



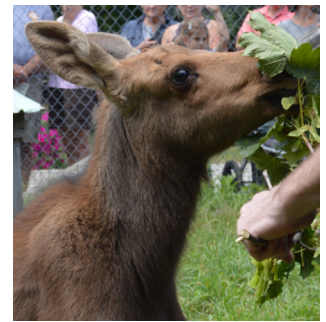
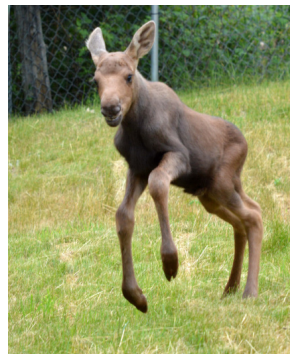
MAINE WILDLIFE PARK 2018 ANNUAL VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



In the blink of an eye, 2018 is already becoming a memory. Like every other season at the Maine Wildlife Park; it was so busy, so action-packed, and so quick. The park sometimes seems like a factory that daily processes people in and out, with animals fed and cleaned up, and our programs and services offered and concluded. It's easy to be consumed by its operation and more difficult to pause and reflect on the mechanisms that make it all work. As a reader of this newsletter, you are more than just a stakeholder in this facility, you are an integral part of that mechanism that allows the park to function, grow, and thrive. The successes of 2018 speak to the truthfulness of this, proof that our visitors are increasingly responding to your efforts and hard work. To break another record hardly seems possible on the heels of so many recent ones, and the park is forever indebted to you for making this possible yet again!

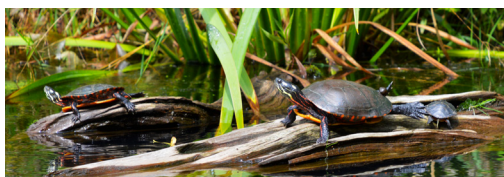
What made 2018 another special year for the park?

A look at the attached admissions and revenue figures will reveal that several sales categories saw growth in 2018, contributing to an increase of 873 people from our record the previous year. Other sales categories and departments like the Nature Store and Snack Shack reported figures that were comparable to last year's record figures. This increase is consistent with the trend of higher attendance at Maine State Parks in general for 2018, but simultaneously contrary to other tourism trends in the state. The Maine Tourism Association reported that all visitor information centers on Maine highways saw decreased volume in 2018, and many summer-based businesses also reported mixed results or decreases relative to last year. The park's increase is therefore a welcome result considering these other tourism trends, and speaks to the other factors that likely made a difference for us. While the most fundamental factor is the undeniable growth of the park that your help makes possible, we had some big help in 2018 in the form of a little wobbly moose calf with a great story and widespread popularity. "Maggie" the moose enjoyed a level of fame that certainly contributed to our attendance figures and gave us a premier attraction in 2018!



A look at park projects:

Our biggest 2018 project was our new songbird exhibit. It opened to the public at the end of the season with just a few birds housed, and we look forward to a grand opening on May 4 to kick off our 2019 season. The past season also brought the introduction of new branding for our facility; including a new look for our map, logo, and a new brochure to showcase them. A remaining piece to the new branding effort will be the installation of a new front entrance highway sign in the upcoming months. We also made changes to our admissions gate entrance with the establishment of our "walk of fame" and increased rental program. Changes will continue here into 2019 as we further enhance our rental offerings and protocol. In 2018 we also adopted a design for a new Nature Store and Game Farm Museum building that now enters an engineering phase for future construction. Per usual, we again designated a tremendous amount of time in 2018 into the maintenance of our ever-increasing physical property.



In memory of Peter & Esther:

2018 sadly marked the passing of two of the park's dedicated volunteers. Peter Wood and Esther Ginsberg committed a huge part of their lives to the Maine Wildlife Park. It was our privilege to know and work with them. They were not only loyal volunteers who gave so much of themselves, they were also colossal characters, and their passing leaves a void in the lives of all of us who worked with them.

Most of you will remember Peter Wood as the Tuesday morning gatehouse attendant who faithfully kept his post for nearly 20 years. Many might not realize that he had many other roles as a park volunteer. He was the Treasurer of the Friends for many years, competently handling the finances of the Friends with the utmost integrity. He took special interest in many of the park's construction projects, was a master gardener, was extensively involved in the Friends BBQs, and provided the park with constant assistance by always making himself available for administrative support. Peter was always quiet about his participation and involvement among other volunteers, visitors, and Friends. He never sought recognition or praise, and his assistance would often go unnoticed. He exemplified what it was to be a servant to a cause and a place that he loved dearly. For those of us who knew him well, he will be remembered for his dedication, humility, and selflessness.



Looking back, and ahead...

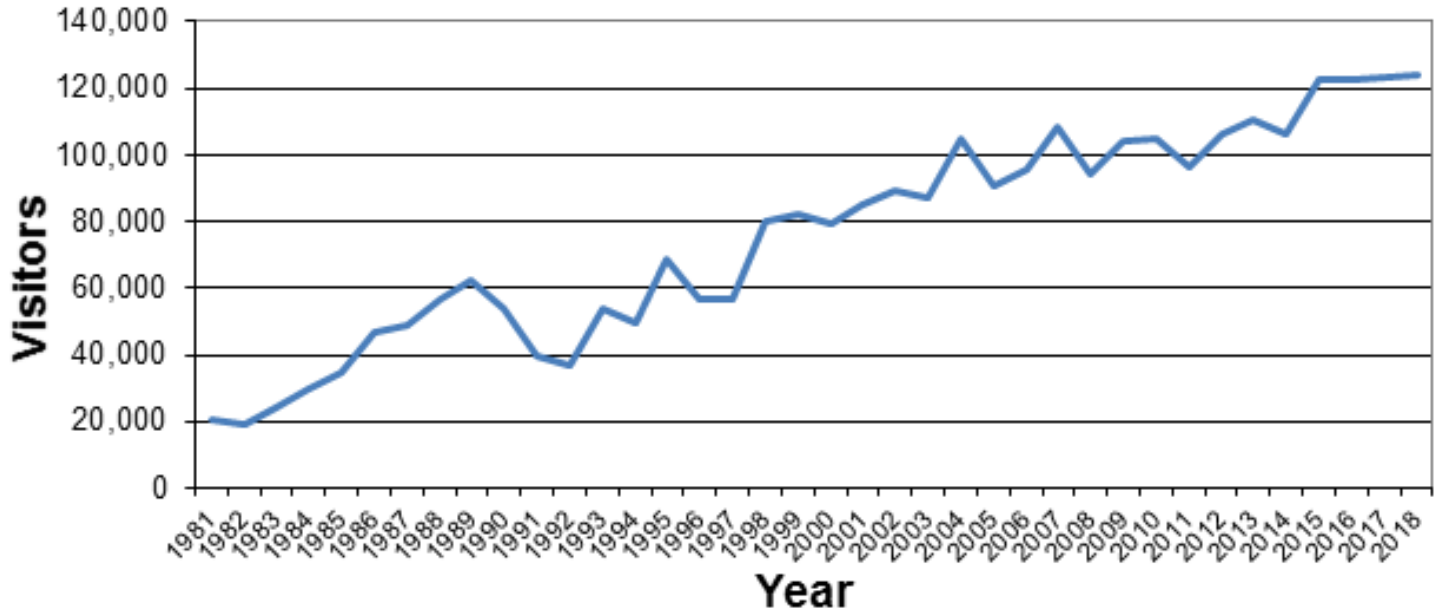
If you've been working at the Maine Wildlife Park for any length of time, you've probably heard me state that the park's volunteers and staff are the facility's most valuable assets. While this is true of virtually any organization, the park's support from volunteers stands out, and I would even say stands alone. The contribution of time and energy from so many has a tremendous impact on the park's large internal culture. I can assure you that all the park's staff feel it. How can we mirror the dedication of people like you who give so much of themselves? We are constantly challenged and motivated by your dedication, the sacrifices you make, and your enthusiasm. This in turn inspires us to do the best we can at our jobs. In other words, the work you do here at the park goes much further than your accomplishments. It has a multiplying effect that pays dividends for the park that are beyond measure. This is what makes the park dynamic, ever-changing, and ever-growing. Since 1990, state parks in Maine have increased their attendance by about 30%. During the same period, the park's attendance has grown by 130%. While it's true that there are many differences between us and other state parks, I believe that the biggest difference is you!

Curt Johnson, Superintendent

For the past eight years, Esther Ginsberg volunteered with her husband Art doing a myriad of job functions at the park. They could be seen volunteering at all our large special events, working at the snack shack and gatehouse weekly, assisting with the fundraising BBQs, were involved in the Friends group, and in many other areas. Esther would fill in at the gatehouse and the Shack with short notice and often work several shifts in a single week. The combination of these two capacities made for hard work and trying experiences in these fast-paced roles. Like Peter, Esther was by all definitions, "one-of-a-kind". To all that she did, she brought her humor, candid nature, and sarcasm that left you with a smile after talking with her. We will remember her at the park for her dedication, genuineness, and resolve.



Maine Wildlife Park Attendance 1981 thru 2018



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

GRAY, MAINE

Wildlife Exhibits • Picnic/Grill Areas
 Nature Trails • Gift Shop • Snack Shack
 Wildlife Programs • Guided Tours

mainewildlifepark.com



