

May 2025

12 Months of Wildlife Management

From Joe Roy, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist



Figure 1. Monitor Nest Boxes from Afar

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With lengthening days and warmer temperatures, May is when our growing season really begins in earnest. Through much of the state our last frost of the year will occur in May, and we will begin to get our vegetable gardens planted. Our heartier native vegetation growth will be well underway, and the leaves will begin to start growing larger by the day. With vegetation emerging, songbirds returning, and amphibian activity well underway, May is a time of immense seasonal change, and the real end of winter and beginning of the sunny warmer months. Many of the things to consider in May for wildlife habitat are continuations of what we began in April.

Spring Plantings

Now is a great time to put your winter planning to use. We have discussed identifying areas to increase vegetation in the past. In addition to the live staking you did last month, you can begin planting trees and perennial plants. These are plants that flower every year. During this time of year, I encourage folks to

consider seeking out native plants to add to ornamental gardens. While buying individual plants can be more expensive, it gives you the opportunity to have a flowering plant year one of establishment.

Monitoring Nest Boxes and Birding

By May we can expect our nest boxes to be getting attention. Observing nest boxes will give you the opportunity to see which species of birds are utilizing them. I encourage you to watch from afar and avoid disturbing the boxes, since this is a time of peak activity. Observing birds during this time of the year in their habitat can also indicate to you if there are natural nesting occurring nearby. Avoiding disturbing natural nests is important as well.

Forest Management

Some sources of funding, like the Natural Resource Conservation Service, may restrict the time of year that you can do tree removal to avoid impact on certain bat species. Often this window of no removal begins in June. Getting activities like pre-commercial thinning, done in May gives you a great start to your spring and summer. It also allows you to release the canopy above desired understory



plant! Always check with your funding sources first regarding restrictions.

No Mow May

Consider giving up some of your manicured law and allow that area to “rewild.” “No Mow May” is a good start, but wildlife needs better cover and food resources year-round. Also, many flowers bloom after May. While the initial growth may just be the non-native grasses that are there, you may have other native plant species that pop up. Giving up some lawn can help our insects and small mammals greatly.

Invasive Plant Monitoring and Removal



Figure 2. Ornamental jewelweed

Like in April, in May invasive plants will continue to make themselves visible. Learning to identify them, containing their spread, and removing them will be on our list every month moving forward.

Vernal Pools



By May, amphibian activity is in full swing. April may be when activity starts, but in May it is apparent statewide. We can find wood frog, spotted and blue spotted salamander eggs in our vernal pools. As we discussed in April, these areas are valuable

habitat for wildlife and avoiding impacting them is key. Careful examination of these areas is fun and educational but here are a few tips and reminders. Avoid deet based insect repellent if you are entering vernal pools. Deet is extremely toxic to amphibians that respire through their skin. Limit or avoid picking up egg masses and place them back from where you found them. Do not drain or disturb the pool edge and leave the sticks and branches in pools in place.



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beginningwithhabitat.org.

This newsletter article was originally written for our partner Small Woodland Owners of Maine.