

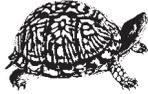


Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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October, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Habitat Management at the Page Farm Unit, Mattawamkeag River WMA - *Written by Mark Caron*

The Mattawamkeag River System WMA encompasses approximately 9,000 acres and is located in Webster Plantation, Kingman, Drew Plantation, and Prentiss Township. The Page Farm Unit is located entirely within Drew Plantation and encompasses approximately 1,200 acres. The upland habitat on the Unit is largely composed of early-successional forest types, and reverting farmland. There is also approximately 20 acres of maintained fields.

Management activities to date have focused on reclaiming six acres (two fields) of reverting fields, and early-successional forest management. In partnership with both the NRCS and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), six acres of reverting field were reclaimed and planted to a conservation mix. This work not only benefited wild turkey but also a variety of other game and non-game species whose habitat includes open fields. Additional habitat enhancement included tree and shrub establishment (hard and soft mast species), apple tree pruning, and bushhogging/mowing twenty acres of fields.

In 2010, MDIFW and the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) partnered on early-successional forest management operations to largely benefit ruffed grouse and American woodcock. Approximately 70 acres of intolerant hardwood and balsam fir is being managed in 5-acre clearcut blocks over a 40-year rotation to perpetuate early-successional habitat which will provide nesting and brood rearing habitat.

In addition, a network of 16 feeding strips, 100 feet wide and of varying lengths with a 25-year rotation was also developed. The strips are adjacent to managed fields and the combined habitats will provide for all the life stages for woodcock including nesting, brood rearing, singing ground and feeding sites.

MDIFW received a MOHF Grant in 2012 to continue the early successional work at Page Farm. Work will take place between March 2013 and December 2014. Existing fields will continue to be managed via mowing. Six acres of field adjacent to the woodcock strips described above have been planted to a conservation mix, and managed for woodcock singing and roosting habitat. Feathering of field edges will create structural diversity between fields and forest to provide additional nesting cover. The numerous apple trees located along the edge of fields and nearby woods were released from competing trees (winter 2013) and pruned this past winter. This will improve the health and vigor of these trees so that they can continue to provide fall and early winter soft mast that will benefit a wide variety of game and nongame species. And finally, an interpretive sign (kiosk) will be made that will help to educate the public about the importance of early-successional habitat and the species that benefit from these habitat types.



MAINE WILDLIFE PARK

1,527 visitors came to see some of the stars of North Woods Law at the park on Saturday, 20% more than last year! Thanks to all who helped, worked, volunteered and attended! As usual, the Wardens were officers and gentlemen!



INFORMATION CENTER

In September the front office of the Department received and replied to (approx):

- 3,659 Phone calls
- 2,035 Emails
- 262 Walk-ins



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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

Sebago Lake Fishery Management - a Manager's Perspective

Written by Francis Brautigam, Regional Fisheries Biologist, Sebago Lake Region

It's nearing the end of the traditional open water fishing season and I've been drafting a status update for salmon and togue fisheries in Sebago Lake. Our reference for evaluating status and "success" is the 2008 Sebago Lake Landlocked Atlantic Salmon Plan. The 2008 plan was developed to support management under the Classic Salmon Initiative, an MDIFW/SAM partnership. Under this initiative the Department is charged with growing larger salmon in select waters throughout the state. Success under this initiative is only possible where an abundant and stable smelt population can be established as forage to maximize salmon size.

While available information indicates we're making great progress and are approaching plan objectives, it remains to be seen if the public is willing to support necessary management changes into the future. While working on the update, four anglers contacted me to share differing angling perspectives on Sebago's fisheries. The first inquiry I received was from Greg Cutting, proprietor of Jordan's Store on the West Shore of Sebago Lake. Greg remarked at the exceptional salmon fishing this year and the unusually good fishing the last few weeks of summer...just wanted me to know. The next day before heading into work I stopped by the YMCA for my morning workout where I encountered one of the staff who reported on the great salmon fishing his family recently experienced on Sebago...landed 4 legals and lost 3 others. I thought I was on my way to having a pretty good week. Arriving at work I scanned my morning's e-mails to find one from a visiting nonresident angler, who indicated both he and his neighbor experienced much slower salmon fishing on Sebago in 2014 than 2013 and wanted to know if something happened in the lake that would have accounted for slower fishing in 2014. The next morning I was greeted by an angler who wanted to inform me of his plans to prepare a petition to change the new togue regulations adopted on Sebago in 2012. The angler had strong convictions about releasing togue that were caught in the protected slot (23 -33") if he thought they were likely to die after release. He viewed the current regulation as one that wasted harvest opportunity for fish that would likely die and could otherwise be used to feed a family - it is noteworthy to mention that existing regulations allow anglers to harvest an unlimited number of togue less than 23 inches (no bag limit). However, because this angler targets and catches lots of larger "slot" togue during the open water fishing season, he no longer fishes for togue this time of the year because he doesn't want to release togue that he believes will die. Similarly, a common complaint we hear from anglers fishing around the state is that my fish is not of legal size or exceeds the bag limit, but it is going to die because it swallowed the hook, is bleeding, or came up too quick and shouldn't it be OK for me to keep the fish so it doesn't get wasted?



Sebago's togue regulations, adopted in 2012, were intended to restructure the lake trout population to biologically suppress togue population growth and increase smelt availability to grow larger salmon. The structure of the regulations was based on available research which indicates light to moderate exploitation of wild togue populations removes the largest and oldest individuals which can actually stimulate population growth. The new rules remove the minimum length limit, allow for an unlimited harvest of togue less than 23", establish a no harvest slot between 23 and 33", and allows for the harvest of one trophy greater than 33". These changes are designed to rebuild a population size structure that more closely

mimics one that is not exploited and more stable. The new rules also...to read more, please [click here](#).

Adam MacDonald, living life with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, participated in a moose hunt organized by local guides Scott Cyr, Joe Carvell, and Dave Hentosh; his friend Camille St. Pierre accompanied them as well and the group received assistance from Lt. Tom Ward of the Maine Warden Service. The Department thanks these caring individuals for providing Adam with this opportunity. The Department received a letter from Adam's teacher from elementary school as they have



kept in touch through the years – Adam is now in his 20s. Her request was that he be considered for a Hunt of a Lifetime moose tag as this would be, in her words, "a big deal" for Adam. He already had the adaptive equipment which allowed him to control the movement of a gun with a joystick and activate the trigger with a straw like device. THANK YOU to all involved. THIS is why I love my job! Written by Deputy Commissioner Andrea Erskine

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

- The Commissioner attended Outdoor Heritage Days in Phillips
- The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner were present at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Council on September 24th. At the meeting the Council voted to adopt fishing regulations for 2015 and furbearer regulations and beaver closures for the upcoming season.
- The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner attended a memorial and dedication in memory of Major Gregory Sanborn and Warden Rick Stone at Green Point Management lands.

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE



< Game Warden Cody Louder has been busy checking tree stands and tagging books in his district to become more familiar with hunters in the Scarborough district. Warden Louder has also met a few of the big landowners in his district. Warden Louder ended up attending the "Touch-A-Truck" held at Cabela's in Scarborough.

> Game Warden Neal Wykes attended two days of water survival training. He also recently assisted with a Navy Seal 13-mile fund raising swim on Sebago Lake for Camp Sunshine. Four Seal's started out from Panther Run Marina in Raymond and ended their swim at Camp Sunshine's Beach in Casco.



< Game Warden Andrew Smart spent time watching anglers on the Aroostook River and found they are still catching some nice brook trout. He also worked an ATV detail with Aroostook County Sheriff's Office to enforce local ATV traffic.

Game Warden Steve Allarie and Deputy Game Warden Nick Raymond assisted fisheries biologists with a pond that was infested with illegally stocked goldfish. Warden Allarie and Deputy Raymond also found several hunting stands and a salted bait site in the expanded archery zone.

RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

Maine Brook Trout Remote Pond Survey - *Written by Merry Gallagher, Fish Group Leader*

Believe it or not, about 1000 of Maine's lakes and ponds have never been formally surveyed by IFW Fisheries Biologists. These unsurveyed ponds tend to be small in surface area, usually less than 20 acres, remote, and are sometimes difficult for a survey crew with equipment to access. Many of these ponds may not fit the conventional description of wild brook trout habitat, so they have not been a high priority for regional Fisheries staff to survey over the years. Therefore, IFW has been working cooperatively with Trout Unlimited (TU) and Maine Audubon (MA) to address this basic survey need through a two-step process.

Since 2011, volunteer anglers have conducted initial surveys on 255 ponds! Volunteer efforts rank the ponds into 3 tiers based on the presence or likelihood of brook trout. To date 104 ponds have been recommended to IFW to conduct baseline surveys. IFW leads the effort of conducting standard baseline surveys on ponds where wild brook trout are likely to be found. A seasonal crew uses IFW's Pond Survey Protocols while performing their surveys and a variety of baseline information is gathered that characterizes the fish community, the pond's physical features, water quality and degree of angler use. All of which is vital information for assessing the pond's current condition and revising fisheries management strategies if necessary. In 2014, IFW Fish Group staff surveyed 25 new ponds!

The basic information provided by the anglers greatly assists our efforts to efficiently survey these ponds. The site specific location information and driving directions provided by volunteer anglers are often invaluable for our ability to locate and access these remote ponds. The volunteers also assist by providing basic information such as if canoes or boats may be available on site at extremely remote ponds. All of this information greatly assists our efforts to conduct and properly inventory these remote ponds and we couldn't do it without you!

The effort will continue in 2015 and if you are interested in joining as a volunteer angler, more information is available here: <http://www.tumaine.org/brooktrout.htm>.

