



# Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

## Weekly Report

[www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com)

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Thursday, April 19, 2012

### MAINE WILDLIFE PARK



The Maine Wildlife Park opened on Saturday, April 14 with record crowds – and they’ve just kept coming throughout this school vacation week. Close to or over 1,000 visitors have been recorded each day! In fact, by the end of the

week, the Park will have seen as many visitors as we saw in the entire month of April, 2011. We don’t know why so many people have decided to visit, but the great weather, live appearances on all 3 Portland TV stations, and close to 6,000 Facebook ‘fans’ may all be playing a part. We are hoping this trend continues, especially with the high cost of gas a limiting factor!

### LICENSING DIVISION

Licensing Division personnel are conducting a 2-day MOSES training class for our registration agents this week at the University of Maine at Bangor. MOSES is the Department’s electronic licensing and registration system. In attendance at the training are representatives from the towns of Stonington, Van Buren, Great Pond, Milbridge, Milo, Monson, Eastport, North Haven, Meddybemps, Allagash, Abbot, Baileyville, Brooklin, and Staceyville. Also in attendance are representatives from Waite General Store in the town of Waite. Following completion of the class, participants will be able to immediately begin registering boats, ATVs, and snowmobiles for the Department using the MOSES system.

### INFORMATION CENTER

Last week the front office of the Department received and replied to:

- 976 Phone calls
- 547 Emails
- 82 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

To view previous Weekly Reports, please visit [www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com) and select “About Us”

### MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

The Maine Warden Service Advanced Academy training room, located at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro, was dedicated to Game Warden Pilot Daryl Gordon on Monday, April 16, 2012. Pilot Gordon was killed in the line of duty on March 24, 2011 when his Cessna 185 airplane crashed on Clear Lake in T10 R11 WELS. Daryl’s family including his mother, Camilla Nutter, his widow, Rita and his two sons Daryl Jr. and Jim along with most of the Warden Service Command Staff attended the Patriot’s Day event.

Colonel Wilkinson pointed out during the dedication that every future Game Warden, starting with the class that starts on May 29th of this year, will learn the importance and techniques of conservation law enforcement while attending class in the “Gordon” room.

The class room space was given to the Warden Service by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to use during the Advanced Academy as well as in service training with the stipulation it could be used for other disciplines while not being utilized by the Warden Service. There is little doubt it is a Game Warden training room as it is decorated with various outdoor themed objects, including moose antlers, snowshoes and various furs hanging on the walls. Other law enforcement classes enjoy utilizing the room whenever possible because it feels more like a “lodge” than a class room.



Daryl Gordon’s family, from left to right, his widow Rita, his youngest son Jim, his mother Camilla Nutter, his eldest son Daryl Jr, along with Colonel Wilkinson pose with the “Gordon Room” dedication plaque.



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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Maine Sporting Heritage 1870-1970

Swan Island  
Maine Wildlife Park

## WILDLIFE DIVISION

### Randy Cross and Jen Vashon along with contractors Lisa Bates and Matt O'Neal, and volunteer John Wood recently finished the winter bear den field season.

Among the highlights, we successfully deployed a live-stream web camera in an 8 year old bear's den on January 11th after beginning den visits on a regular basis on January 6th. This bear gave birth to 2 cubs on January 16th. The den cam installation was part of a cooperative effort with a privately funded nonprofit group that is hoping to raise funds to help wildlife research in Maine (Wildlife Research Foundation).

We finished the winter field season on March 28th when we visited two 15 year old females for the second time this winter in northern Maine. These bears were first weighed while pregnant on December 29th and January 3rd. They lost 60 and 65 pounds in 85 and 90 days, respectively, since we handled them earlier in the winter (ID 1592 had 3 cubs – total combined weight of all 3 cubs = 13.1 lbs, and ID 1574 had 2 cubs – total combined weight = 14.6 lbs). Both of these bears traveled about 2 miles from their first den to their second den.

We visited 75 dens this winter, handling a total of 165 bears. We handled 38 yearling bears (19F, 19M) in 20 dens and 60 cubs in 26 litters (30F, 30M; 2.31 cubs/litter). There were 2 litters of 4 in Bradford and only 3 single cub litters (2 in Brad and 1 at Spec Pd). Last year's cub survival was 79.7% (47 out of 59 cubs that were handled last year were seen in the dens this year as yearlings). This rate of survival to one year of age is higher than our long term average which is closer to 70%.

One important piece of information that we are able to gather every winter is the weights of bears that are just over one year old (yearlings) who are in the den with their mothers. These yearling weights are our most sensitive indication of the relative abundance and quality of food resources available to all the bears during the preceding summer feeding season. This winter, yearling weights averaged 53 pounds for all yearlings combined which is a relatively high average indicating that last spring, summer and fall were particularly good natural food years for bears in Maine. This was especially true for bears living in the big woods of northern Maine where yearling bears averaged a whopping 61.8 pounds. For comparison, in leaner times, yearling weights tend to average closer to 30 pounds like the 9 year period from 1996-2004 when they averaged just under 27 pounds in our northern study area.

Every den season holds its own surprises. This winter we had 6 bears denned in hollow trees above the ground (5 were nested greater than 25 feet above the ground). We have seen less than 12 bears denned this high in trees in the previous 29 years combined (close to 1,500 dens). We successfully handled 5 out of these 6 thanks to Bill Hanson, a professional tree climber from FPL who spent 3 days helping us.

Each winter, we select a few dens to use as "demonstration" dens for college groups and other appropriate guests. This winter we hosted 232 guests on 29 days including groups from colleges (UMaine - 28, Unity - 31, and Bowdoin - 12 (twice)), the Kicking Bear youth program - 22, legislators and guests of the Commissioner - (2 groups - 49 total). Media included The Bear Whisperer (Sportsman Channel), Animal Planet TV (North Woods Law), WVII TV (local news), Newspaper writer, Deirdre Fleming (PPH) and a freelance photographer, Paul Cyr (YouTube).



**This past Saturday** regional wildlife biologists Chuck Hulse and Bob Cordes led a Deer Wintering Area (DWA) management tour for the Small Woodland Owner's Association of Maine on Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust's (RLHT) land in Rangeley Plantation. The talk to 25 attendees focused on the habitat needs of wintering deer and DWA management being practiced on this property. Assistant regional wildlife biologist Bob Cordes and consulting forester Peter Tracy of Farmington wrote the harvest and timber management plan for the RLHT. Most of the harvest was completed this past winter and they were able to show how certain commercial forestry methods can be applied to both generate income for the landowner and meet the long term habitat needs for wintering deer. For the Region D regional wildlife biologist this was their third Saturday field tour and talk over the past four weekends. The others being a wildlife tracking workshop for SWOAM in Mercer and a DWA ecology and management workshop for Unity College in Coplin Plantation.

## OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

- Commissioner Woodcock attended the Lisbon Fish and Game Association forum on Wednesday, April 18th. Those in attendance enjoyed a spaghetti dinner followed by brief remarks from the Commissioner and then a Q & A session. DIF&W personnel attending were: Recreational Safety Coordinator, Mike Sawyer; Director of Landowner Relations, Mark Latti; Wildlife Biologist, Judy Camuso; and Game Warden Evan Franklin.



## FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

### The History of Walleye in Maine

By Scott Davis, Fisheries Specialist

Most Mainers may not know that there was a Belgrade Lakes Hatchery at one time. Others may remember its whereabouts, or recall the remains of the four hatchery pools that once lined the outlet of Salmon Lake where it flows into Great Pond. The Belgrade Lake Hatchery was purchased in 1904 by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game from the Kennebec Fish & Game Association. Records indicate that a total of 1.5 million walleye eggs were obtained the following year from the United States Commission of Fisheries to rear out in the Belgrade Lakes Hatchery - this was the first legal importation of walleye into

Maine. A spawning population of walleyes became established in Great Pond by 1916, most likely by escapement from this hatchery. By 1953, walleyes were extirpated from the Belgrade Lakes following several years of targeted harvest during their spring spawning runs.

In the fall of 1996, one walleye was caught in a routine trap-netting operation in Long Pond. It was clear that this fish, and subsequently others, were present as the result of illegal introductions. Since that first sign of walleye in 1996, a total of 67 walleyes have been caught and destroyed from Long Pond and Great Pond during spring trap-netting operations. Age assessments of those fish indicate that they arose from two separate illegal introductions made in 1992, and again in 2004. The 1996 cohort is now 18 years old, while the 2004 cohort is 7 years old.

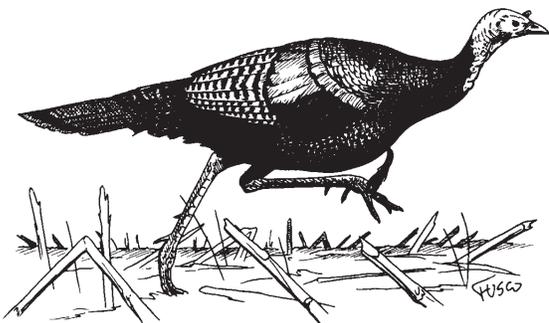
Fortunately, there are no signs of successful reproduction in either water. To limit the walleye as a threat for illegal transport and introduction into other Maine waters, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's objective is to continue spring trap-netting in both Long and Great Ponds and destroy all walleyes caught.



## INFORMATION & EDUCATION

We would love to have you join us for the Hooked on Fishing Instructor Training at Cabelas on Sunday, April 22 from 10am-3pm. There is no cost to attend this training and participants have the opportunity to learn more about the program and become a certified Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs Instructor!

Contact Emily MacCabe at [emily.maccabe@maine.gov](mailto:emily.maccabe@maine.gov) to sign up!



**Run out and get your Turkey Permit now!**

Spring Turkey Hunting in Maine starts on **April 30, 2012**  
and ends on **June 2, 2012.**

Youth Spring Wild Turkey Day is **April 28, 2012**

Fridays at 9PM e/p



**NORTH WOODS LAW**

