



# Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

## Weekly Report

[www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com)

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Thursday, May 3, 2012

### MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

A Bald Eagle leaps out of a cage Wednesday a moment after being released by Game Wardens Steve Allarie, right, and Terry Hughes in Augusta. The 8-year-old hen was recovered by Allarie in late March after it become entangled with



another eagle in Litchfield. After being rehabilitated at Avian Haven in Freedom, the bird was set free Wednesday off West River Road. The bird took flight immediately and was last seen soaring east over the Kennebec River.

### RETIREMENT

This past week Maine Warden Service, Section 6 saw the retirement of Sergeant Mark Warren. He served the state of Maine for 25 Years and retired on April 30th. His experience and leadership will be missed in section 6 as well as the warden service as a whole.



### INFORMATION & EDUCATION

On Saturday, April 28th, Emily MacCabe conducted a Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs Instructor Certification Workshop at Penobscot County Conservation Association in Brewer. Twelve new volunteers and instructors were certified and many have already begun planning events within their communities.

[Click here](#) to see the facebook page that Instructors from Downeast have created to help promote the program in their area.



Also on Saturday, April 28th, I&E Director, Doug Rafferty emceed at the Ducks Unlimited Saco Bay Chapter's Annual Banquet. Money was raised for habitat and wildlife restoration.

### INFORMATION CENTER

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

- 1,335 Phone calls
- 472 Emails
- 50 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

To view previous Weekly Reports, please visit [www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com) and select "About Us"

### LANDOWNER RELATIONS

Landowner Relations Coordinator Mark Latti and Game Warden Lieutenant Dan Scott represented the department at the Sportsman's Forest Landowner Alliance quarterly meeting. The alliance, comprised of representatives from large commercial landowners, conservation agencies and sporting associations meets regularly and works together on natural resource issues such as land use, legislation, conservation, and access.

### OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

On 4/26, Deputy Commissioner Andrea Erskine conducted an Advisory Council meeting in Presque Isle.



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## FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

### Spring 2012 Pushaw Pike Monitoring

Nels Kramer, Regional Fisheries Biologist, Penobscot Region

Northern pike were first reported in Pushaw Lake in 2003, the result of an intentional, illegal stocking. This introduction represents the first documentation of northern pike within the Penobscot River drainage. The Penobscot River is New England's second largest river, with a watershed that covers about a third of the State of Maine (approximately 22,300 km<sup>2</sup>; 8,600 mi<sup>2</sup>). Once pike move down from the Pushaw Drainage into the Penobscot, they will have unfettered access to the entire drainage until they reach the Howland and West Enfield Dams.

Presently both dams have barriers installed in the fishways that will prevent the passage of pike but still allow endangered Atlantic salmon free passage to the upper reaches of the drainages.

Since 2003, IF&W and DMR fisheries staff have collaborated to monitor the growth of the pike population in Pushaw and document their expansion throughout the drainage through angler creel surveys (successful), gillnetting (unsuccessful), boat electrofishing (unsuccessful), and spring trapnetting (successful) efforts. Most pike collected during the spring netting efforts were killed upon capture. A small number of captured pike were stripped of eggs or milt and then surgically implanted with radio telemetry tags, allowing biologists to track their movements and monitor what types of habitats they utilized throughout the year.

MDIF&W and MDMR have collaborated in the past to capture and remove pike in an effort to suppress the pike population within the greater Pushaw watershed, as well as document their expansion throughout the drainage. Trapnetting in the spring commences as soon as the inlet stream is ice-free and trapnet gear can be safely deployed. Typically, this occurs by the end of March or the beginning of April. It is imperative that gear be deployed as soon as possible because of the nature of pike spawning activity, and delaying gear deployment by even a couple of days can have a pronounced impact on numbers of pike captured and removed.

This year trapnets were set on March 16th just as ice was leaving the inlet. Over the next week a total of 14 trapnets were deployed; 6 in the lake inlet and another 8 in the outlet stream as far as 5 miles from the lake. A total of 71 pike were captured this year, a slight decrease from last year's total of 78 pike. Of all pike handled, 33 were females, 29 males and 9 were immature fish. The mean length and weight of all females handled was 28 inches and 5.9 pounds, males averaged 20.9 inches and 2.5 pounds. Immature fish were 9.7 inches long and weighed ¼ pounds, on average. The largest pike handled was a ripe female that was 39 inches long and weighed in at 15.4 pounds.

We conduct spring trapnet operations to monitor the expansion of the pike population in the Pushaw watershed, and eventually into much of the Penobscot and Piscataquis watersheds, and we have no illusion that our efforts will eliminate the northern pike population from the drainage. We do however, kill all pike captured, and it is estimated that a female pike will produce 9,000 eggs for each pound of body weight. By calculating the total pounds of pike captured and killed, we essentially removed 1.74 million potential juvenile pike from the system during this year's operation. Total for the project since the 2006 spring trapnet effort is 8.2 million potential young pike eliminated.

Additionally, Maine IF&W will spend a significant amount of money on pike-related research projects and control efforts. Costs associated with these activities include personnel time, sampling gear, equipment, travel, boat fuel, and training programs. This is funding that should be used for additional stocking programs, increased habitat improvement projects and other fisheries enhancement ventures with direct benefits to Maine anglers.

This project is conducted with cooperation and funding from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Atlantic Salmon Federation.



*Josh Kuester is holding a 17 pound female pike.*

## WILDLIFE DIVISION

The beginning of May marks the beginning of great blue heron colony monitoring by over 90 volunteers across the state. Volunteers with the Heron Observation Network, or HERON, will observe great blue heron colonies from a distance that prevents disturbance to the nesting birds. They count the number of active and inactive nests and record whether the birds are incubating or have young, and the number of young in each nest. This year, observations will be a bit more detailed in an effort to better document productivity of individual nests. Great blue herons are a special concern species in Maine due to a declining coastal breeding population. HERON was started in 2009 as part of an effort to better understand population trends statewide.

For more information about the Heron Observation Network, [click here](#), or contact Danielle D'Auria at 941-4478 or [danielle.dauria@maine.gov](mailto:danielle.dauria@maine.gov).



## WILDLIFE DIVISION

Last week, Biologists Dana DeGraaf, Don Katnik, and Lindsay Tudor of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) and Curt Clumpner and Michelle Bellizzi of International Bird Rescue (IBR) provided a three-day Oiled Wildlife Training Workshop to MDIFW staff, wildlife rehabilitators, and volunteers from around the state. For coastal oil spills, MDIFW is a natural resource trustee and is responsible for the protection of Maine's natural resources including shorebirds, waterfowl and their habitats. MDIFW works cooperatively with several state and federal agencies for oil spill planning, preparation and response. The purpose of this recent training was to review updates to Maine's Oil Spill Contingency Plan and discuss MDIFW's and IBR's response to, and rehabilitation of oiled wildlife. Lindsay Tudor provided a detailed overview of shorebird biology, migration, and habitat usage along Maine's tidal coastline and offshore islands. Lindsay discussed sensitive habitats such as mudflats and their role in providing abundant food resources for migrating birds in addition to how oil spills may affect those resources. Don Katnik presented his ongoing work prioritizing and mapping coastal habitats. Don's work is part of a larger collaborative process with the Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) and the Department of Marine Resources; the goal of this work is to prioritize, or rank, Maine's coastal habitats based on existing natural resource data, and then determine which high priority resources could be effectively protected during a spill. Because of the complexity and diversity of coastal habitats throughout Maine, Priority Habitat Maps will be a useful tool that can be implemented during a large coastal oil spill to efficiently guide response operations and protect the most sensitive areas (if possible) first. Dana DeGraaf coordinates the Department's oil spill response team and provided an overview of staff roles during a spill and how MDIFW integrates into the larger structure of the Incident Command System in addition to sharing of resources between agencies. Currently, Dana is working with the US Coast Guard and MDEP to better organize and use local volunteers and wildlife rehabilitators in the event of a large oil spill. This will be accomplished by working with the established volunteer network associated with existing wildlife rehabilitation facilities and other volunteer organizations to create an online volunteer registration process to enhance oiled wildlife rehabilitation preparedness and capabilities.

IBR is a world-renowned wildlife rehabilitation group and has been saving seabirds and other aquatic birds around the world since 1971. IBR's team of specialists has led oiled wildlife rescue efforts in over 200 oil spills in more than a dozen countries. They presented several recent case studies of their response work during the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the MV Rena tanker spill in New Zealand, and the Yellowstone River Pipeline spill in Montana. Additionally, IBR presented their new work and research in the field of oiled bird rehabilitation and new techniques Maine's wildlife rehabilitators could use during a response. IBR has been working with local wildlife rehabilitators and MDIFW for several years and is the current lead wildlife rehabilitation contractor for large oil spills in Maine. IBR and MDIFW were able to visit several wildlife rehabilitation facilities around Maine including the Center for Wildlife in York, Avian Haven in Freedom, and On the Rush of Wings in Friendship.

For more information on IBR, please [click here](#).

For more information on Maine wildlife rehabilitators near you, please [click here](#).

### Leveraging Technology for Fish and Wildlife Conservation

*By Don Katnik*

Just like any other agency or organization in today's information age, MDIFW needs to manage data. Some of this information is used to evaluate potential impacts of proposed projects on Maine's fish and wildlife resources. In the "old days," someone had to manually overlay each proposed project footprint with each habitat data set, then generate a map of the project to include with the evaluation response. The Habitat Group in MDIFW's Research and Assessment Section has developed a computer tool that does this, so biologists can spend their time where it is needed most—helping project planners avoid or minimize impacts to Maine's natural resources—instead of pressing keys on a computer. Our goal was to leverage emerging technologies to make the review process more efficient, transparent, and standardized. The review tool is connected to a database that will allow MDIFW to track the cumulative effects of multiple projects over time, which is something we have never been able to do before. This tool could eliminate the need for other agencies to review MDIFW's data to determine if MDIFW needs to be involved in a project.

### Wiley's Weekly

Joe Wiley provided training in invasive plant species identification and control to 7 Maine Conservation Corps team leaders at Two Lights State Park.

Joe also participated in a Katahdin Area Invasive Species Management Group meeting at UMO attended by most large forest land managers in the region. The meeting was facilitated by Baxter State Park staff and focused on inventorying known locations of invasive plants on the collective landbases.



## MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

### Colonel Joel Wikinson's Big Sur Marathon Experience

The Big Sur Marathon is one of the most scenic Marathons in the country as it starts in Big Sur and ends in Carmel. You Run 26.2 miles along scenic Highway One, the nation's first nationally designated Scenic Highway. Rugged mountains, wide ocean views, and the world-renowned Monterey Peninsula all make this very challenging marathon a true joy for marathon runners. It provides runners with a back-to-nature experience as it winds through redwoods and pastoral scenes before paralleling the coast. Sure, it's hilly and hard, but flying down the edge of California with piano music wafting over the ocean overrides the challenge. Strawberries at mile 23, bagpipes and various musical groups and arrangements along the way all contribute to the overall experience. The crashing waves and craggy cliffs give runners a chance to rest their eyes—but certainly not their legs. Bart Yasso, who is a running legend and who's been the Chief Running Officer at Runner's World since 1987 states, "If we were told that we could run only one marathon in our lifetime, Big Sur would have to be it."

As a new marathoner I needed this experience. Last year I ran Big Sur but the scenic Highway One had been washed out and required the course to be an out and back not actually running the full point to point course. That was not good enough for me so I signed up early to return and get the full race experience. I found the course to be extremely challenging compared to other marathons that I have run, with the hills strong headwinds and temperatures increasing as the day went on. I ended up running a 3:44:38 which was slower than my best marathon time and pace, but far exceeded my anticipated finish time for this course. I was very pleased with my run and felt strong and it has fed my further addiction to this sport which people call the "the poor mans Mt. Everest!" I returned home and decided to try and run a back to back and have signed up for the Sugarloaf Marathon which is scheduled for Sunday May 20th. I will be joining some of my Warden Service Colleagues who will be taking on the first time marathon challenge as well.

Running is my time to get things right in my head both professionally and personally and you learn a great deal about your own capabilities and self discipline. You can not achieve your goals without a plan and dedicating your time and efforts in a focused manner. It has also been a way for my staff to collectively come together and foster teamwork, esprit de corps and promote physical fitness in a competitive and fun environment outside of the day to day challenges of our chosen law enforcement profession as Game Wardens. It's fair to say the running bug has caught a lot of us and the energy level is high as you feel such a sense of accomplishment when you finish a race.



### Warden Activity this week

Monday evening, Warden Marquis as well as several other Wardens was called out for a possible drowning in a remote trout pond just east of Eagle Lake. Just getting into the remote pond was no small feat with off and on driving rain and the access road was not more than a muddy and rocky jeep trail. Warden Marquis and the others searched through the night with no luck. The responding wardens were able to get about 2.5 hours of sleep before resuming the search in the morning with the assistance of the Maine Warden Service Dive Team. Once the dive team had divers in the water, they recovered the body within about 20 minutes, giving much needed closure to family members of the drowning victim. Even as a member of the Warden Service, Warden Marquis was amazed once again as all the wardens involved came together for a speedy resolution like a well oiled machine.



In the evening of April 28th Warden Josh Smith received information that several subjects were fishing the recently stocked Jordan River in the town of Raymond and keeping more than their limit of trout. Warden Smith and Warden Tony Gray worked the area the following morning and did not make contact with the suspects. Later in the day Warden Smith received more information that the suspects had returned. Warden Smith gave the information to Warden Pierre. Warden Pierre and Warden Wykes went to the area. Warden Pierre observed the suspects for several hours and saw the subjects catch more than their limit of trout and place them into a bucket. The suspects were stopped by Warden Wykes when they left the area. When Warden Wykes explained to them why they had been stopped one of the subjects asked, "How many buckets of fish am I allowed to keep?" Warden Wykes informed the suspects of the limits on brook trout. Several summonses were issued, including one summons for 19 fish over the limit.

