

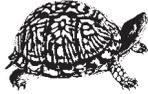


Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

284 State St., 41 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330 207-287-8000



December, 2014

MAINE WILDLIFE PARK



The new state of the art Canada lynx exhibit at the wildlife park was completed the beginning of November. The lynx kittens, purchased from a captive breeding facility in Minnesota, are about 7 months old now, and really utilizing the whole space. The Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park funded about 75% of total costs; while the wildlife park funded 25% plus hundreds of hours of staff and volunteer time in finish work and landscaping.

Chelsea Elementary School showing us their camo spirit!



Register your snowmobile
ONLINE



Photo by Paul Cyr

INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 2,488 Phone calls
- 754 Emails
- 132 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

- The Commissioner attended a snowmobile landowner appreciation supper in Standish on November 11th
- The Commissioner's Advisory Council did not meet in November, but is scheduled to meet on December 18th at 9:30 a.m. at 284 State St., Augusta. Agenda items will include the First Roach Pond fishing regulation petition; license guide rules (stand-up paddle boards) and boating regulations.
- Preparations are being made for the Annual Office Christmas Party scheduled for December 19th beginning at 11:30 am at 284 State Street, Augusta. Please feel free to join the festivities and bring your favorite dish to share.

Right: Charlie Mann received a Commissioner's print from Commissioner Woodcock for 20 years of service to "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs". He has been involved since the program started.



Far Right: The Commissioner viewing some fish eggs with kids!



FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

Fisheries Report - Written by Greg Burr, Regional Fisheries Biologist, Grand Lakes Region - Jonesboro

Last winter the department started a new management program for lake trout at West Grand Lake in Washington County with the goal of improving numbers of larger lakers. The department embarked on this new lake trout endeavor after anglers and local guides asked to improve on the frequency of larger lake trout being caught. Historically, the lake regularly produced fish over 10 pounds with the largest on record being 25 pounds and 5 ounces caught in the winter of 1997. The strategy for increasing the frequency of larger fish caught started on February 1st, 2014 by implementing a "selective harvest" regulation that protects fish in a certain size range, or "slot". This "slot limit", as these types of selective harvest regulations have become to be known, emphasizes no-kill of a certain size range to hold over more fish to older ages and larger sizes. In this type of selective harvest management program, the smaller sized and more numerous part of the population under the slot can be harvested under more liberal limits; for fish exceeding the slot size, only a very limited number may be taken. Such is



Percent Over 18"	100%
Percent Over 20"	72%
Percent Over 21"	56%
Percent Over 22"	28%
Percent Over 23"	8%
Percent Over 24"	6%
Percent Over 25"	6%
Percent Over 30"	6%
Percent Over 33"	3%

the case at West Grand where the selective harvest regulation protects lakers between 23 and 33 inches but allows 6 fish to be taken under 23 inches, or 1 of your 6 fish can be over 33 inches. The regulation was designed to increase the percentage of the catch within the protective slot as well as fish over 33 inches. More specifically the goals are to have 15% of the spawning population over 23 inches, 10% or more 25 inches, 5% or more over 30 inches and 3% or more over 33 inches.

This fall biologists set trap nets on several lake trout spawning shoals to monitor size quality of spawning fish. The results revealed that there are still some larger individuals in the population, but that more fish need to grow and enter into the protective slot. The data show that there

is a sharp decline in fish surviving from 21 inches to 22 inches and then another sharp decline from 22 inches to 23 inches. This indicates that there is either natural mortality or angler-related mortality (most likely both) contributing to the decrease in the presence of larger fish being produced for the fishery. The percent sizes of spawning fish were as follows:

Two lake trout sampled on the spawning shoals were large trophy size fish. They were 10.5 and 16 lbs.

Biologists will continue to monitor the size quality progress of the lake trout population both in the spring fishery and on the spawning shoals. In the future it may be necessary to widen the no-kill slot and to decrease the bag limit under 23 inches to allow more fish to move into the no-kill slot.



MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

> DIVISION A: Warden Carlton Richardson investigated a report of a baited tree stand in Buxton. He walked in on the stand and was met by the owner walking out dressed in all black and carrying a bow and arrow. Warden Scott and the subject walked to the baited site. He was summonsed for hunting over bait.



< DIVISION D: Warden Kemp teamed up with Warden Dauphinee got a tip about an illegal doe in a suitcase at a camp. The Wardens visited the camp, and the 5 hunter's at the camp were surprised to hear there might be a deer there, as they had no idea what the wardens were talking about. A short hike around the camp, and Warden Kemp located the quartered up lamb deer hanging behind the outhouse.



> DIVISION E: Wardens Josh Beal and Charles Brown were lucky enough to watch a man place deer bait right in front of them, about 30 yards away from their location. Some violations Wardens Beal and Brown dealt with during opening week were a loaded gun, two felons with firearms, and a shot and left doe case (photo).

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

Thanks to the continuing support of pheasant hunters from Maine and out of state, and the hard work of members from several fish and game clubs, there have been about 2,100 pheasants released in 22 sites in York and Cumberland counties so far this fall. The major stocking events have ended for this season, but, smaller and more frequent stocking will occur at the two sites in the Berwicks and one site in Wells, so long as birds are available, which should hold birds for good hunting through the season. Thanks also go to the generous landowners that agree to provide release sites for this program. Without this assistance and support, this program would not be what it is today.

John Bernard is one volunteer that rallies the troops for this pheasant program. He has been an important part of this program since 1991. A retired school teacher, he has lived most of his life in the Portland area. A lifetime member of the Windham/Gorham Rod and Gun club and the Kezar Falls Rod and Gun club and a lifelong pheasant hunter, John has shared his enthusiasm for these birds with young hunters. As John says, "A young boy or girl may not have the patience or experience to be proficient in deer or ruffed grouse hunting. Unlike grouse, pheasant flush in slow motion in a straight line in open cover. Kids are able to observe the whole flush and follow the bird with the shotgun barrel. A kid that leaves with a bird in hand is more likely to come back for more."

The pheasant program has evolved over several years from what it was in the 1940's to what it is now. At one time the state raised birds for release, and now some birds are purchased as adults and released upon arrival, and others are raised by some of the clubs and released as adults.

According to Scott Lindsey, "Pheasants are a particularly good game bird to hunt with dogs because despite the fact that they prefer to run from predators including hunters, they will at times hold tight. When they eventually explode from heavy cover with their unique cackle and a thunderous wing beat, they can startle unprepared hunters and dogs."

This program is directly supported by the purchase of pheasant stamps. A pheasant stamp is required along with a regular hunting license, and two birds are allowed each day. Permits are \$19.00, and \$17.00 of that goes directly to the program for birds and materials. 1,700-2,000 stamps are sold each year.

Although the program has changed over time, we are still providing a unique upland bird hunting opportunity in southern Maine. - Written by Bonnie Holding, Director of Information & Education

