



Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

# Monthly Report

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February 2014

## Check the chickadee on your 2013 tax form!



### MAINE WILDLIFE PARK

The Maine Wildlife Park was open to the public from April 13 to November 11 in 2013, and saw its highest attendance ever this year with 110,312 visits and \$739,477.00 in total revenue for calendar year 2013. This represents about a 4% increase in attendance compared to 2012, even as the park faced the economic and weather-related challenges of high gas prices and many rainy days.

Local visitors accounted for about 50% of attendance, with as many as 45% from out of state and 5% from out of the country during peak season! The park's continuing popularity with both Maine residents and tourists alike helped it meet its legislative mandate and stay 'in the black' for the 7th consecutive year.

Some event highlights included the Dry Mills Hatchery new education building Grand Opening was noted with a parkwide, free Open House in June with close to 1800 people attending. The annual Pow Wow and Rick Charette concert both saw increases in attendance, and the Halloween Night Visits broke all records with nearly 2000 visitors! North Woods Law was again spotlighted at a park in late September, drawing in over 1200 visitors to get photos and autographs from their favorite game warden stars.

### INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 3,591 Phone calls
- 1,898 Emails
- 259 Walk-ins



#### Missed an issue?

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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

## FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

### Partnerships for Fisheries Conservation

A few years back, recently retired Dr. Dave Haskell joined the Sebago Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) and later attended their annual banquet, where he bid on and won a rather peculiar item. This item allowed him to spend a field day with the Regional Fisheries Staff. Brian Lewis and I had the pleasure of taking Dave out during some fall trapnetting operations, where he got to witness some of Maine's great landlocked salmon.

As I recall, it was a bright, cool crisp fall morning and we were bobbing around on Kezar Lake in Lovell, when out of the blue Dave asked what conservation projects Trout Unlimited could partner with MDIFW on that would be helpful and meaningful. It took a few minutes for me to wrap my head around the question, but eventually my answer was trout pond reclamations. I explained how these types of projects would probably provide the most bang for their dollars and produce tangible results. As they say, the rest is history.

Dave and Trout Unlimited quickly developed the "5-in-5" project standing for 5 years...5 trout ponds and a goal of raising \$50,000 in five years for reclamation projects in the Sebago Lakes Region. They have almost reached their goal, and together with MDIFW we have reclaimed two trout ponds, Little Concord and Abbott Ponds, both in Sumner, with two additional waters planned for 2014. Besides funding for chemicals, equipment, and signage, the Sebago and Mollycokett Chapters have also donated volunteer labor. Volunteers have assisted with a variety of tasks alongside MDIFW staff including: treatment preparations, site withdrawal, pond draw downs, beaver dam removal, road work, onsite meals for MDIFW staff and volunteers (see photo), and even overnight security. Together, we have developed a working relationship that has benefitted both organizations. MDIFW received additional funding, volunteers, and project support, while TU has reported a more energized and active membership and volunteer base, as well as a better understanding and respect for MDIFW staff. Frankly, these have been some of the most rewarding volunteer projects I've been involved with in my career.

While "5-in-5" may have been the start of an improved partnership between MDIFW and TU, it appears to be only the beginning. Sebago Trout Unlimited's leadership has jumped headlong into becoming a more active conservation organization. In the past few years, they have tackled numerous regional conservation projects benefiting local fisheries including:

- assisting USFWS w/ road crossing surveys on the Crooked River
- dam removals on Chandler River and Swett Brook with USFWS and MDIFW
- Swett Brook Bridge Project with MDIFW, USFWS, and MDOT
- assisting MDIFW w/ the Jordan River egg take
- Swift/Dead Diamond trout tagging with Dartmouth College and New Hampshire Fish and Game
- Crooked River Riparian Nonpoint Source Pollution Survey with the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Wells Marine Reserve stream surveys
- Beaver dam removal and landlocked salmon redd counts on Swett Brook for MDIFW

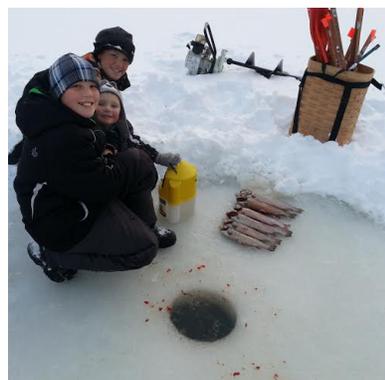
Based on the above list, it is obvious many of these projects involve not just partnering with MDIFW, but also with numerous other organizations for a successful outcome towards a common goal.

Lastly, I have to give some recognition to Steve Heinz of Sebago Trout Unlimited. Steve has been instrumental in seeing many of these projects through to fruition. His drive, pit-bull like tenacity, and failure to be thrown astray by "bureaucratic" obstacles, has made him a valuable asset for TU and MDIFW alike. Thanks Steve, and I'll see you in the field tomorrow morning as we look at yet another potential dam removal project. Region A fisheries staff looks forward to working with TU over the next 5 years!



## INFORMATION & EDUCATION

Recreational  
Safety  
Coordinator  
Mike Sawyer  
presents  
Secretary  
Brenda  
Chaplin with  
a pin to  
celebrate 35  
years in state  
government.



These boys were fishing on Levasseur Pond on the PCCA Grounds in Brewer 1/5/2014.

Because of the IF&W stocking program, children are able to fish ponds and actually catch fish. PCCA is proud to encourage children to Ice Fish and also introduce children and families to fly fishing and other outdoor activities.

## MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

- During the last two weeks, ice fishing on most lakes in southern Maine has increased. Sebago is yielding some very nice lake trout. Warden Herring has checked several nice fish. He has addressed several anglers operating ATVs and snowmobiles with expired registrations. He has written summonses and several warnings for lake trout being within the slot limit.
- In one case, he found two lake trout measuring within the slot limit lying on the ice and filleted next to a subject's ice shack. The subject was identified as the same individual he recently summonsed on Hinckley Pond in South Portland, for being 27 trout over. Just days prior to this encounter, Warden Herring summonsed the same individual for operating while his license was suspended.
- Warden Adrian Marquis spent the last two weeks working fishermen and snowmobilers (like most wardens in Aroostook County). Fishing has been decent with varied success. For most of this past period, there has been a serious lack of snow on the lakes. Most clubs have groomed their trails well with smooth and hard conditions. Warden Marquis worked a successful detail that led to one summons for a slot limit violation, and one summons issued by Warden Fitzpatrick for failing to check cusk lines once per hour.
- Warden Steve Couture and Sergeant Terry Hughes attended a children's fishing derby in Liberty.



## RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

### American Black Duck Winter Banding

Wildlife biologist Kelsey Sullivan and several volunteers will again be collaborating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on an American black duck banding project this winter. This year's field effort will be a continuation of a five-year study to assess the utility of using an "after the hunting season" banding program. Traditionally, most ducks are banded prior to the hunting season in order to determine that year's harvest rates. But because black ducks are difficult to band in significant numbers in late summer, a winter banding program is being studied. This project is part of a larger Atlantic Flyway (northeastern states and Maritime Provinces) project to increase the banding sample of black ducks, and assess if these bandings and resulting information improve estimates of population size and harvest rates. Data collected from these banded birds will ultimately inform management decisions.

Staff will trap ducks using a cloverleaf type trap where ducks enter a corn baited funnel into a large wire trap. Trapped ducks have difficulty finding their way out the narrow funnel. Once captured, the sex and age of each duck will be determined. Each duck will then receive a uniquely numbered leg band, and immediately be released.

This year's trapping efforts will be conducted in upper Penobscot Bay, Frenchman's Bay and Machias Bay.

