife.



Nick Lund is the Advocacy and Outreach Manager for Maine Audubon. A graduate of Maine Law, Nick worked on landscape-scale energy policy issues for the National Parks Conservation Association in D.C. until moving home to Maine in 2018. He is also a nature writer, and the author of several books, including the American Birding Association Field Guide to the Birds of Maine (2022), and forthcoming books on evolution and avian conservation.



Photo Credits – Herb wilson

October 9th - Vagrant birds seen in Maine

Herb Wilson

Finding a bird out of its normal range is always an exciting event. Birds' ability to fly sometimes produces jaw-dropping occurrences well beyond the normal range of a species. I will explore some of the research that has been done to explain vagrancy in birds. Some explanations rely on intentional movements to explore outside the normal range and others involve the effects of storms and faulty navigation. We will consider some of the more amazing vagrants that have occurred in Maine.

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



Photo Credit – Hovel and Daly

November 13th - Mountain lakes as sentinels of change in the northeast

Dr. Rach Hovel and Dr. Julia Daly

High-elevation lakes in the northern Appalachian Mountains are unique in a number of regards: they exist in a more forested landscape than alpine lakes in other mountain ranges, and they experience fewer direct anthropogenic impacts and colder climatic zones compared to lower-elevation lakes in the northeast. Due to their remote nature, these lakes can help illuminate regional signals in changing climate and atmospheric deposition, and their elevation and size can contribute diversity in lake characteristics across the landscape. In this talk, we will share background on a research program on nine lakes in the western Maine mountains, present long-term trends in water chemistry, and explore interactions between water chemistry, temperature, and biological response. As these lakes recover from the impacts of atmospheric deposition of pollutants (“acid rain”), new climate conditions are shaping seasonality and productivity. Our talk will also discuss the recreational attributes of these lakes, and share opportunities for community science involvement.



Photo Credit – Hovel and Daly

Dr. Rachel Hovel is an aquatic ecologist who studies fishes and invertebrates across a range of freshwater habitats. Major themes of her research include species interactions, the timing of ecological events, and biodiversity of species and life histories. In particular, she is interested in how changes to freshwater environments—especially climate change—influence aquatic organisms and ecosystems. Rachel’s research currently takes place in the Canadian Arctic and the lakes of Maine.

Dr. Julia Daly is a geologist at UMF with a focus on geomorphology and climate change. She is broadly interested in the connections between changing climate and the signature of this change in both modern watersheds and the geologic record. An interest in the mountains of western Maine led her to begin collecting data in the mountain ponds around 2010. In addition to the mountain ponds project, she works with UMF students to document changes associated with dam removal in Temple Stream.

For more information visit www.mainemountainponds.wordpress.com

Odonata??? What???????

**Clues: They spend most of their lives in water.
They can be easily seen when in the air.
They don’t exist well in polluted water.
They are our best friends in more ways than one.**



Photo Credits – Ellie Hopkins

They are better known to us as damselflies and dragonflies - separate members of the order of carnivorous insects known as Odonata. The bodies of dragonflies are larger and chunkier and they rest with their wings open and extended. The thinner, more delicate appearing damselflies rest with their wings folded over their bodies.

Odonata spend most of their lives under water. They hatch from eggs which are dropped in the water or onto vegetation in the lake. The eggs turn into nymphs and will molt continuously for up to four years as they grow. This all happens under water. They finally molt into adults and take to the air, becoming what we see as damselflies and dragonflies. They will spend the next months of their lives finding a mate and starting the process all over again.

Odonata are important to us because they live by eating many insects, especially mosquitoes. They, in turn, are food for frogs, birds, fish and others. To complete their life cycle they require clean water full of oxygen, and healthy vegetative cover so they can disguise themselves from predators. They are fairly intolerant of pollution. Because of this they serve as indicators of a healthy lake environment.

We can help ensure a healthy environment for these useful and colorful creatures by preserving and planting diverse native vegetative strips along the edges of our lakes as buffers and by not using pesticides near our water. Buffers serve as a filter for runoff, keeping pollutants out of our lakes as well as providing great habitat for Odonata and other wildlife.

Maine is fortunate to be home to many sub-species of both damselflies and dragonflies. Spend a few minutes looking closely at Odonata. Discover some of the differences in the shape and coloration of these truly beautiful eating machines. Check out those jaws and then thank heaven it’s mosquitoes they find so tasty.

-President's Column-

Greetings Everyone,

I am writing this in April because summers are very busy here on the farm and there is no time for doing anything other than "vegetables." Although it is still cool and very wet the birds are returning and the bird song is in stereo as I walk up the driveway in the early morning to feed our barn cat. One of the most wonderful parts of spring is the return of bird song and we must all stay vigilant to preserve this invaluable treasure. Speaking of bird song, one of the earliest arrivals or possibly just appearance was a flock of blue jays and other people noted a similar surge at their feeders. Realizing that I knew almost nothing about our raucous visitors I did a little research on blue jays. (See article below)

Next fall's line up of talks begins with Nick Lund in September. He is coming up from Maine Audubon in Falmouth to update us on the legislative activity with which MA has been involved in Augusta. They are now very active with conservation related bills helping to preserve and improve many aspects of living in our beautiful state. In October, Herb Wilson will be speaking on what he says is one of his favorite topics, bird vagrants. In November, we will be informed about research being done on high altitude lakes and how they are faring in the face of climate change by Julia Daly from UMF and Rachel Hovel. At this time we are still struggling to make live zooming work but the challenges are many. We will continue to try to make this happen for those of you who can't enjoy the talks in person. Looking forward to seeing you all in the fall.

-Nancy



Blue Jays

Nancy Knapp

The Blue Jay, one of Maine's most familiar species, is found in mixed woods across the state, particularly where oak and beech trees are available and is also common in residential areas. Males and females are similar in plumage and the female may be slightly smaller than the male. Their full range across the country extends from southern Canada to the eastern and central US to Florida and NE Texas. The western edge of their range used to be just east of the Rocky Mountains but recently has extended up to the NW coast of the US and Canada, overlapping with the closely related Steller's Jay. Since the 2 species are close they may sometimes hybridize. As we all know, the blue jay is a noisy and aggressive bird. However, because it flies slowly it can be preyed upon by hawks and owls and many predators prey on jay eggs and young, including crows, snakes and raccoons. The adult jay, in return, will chase predatory birds, sounding alarm calls when a predator is in their territory which also helps to warn smaller birds. Jays will drive off any owl which mistakenly chooses to roost near their nests.

Blue Jay Fun Facts

Migration: Do blue jays migrate? Flocks have been observed along the Great Lakes and Atlantic coasts but their migratory behavior remains a mystery. Some birds will remain in their territory throughout the winter, some may go south and even vary their migratory patterns from year to year. They do seem to be able to adapt to different and changing habitats successfully.

Crest: When a jay is agitated or angry the crest on the head will rise, when frightened the crest bristles outward, brushlike, and when the bird is relaxed or eating the crest is flattened.

Diet: Acorns are the favorite food but they consume all types of plants and occasionally small animals. Nuts are consumed by holding them with their feet to crack. They apparently love peanuts in the shell. Grains, berries seeds, table scraps are all on the menu. They occasionally cache food which is not always retrieved so they are effectively good tree planters.

Nesting: Nests are usually built high up in trees although occasionally in unusual places such as mailboxes if nothing else is nearby. Nests are cup shaped with 3-6 brown-spotted greenish eggs. Blue jays are monogamous for life and both sexes build the nest and rear the young although only the female sits on the eggs. After the young fledge the family stays together until the fall when the young move away.

Intelligence: Jays are highly curious and since they are related to crows they are considered to share advanced intelligence. This is illustrated by their family bonds and complex vocalizations. They are able to exactly mimic the calls of red tailed and red shouldered hawks, 2 of their predators which is possibly a protective maneuver. In captivity they have been observed to use tools to obtain food.

Folk Tales: In old African-American folktales of the south, the blue jay was sometimes credited with making the earth, or conscripted by the devil to interact with wicked men on earth. The blue jay is also the mascot of several universities and sports teams and is the provincial bird of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

So our noisy bright blue friend is really quite the impressive bird!

Source, Wikipedia, Blue Jay



Photo Credit – Suzanne Rogers/Audubon Photography Awards



Photo Credit – Matthew Heckerling/Audubon Photography Awards



Photo Credit – Susan Kiesel/Audubon Photography Awards



It's estimated that one million birds die or are injured per day around the country after colliding with glass windows. We need your help understanding this problem in Maine so we can craft and implement solutions.

For four years now, Maine Audubon and our partners at BirdSafe Maine have monitored bird collisions around Maine. We're creating real change: in 2023 we passed a landmark bird-safe architecture bill in the state legislature, and have more policy goals ahead.

What You Can Do

BirdSafe Maine is a partnership between Maine Audubon, the University of Southern Maine and the Portland Society for Architecture, working together to understand and address bird / building collisions in Maine. We've received reports of hundreds of birds representing dozens of species, and we're working to continue to turn our study into real policy solutions.

If you find a dead or injured bird, please:

- Take photographs of the bird in place.
- Email images with the date and address to **BirdStrike@MaineAudubon.org**
- No need to collect the bird, but you can move it to a safe place to decompose if you feel comfortable.
- If you find an injured but living bird, please contact **Avian Haven** at **207-831-4888**.

We will use this data to better understand timing, species at risk, and help identify solutions homeowners can take to reduce these deaths.



From Maine Audubon: Dazed Red Eyed Vireo from collision with glass storm door. Photo Credit - Burt Knapp

Western Maine Audubon Officers

President, Nancy Knapp 778-6285

Treasurer, John Slack 860-0442

Secretary, Burt Knapp 778-6285

Public Relations, Will Jones 491-2443

Board Members at Large:

Camilla Cai

Ellie Hopkins

Nick Leadley



WESTERN MAINE CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES! I want to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in Maine as a **new** **renewing** member.

Annually: \$30 Senior/Student | \$40 individual | \$50 Household | \$Other _____

Monthly: Enroll me in the Frequent Flyer Program and charge my credit card each month:

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$25 Other \$ _____

Name(s): _____
As it appears on credit card if you are charging to card

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Card Type _____ Card # _____ Exp. date ____ / ____

Please make checks payable to:

Maine Audubon | Maine Audubon, 20 Gilsland Farm Rd, Falmouth ME 04105

Join or renew online:
maineaudubon.org/join

Thank you!



Western Maine Audubon
PO Box 832
Farmington, Maine 04938