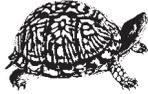




Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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May, 2015

RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

2015 Baitfish Dealer Inspections - *Written By Kevin Gallant, Biology Specialist, Fish Group, Bangor*

While the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has been conducting Bait Dealer Inspections most years since the 1990's, this year we increased our level of effort from the usual 10% to inspect at least 25% of all license holders statewide. This includes all Live Bait Retail, Baitfish Wholesaler, and Smelt Wholesaler license holders. This year, IFW issued 446 licenses through early February. Of those, Biologists and Wardens inspected 173 license holders (38.8%). The primary focus of these inspections is to verify that all live fish being sold are legal baitfish species and that the business is properly licensed. Biologists document all species present and record a few other fishery aspects such as baitfish prices, where bait is stored prior to sale, bait disposal, etc. This year we found 8 Dealers operating without a license or without the proper license. We also found 2 Dealers with illegal fish species on their premises (both were sticklebacks, were not for sale, and were culled). These cases were shared with the Warden Service for any follow-up. One emphasis for this year was to make sure all Dealers were planning to dispose of any leftover bait in a legal fashion. It is illegal for anyone to dump excess bait into any Maine water, Dealers included. One can obtain a Private Pond Stocking Permit to allow leftover bait to be held for future use in one's private pond. Another emphasis this year addressed the commercial sale of amphibians. It is illegal to sell amphibians for bait in Maine without a commercial permit from IFW. Two Dealers were found to be selling amphibians and were encouraged to get a permit to continue their sales of amphibians.

The Bait Dealer Inspection Program, first and foremost, is a fantastic communication opportunity for Biologists, Wardens and Dealers. The primary goal for all involved is to assure that only legal baitfish species are dealt and ultimately used by anglers. During inspections, Biologists and Wardens often field questions about fish ID, private pond stocking permits, game fish stockings, proper disposal of excess baitfish, and pertinent rules and laws. This provides a great opportunity for public outreach regarding the use of live baitfish, as most Dealers are in direct contact with many of the State's anglers. This will hopefully continue to limit the chance of unwanted species being spread throughout the state in bait buckets. We expect to continue an increased inspection effort for the years to come and hope to continue to find that a vast majority of our Dealers are in compliance with existing laws and providing a valuable service to Maine's angling community!



Photo By Tyler Grant, MEDIFW

A Common Shiner, a legal Maine baitfish



The winner of the 2015 Maine Waterfowl Stamp contest is Michael Loring of Windham, ME.

[Click here](#) to read more about the contest and winners!

INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 3,041 Phone calls
- 1,659 Emails
- 242 Walk-ins



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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

The legislative session is in full swing and the month of April brought many public hearings and work sessions. For an update on current legislation please visit the Department's homepage: www.maine.gov/ifw and under Public Meetings, click the link for "127th Legislature 1st Session."

Commissioner's public events included:

- Maine Professional Guides annual banquet held at Jeff's Catering in Brewer
- ATV Maine's annual banquet, also held at Jeff's Catering in Brewer
- Public hearing in Phippsburg to discuss a petition that was received to remove the Town of Phippsburg from the expanded archery zone WMD 24
- On behalf of the Commissioner, Colonel Wilkinson officiated the public hearing held in Greenville on April 24th to discuss moose permit numbers in WMD 9. Good job Colonel!

Old Town Canoe graciously donated a kayak to the Maine Guides Board recently, and in return, Luke LaBree of Old Town Canoe and Johnson Outdoors received an appreciation print from IFW Commissioner Chandler Woodcock. If you look closely up the left side of the river pictured in the print, you may see an Old Town canoe along the banks.



The Maine Guides Board oversees the Maine guides testing and license programs. The board is comprised of Game Wardens, IFW staff, Marine Patrol Officers, Maine guides, and other interested parties. Many guides donate their time and expertise to the program, working to ensure that the title "Registered Maine Guide" is well deserved.

The testing procedure for Maine guides is changing, as the test is transitioning from a written and oral exam to a practical test where applicants must demonstrate outdoor skills required to be a guide.

As Game Warden Sergeant Dave Craven stated, "It's one thing to know in theory how to start a fire on a rainy day, or safely erect a tree stand, but the new test will have a hands-on component."

The Old Town kayak that was donated will be part of that hands-on testing. Thank you Luke and Old Town!

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE



< (Division A) Game wardens have been continuing to patrol Sebago Lake and have recently seen a decline in ice strength on the Great Bay Western side of the lake. The recent warm weather and rain has quickly advanced ice out. Lake trout fishermen are maintaining some success and catches of 20 or more fish are still occurring. Boats are seen here navigating open water among the remaining ice sheets.

> (Division B) Game Wardens Ethan Buuck and Kris MacCabe were called out for an overdue snowmobiler where an individual was last known snowmobiling from his camp in Chesterville. After an exhaustive search, they were able to locate a single snowmobile track going up a paved road in Wayne that led to a discontinued snowmobile trail. The wardens followed the track and found the stuck snowmobile but the operator was not found. The game wardens tracked the subject and were able to make voice contact ultimately locating the subject, cold but in good shape. They were able to walk him back to the snowmobile, free his machine and escort him to awaiting EMS personnel.



< (Division D) Game Wardens Josh Polland, Troy Dauphinee, and Will Shuman continued this period working ice fisherman. The weather has been great and a few good sized salmon were checked. Several hours behind spotting scopes were put in by game wardens to help ensure compliance of Maine's ice fishing regulations.

> (Division E) Maine's game wardens participated in the annual Presque Isle Sportsmen Show. Several children were happy to get their share of stickers from the crew that attended the IF&W booth. Fish, wildlife, recreational vehicle, and recruitment related questions were asked by those attending the show. Also, Wardens Ryan Fitzpatrick and Ed Christie attended the annual Kid's Ice Fishing Day at Madawaska Lake on Sunday. It was a beautiful day and 92 kids arrived ready to fish. Several trout and a number of yellow perch were caught.



WILDLIFE DIVISION

Swan Island in it's 50th year! - *Written by John Pratte, Wildlife Biologist & Swan Island Manager*

The campground on Swan Island at the Steve Powell Wildlife Management Area is entering its 50th year in operation. During this time we have hosted many school groups, non-profit groups, and families who have enjoyed exploring the bountiful wildlife, history and educational programs.

Swan Island began as a destination for visitors who wanted to view the abundant deer and numerous flocks of waterfowl frequenting Merymeeting Bay. Over time the focus has shifted to the combination of wildlife viewing, history, camping, hiking and paddling experiences.

With time comes infrastructure needs and opportunities. Our ferry, which services public and staff needs, has been in service over 50 years, exceeding its life expectancy. After evaluating many options we found the most cost effective was a new ferry.

Going into the 2015 season we will have a modern, aluminum ferry that will increase our capacity from an average of 15 passengers to 55. Not only will our efficiency be dramatically improved, but in combination with a new dock at the campground we can bring large groups directly to the campground, bypassing multiple trips in the tour truck.

I am excited about the new opportunities and improved visitor experience on Swan Island this year.



FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

Crooked River Redd Survey - *Written by Jim Pellerin, Fisheries Biologist, Sebago Lake Region*

The Crooked River is the single most important spawning and nursery tributary supporting the wild landlocked salmon sport fishery in Sebago Lake. The river has the potential to significantly, if not entirely sustain Sebago Lake's salmon fishery with naturally produced fish. Aside from its importance as a spawning tributary for Sebago, the Crooked River also provides substantial recreational angling opportunity, and is the only high quality river fishery for salmon in southern Maine today. This was not always the case, as the river had been plagued with mill dams for centuries, and Sebago almost lost its salmon population from DDT use in the mid to late 1960s. Since the creation of the Fisheries Division in the early 1950s, each generation of biologists have all worked towards the restoration of the wild salmon population of Sebago Lake.



Although MDIFW conducted a complete habitat survey of the main stem Crooked River in the mid 1980s, the scale of the survey did not clearly identify the specific location of spawning habitats, particularly those actually being utilized by spawning adults. Salmon spawning sites are critical habitats in terms of production potential; identifying key spawning locations, as well as their distribution and abundance, are integral to the long-term protection of the Crooked River salmon population.

Consequently, MDIFW planned a salmon redd survey for the fall of 2014. The project was a joint effort involving MDIFW regional staff, as well as volunteers from the Sebago Lake and Mollycokett Chapters of Trout Unlimited. Various sections of the river were surveyed for salmon redds by teams of two via walking and/or canoeing.

A summary of the survey results is presented in the table. A total of 2,107 redds were observed over the 58.1 mile reach of the Crooked River from Songo Pond downstream to its confluence with the Songo River. The data indicate a relatively high percentage of current redd sites are located above historical sawmill barriers (Edes – 85.2%, Scribners – 61.1%, Bolsters – 46.9 %), which validates early and current efforts by the Department to restore and enhance fish passage in the watershed.

Summary of Crooked River Redd Survey, 2014.				
Summary of Crooked River Redd Counts (2014)				
Section	Miles	Redd Count (%)	Redds/Mile	Test Pit Count ¹
Albany-N Waterford	12.3	2242 (10.6)	19	NA
N Waterford-Sodom	15.7	453 (21.5)	29	146
Sodom-Twin Bridges	3.7	230 (10.9)	62	30
Twin Bridges-Bolsters	4.1	82 (3.9)	20	24
Bolsters-Scribners	2.6	300 (14.2)	115	34
Scribners-Edes	10.1	508 (24.1)	50	47
Edes-Rte 11	2.7	256 (12.2)	95	46
Rte 11-Songo R	6.9	54 (2.6)	8	6
Total	58.1	2,107 (100.0)	36	378
1 Test pits only counted where they occurred in the presence of one or more redds.				
2 Actual counts were 273, adjusted downward 18% for unaccounted test pits within this section.				
Estimated Adult Spawning Population				
2,318 - 4,6351 adult LLS				
1 Calculations assume 1-2 redds/female and a F:M sex ratio of 45:55 (Jordan River Data)				

Redd counts have been widely used as a relatively simple and inexpensive method to monitor or estimate the population size of adult spawning salmonids. Redd counts can be expanded with a multiplier for redds per female and a sex ratio to yield a rough population estimate for the number of spawning adults. The redd count data obtained in this survey and the best information available for multipliers suggest the adult spawning run for the Crooked River in 2014 ranged from approximately 2,300 to 4,600 adult salmon. This latest information indicates that there have been significant gains in spawning activity and adult returns to the upper river, which is consistent with observations of more wild salmon in the Sebago Lake fishery. It is rewarding to see the culmination of over six decades of work by various MDIFW biologists unfold into a rather remarkable success.