Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

284 State St., 41 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330 207-287-8000

July, 2015

The new ferry that brings guests across the Kennebec River to Swan Island is now in service!

The new ferry can hold over 50 passengers compared to 12-15 passengers on the old ferry. Much more efficient and much more comfortable. Also, much better access for wheelchairs, elderly, bicycles and gear.

The bid for this ferry was awarded to Kann Manufacturing in Iowa. It was built over the winter and delivered the first week of June. Some more facts; it took 3 days to get it to Maine and Reed & Reed unloaded it for us.

If you haven't checked out Swan Island yet, it is time to go!

From the 2015 Moose Lottery

Information Center

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

- 3,508 Phone calls
- 1,442 Emails
- 242 Walk-ins

Missed an issue?

To view previous Weekly Reports, please visit **www.mefishwildlife.com** and select "About Us"

Like us on Facebook!

Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

Maine Warden Service

DIVISION A: Warden Lucas Bellanceau took a few days off to help on a disabled veteran's turkey hunt that took place at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester. Lucas called in several turkeys and was able to help disabled veteran, Daniel Robles of San Antonio Texas, take his first turkey.

DIVISION B: Corporal Michelle Merrifield and her K9 Piper completed the NESPAC cadaver school. The last two weeks concluded the NESPAC Advanced Cadaver Certification tests and incorporated the shoreline water and boat portion of the training. Congratulations, Warden Merrifield and Piper!

DIVISION C: Warden Scott Osgood handled an interesting eagle complaint. It was found dead on a lawn next to a two-and-a-half foot lamprey eel; both were under power lines. Warden Osgood believes the eel likely made contact while flying. He transported the banded eagle to Bangor, where the bird group biologists called in the bands and determined that this adult male eagle had lived a very long life. It was almost a record in Down East Maine; the eagle was 31-years-old.

DIVISION D: Warden Josh Polland assisted with an injured hiker who was reported near Buttermilk Falls. The hike carried over into the evening and the woman was discovered a considerable distance from where she was last reported. She was however in good spirits and after providing her with fresh water, a warm shirt, and crutches, she was able to make it out to the parking lot.

DIVISION E: Game Warden Alan Dudley - Warden Dudley received an anonymous call reporting a fishing violation on Number Nine Lake. After some surveillance, he checked the fishermen when they came to shore. A thorough investigation revealed a hidden compartment in the bottom of the boat stuffed full of trout. In the end, eighteen trout were seized as evidence.

Div A

Div B

Div E

Div D

Div C

Photo by David Gouthro

Always a good day on the water!

Office of the Commissioner

- On June 13th, the Commissioner and staff attended the Maine Moose Lottery Drawing in Bethel. Prior to the drawing an Advisory Council meeting was held to discuss rulemaking proposals for any-deer permit allocations and changes to the trapping season. Several other items were also discussed that will be coming up for rulemaking short: Beaver closures; migratory bird seasons; fishing regulations and the Islesboro special hunt.
- Two public hearings were held on the proposal to make changes to the trapping rules. The Commissioner and staff attended a hearing in Portland on 6/23 and a hearing in Bangor on 6/25 to discuss the proposed changes to minimize the unintentional take of Canada lynx through regulated trapping.

Information & Education

The 2015 Moose Permit Lottery event was held on Saturday, June 13 and was a great success! Kudos to Bethel, Maine for their hard work in hosting the event and to all our staff for their efforts as well. Emily MacCabe and Dana Duncan were incredibly busy that day, thanks so much!

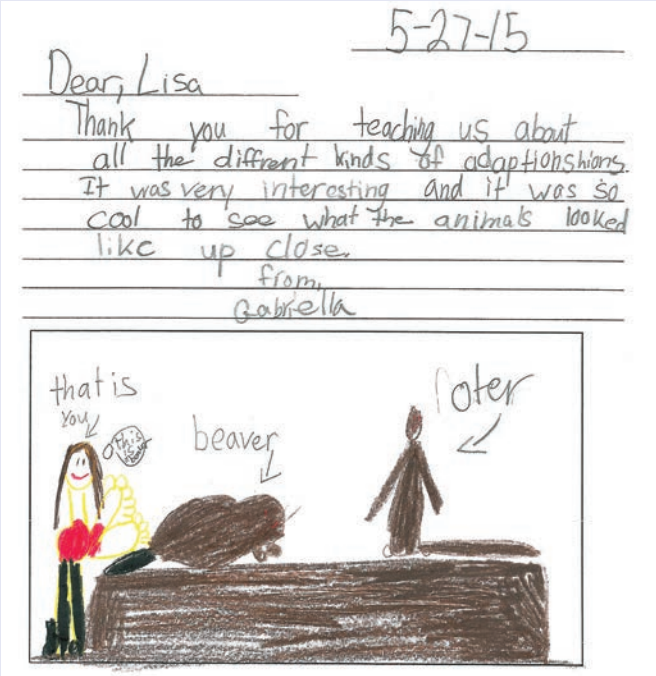
North Woods Law is always a draw and the wardens who attended were great about signing autographs and having their photo taken, even Major Cloutier.

A good recipe for the day: sunny, warm, and lots of people. The main tent with seating for 1000 was full to capacity! The moose calling competition was loads of fun with some very talented callers, young and old, and, what I am sure what could be considered a world record moose call, led by Roger Lambert.

After the moose calling competition, the Maine Warden Service Color Guard kicked off the moose permit lottery and then Commissioner Woodcock welcomed the crowd and read the first 200 names. Volunteers helped to read the remainder of the 2,740 names on the list, which took a couple hours to complete. It was great to hear a cheer from a member of the audience when they heard their name called!

Here are a few photos from the event.

Over 2,100 children attended 35 wildlife and conservation education programs at the Maine Wildlife Park and Swan Island this May and June. Add on another 10-15% for parent chaperones, teachers, and bus drivers; who seem to get as much out the programs as the kids. Swan Island programs were given a great boost with another generous $2,000 grant from the Merrymeeting Bay Trust specifically for scholarships to education programs; while the Wildlife Park provided $1,500 in similar scholarships. There is much more 'cross-pollination' between the 2 facilities, as teachers and homeschoolers learn about and try out the 2 different venues.
Great spring weather certainly helped too!
Written by Lisa Kane, Science Educator


5-27-15

Dear, Lisa
Thank you for teaching us about all the diffrent kinds of adaptionshions. It was very interesting and it was so cool to see what the animals looked like up close.
from,
Gabriella

Top: Cadence Rau & Ruth Bois participating in a school program.
Bottom: Thank you letter from a student with a great drawing!

Licensing Division

Suellen Barton recently retired after 29 years of State service. We wish Suellen all the best in her well-deserved retirement. She will be missed but we hope that she will stop by and visit us often.

Wildlife Division

Wildlife Management Area Blogs
Written by Ryan Robicheau, WMS Supervisor

In an effort to increase public use and awareness of State-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) the Department's Regional Wildlife Biologists have begun blogging about WMA's within their regions.

Once a week for the rest of the year we will cycle around the State describing particular uses, attributes, and interesting tidbits of information about the properties. We'll indicate how to access the properties and what hunting; fishing or trapping opportunities might be found there.

In addition to the blogs which are meant to be entertaining and informative, additional information and maps can be found online through the Department's website at **www.maine.gov/ifw**.

Fisheries & Hatcheries Division

Wild Brook Trout Pond Surveys in Region C
Written by Greg Burr, Regional Fisheries Bio., Jonesboro

Halfmile Pond is a 29-acre wild brook trout water located just north of Route 9 in the Amherst Mountain Community Forest. Prior to 2010, anglers complained that the overall size quality and population numbers had decreased, leaving anglers with poor catch rates and small fish. In response, Region C biologists conducted summer netting investigations in 2011, confirming a small brook trout population that averaged 10.2 inches. Consequently, in the fall of 2011 we recommended closing the pond to ice fishing and prohibiting the use of live bait in hopes of increasing overall fish numbers and size quality. The new rules were put in place in January 2012 and after three years of being closed to ice fishing we conducted a spring trapnetting survey in 2015 to check on the pond's progress.

The netting captured 60 brook trout ranging in length from 4.6 to 12.6 inches and we estimated an overall population of 148 trout. During the spring survey we also removed 438.2 pounds of common suckers, pumpkinseed sunfish, golden shiners and creek chubs to reduce interspecific competition to help increase brook trout growth rates and size quality. We plan to return to Halfmile Pond in the spring of 2016 to again check on its progress and we'll continue to remove rough fish.

Research & assessment Section

Chance Encounter Leads to Mussels, Butterflies, New Friends

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has a mandate to conserve and protect all species of fish and wildlife, from bears to butterflies. This is a tall order considering there are over 15 thousand species of inland fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates in Maine. One of the tools the Department uses to better understand the distribution and status of this overwhelming diversity is citizen science atlasing. Trained volunteers contribute to many such atlases, currently ranging from breeding birds to brook trout to bumble bees. The following story from the Bangor Daily News (June 11, 2015) highlights one such volunteer on the Maine Butterfly Survey project. Her story is a tribute to the efforts of hundreds of enthusiastic citizen scientists statewide that make significant contributions to documenting Maine's natural heritage.

-Phillip deMaynadier, Wildlife Biologist, Research and Assessment Section

FORT KENT, Maine (Reprinted and modified with permission from Julia Bayly, Bangor Daily News)

This is a story about how covering a school budget ended up in a butterfly hunt.

Any journalist will tell you the best part of the job is its unpredictability. Sure, it can be a bit stressful at times, but overall I enjoy the randomness that is my life.

Things got wonderfully random earlier this week, when I was on my way to Fort Kent to get a quick photo to illustrate a story on the School Administrative District 27 budget referendum.

Not far from the house, I saw a camper van pulled over and what appeared to be two people looking a tad lost.

Knowing that lost feeling all too well, I stopped to ask if they needed directions.

That is how I met Anne and Stephen Hammond, butterfly hunters from Woolwich.

Photo by Steve Chorvas

Well, actually, Anne, 75, is the hunter. Stephen, 74, is her driver, support staff and pit crew.

One thing led to another, and by the time I was back on the road to get my photo, the Hammonds were making a U-turn back to Rusty Metal Farm, where I invited them to park their camper van for the night.

That evening, over some amazing steamed garlicky mussels — compliments of Anne and Stephen — and a bottle of white wine I purchased on a recent trip to Quebec, I learned that in addition to it being their 47th wedding anniversary, I was the first dinner guest ever in the camper.

I learned that the two eventually moved to the Bath area, where they began a successful hardware business that now mostly is in the hands of their children, leaving them time for things such as butterfly hunting.

Five years ago, after seeing a story in the newspaper, Anne joined the Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Butterfly Survey, and she has been on the prowl ever since.

"I used to collect insects as a little girl," she told me. "I collected all kinds of butterflies in my area around Peekskill."

Anne learned about the various species of Maine butterflies, their relationship to the Maine environment and economy and the various methods of locating and collecting them.

"They give you a net," she said. "But I did have to buy my own [guide] book."

Net and book in hand, Anne tramps the woods and fields around the state, from April to September, locating, identifying and documenting every butterfly she comes across.

This week, she was on a sort of grail quest looking for the elusive early hairstreak, or Erora laeta, which has not been documented in Maine for at least 60 years, she said.

It was tracking the hairstreak that brought the Hammonds to northern Maine.

Early hairstreaks, Anne said, live their brief two-week adult life in the tops of healthy beech trees eating beech nuts. The couple had been looking for beech trees when I met them on the road.

I told them I was fairly certain there were beech trees on Rusty Metal Farm that had not fallen to the beech bark disease, which has wiped out most of the species in Maine.

The best chance at seeing the hairstreak is on sunny days, from May 15 to June 15, when they come down from the tree tops to sip water and minerals in open, rocky areas such as dirt roads or driveways.

Unfortunately, not only was it pouring rain the entire time the Hammonds were here, but my beech trees proved to be as elusive as the early hairstreaks.

"I know there are some here," I kept saying as we trudged along muddy trails, getting slapped in the face by wet branches and swatting mosquitos. "At least, I think there are."

I did not have a huge amount of time to explore and Anne was a remarkably good sport about the whole thing. She said she is getting used to coming up empty when it comes to the early hairstreak.

She did get lucky on a trip a while back to Mount Greylock in Massachusetts when she joined nine other butterfly enthusiasts looking for the hairstreak.

"There were 10 of us toting our cameras down a trail to this beech tree," she said. "We saw one hairstreak, and we all just surrounded it pointing our cameras at it."

I am hoping she has similar or better luck when she and Stephen continue to explore northern Maine looking for pockets of healthy beech trees.

We were able to find one Fort Kent resident who said he had a stand that looked promising, and I last saw Anne and Stephen heading in that direction with plans to continue on to Allagash and into the North Maine Woods.

In the meantime, if you spot a brown camper van with a high lift jack hooked to the front grill, give the couple inside a wave.

Take it from me: It's a great way to add some randomness to your life.