



Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Weekly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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MAINE WILDLIFE PARK



Commissioner Chandler Woodcock was on hand on a rainy May 4 at the Wildlife Park to help officially open the new mountain lion exhibit. This exhibit, at 3500 square feet, is the largest in the NE. Funded in large part by the Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park, the exhibit features caves, rock faces, windthrown trees and a variety of large native trees. Media including the Sun Journal, BDN, WGME and many local weeklies gave great coverage of the event.



LICENSING DIVISION

This past week the Department reached a milestone of having delivered over a million informational emails to our customers since the beginning of the year through our new tool – GovDelivery. GovDelivery provides state of the art communication tools that the Department can use to provide information to our customers. The Department currently has over 164,000 subscribers to this service. The service allows subscribers to choose to receive informational emails on a variety of topics ranging from moose permit applications to public meeting notifications. The service allows the Department to communicate with a large number of our customers very quickly. We look forward to learning about and using the many features of this new service over the upcoming year.

The moose permit application deadline is fast approaching. All applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM on Monday May 14th. We are currently receiving around 1,000 applications per day through our online application process which can be found on our website.

ENGINEERING & REALTY



The Engineering division has completed concrete work for the Fish viewing pool at the Dry Mills Hatchery. Site work continues and we anticipate completion in the next few weeks.

INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 1,313 Phone calls
- 617 Emails
- 86 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

To view previous Weekly Reports, please visit www.mefishwildlife.com and select "About Us"

Wiley's Weekly

Wiley conducted a field review of the harvest prescription for the Codyville public lots. Recommendations were made to the BP&L forester for riparian zone management and old growth retention.



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Maine Sporting Heritage 1870-1970

Swan Island
Maine Wildlife Park

FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

The fishing at Moosehead Lake has been excellent this spring. Anglers are reporting some terrific catches of big, fat salmon in the Moose River. We have also heard reports of clouds of smelt in the river. The togue fishermen are doing well too. I spoke with an angler this week that caught 1 salmon and 10 togue in a morning of fishing. He noted that all the fish were fat and sassy as well as full of smelt, but the fishing was actually better a few days ago.

This is good news and follows a trend we have documented the past few years on Moosehead Lake. This past winter was the fourth winter in a row of improving fatness in togue and our brook trout catch was very good. Last fall we had one of the best years on record for salmon condition from our annual trapnetting operation. Only in 1978 were the fish this fat overall. Not only were they heavier, but each age group showed improvement in average length. This is even more remarkable considering the recent history of growth problems on the lake. In fact, we were very close to the bottom of the barrel in 2007. Anglers may recall that at that time IFW biologists identified another "wave" of togue entering the fishery at Moosehead Lake. Togue feed heavily on smelt and compete with salmon (and themselves) for forage. We already had plenty of firsthand experience that high densities of togue caused severe growth problems for both salmon and togue and this "wave" of togue in 2007 was looking more and more like a tsunami. Therefore in 2008, we liberalized the regulations to include no size or bag limit on togue less than 18 inches and increased the bag limit to 2 fish for togue over 18 inches. We recognized the need to thin these fish out quickly if we were to maintain growth rates. Over the next three years, anglers removed tens of thousands of togue and no doubt saved the smelt population from crashing even further. Removing these surplus togue saved tens (if not hundreds) of millions of smelt over the next few years. Salmon growth is now excellent and there are still plenty of togue in the lake.

Needless to say, we are very pleased with the positive trends in growth since the management changes were made in 2008. We are still cautious however. We have seen some peaks in the past and those positive gains were quickly erased when we tried to increase stocking rates to take advantage of the improved growth. Any management change that would increase the number of predators would be a step in the wrong direction. For now, we will stick with a successful plan and try to get several years of good growth under our belt. Managing the fishery on Moosehead Lake requires constant monitoring and the ability to evaluate long term data. It is not a Ron Popeil oven, where you can: "Set it and forget it!" We will continue to evaluate the fishery and encourage anglers to take advantage of some very good spring fishing in the beautiful Moosehead Lake Region.



Photos by: Amy Lane of the Grey Ghost Camps

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

- Thursday, May 3rd Commissioner Woodcock participated as a member of the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board in allocating grant monies to applicants. Each year, about \$700,000 are distributed to innovative projects that directly benefit Maine's outdoor heritage. By awarding grants in four different funding categories, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund supports a broad range of conservation initiatives. Those categories are fisheries and wildlife enhancement, public land acquisition, endangered species protection and natural resources law enforcement.
- Friday May 4th Commissioner Woodcock attended the grand opening of the Wildlife Park's new, state of the art Mountain Lion Exhibit. Commissioner Woodcock assisted Ray Clark, President of the Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park, to officiate the ribbon cutting ceremony. Over a year in construction, this ambitious project was funded in large part by the Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park. Additional and substantial contributions in time, labor and landscaping came from Park volunteers, inmates from Windham Correctional Center, MDIFW engineering and wildlife park staff.
- Tuesday, May 8th Commissioner Woodcock was a guest speaker at the Mountain Valley High School Conference Top 10, held at the Augusta Civic Center. The conference was to recognize Mountain Valley High School honor students and their achievements.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION



Emily MacCabe, Youth Activities Coordinator, teaching a group of potential instructors the in and outs of the Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs program.



MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

The new "Wall of Shame" is very similar to the existing "Wall of Shame" that has been received so well by citizens and visitors of the state of Maine. OGT sees the value of increased public awareness to poaching issues in Maine and therefore, actively solicited funds and made plans to purchase a second trailer to increase visibility and reach out to more people and participate in more events across the state. The plan is to be able to keep one "Wall of Shame" in the northern part of the state and the other in the southern half to decrease mileage and time spent getting the display to where it needs to go. Logistically, it will be much easier to have the display presented at an event in Aroostook County and then have it at Kittery Trading Post a few days later.

Maine OGT partners with the Maine Warden Service to provide the public with an avenue to report poaching and stay anonymous through the OGT hotline and online at www.maineogt.org. All of the displays in the current "Wall of Shame" trailer and the new "Wall of Shame" are provided by members of Maine Warden Service from illegal hunting and fishing cases that they have made. The trailers can be considered a mobile museum of poaching and the poachers negative effect on fish and wildlife in the state of Maine.



Colonel Joel Wilkinson attended the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (USFWS/NSCLEC) Wildlife Law Enforcement Chiefs Meeting.

As possibly the first "summit" of this type and scope, the meeting provided an unprecedented opportunity to connect and communicate. The result was valuable national dialogue on where we are today - and where we hope to go in the future in our collective efforts to protect fish, wildlife and their habitat.

Colonel Joel Wilkinson was selected to be part of a five chief panel nationally, that included the Chief of Texas, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Maine of course. The panel's role was to prepare the membership and enter into a discussion with all the nations chiefs regarding preparing for Leadership transitions in the upcoming years. We also began work on developing a national Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs training course that would be offered to all state and federal conservation law enforcement managers at the National Conservation Training Center in W. Virginia. Part of the course was a one day leadership site visit to the National Battlefield of Antietam. The one day trip was a "case study" of conceptions of leadership, interactions with political leaders, strategy development and implementation and outcome and analysis. We used the decisions of both the confederate and union army leadership as lessons learned from the deadliest one day battle in our history.



Warden Activity this week

Wardens Thibodeau and Christianson with 18 salmon over the limit. These fish were all packaged and packed for the ride back to Massachusetts. Both men were removing their boat from the lake, when stopped at the Belgrade Boat Landing. The two fishermen stated they had very good luck and have fished the lake for 15 years.



Warden Scott Martin worked a planned fishing detail where he witnessed the rampant illegal take of large brook trout in significant numbers. This occurs more often than we would like or suspect.



Warden Gary Sibley spent a good part of his week working smelts and open water fishermen. On Tuesday Warden Sibley received a call from retired Game Warden Gary Pelletier and his son, Sgt. Tom Pelletier of the Maine State Police. The two were at Mud Brook dipping smelts when they came across an individual standing in the woods along the brook. The man had nothing in his hands at the time of the initial contact. Retired Warden Pelletier soon spotted a pail of smelts a short distance away in the woods. The man claimed to know nothing about the pail of smelts and the net that was also lying nearby. Retired Warden Pelletier used his charm and interpersonal communication skills to elicit a confession from the man in fairly short order! The man was told to grab the smelts and head out to the road with them. Once back at the road the man was encountered by yet another retired Game Warden who was coming to dip smelts. Retired Warden John Robertson was about to "apprehend" the man when he realized who was accompanying the man. Warden Sibley arrived a short while later and summonsed the man for six quarts of smelt over the limit. The violator obviously was not a supporter of the "cause" even though he was wearing an old Maine Warden Service Association ball cap!

