

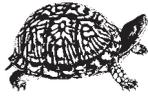


Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Monthly Report

www.mefishwildlife.com

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March, 2014

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

- With spring fast approaching, ice related emergencies are likely. This past weekend, game wardens and other first responders partnered for ice rescue preparation and deployment. On Saturday, game wardens and first responders from Gorham, Standish, Windham, and Brunswick experienced the capabilities of airboat operation and ice-water entry. The Maine Warden Service and Brunswick Police Department supplied airboats for the training. The ability of an airboat to navigate land, thin ice, and open water provides a vital piece of equipment in the event of an ice rescue situation.



- Additionally, game wardens received experience in ice water entry provided by Gorham, Standish, and Windham first responders. Familiarity with open water entry in winter in a controlled environment better prepares first responders in the event a life-saving situation arises. This training plays a critical role in the preparedness, deployment, and teamwork of all first responders to include local fire and rescue teams and law enforcement. The accompanying photo shows Game Wardens Peter Herring (left) and Cody Louder in the frigid waters of Sebago Lake.



- Snowmobiling and fishing conditions were prime, leading into the holiday weekend. Activity was relatively low due to a large snowstorm into Friday. Section 11 worked the Annual Schoodic Lake derby and found activity to be less than normal. A few sleds were checked and some cusk and drug violations were dealt with. Fishing has been slow in the section, but a few nice fish have been checked.

- Snow and cold temperatures have kept Maine's snowmobile trails busy. Game wardens have responded to dozens of crashes statewide and we sadly had one fatality last week making for a total of three deaths this season. Speed, operator inexperience, and alcohol continue to be contributing factors for any snowmobiling crashes. Game wardens urge all riders to operate carefully and always maintain complete control of your machine. Snowmobiling is a family sport in which thousands of people enjoy on any given day. Be mindful of others and be sure your snowmobiling trip is a safe and memorable one.



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

- The Commissioner's office has attended public hearings and work sessions before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Several bills are currently before the Committee and this week's topics included the Department's omnibus bill (LD 1667) and the State Heritage Fish Waters list.
- Commissioner Woodcock also participated in a fishing derby on Wilson Lake in Wilton.

INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 2,472 Phone calls
- 1,506 Emails
- 226 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

FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

New Ice Fishing Opportunity for Lincoln County - *Written by Wes Ashe, Fishery Biologist, Belgrade Lakes Region*

Wiley Pond is a picturesque, 18-acre water that is located along Maine's midcoast in the town of Boothbay, and is home to the Boothbay Fish & Game Association. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife had stocked fall-fingerling brook trout for many decades. Since Wiley Pond is managed as a put-and-take fishery, and very few trout are expected to live through the hot summer months, fishing for the trout stocked the previous fall was all but absent by mid-summer.



To remedy this situation, MDIFW held a meeting with the Boothbay Fish & Game Association at their lodge during fall 2012, and the result was the conception of a unique and exciting youth fishing opportunity. This winter, for the very first time, Wiley Pond was open to ice fishing for children (16 years and under) and other complimentary license holders for the month of February. Prior to the ice fishing season, in November 2013, the pond was stocked with nearly 600 brook trout that included 450 fall-fingerlings (about 7 inches long), 100 fall-yearlings (about 13 inches long), and 20 adults (about 18 inches long). The abbreviated season coupled with a high stocking density allowed youths to catch a whole mess of trout! MDIFW fisheries biologists visited the pond in the morning hours of February 1st (the opening day), and counted nearly 30 kids, 25 adults, and over 60 brook trout on the ice!

Wiley Pond was a huge success this past winter, so MDIFW wants to start up more programs just like it. We are always on the hunt for more youth fishing opportunities. So, we need your help! In order for a pond to qualify as a good youth fishing water it should be small (< 50 acres), shallow (< 25 feet), have few large predator fish like smallmouth and largemouth bass and northern pike, and have good public access with ample parking. If you know of a pond that might fit these criteria, please feel free to give us a shout (547-5316) and we'll do some research to see if your local water would be a good candidate for youth fishing. Thanks for your help!



WILDLIFE DIVISION

Time to take to the air - *Written by Amanda DeMusz*

Biologists in the northern regions have recently begun aerial surveys of deer wintering areas across the state. Conditions have reached the level where deer move into their winter "yards" in response to restrictive deep snow and severe cold. Deer "yards" provide protection from the elements, decreased snow depths, and ideally will have some limited food resources to sustain the animals till breakup.

Taking to the air allows biologists to document if deer have moved into known wintering areas or are using new wintering areas. Thanks to the experienced and skilled Warden and Forest Service pilots, the state has been documenting deer usage of yards and flying these systematic surveys since the 1970's. Surveys are done from a fixed-wing Cessna, systematically flying low and slow over forested areas. Biologists are looking for the tell-tale sign of trails and to spot deer when possible. Heavy cover of deer wintering areas limits the ability of biologists to see deer from the air but the distinct trails they create as paths to areas of food and cover are easy to spot.



In Region G, snow depths on the stake in Ashland as of March 4th were 16 – 27

inches. Maximum depth reached so far were around February 18th with 17 – 30 inches of snow. We have flown key areas of 24 towns in the northern half of our region. Along with the



areas around several towns where deer are documented every winter, I'm happy to report that we have documented deer usage of wintering ranges in the big woods! Thanks to some mild winters allowing for recovery of the deer herd, natural migration, and cooperation on habitat management with several private landowners, deer seem to be returning to the big woods and remaining there through the winter.



RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT SECTION

The Maine Remote Pond Survey Project - *Written by Tyler Grant*

The Maine Remote Pond Survey is a joint effort by The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), Trout Unlimited (TU) and Maine Audubon (MA) to survey and map the nearly 1000 remote ponds which have not yet been formally surveyed by IFW. Many of these ponds are small, remote, and very difficult to get to. Volunteer anglers are sent to these ponds to fish and then report back on what they discover. This information is invaluable to IFW biologists in allowing them to focus their efforts on ponds that likely contain previously undocumented populations of wild brook trout. The angler reports also contain important information about the best way to access the remote pond and give indications of habitat features and the level of angling pressure the pond may be getting. These simple things save hours of valuable time and allow IFW to focus our efforts on ponds more likely to be wild brook trout ponds.



Based on the volunteer angler reports, IFW then conducts standard surveys on the ponds that show the most promise. In a standard survey, a crew of IFW biologists completes a gill net survey of the pond, and measures and weighs any brook trout caught. Scales are taken from the fish to determine their age. In addition, the pond's water quality is assessed by measuring pH, conductivity, alkalinity, temperature and dissolved oxygen content. A depth map of the pond is created, including descriptions of any important features, and minnow traps are set to sample the minnow community present in the pond. In the three years that the Remote Pond Survey Project has been in operation, 257 ponds have been visited and surveyed by volunteer anglers, and 45 of those ponds have been formally surveyed by IFW with 34 of those ponds documented to contain wild brook trout. This information helps IFW staff make management decisions that best protect this valuable resource. Any anglers interested in helping the survey effort can visit

www.tumaine.org/brooktrout.htm to learn more.



LICENSING DIVISION

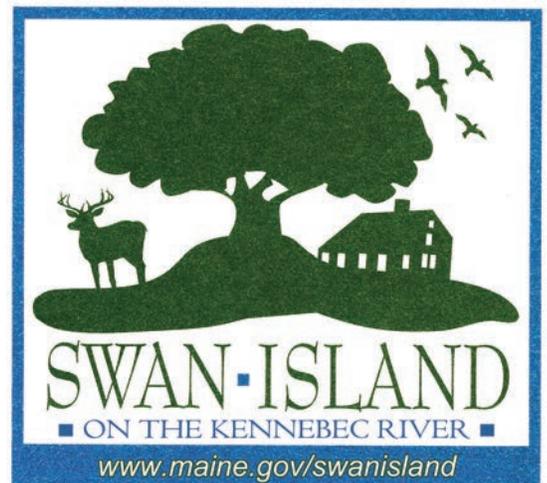


Retiree Joyce Handran was welcomed back to present her with a Commissioner's print in appreciation of her years of hard work with the Department.

MAINE WILDLIFE PARK

The Maine Wildlife Park is planning to open to the public mid-April.

Just in time for vacation!



*Do you love Swan Island?
Do you want to help keep Swan Island open to the public?*

Purchase a Swan Island sticker (above) from the online store or at the main office.