



Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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June 2014

FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

Moosehead Lake Region Report - *Written by Tim Obrey, Regional Fisheries Biologist*

Fisheries change with time and we do our best to stay on top of it. We are constantly researching, collecting and evaluating data, and reviewing management strategies on our waters. We are fortunate here in the Moosehead Lake Region because we have a long history of consistent data collection which helps us to analyze changes in trends and look for methods to protect our gamefish populations and improve the fishing.

As an example, we have been working with Brookfield, the company that operates the dam on behalf of the Kennebec Water Power Company, to improve the water management on Moosehead Lake. A few years ago we conducted some pretty intensive evaluations of our lake trout population. We re-confirmed that our lake trout were still spawning at depths greater than 4 ½ feet in the fall on rocky, wind-swept shoals. However, the actual dates of spawning were up to two weeks later than much of the historical data suggests - lake trout are spawning near the end of October instead of mid-October. Brookfield is currently required by license to have the lake drawn down by October 10th each year to protect lake trout eggs. The idea is to have the lake at a low level while lake trout are spawning, then the lake usually refills in the late fall. As long as the lake level does not drop more than 4 ½ feet below the spawning elevation, all the eggs will be safe from freezing until they hatch in early spring.



Prior to the licensing of the East Outlet Dam, and before a gentlemen's agreement between the IFW and the past dam owners, it was possible to fully open the gates on the dam in the fall creating as much as a 7 foot drawdown. This would have caused lake trout eggs to become dewatered in the winter. To avoid this, the current license sets a minimum lake elevation for the winter and notes that the power company cannot draw the lake down any more than 2 feet below the elevation that occurred on October 10th. However, this single date requirement creates the situation where the dam operators must dump large volumes of water in September and early October to achieve the water level goal on that date. This makes it tough to fish in the East Outlet during one of the best fishing times of the year.

We are working with Brookfield to amend their license to enhance the fishing in the East Outlet, while still providing protection for our lake trout. IFW has recommended changing the October 10th deadline to a window of dates from October 10th to October 25th to more accurately reflect current conditions. IFW has also recommended increasing the allowable over-winter drawdown from 2 feet to 3 feet. This will protect the lake trout which are still spawning at depths in excess of 4 ½ feet, yet allow the company to have a more gradual fall drawdown to reduce high flows in the East Outlet. Campowners will still have an opportunity to work on their docks in the fall as the lake drops in late October and November. It also provides additional storage in the spring which is very important to alleviate spring flooding downstream of Moosehead Lake along the Kennebec River.

Brookfield has been a very responsible partner with IFW. It is clear they understand the recreational and economic importance of the sport fisheries for the communities around their projects, and they have shown a commitment to improving the fishing and safety for all those that work and play within their project areas.



INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 4,708 Phone calls
- 2,040 Emails
- 476 Walk-ins

Missed an issue?

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Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Swan Island

Maine Wildlife Park

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE



On Friday May 16th, Warden Wayde Carter was working the Scott's Brook area in Northfield and located an older model jeep parked in the woods. A male subject soon returned to his vehicle. Warden Carter asked how the fishing had been and the man replied "pretty good" and ultimately produced twelve brook trout. The limit on this body of water is general law of five trout. The man was summonsed for possessing too many fish.

Warden Eric Blanchard attained a search warrant for a firearm and other evidence involving the illegal hunting of turkey. The subject shot a male and female turkey within 100 yards of a residence. He took the male bird but left the hen in the field. Complainants contacted wardens with detailed information which lead to a search warrant and confession. The subject was charged with three wildlife violations. His firearm was seized.



Members of the Maine Warden Service Dive Team spent several days experiencing dive training for the team. It is annual training developed to acclimate divers to the water in the event some divers had not been deployed recently. Training is also given on underwater equipment and tools used by the dive team.



Game wardens shown here while deployed on a recovery mission on Echo Lake in Aroostook County for a victim in a canoeing incident.



RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

2015 Action Plan for Maine's Fish and Wildlife - *Written by Charlie Todd, Endangered and Threatened Species Coord.*

MDIFW staff and conservation partners are beginning revisions to Maine's Wildlife Action Plan. All states must submit Plan revisions to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by October, 2015 in order to maintain eligibility for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. These funds are allocated on a formula based on a state's size and population census. Congress sets overall funding allocations each year as well as the ratio of required "state match" expenditures. In the first 14 years of this program, annual grants to Maine have totaled more than \$8,000,000.

Maine's first Action Plan (<http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/reports/wap.html>) was approved in 2005, and outlined a comprehensive strategy for "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" (SGCN). State Wildlife Grants are the primary revenue for overall fish and wildlife diversity beyond that generated by sportsmen equipment and licenses which naturally focus on game management and sport fisheries. Maine's Endangered Species Act (1975) established a mandate to conserve the State's rich heritage of fish and wildlife resources, but program funding has evolved more slowly.

The scope and effectiveness of any plan hinge on available funds and partnerships. These are some of the many expectations for the pending 2015 Plan revision:

- A Wildlife Action Plan should be a statewide conservation strategy for all fauna and associated habitats. It should be adaptive and well-integrated throughout the conservation community.
- States must prioritize and focus their ten-year plans to maximize benefits to species and habitats "at risk." Effectiveness measures establish clear benchmarks and transparency.
- Wildlife Action Plans should focus on proactive conservation strategies and minimize the need to designate species as Endangered or Threatened.
- Northeastern states have pledged to develop Plans that are complimentary across state boundaries.

State Wildlife Grants are thus both an opportunity and a challenge to an agency. A preliminary review has identified more than 300 SGCN for consideration in Maine's 2015 plan. Evaluating the extent and condition of their habitats and major threats can optimize strategies that best benefit species at risk and associated landscape conservation efforts across Maine.

Our primary source of state match to earn State Wildlife Grants has been the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund. This is a trust account derived entirely from voluntary funds: sales of the "Loon Conservation Plate" or "Sportsman Plate" on vehicle registrations, donations to the "Chickadee Checkoff" on Maine's individual income tax returns, or direct gifts to the program. If you are not making a modest contribution to support this effort, please reconsider!

For more information on State Wildlife Grants and / or to learn about Maine's "Teaming with Wildlife" coalition, see:

<http://www.teaming.com/state-tribal-wildlife-grants-swg-program>



WILDLIFE DIVISION

Forest Management - Written by Mark Caron, Region E Wildlife Biologist

The Mattawamkeag River System WMA encompasses approximately 9,000 acres and is located in Webster Plantation, Kingman, Drew Plantation, and Prentiss Township. The Page Farm Unit is located entirely within Drew Plantation and encompasses approximately 1,200 acres. The upland habitat on the Unit is largely composed of early-successional forest types, and reverting farmland. There is also approximately 20 acres of maintained fields.

Management activities to date have focused on reclaiming six acres (two fields) of reverting fields, and early-successional forest management. In partnership with both the NRCS and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), six acres of reverting field were reclaimed and planted to a conservation mix. This work not only benefited wild turkey but also a variety of other game and non-game species whose habitat includes open fields. Additional habitat enhancement included tree and shrub establishment (hard and soft mast species), apple tree pruning, and bushhogging/mowing twenty acres of fields.

In 2010, MDIFW and the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) partnered on early-successional forest management operations to largely benefit ruffed grouse and American woodcock. Approximately 70 acres of intolerant hardwood and balsam fir is being managed in 5-acre clearcut blocks over a 40-year rotation to perpetuate early-successional habitat which will provide nesting and brood rearing habitat.



In addition, a network of 16 feeding strips, 100 feet wide and of varying lengths with a 25-year rotation was also developed. The strips are adjacent to managed fields and the combined habitats will provide for all the life stages for woodcock including nesting, brood rearing, singing ground and feeding sites.

MDIFW received a MOHF Grant in 2012 to continue the early successional work at Page Farm. Work will take place between March 2013 and December 2014. Existing fields will continue to be managed via mowing. Six acres of field adjacent to the woodcock strips described above have been planted to a conservation mix, and managed for woodcock singing and roosting habitat. Feathering of field edges will create structural diversity between fields and forest to provide additional nesting cover. The numerous apple trees located along the edge of fields and nearby woods were released from competing trees (winter 2013) and pruned this past winter. This will improve the health and vigor of these trees so that they can continue to provide fall and early winter soft mast that will benefit a wide variety of game and nongame species. And finally, an interpretive sign (kiosk) will be made that will help to educate the public about the importance of early-successional habitat and the species that benefit from these habitat types.

In the Wildlife Biologist's Footsteps, a series of short videos - Written by Chuck Hulse, Regional Wildlife Biologist

New to the IFW website, In the Wildlife Biologist's Footsteps features an ongoing series of short videos bringing the viewer into the field for a close-up look at the work of department wildlife biologists. For about 20 years I've often carried a small video camera with me when I felt something interesting might occur. Sometimes it did, but what I shot never went beyond a DVD for my own use for talks, and copies for the biologists or game wardens I was working with at the time.

Last summer I approached Mark Latti, IFW Outreach Coordinator with the idea of a focused effort to shoot and produce short videos featuring department wildlife biologists as they do their work in the field, then post them on the website. There are no interviews. Rather the perspective is to have the viewer see what it is like to be there - even if it is the back seat of a Cessna 180 doing a low-level aerial wildlife survey or following us on a snowmobile. Mark liked the idea and provided me with lots of encouragement.

So I brought the idea to wildlife division director Judy Camuso, as well as the management section supervisor, Ryan Robicheau. Both supported the idea as well as the need to travel outside the region some, so other division biologists could be featured. As one who does better with deadlines, I promised to produce a minimum of eight videos in a span of one year.

Six videos are completed with three more in various stages of development. The completed videos are as follows:

- Scott Lindsay doing house-to-house deer biological data collection.
- Kendall Marden working the Eustis moose tagging station.
- Bob Cordes capturing a ruffed grouse that would not (but could) fly.
- Kelsey Sullivan banding black ducks on the coast of Maine.
- Cory Stearns maintaining waterfowl nest boxes on the Greg Sanborn Wildlife Management Area.
- Myself conducting an aerial deer wintering area survey.

At this writing three of the videos are posted on the department website. The current plan is to post one every few weeks. To view them go to <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/reports/InTheWildlifeBiologistsFootsteps.html> or go to the bottom of our home page to access the department's YouTube or Facebook sites.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Woodcock attended two events in May, Warden's night at Bucks Mills Rod and Gun Club in Bucksport and the Fishing Festival in Norway.

Preparations are being made for the moose lottery drawing event on June 14th in Presque Isle. Good luck to all that applied!

STAFF CHANGES



We are pleased to announce that Game Warden Rick LaFlamme has accepted the position of Game Warden Corporal for the new Landowner Relations position within the Bureau of Warden Service. Warden LaFlamme has over 18 years of State service beginning as a Maine Marine Patrol Officer 1996.

During his tenure at the Department of Marine Resources, Warden LaFlamme was promoted to pilot and field sergeant where he demonstrated solid leadership prior to being hired by the Maine Warden Service. Throughout his career in State service and especially while in the capacity as a Maine Game Warden, Warden LaFlamme has fostered numerous relationships with land owners, land users, consumptive, and non-consumptive users.

He has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to build consensus amongst various recreational groups. Warden LaFlamme possesses the skills, interest, and passion to facilitate a statewide program which impacts all outdoor recreation in Maine.

We are very pleased to announce that Katachi Clark will be joining IFW's Bureau of Resource Management as our Data Entry Operator, beginning Monday May 19, 2014. This is an important position in our organization, as the Bureau's Data Processing Section conducts the processing and management of information collected by the Bureau and other administrative units of the Department.

Katachi is ideally suited for this position and we are excited to have her. Katachi comes to us with a number of previous experiences in data entry, customer service, and office support. She comes to us most recently from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Impendence where she has been a volunteer in the office for the past six months. Prior to that, she worked as secretary performing office and administrative support for the Land Use Regulation Commission in the Department of Conservation for five years. She also spent a year as Quality Development Specialist for Access Worldwide managing call traffic and contacting customers to sell and upgrade services.

Katachi's new position with IFW will conduct input and tracking of fisheries and wildlife biological data, harvest registration information, and user survey data. She will be responsible for direct interactions with big game and fur tagging registration stations. She will assemble and supply necessary materials, secure the prompt return of accurate information, conduct billing, receive fees, track accounts of registration agents, and address questions and needs of stations. She will also perform computer data entry of big game and fur tagging registration data, hunter survey data, vehicle/animal incident reports, tagging station applications, and various other paper records.



Please join us in welcoming Ian Farley on board as the new Lands Management Biologist for the Department. Ian will coordinate the Lands Management Program for IFW.

Ian is a graduate of UMO in Forest Operations/Engineering and has a minor in Forest Products. Ian has spent his career after graduation working in sensitive habitats in Massachusetts in both state and private capacities and is excited to return to Maine to continue his work. We feel that Ian has an excellent skill set and enthusiasm with which he can use to further the wildlife habitat planning and management undertaken by the Lands Program in coordination with the Regional Wildlife Biologists.

As most of you know, the Lands Program is one which relies heavily on input and cooperation with both the Regional Wildlife Biologists and Research Assessment Section staff to be as effective as possible. I'm excited for Ian to become part of the team in this endeavor. In that light, please welcome Ian into the Department.



After 20 years of service, George Wharton reluctantly retired from his Fish Culturist post at the Grand Lake Stream Hatchery.



After 19 years as a Data Entry Specialist, Christine Bourque retired from state service.