



2009 Moose Permit Lottery
June 18 6 p.m. University of Maine at Fort Kent



Open Water Fishing Report Inside



IF&W INSIDER

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We are stewards of Maine's fish and wildlife, preserving and protecting our natural resources, quality of life and economic foundation.

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ANGLERS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO USE BIODEGRADABLES

Study: Soft plastic lures harming Maine's fish



This artificial lure was removed from this brook trout.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) is strongly encouraging anglers to protect Maine's fish by changing from soft plastic lures to biodegradable ones.

Maine fisheries biologists are reporting increasing numbers of angled trout and salmon with indigestible soft plastic lures in their stomachs, according to John Boland, IF&W Fisheries Division Director. A discarded soft plastic lure consumed innocently by a brook trout from the bottom of a fresh-water shoal likely remains in that fish's stomach for the rest of its life and may cause health issues such as ulcers and weight loss.

Soft plastic lures are most commonly used by bass anglers, often in waters shared with trout and salmon. IF&W is cooperating in studies on the

effects of soft plastic lure ingestion by trout and salmon, including one recent experiment at Unity College, which was conducted by IF&W Pathologist Dr. Russ Danner, Unity College Professor Jim Chacko, PhD., and IF&W Fisheries Biologist Francis Brautigam, and in another study currently underway at Southern Maine Community College.

The study conducted at Unity College found that 65 percent of brook trout voluntarily consumed soft plastic lures if they simply were dropped into water.

"We found that fish retained the lures in their stomachs for 13 weeks without regurgitating them," according to Dr. Danner. "They also began to act anorexic and lost weight within 90 days

L.L.Bean to sell biodegradables only by Aug. 1

By Aug. 1, L.L.Bean Retail Stores will no longer be offering traditional soft plastic lures. Instead, the retailer "will be proud" to only offer biodegradable alternatives.

According to Mac McKeever, an L.L.Bean Senior Public Relations Representative, biodegradable alternatives cost about the same as traditional soft plastic lures, are just as effective and durable, and breakdown naturally in water within 60-90 days and within 30 days in a fish's stomach.

The Freeport-based company began considering making a switch last fall, but after reading a Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife report on how soft plastic lures are harming Maine's fish, it decided to make the transition sooner.

"I'm hoping that your fantastic study will inspire people to consider alternatives and spawn additional

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Study: Soft plastic lures harming Maine's fish

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of eating a soft plastic lure."

Without regard to the chemical toxicity of ingested soft plastics, the fact that these lures are occupying space in a trout's stomach limits the amount of space available for natural food. There is a lot of veterinary medical evidence that foreign bodies in the digestive tract cause ulcers, weight loss, and anorexia.

"We strongly encourage anglers to voluntarily purchase biodegradable and food-based lures rather than soft plastic ones," Dr. Danner said. "Also, we are asking anglers not to discard plastic lures into any waters, and also to attempt to retrieve any soft plastic lures that have become unhooked".

For millennia, trout and salmon have foraged the waters of Maine for nutritious natural forage such as small fishes, insects and other invertebrates. In the last 20 years, food mimics made of soft plastic has begun to compete with these nutritious natural forage items. The effects of soft plastic lure pollution on freshwater ecosystems are not well understood yet, but it is

unlikely that eating soft plastic lures will be found to be a good thing.

"The wide assortment of soft plastic fishing lures is staggering," Dr. Danner said. "Soft plastic lures come in every color, a myriad of sizes, and resembling every swimming, crawling, and flying creature a fish could imagine eating. Large fish searching the waters of Maine are bound to come upon brightly colored soft plastic lures lost or discarded by anglers and consume these imitators of natural food items."

There are estimates that as much as 20 million pounds of soft plastic are being lost in freshwater lakes and streams annually in the U.S. The average life expectancy for these soft plastic lures is more than 200 years.

"We need all anglers to do their part to protect Maine's valuable fisheries from this serious threat," Dr. Danner said. "Natural lure alternatives are available at many retailers and online, and should become the choice of people who love to fish Maine's waters".

If you wish to learn more about the experiment conducted at Unity College a report on the project was

L.L.Bean

Continued from Page 1

studies in other states," McKeever said. "In concert, it is my hope that L.L.Bean will set a positive example for others by only offering biodegradable alternatives. We're doing it because we have had a long history of environmental benevolence. We're doing it because it's simply the right thing to do."

The new assortment of biodegradable alternatives closely mirrors the broad assortment previously represented by the traditional soft plastic lures L.L.Bean was offering, McKeever said.

The catalog and website soon will follow suit.

published in the Northern American Journal of Fisheries Management. It is available at <http://afs.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-abstract&doi=10.1577%2FM08-085.1>.



Maine Fish & Wildlife

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IF&W Wildlife Biologist Charlie Todd (second from left), whose career has focused on restoring the bald eagle population in Maine, receives the pen used by Gov. John Baldacci (center) to sign legislation removing the species from Maine's Endangered Species List. Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin and the legislation's sponsors, Sen. Bruce Bryant and Rep. Mark Bryant, look on. (Below), Nikki Richardson holds Larry.

The Bald Eagle

A C E L E B R A T I O N O F R E C O V E R Y

Gov. Baldacci signs bill to remove Bald Eagle from Endangered Species List

On May 26, Gov. John E. Baldacci ceremonially signed LD 66, An Act To Amend Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List by Removing the Bald Eagle. The bill was ceremonially signed during a ceremony at Capitol Park with Lawrence the Bald Eagle present.

"When you look at this bald eagle, you really get a sense of strength, awe and beauty," Governor Baldacci said. "Those characteristics are a perfect representation of this great country."

Bill sponsor Sen. Bruce Bryant (D-Oxford), co-sponsor Rep. Mark Bryant (D-Windham), and a number of supporters of the legislation attended the ceremony.

In the 1970s, only 20 nesting pairs of eagles lived in Maine and they were virtually the only ones left in the North-



east. One pair was in New York

In 1978, the bald eagle was first recognized as an Endangered Species in Maine and 42 other states. Less than 10 years later, further action was taken in the Maine Legislature to protect the bald eagle and other Endangered Species in Maine. With the signing of LD

66, the bald eagle is the first species to be removed from this list.

Bald Eagle populations have been restored to more than 475 nesting pairs now in all 16 Maine counties. The legislation signed includes protections that ensure that the bald eagle population in Maine continues to thrive.

"Thanks to the work of State and federal agencies, the problem has been corrected over the past 30 years in Maine and throughout the country," the Governor said. "But the government agencies were not alone in their efforts. Conservation organizations, landowners who share their properties with eagles' nests and volunteer citizens helped out, and I would like to thank them for their commitment to this remarkable species."

The Bald Eagle

A C E L E B R A T I O N O F R E C O V E R Y

IN APPRECIATION

COMMISSIONER ROLAND D. MARTIN

AND THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE MAY 26, 2009 CELEBRATION

AND TO THEIR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO RESTORE MAINE'S BALD EAGLE POPULATION DURING THE LAST 30 YEARS.

Governor John E. Baldacci	The University of Maine	Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge
Maine Sen. Bruce Bryant	Acadia National Park	Avian Haven
Maine Rep. Mark Bryant	Maine Forest Service Bureau of Parks and Lands Maine Department of Conservation	Huber Resources Group
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	Land for Maine's Future Program State Planning Office	NextEra Energy
IF&W Biologist Charlie Todd	Penobscot Nation	Patrick McGowan
Lori Nordstrom U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Passamaquoddy Nation	Paul F. Jacques
Rosemary Winslow for U.S. Rep. Michael Michaud	Maine Pulp and Paper Foundation	Karen Tilberg
Renee Goodwin for U.S. Sen. Susan Collins	Maine Audubon	Tom Duffy
Chuck Mahaleris for U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Bob Moulton
Pam and Nikki Richardson caretakers of Larry, the Bald Eagle	The Nature Conservancy	Charles Richards
The Office of the Governor of the State of Maine	Forest Society of Maine	George Herrick
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	BioDiversity Research Institute	Bernard Thompson
USFWS Landowner Incentive Program	Maine Island Trail Association	Volunteers throughout Maine
	Downeast Lakes Land Trust	Poet Max Soucia
	Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge	Photographer Karen Jamarillo
		Photographer Bob Malbon

46 acres added to Scarborough WMA

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in April completed its purchase of a 46-acre parcel to be added to the Scarborough Wildlife Management Area.

The property was purchased from the Gervais family of Scarborough. It is located on Manson Libby Road adjacent to Dunstan River and the 3,200-acre Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

The acquisition, originally spearheaded over several years by the Friends of Scarborough Marsh, will conserve habitat for species impacted by the Julie N oil spill, which occurred in the Fore River in 1996.

"Scarborough Marsh is a critical wildlife habitat that is enjoyed by thousands because of its uncompromised beauty," said Roland "Danny" Martin, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "The Julie N oil spill was an unnecessary tragedy that impacted wildlife and their habitat. From that event, however, comes an opportunity to conserve land for the fish and wildlife that live at Scarborough Marsh and the people who visit there. I thank the Gervais family for their commitment to this preservation effort, and the partners who

I thank the Gervais family for their commitment to this preservation effort, and the partners who worked together to add acreage to this natural resource."

-- Commissioner Martin

worked together to add acreage to this natural resource."

Acquisition of this parcel is consistent with the management goals of conserving critical upland habitat surrounding Maine's largest salt marsh, and providing for enhanced public recreational access for hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and bird watching. This parcel also meets the criteria of a high conservation priority under the State Wildlife Action Plan, and is part of one of the original Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance identified in this plan.

A number of project partners made this effort possible, including the Gervais family of Scarborough, Friends of Scarborough Marsh, the Natural

Resource Trustees for the Julie N Oil Spill, the Town of Scarborough, the Land for Maine's Future Program, the Scarborough Land Conservation Trust, the Davis Conservation Foundation, and Ducks Unlimited.

The Gervais family has maintained the property as a working farm since the 1950s and has continuously volunteered assistance to regional staff from IF&W on Scarborough Marsh maintenance projects.

The property will be managed as open space and wildlife habitat by IF&W. Upland fields, Spartina salt marsh, freshwater wetlands and both mature and early successional forests provide a diversity of habitat types for many wildlife species. These include the endangered New England Cottontail, whitetail deer, red fox, many species of waterfowl, shorebirds, birds of prey and grassland birds such as Savannah sparrows and Eastern Meadowlarks.

The Maine Audubon Society, in cooperation with IF&W, operates a Nature Center across the marsh that draws more than 10,000 visitors annually to learn about the marsh and recreate in it. It is expected that this property will provide additional opportunities for their educational programs.

UM honors Stadler with 'Award for Professional Excellence'

Mark Stadler, Director of the Wildlife Division, has received the Award for Professional Excellence from the University of Maine's Wildlife Program.

James R. Gilbert, Chair, Department of Wildlife Ecology, conferred the award to Stadler last month.

In making the award, Gilbert wrote that Stadler's achievements bring honor to him and to the Department of Wildlife Ecology.

"One of my earliest memories is my love for wild things and wild places,"

said Stadler. "When I was in the fifth grade, I 'knew' that I wanted to attend the University of Maine and become a wildlife biologist in Maine...and I set my sights on those goals with a firm dedication. I have greatly enjoyed the privilege of being a wildlife biologist in Maine and doing my part – along with many others – to ensure the wise use of our natural resources and the perpetuation of our outdoor heritage."

Stadler's name and degree from the University of Maine will be perma-

nently displayed on a plaque for the Award of Professional Excellence in Nutting Hall.

In addition, the University of Maine's Wildlife Program will post his name on a similar list on its Department website, along with a description of his professional career.

Gilbert wrote, "We are proud of the accomplishments of our alumni and want others, including our current and prospective students, to see the range of possibilities with a career in Wildlife."

Martin named 'Warden of the Year'

WINSLOW – Maine Warden Service Game Warden Jim Martin Jr. of Calais was recognized last month as "Warden of the Year" for his honesty, consistency and strong work ethic during his 20-year career.

Maine Warden Service Col. Joel Wilkinson, Chief Game Warden, and Major Gregory Sanborn, Deputy Chief Game Warden, presented Warden Martin with the honor, and recognized others for exemplary service during the Maine Warden Service's annual meeting.

"The significant achievements we honor speak volumes about the commitment, courage and core values of Maine game wardens," said Col. Wilkinson.

This year's honorees are:

Warden of the Year/Shikar Safari Club Wildlife Officer of the Year Award: To Jim Martin, a 20-year veteran based in Calais, nominated by Sgt. David Craven.

Colonel's Award: To the Cumberland County District Attorney Stephanie Anderson, Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Norbert, and the Cumberland County District Attorney's Office, selected and presented by Col. Joel Wilkinson. For their unwavering support and steadfast commitment to the prosecution of Robert Lapointe.

2008 NASBLA Boating Officer of the Year: To Warden Alan Gillis of Orrington, presented by Col. Joel Wilkinson and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

Supervisor of the Year Award: To Chief Game Warden Pilot Charlie Later of Greenville. Presented by Major Gregory Sanborn.

Special Recognition Awards:

To Jody Breton of Livermore Falls, former director of the Natural Resources Service Center, presented by Col. Joel Wilkinson and Major Gregory Sanborn.



Major Gregory Sanborn (left) and Colonel Joel Wilkinson (right) stand with "Warden of the Year" Jim Martin Jr.

To the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Department, presented by Sgt. Chris Simmons and Col. Wilkinson.

To U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agents Eric Holmes and Robert Roth, presented by Game Warden Joey Lefebvre.

To Dave Blake, Jeff Coon, Chris Davidson and David Minott, four members of the Maine State Police garage staff and nicknamed the "Dirty Dog Posse," presented by Lt. Shon Theriault and Warden John MacDonald.

Meritorious Service Award: To Sgt. Bill Chandler of Greenville, presented by Lt. Pat Dorian.

Exemplary Service Awards:

To Captain Dan Scott of Hampden, Investigator Phil Dugas, Investigator Jason Luce, Warden Kevin Anderson and Warden Jeremy Judd, presented by Lt. Adam Gormely.

To Warden Specialist Steve Allarie of Farmingdale, presented by Lt. Shon Theriault.

To Warden John MacDonald of Pownal, presented by Lt. Shon Theriault.

To Warden David Allen of Ashland, presented by Sgt. Tom Ward.

To Warden Rick Clowry of Harmony, presented by Sgt. Bill Chandler.

To Warden Mike Pierre of Gorham, presented by Sgt. Tim Spahr and Lt. Adam Gormel.

To Warden Ben Drew of Houlton, Warden Durward Humphrey of Benedicta, and Warden Scott Martin of Patten, presented by Lt. Doug Tibbetts.

K-9 Conservation Case of the Year Award: To Game Warden Paul Farrington and Koda, of Springfield, presented by Warden Wayde Carter and Warden Roger Guay.

K-9 Search and Rescue of the Year Award: To Game Warden Jeff Spencer and Bridger, of St. Francis, presented by Warden Wayde Carter and Warden Roger Guay.

Maine Warden Service Association Legendary Game Warden: To retired Game Warden Don Walker of Bingham, presented by Warden Chris Dyer. Walker served from 1954 to 1975.

Maine Warden Service Association Merit Awards: To Rick Michaud of Councville, Lance Wheaton of Forest City, Jack Knight of Bridgton, and Pam and Brian Wells of Old Town.

Lynx project completes '09 winter field study

**By Scott McLellan
and Jennifer Vashon**
Wildlife Biologists
Management Group

IF&W's lynx project's 2009 winter field season recently ended. Field activities were initiated on January 21, 2009 and ended on April 1, 2009. The field crew was lead by Scott McLellan, Biologist in the Bangor Mammal Group, and included 3 seasonal technicians, Eric Rudolph, Jessie Kuester, and Lonna Perry, 2 volunteers, Brandon Coones and Carmen Vanbianchi, and graduate student David Mallett.

The overall goal of the field effort was to maintain or increase the overall number of radio collared lynx and increase the number being tracked by GPS collars to improve our understanding of lynx movements and habitat use. In addition, we planned to back track collared female lynx to check on presence of young lynx from 2008.

This winter, the field crew captured 15 individual lynx (13 males and 2 females) 43 times in cage traps. The focus of this winter's capture effort was to:

- replace the VHF radio collar on a male lynx with a GPS collar,
- capture a male lynx whose GPS collar had been inaudible for over 1 year,
- capture two male lynx whose GPS collars were in need of replacement,
- capture a female whose collar self-released due to an internal mechanism failure,
- capture a male to replace his satellite collar with a GPS collar, and
- capture new lynx to increase our



sample of collared animals.

All 6 lynx targeted for capture were captured this winter. Five were equipped with GPS collars and 1 with a satellite collar.

We also captured 6 adult lynx (5 males and 1 female) for the first time and equipped each with a GPS collar. An adult male caught last fall was also recaptured. We immobilized this lynx to download 6 months of locational data from his GPS collar which revealed that the GPS unit had stopped taking fixes in November. We replaced his collar with a functioning GPS collar. Two adult males that were captured late last fall were recaptured early this winter and released without chemical immobilization because a download of the GPS data was not necessary given the brief period between captures.

We observed 5 mortalities of collared lynx (3 males and 2 females) during this report period. Three adult lynx (2 males and 1 female) were killed by fishers, 1 adult female died of starvation, and another adult male was likely killed by a fisher, but too much time had passed to accurately deter-

mine cause of death. In addition, the radio collars from 2 lynx (1 male and 1 female) self-released due to an internal mechanism failure. Future efforts will be made to recapture both of these individuals.

This winter, we backtracked 2 female lynx that did not show evidence of producing litters in 2008 to verify that litters were not produced and to document the unlikely event that they produced kittens later in the

summer. Both females were traveling alone. At the capture sites of 2 adult female lynx captured this winter, we did not observe tracks of kittens. We also backtracked one of these females this winter and verified that she was alone.

The Maine Warden Service monitored each collar signal once a week to document mortality from January to the end of April. In mid-May, breeding-age females will be monitored twice per week to determine den establishment. At the beginning of the winter field season, we were monitoring 15 lynx (12 males and 3 females) including 12 lynx equipped with GPS collars. At the end of the winter field season, we were monitoring 15 lynx (13 males and 2 females – based above this should be 1 female) that includes 13 lynx equipped with GPS collars (11 males and 2 females), 1 male with a satellite collar, and 1 male with a VHF collar (who is approximately 20 miles northwest of our study area and will likely not be recaptured). In addition, one of the males equipped with a GPS collar (captured in fall 2008 in the study area) was last located near the town of Allagash.

MAINE ENDANGERED SPECIES

Jonathan & Haley + Snakes

By T. Parker Schuerman

Southern Maine Preserve Manager
The Nature Conservancy

My daughter, Haley, and I recently helped Jonathan Mays, an IF&W herpetologist, conduct research on the Black Racer snake at the Wells Barrens Preserve, 25 miles southwest of Portland.

We released two snakes that were caught days before our adventure, and captured another new snake (a male) for Jonathan's research project. He was hoping to catch a few more males on this site.

The male was released after a radio was inserted into him by the IF&W veterinarian.

Here's what Haley learned:

- Snakes are OK when someone like Jonathan is teaching you about them -- and holding them;
- Northern Black Racer snakes disappear very quickly, almost magically;
- When spooked, Black Racer snakes climb, very adroitly and gracefully, into and around trees.



Photos by T. Parker Schuerman
Haley Schuerman (top) looks at a Black Racer snake being held by IF&W biologist Jonathan Mays. (Left) Haley touches a Black Racer snake. (Above) a Black Racer sits in a tree.

H1N1

Be informed! Visit maine.gov & click on Swine Flu Information

Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin and IF&W representatives on the state's Emergency Response Team worked with Gov. John Baldacci, Dr. Dora Mills and the Maine Center for Disease Control, the Maine Emergency Management Agency and others in preparedness of a possible pandemic.

MAINE ENDANGERED SPECIES

IF&W, U-Maine partner to aid Clayton's Copper Butterfly

By Beth SwartzWildlife Biologist
Reptile, Amphibian
& Invertebrate Group

The Endangered Clayton's Copper (*Lycaena dorcas claytoni*) is a small, orange-brown butterfly known only from a handful of sites in Maine and western New Brunswick. It is found only in association with its single larval host plant, the shrubby cinquefoil. This uncommon shrub has a scattered distribution in Maine and rarely occurs in stands large enough to support viable populations of the butterfly. Where it grows best is along the edges of calcareous wetlands (i.e., rich in calcium carbonate or limestone), which are a rare habitat type in Maine. Not found everywhere its host plant grows, the Clayton's Copper is even rarer – with only nine extant occurrences documented in the state.

This butterfly takes one year to complete its life cycle. In late July and August, when shrubby cinquefoil is blooming, females lay their eggs singly on the underside of cinquefoil leaves. Leaves and eggs drop to the ground in autumn, and the eggs overwinter. The pale green larvae hatch in spring and crawl back up the plant to feed on its leaves. After the larvae molt and pupate in early summer, adult butterflies emerge during July and August to start the cycle over again. Throughout the flight period, Clayton's Copper remains local to its cinquefoil stands, where the abundant yellow flowers provide its primary nectar source.

Clayton's Copper is listed as Endangered in Maine because of the extremely limited number, size, and distribution of its populations; the rarity of its habitat, and its near-endemic status (limited almost exclusively to Maine).

In 2007, MDIFW began a partnership with the University of Maine (UM) to investigate two key questions about this rare butterfly. What is the population size and what is its genetic status as a subspecies? Under the guidance of Drs. Judith Rhymer and Frank Drummond, UM graduate student Emily Knurek has been doing surveys to estimate the size of Clayton's Copper populations at the nine locations in Maine where the species occurs. Having a baseline population estimate is critical to assessing a species' true status and recovery potential, as well as establishing management goals and monitoring population trends. Emily is also investigating the butterfly's taxonomic (genetic) status.

While most lepidopterists accept that Clayton's Copper is an isolated subspecies of the more widely distributed Dorcas Copper (*Lycaena dorcas*), the taxonomic distinction between the two has never been quantified. Only detailed morphological and genetic analyses will determine if Clayton's Copper is a true subspecies, thus confirming and further increasing its conservation significance in Maine. Emily's research will continue through this year and should be completed by August, 2009.

Also in 2009, two new UM graduate students will be starting research to follow up on Emily's work and investigate some new areas of Clayton's Copper life history and status. Corrine Michaud will be looking at the genetic structure of Clayton's Copper popula-



© Beth Swartz

tions in Maine; gathering basic life history information; and also analyzing the quality and selection characteristics of the butterfly's host plant (shrubby cinquefoil). Sarah Drahovzal will be doing an environmental assessment of the circumneutral fen (wetland) habitats where the Clayton's Copper host plant is found, and comparing characteristics of those areas occupied by the butterfly vs. areas of habitat unoccupied.

Funding for this work comes from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, University of Maine, The Nature Conservancy, American Philosophical Society, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Loon Conservation Plate, and Chickadee Check-off funds.

BEARS AND BIRD FEEDERS



Photo by Chuck Hulsey

Two bears seek food that was left in traps by IF&W wildlife biologists in an attempt to catch them and move them from a Livermore Falls neighborhood. Three bears -- a sow and her two yearlings -- are use to eating bird seed left in yards or put out by homeowners who like looking at the bears. For other neighbors, the bears were becoming a nuisance. All of the bears were moved from the neighborhood. Biologists urge people to not keep food sources outside, particularly trash cans, pet food or bird seed, until July, when natural food is available for bears in the woods.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GOVERNOR'S CUP BASS TOURNAMENT

Sunday, June 14

House of Representatives
vs. Senate

Is this YOUR year?

MOOSE PERMIT LOTTERY

Thursday, June 18

Doors Open at 2;

Names Drawn at 6

University of Maine at Fort Kent

IF&W OPEN HOUSE

Meet biologists &
wardens; see animals

Saturday, June 27
Maine Wildlife Park, Gray

'Loon' plate promos hit airwaves, e-mail

The Maine Departments of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Conservation are using the airwaves and mailboxes to promote the sale of the Conservation "Loon" license plate. Radio ads include the voices of Registered Maine Guide Gil Gilpatrick, Registered Maine Guide, and interviews have been done with Beginning with Habitat Coordinator Steve Walker, and IF&W Bird Group

Leader Brad Allen.

The ads will continue to run on WTOS, WQCB, and WFNK the last week of each month through December.

As a reminder, the public can access the myloonplate.com website for more information and to use the Loon Plate Renewal Reminder on the site. They will get an email from "The Loon" at the beginning of the month their



registration is due as a reminder. Even if they don't have the loon plate they can use it to remind them to get a loon plate next time they register.

Maine Wildlife Park's season well underway

The Maine Wildlife Park in Gray opened on schedule in April and was given detailed coverage by TV Channels 6, 8 and 13, and the Portland Press Herald.

For the past two years, opening day had been delayed up to 10 days because of deep snow cover. This year's cooperative weather gave the Maine Wildlife Park a great start, with attendance up 120 percent over last year.

Superintendent Curt Johnson said that visitors have been commenting on how great the park looks. They also are thrilled about the new porcupine exhibit, the first of six new small mammal enclosures that will be constructed through 2010, and that parallel the deer yard trail in a wooded setting. These naturalized exhibits, with specialty "see through" wire mesh for greater visibility and photo opportunities, are a huge improvement over the old cement and chain link "row" that we are anxious to dismantle.

The fish tanks are once again operational; and the peacocks, turkeys and pheasants are all housed communally in the large, naturally landscaped nylon mesh greenhouse, with the last of the old wire pheasant pens dismantled and landscaped.

Kudos to wildlife park staff and volunteers, and Windham Correctional



inmates on work release, for their hard work in readying the facility for the 2009 season.

Numerous schools have been registering for wildlife programming, field trips and tours in part because of an advertised 'early bird special' on program fees.

The park is open daily from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Top: A porcupine sits in the new Porcupine exhibit. Right, Yankee magazine named the Maine Wildlife Park its "Best Place to Meet Natives."



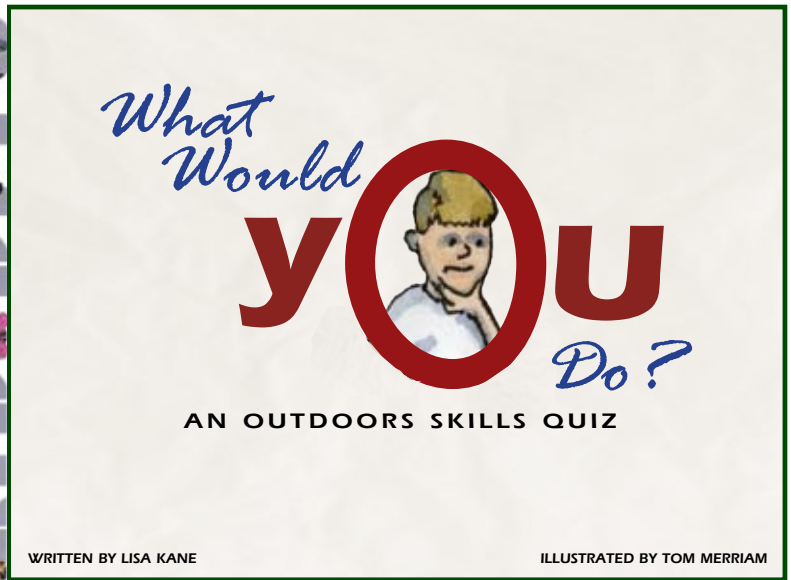
Outdoor skills quiz fun test of knowledge

Do you know what you should do if a see a bear nearby when you're picking blueberries? Or if you see a turtle on its back along the side of a road?

These are two of the 12 questions posed in the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's newest booklet, "What Would You Do? An Outdoors Skills Quiz," now available for parents and teachers to show their children or pupils before summer vacation begins. It's also a fun activity for adults!

The quiz was written by IF&W Natural Sciences Educator Lisa Kane, who for more than 20 years has taught outdoors and wildlife conservation classes at school events, children's programs, the Maine Wildlife Park and Swan Island. It was illustrated by Tom Merriam, an outdoors artist whose work also graces the Sportsman's License Plate, and was designed by Deborah Turcotte, the Department's spokeswoman.

"This appealingly illustrated online quiz gives kids of all ages a chance to see how they'd react in the common outdoor situations depicted," said Kane. "Hopefully by taking the quiz, kids will



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learn what the right things are to do in certain situations when boating, camping, snowmobiling or interacting with wildlife."

The booklet is simple to read and easy to use -- and is a great addition to any safety day programs currently being scheduled schools statewide in anticipation of summer vacation.

"A current state and national concern is how to get kids to recreate outside, and once they're there to make sure they are acting safely and ethically," Kane said. "Teachers might use the booklet as a stepping stone for kids to share some of their own outdoor adventures, either by writing a story or giving a talk. Teachers also might use

the quiz prior to a field trip, to ensure kids know how to act appropriately and safely while visiting a state park, beach or other outdoor venue."

To read and share the booklet from your home, school or work computer, visit <http://www.flipseekllc.com/maine200904kidbits.html>

A printer-friendly version also is available online for teachers. The booklet can be printed on standard copy paper, and then the sheets are cut in half, with one stack placed on top of the other. Just staple and it's ready to be used by your students!

It's available at <http://www.flipseekllc.com/maine200904kidsbit-teacher.html>.

**1,030+ fans
& counting**

Search: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (use the ampersand!)



you one of our
facebook fans? cool.

Deputy Game Warden Ceremony



Maine Warden Service Major Gregory Sanborn swore in two Deputy Game Wardens during a May 26 ceremony at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife headquarters. Lauren Turcotte Seavey, 8, (left) and MaggieBeth Turcotte Seavey, 9, the daughters of IF&W Spokeswoman Deborah Turcotte, were thanked for their commitment to the Maine Warden Service, particularly having to give up time with Mom when she's handling media calls regarding emergencies that require wardens' attention on nights and weekends.



Safari Club Donation

Vicki Moriarty, president of the Maine Chapter of Safari Club International, recently presented IF&W Wildlife Biologists Randy Cross and Jennifer Vashon with a check for \$6,000 to support the Department's bear program.



Maine Birder Band featured in magazine

The Maine Birder Band, an identification band for bird watchers to secure to their gear, was featured under "new products" in the June edition of birders World magazine.



Photo by Heather Rodriguez



MAINE FALLEN OFFICERS MEMORIAL

Members of the Maine Warden Service participate in the annual remembrance ceremony for law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. The May 14 event was held at the Maine Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Augusta.

RECENT INCIDENTS

Four Massachusetts residents were aboard a boat that was driven into trees on Square Pond in Shapleigh on May 31. One woman suffered life-threatening injuries and two others suffered minor injuries.

A Trenton man fell from a tree stand he was repairing near Pittston Farms on May 30. The man died a few days later at a Bangor hospital.

A Skowhegan man suffered life-threatening injuries when ATV-ing on May 30. He was thrown from his vehicle and hit his head on a rock ledge. He was transported to a Bangor hospital.

A turkey hunter accidentally shot himself in the heel after dragging his shotgun to set up decoys. He was treated at Blue Hill Memorial Hospital and released.

Other: nuisance animal complaints, illegal fishing, searches for missing individuals, capsized boats.



BOATING SAFETY PRESS CONFERENCE

Lt. Adam Gormely shows WCSH-6 reporter Don Carrigan a life jacket during the Maine Warden Service's annual boating safety press conference on May 18. The event tied into National Safe Boating Week, and was attended by the Maine Marine Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard.

CENTRAL MAINE REGION C

By Robert Van-Riper
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Sidney

With the advent of spring, Region B biologists have taken to the field, undertaking open water evaluations of a wide variety of lakes, ponds and streams throughout the Midcoast.

While it is often referred to as "the Midcoastal Region," Region B encompasses about 4,000 square miles, extending quite far inland from the coast. At the coast proper, the Region extends generally from the Androscoggin River on the west to the Penobscot on the east. Going north along the Androscoggin, the region reaches Livermore Falls before turning northeast in a somewhat ragged line roughly following the Kennebec\Franklin and Kennebec\Somerset county lines to Canaan. From there, it heads north to Cambridge, again east to Garland, then southeast to the Bangor area and the Penobscot River.

Throughout the region, there is a great variety of aquatic habitat types. Indeed, there are more than 300 named lakes and ponds and about 3,000 miles of permanent and intermittent streams. Region B is somewhat unique in that most of its waters are relatively easy to get to. A pond considered "remote" in this neck of the woods might be all of a half-mile walk. But, that quick hike might provide a pond or stream that one angler has all to themselves. In short, there as many types of fishing to be found here as there are anglers.

This year, working with State Sen. Dave Trahan, Advisory Council member Mike Witte, Lincoln County Fish and Game, Medomak Valley Land Trust, and the selectmen from the town of Waldoboro, regional biologists were able to create a fishing water for kids on a quarry on a town-owned lot. The



Kate Kemper, daughter of IF&W Regional Fisheries Biologist Keel Kemper, admires an 18-inch smallmouth bass she caught on her first cast of the 2009 fishing season at Unity Pond. Kate was using her Zebco 202 with a tube jig.

quarry is small, not much over an acre. It was also on a town lot, meaning that the property was owned by all the citizens of Waldoboro.

While it may appear an easy task to get something beneficial like a "kids fishing water" in place, there is a process involved. In this case, Sen. Trahan, acting on a suggestion from Lincoln County F&G, approached IF&W to see if a kids' water there was a possibility. Our first step was to notify the town of the suggestion. The selectmen agreed that it was an idea worth investigating, and scheduled a public meeting to discuss the idea with interested citizens. The results of this meeting were to proceed with an evaluation and report back on the results in a second public meeting. After the initial evaluation showed that the quarry was suitable for brook trout, we were able to secure some unscheduled hatchery fish as a startup stocking.

We soon discovered two things. First, both big and little kids took ad-

vantage of the fish. Second, not all of the 100 fish we put in that year were caught. Reports received in April of this year indicated that anglers had taken several trout from 12 to 14 inches. This meant that not only were the fish able to survive the warm summer months there, but that conditions also were suitable for over-winter survival and growth. All in all, not bad for a little mined-out quarry.

At the follow-up public meeting this spring, Lincoln County Fish and Game pledged their assistance in monitoring the site and proposed to hold a kids derby there. Some concern over liability was expressed by the selectmen and some concerned citizens. It was brought up that state liability laws adequately protected the town in that regard. Ultimately, with the cooperation of everyone concerned, it was agreed that the pond would be included of the department's list of kids only fishing waters in the next fishing laws revision.

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To let the big kids, that is, those over 16 know, the Department is providing provide signs to identify it as such. On May 30, Lincoln County Fish and Game held their second fishing derby.

WESTERN MAINE REGION D

By Dave Boucher

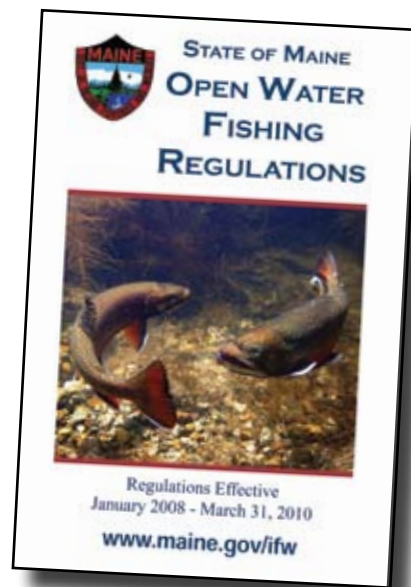
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Strong

Providing public access to Maine's lakes and ponds is one of the Department's highest priorities. Securing access is a difficult and time consuming task, however, so when we succeed it's always worth mentioning.

Here in western Maine, we've just completed the development of one site and have several others in various stages of development. A new carry-on launch was recently opened on Middle Sandy River Pond in Sandy River Plantation. Middle Sandy River Pond supports an excellent brook trout fishery and connects to Upper and Lower Sandy River Ponds, which also provide trout fishing. So in essence, boat access is guaranteed for three trout ponds for the price of one! This hand-carry launch is located about 8 miles south of Rangeley along Route 4.

Access to the Sandy River also will improve when newly acquired sites in Farmington Falls and New Sharon are developed. This 5.5-mile section will be an outstanding paddle through some fabulous farm country with good fisheries for smallmouth bass and brown trout. The upper site will be located just east of the village of Farmington Falls and extend downstream to New Sharon in the vicinity of Muddy Brook.

The Departments of Conservation and Transportation are cooperating on improving boat access to Chain of Ponds in northern Franklin County. Two new sites are being developed – one



REMEMBER YOUR LAW BOOK!

near the Natanis Pond Campground on the north end and one at Lower Pond, which is the southern-most lake in the chain. This is a highly scenic area with great fisheries for both brook trout and landlocked salmon.

We're pleased with this progress, but recognize that there's much more work to do. Our highest priorities for access acquisition and development now focus on Oaks Pond in Skowhegan and Hancock Pond in Embden. Popular and heavily utilized fisheries dependent on stocking programs were recently suspended on both waters for lack of suitable access for summer anglers. If you become aware of properties on either water that might be suitable for boat access, please give us a call (778-3322) and we'll investigate.

The Rangeley Lake salmon fishery is showing some clear signs of recovery following several sub-par years. As reported here earlier, several robust year-classes of wild salmon placed a great burden on the lake's delicate forage population (smelts), and the growth and size quality of salmon suffered accordingly. In order to reduce the number of smelt predators and facili-

tate a recovery, we curtailed the salmon stocking program and encouraged anglers to harvest a few more fish. Salmon captured during last fall's trap-net survey showed improved growth, and there was a great spawning run of smelts in late April. Game wardens and anglers reported improved numbers of larger salmon in this spring's fishery, so it seems the lake is finally coming around.

MOOSEHEAD LAKE REGION E

By Tim Obrey

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Greenville

Last year, IF&W teamed up with the Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) in Greenville to create a college internship/summer work program to benefit fisheries in the area. One of the first projects includes a competition removal study on several local trout ponds. The project continued this spring at Crocker Pond in Dennistown and Center Pond in Soldiertown. The goal of this project is to remove species that compete with brook trout for food and habitat. Based on work conducted by this region on Little Moxie Pond in Shirley, the removal of these species can greatly improve growth rates and survival rates for young wild trout.

In 2008, we removed over 2,000 pounds (5,350 individuals) of white suckers from Crocker Pond. Based on our population estimates derived from the catch rates, we removed around 47-100 percent of the total sucker biomass. Of course, we didn't get them all but the actual figure was probably close to 85 percent. That was a pretty good start.

In 2009, we again hired two Unity College students to return to Crocker Pond and continue the project. We tended four nets from May 7 to May 22.

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Two Unity College students are working with IF&W this spring to remove white suckers from Crocker Pond.

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In this time, we removed approximately 1,200 lbs of suckers. The amount of effort was nearly identical to the previous year. Again, based on population estimates, we removed between 58-100 percent of the total population, with a point estimate of 97 percent.

Clearly, trapnetting can be an effective tool to reduce sucker populations in small headwater ponds. We did see an improvement in the condition or fatness of the hatchery brook trout that were also in our nets. This improvement was likely the result of last year's removal and a reduction in the stocking rate. Crocker Pond, which has no tackle restrictions and just a two-fish limit, continues to produce some fine fish. Thirty-four percent of the trout in this pond were greater than 12 inches. The Jackman Region has some of Maine's finest brook trout fishing in the state, and this pond has very good access and worth a stop if you're in the area.

We captured fewer suckers and trout at Center Pond in Soldiertown. We removed about 200 pounds of suckers over two weeks of netting from this 51-acre wild brook trout pond, which lies just north of Rockwood. We estimated the trout population to be 234 fish with just 6 percent greater than 12 inches, although there were a few nice individuals. This pond is relatively shal-

low and cool water habitat is probably hard to find in the heat of the summer, making it tough on the wild trout. We believe the removal of suckers could improve conditions for trout on this water in the future.

This cooperative project is supported by donations to NREC from groups and individuals interested in improving the fishing in the region, as well as funds from the winter togue fishing derby on Moosehead Lake sponsored by the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce. We plan to continue the competition removal project next spring and add new projects in the near future. Thanks to everyone for their support!

PENOBSCOT REGION F

By Nels Kramer

Assistant Regional Fisheries Biologist
Enfield

As Yogi Berra would say, it was déjà vu all over again!

About 10 years ago, while trout fishing on a pond in the North Country, I had the opportunity to witness a spectacle that I had hoped at the time I would never, ever see again.

While paddling back to the landing at the end of a successful days fishing, a loon appeared next to the canoe with what appeared to be a fat 15-inch trout in its beak. The trout was still very much alive at the first surfacing. Down went the loon with trout in tow, but quickly they were both back on the surface to continue the fight. Back down they'd go, and so on. After about 2 or 3 minutes, the trout had succumbed and the loon summarily threw back his head and swallowed the trout whole! Never would have thought a loon could have handled a trout any bigger than that.

Until this past weekend, that is. While fishing another un-named trout pond in the North Country with IF&W Wildlife Biologist Vasco "Buster" Carter, we were tailed for hours by a very pesky loon. Everywhere we'd paddle, that loon would follow. All afternoon! We became convinced that the reason we were not catching any fish was because of our new found feathered friend. Until around 5 p.m. That's when everything changed.

Suddenly the loon started swimming back and forth under the canoe at a high rate of speed, almost frantically. Then a fish hit. A nice trout had taken my offering. Because of the circumstances, I wasted no time getting him in the canoe.

A quick measure at 17 inches meant that he was going back, as this pond is managed for trophy-sized fish with a bag limit of one trout daily and a minimum length limit of 18 inches. As I was holding him momentarily next to the canoe to revive him a bit before release, Buster yelled out for me to watch my hand as the loon was now making threatening advances towards my appendages. I swiftly lifted the fish out and decided to wait until the loon made another run to the other side of the canoe. I then slid the trout back into the water with a push towards the deeper part of the pond. Seconds went by before I saw the loon go back under the canoe in pursuit, but I was

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IF&W Wildlife Biologist Vasco "Buster" Carter holds a 17-inch trout that he thought he saved from a loon. An attempt to release the trout away from the loon was unsuccessful. He became dinner.

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fairly confident that the trout would get away.

As Buster and I were celebrating our "successful" attempt to outsmart a mere bird, up came the loon about 50 yards out with that 17-inch trout in its beak! This time it was only about a 30-second fight before that loon threw its head back and swallowed him whole! Sounds hard to believe, I know, but I've talked to a number of anglers since that have observed the same scenario played out on this pond and other ponds with hauntingly similar results.

Remember, I measured that fish before release, and it was between 17 and 18 inches, and in very good condition. Realistically, that fish weighed close to two pounds!

Many fish in the 16- to 18-inch category apparently have been consumed by the pair of loons making their home at this pond shortly after release all spring, making me wonder what's the point?

When I start to do the math, it becomes even more depressing. We don't stock a lot of fish in this pond, and the only other species of fish in the pond is dace and shiners. We expect anglers to release any fish less than 18 inches, with the hope that these fish will continue to grow and next year they will be available for harvest. With two loons eating a trout or two a piece (or more) a day all season long, it starts to add up quickly. What's left for the angler that buys a license, follows the rules and expects some return on their time, effort and investment?

If this scenario sounds familiar, IF&W Regional Fisheries Biologist Dave Basley in our Ashland office wrote a very similar story that appeared in the fishing report from June 23, 2008. In Dave's report, he posed the question "So I think you now can understand our dilemma, as one charged to improve the sport fishery for larger brook trout, how do we manage around this conundrum?"

AROOSTOOK CTY. REGION G

By Dave Basley

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Ashland

By all accounts the fishing in this area has been meeting all expectations this spring. From the first ice out at Long Lake, anglers have been successfully catching 3- to 5-pound salmon with regularity. The smelt ran very well in the tributaries which should ensure an adequate forage supply to maintain size quality.

Togue fishing at Eagle Lake has picked up where the winter fishing left off. Anglers can continue to harvest a daily bag limit of six togue having a minimum length of 14 inches and only one may exceed 23 inches.

Brook trout have been cooperative

at Fish Lake, Square Lake and Cross Lake.

In the backcountry, Big Eagle has been exceptional for togue 3-5 pounds with 7- to 8-pound fish not uncommon. Please remember than the general law bag limit of 2 togue remains in effect in 2009.

Twelve- to 17-inch brookies have been the norm in Big Eagle and Churchill Lakes.

Anglers continue to be encouraged to visit First, Second and Third Musquacook Lakes to harvest togue. Although indications are that smelt abundance has improved since implementing liberal bag and length limits in 2008, the 6 togue daily bag limit and 14-inch minimum length limit and only one may exceed 23 inches, is slated to remain on the books for the foreseeable future. We continue to encourage anglers fishing these waters to please harvest the togue.

The flow in our rivers has been "bumped up" by the recent rains and the weather continues to be cool. Anglers were reporting excellent trout fishing in brooks and rivers over Memorial Day weekend. Water conditions remain similar to extend this fishing into the coming weekend.

The Aroostook River, any spot from its headwaters to the New Brunswick border, should be on the list of waters to fish if visiting the area. Other notable tributaries to the Aroostook include the Big Machias and Little Madawaska River for trout fishing. The upper and lower reaches of the Aroostook are under special regulation while the middle section is under general law. Please check the lawbook to identify those sections under special regulation.

We would note that the Ashland headquarters has been under new construction over the winter. Visitors to the office are advised that the public entrance is now on the west end of the building. The lowermost driveway will access vehicles to the public parking and entrance. All IF&W staff is now located in the new office building.