



Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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Friday, September 6, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Mattawamkeag River WMA Access Improvements

Written by Ryan Robicheau, Forest Technician

Amidst all the rain and intermittent sunshine this year, the Department has undertaken an effort to improve public access into the Page Farm Compartment of the Mattawamkeag River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Drew Plantation. Maps of the WMA can be found on our website, or on the Maine Atlas and Gazetteer on page 44.

The Page Farm Compartment of the WMA is an excellent example of the work that the Wildlife Management Section undertakes to promote wildlife habitats and provide access to recreational activities. This area of the WMA is comprised of reverting farmland habitat as well as regenerating and mature forested areas. The Department has undertaken an intensive management effort to promote and maintain early successional habitats on the property and has partnered with the Ruffed Grouse Society, Wild Turkey Federation, private landowners, and others to promote these habitats. Through this work, the Department has released apple trees, planted additional soft mast producing trees, created a network of early successional block and strip cuts to rejuvenate hardwood species and reclaimed fields for grassland bird nesting species. Most recently, this year the Department has worked with its partners to install food plots on a portion of the reclaimed fields. More work is planned to promote edge habitats adjacent to the fields.

In order for the public to enjoy these improvements, the Department is currently rebuilding the access road into and over the access road on the property. Approximately three miles of road will be upgraded, including the addition of cross drain culverts, gravel, ditching and grading. In addition to allowing for hunters and others to access the property, this road improvement will allow for easier access to the Mattawamkeag River for fishermen and boaters, since it terminates at the river.

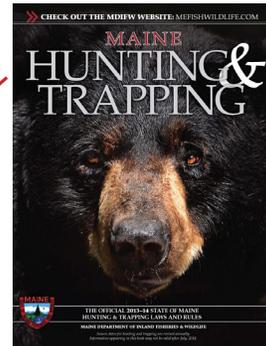
Working with a local contractor, these improvements will allow for the many recreational users to continue to enjoy the property as well as provide for better access for management purposes.

MAINE WILDLIFE PARK



Wildlife Educator Lisa Kane hands out cake as the Maine Wildlife Park recognizes the Friends of the MWP at a dinner in their honor.

Available Now!



Grab one wherever licenses are sold, or view on our website.

INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 5,801 Phone calls
- 2,623 Emails
- 435 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

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



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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Meetings and events for August included...

- 3 public hearings, 2 regarding the Department's rulemaking proposal for changes to the spring and fall turkey hunting seasons and 1 regarding the migratory bird hunting seasons. Turkey hearings were held in Presque Isle and Bridgton; migratory bird at the Augusta Armory.
- The Advisory Council meeting was held at Cabela's in Scarborough. The Council voted unanimously to approve the 2013 – 2014 Migratory bird hunting seasons.
- Warden School graduation at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Congrats to the new wardens and good luck in your new assignments.
- The Commissioner attended two shooting events, the Ruffed Grouse Habitat shoot in Richmond and a Boy Scout shooting day event in Auburn.



At a recent staff meeting held at a local facility, some of the staff look on with curiosity as one staff member made a bad suggestion.....

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

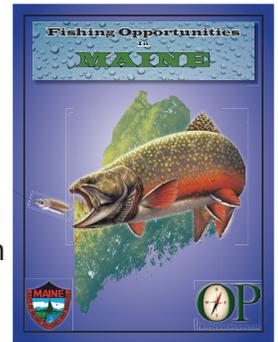
The month of August has proven to be highly productive for the Maine Warden Service with search and rescue operations, crashes, investigations, water survival training, and the graduation of the 2013 Advanced Warden School.

The whereabouts of Appalachian Trail hiker, Geraldine Largay, are still unknown. The Maine Warden Service has partnered with all federal, state, county, local partners, and professional volunteer SAR organization in the effort to locate Largay.



Wondering just where to fish in Maine? Finding that fishing spot just got a whole lot easier.

Fishing Opportunities in Maine, a booklet created by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, provides all the information you need to choose your next fishing destination.



The Fishing Opportunities booklet is available at the IFW headquarters at 284 State Street in Augusta, is online at mefishwildlife.com, and a booklet can also be sent to you by contacting the department at http://www.maine.gov/ifw/aboutus/auto_forms/contact_us.htm.

FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

Go Fish Mount Desert Island!

Written by Greg Burr, Regional Fisheries Biologist

The Downeast Region would like to announce the release of a new Department brochure that highlights fishing on Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park.



This colorful and detailed publication gives visitors and local anglers a snapshot guide to pursuing both cold-water and warm-water fish species at one of the most visited destinations in Maine. The booklet walks the reader through the identifying characteristics of each gamefish species present on Mount Desert Island, their habitats, and fishing tips on where and what season is best for each species. There are

more than two dozen lakes and ponds on MDI; the brochure features sixteen waters with significant fisheries that will help anglers focus their efforts to have successful trips.

Brooks and streams on MDI also provide good fishing opportunities for eastern wild brook trout. These waters include: Kebo Brook – Bar Harbor, Otter Creek – Bar Harbor, Old Mill Brook – Bar Harbor (insert Old Mill brook trout photo here), Hunter's Brook – Seal Harbor, tanley Brook – Seal Harbor, Little Harbor Brook – Northeast Harbor, Asticou Brook – Northeast Harbor, Marshal Brook – Southwest Harbor and Buttermilk Brook – Southwest Harbor.

Another scenic mountain portion of the Downeast Region that should be noted by anglers is the Hidden Ponds Bureau of Public Lands back-county preserve off Route 182 between the quaint villages of Franklin and Cherryfield. Adventurous anglers can park at the Hidden Ponds trail head and hike into the remote waters of Tilden, Little Long, Salmon and Anderson Ponds. These pristine waters are stocked annually with brook trout and boast trout between 13 and 15 inches, with Little Long Pond producing fish that sometimes exceed 17 inches. Hiking into these ponds takes from 25 minutes to an hour and a half but they are worth the effort. They can be fished from shore but are best fished from a canoe or float tube.

RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

Fall Deer Population - *Written by Kyla Ravana, Wildlife Biologist*

With the approaching fall, the morning dew hangs more heavily laden on vegetation, the early frosts have returned to northern Maine, and the leaves are beginning to turn color. However, the transition from summer to fall brings more than a change to Maine's landscape. Indeed, as the hunting season approaches, our constituents have once again become energized by sitting over bait for a black bear, dreams of calling in a bull moose or flushing a covey of grouse, or thoughts of sitting on stand, or still-hunting, for one of the state's prized whitetails. That's right....I mentioned the purportedly rare white-tailed deer that inhabits regions of Maine in varied abundance. Rare in many areas of the north and east? Perhaps, but not quite as much anymore....

I have heard, and read compositions, that our state incurred estimated losses of up to 70% of our deer population, following the 2007-08 and 2008-09 winters. In actuality, our best estimates are more in the neighborhood of a loss of around 30-35% of the deer population. Whatever the estimate, the deer population took a significant hit. Indeed, so much so that some members of the public, and biologists alike, continue to cite the detrimental impacts of those two winters on our deer population. However, following three pretty mild winters, now is the time to move forward, the time to archive that period as a part of our state's past.

Our state's deer populations are at similar levels prior to those two extremely severe back-to-back winters. For example, according to our 2012 records, 65% of our WMDs experienced a buck kill above and beyond the 10-year average; all other WMDs are at similar harvest levels to their respective 10-year averages (see Figure: Buck-Kill-Index [BKI]). Statewide, we recorded a BKI of 78 during the 2012 hunting season, compared to the 10-year average of 70.

Some of the positive aspects of deer-hunting in Maine include: 1) a rebounded population, 2) the opportunity to harvest a big animal, not just in northern Maine, but anywhere in the state, and 3) the chance and thrill of hunting in the "big-woods" of Maine for a mature buck. Yes, densities in the big woods of the north are lower than in southern Maine, and almost always have been through history except for a few decades around 1900, but for some hunters it is the challenge, and the experience of big-woods hunting that can be found throughout Maine that is the thrill. Our deer are back, and we expect to see a good harvest for the 2013 hunting season.



Be on the lookout for this year's Research & Management Report at IFW-staffed moose check stations, Augusta and regional offices, and other strategic locations. It will also be found on our website with past years' reports: <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/reports/researchmanagement.html>

Somewhere on the Upper Sunday River - *Written By Doug Rafferty, Director of Information & Education*

MDIFW Biologist Bobby Van Riper pauses to look at his work tearing out a dam across the stream. "If we don't do anything else we've at least made the connection between upper and lower," he says.

Van Riper and his team of volunteers and IFW employees are working on tearing out a no-name dam across a little used section of the river that only makes a difference to one group - brook trout. Tearing out this dam will help the stream flow a little freer, move a little more quickly, and allow the fish to go up as well as down the stream with a lot less stress. It will probably also eventually alter the river significantly from its path over the last 100+ years.

This is what IFW biologists do. Whether it's a stretch on Sunday River or some other habitat in some other section of Maine, they slug through the hot and the dry and the wet to make some little corner of Maine a little more habitable to a species you may never see. They do it time and again and they have to coordinate with lots of other agencies and everything has to be right.

So why does Bobby Van Riper spend two days in the wilds of Maine in neoprene waders pulling out boards and logs and making a stream whole again? "I've wanted to do this since I was a kid," he says.





Jim Connolly, a wildlife biologist with more than 30 years of experience at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, has been promoted to the agency's top biologist position.

"Jim's combination of experience and abilities will serve him well as Director of Resource Management," said Chandler E. Woodcock, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "His ability to work with the public combined with his experience and talents will benefit not only the Department, but the entire state as well."

In his role as the top biologist for the Department, Connolly will oversee the bureau of resource management which includes the wildlife division, the fisheries and hatcheries division, and the program services division. This is the top non-appointed position within the agency, influencing state and federal policy concerning fish and wildlife issues, and overseeing more than 120 employees and a budget of approximately \$14 million.

Connolly most recently served as the Wildlife Division Director for the Department. As the division director, he oversaw wildlife rule and regulatory proposals, and developed and implemented long-term wildlife management plans and policy.

In addition to Wildlife Division Director, Connolly also was the Regional Wildlife Biologist for the central part of the state, and the IFW computer services supervisor in Augusta.

As the Regional Wildlife Biologist in Sidney, Connolly directed a staff of 8 people implementing a wildlife management program that included oversight of 25,000 acres wildlife management areas, coordinated environmental review for the region and implementing a wildlife management program in one of the state's most biologically diverse areas.

Prior to becoming the regional wildlife biologist, Connolly was the computer services supervisor where he oversaw the lotteries for moose, turkey and deer, oversaw department information and technology needs, as well as the Department's data processing.

Over his career, Connolly has been recognized for his outstanding work and was recently awarded the 2010 employee of the year for wildlife. He has also received the Ken Anderson Award for outstanding service and dedication in 1998; and the IFW Employee Service Award presented by the Commissioner and the Governor in 1996.

MDIFW auctions off 10 moose permits annually, and opens the bids in February. This year, over \$106,000 was raised and applied to providing scholarships to Maine resident boys and girls, ages 8-15, for Conservation Camp at Bryant Pond 4-H Camp or Greenland Point Center in Princeton. These 2 letters reflect a majority of the kids' experiences!

8/9/13

University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center
PO Box 188*Bryant Pond*Maine*04219
(207) 665-2068
www.umext.maine.edu/bryantpond

August 5, 2013

Dear IF&W,

Thank you for sponsoring my stay at the Bryant Pond 4-H Camp and Learning Center. Also, teaching me hunter safety. This was a great experience for me because it was my first over night camp. I met a lot of new people, that was pretty cool. I also passed my hunter safety test so, I just wanted to say thank you!

Thank You,
Jakob Bernheisel

Jakob Bernheisel



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July 2, 2013

Dear IF&W,

Thank you for sponsoring my stay at the Bryant Pond 4-H Camp and Learning Center. I had a great time learning the safety of hunting and riding ATV's. I learned how to ride an ATV and I did better than I thought! My counselors were always there for me if I was struggling and being supportive. Thanks to Gary, Matt, Naomi, Christin, Ron, Phil, and other staff I had a great time at Bryant Pond 4-H learning Hunter Safety and ATV! Thank you so much!

Thank You,
Katya Fons

-Katya ☺

