

# THE HARLEQUIN

York County Audubon

[www.yorkcountyaudubon.org](http://www.yorkcountyaudubon.org)

Autumn 2016

## **Doug Tallamy Brought It Home** *by Monica Grabin*

Doug Tallamy's presentation at the Ogunquit Playhouse on June 27th was all it was cracked up to be, and more. A large audience sat in the beautiful Playhouse and took in a wealth of information about how we have impacted birds and the rest of the natural world, and what we as individuals can do to help Nature recover. Although I felt I was well-versed on the importance of native plants in the landscape, I have to admit that I was astonished at how little I understood the reasons that natives are so critical. I was missing a huge piece of the puzzle of our interconnected world, and the piece I needed was *insects*, in particular the lepidoptera, butterflies and moths.



When I think of planting native plants I think of things like berries that will feed birds during the winter, or milkweed which is needed by Monarch

butterflies. What I don't think about is the caterpillar droppings on my deck furniture that drive me crazy. What Dr. Tallamy made me realize is that those caterpillars, living on my oak trees, are the way that our birds feed their young. Young birds can't eat berries or seeds. Their parents look for caterpillars instead, which is the perfect food for baby birds. When your trees, shrubs or herbaceous plants are host to caterpillars, it may be a problem to you, but it's a life-saving bonanza for birds.



Dr. Tallamy made it clear that not all trees and shrubs are created equal. Natives have evolved along with the insects and the birds around them. They are the base of a food web that sustains other natives. Plants from "away" are often not as attractive or digestible to native insects, especially in their larval (caterpillar) stage, so they are left alone. Many non-native species are prized exactly because their leaves are not bothered by insects. But for the rest of the food web, this is not a good thing. Dr. Tallamy gave a great illustration

of this, by looking at the difference between the caterpillars, moths and butterflies he found on a non-native Bradford Pear, as compared to a native White Oak. The pear had very few, and its leaves were spotless, while the oak was full of insects and its leaves were full of holes. He called it a “holistic” situation. It took most of us a second or two to get it, but we got it.

Dr. Tallamy also burst the bubble of dependence on our “natural spaces,” such as parks, as protection for our native species. These are typically pretty small areas, and the fact that they are often quite near plantings of non-native species means that they are under constant threat of invasion. Dr. Tallamy showed pictures of a nature reserve across a highway from a development filled with Bradford Pear. (Bradford Pear is incredibly popular as a decorative planting throughout the Northeast, and a particular thorn in Dr. Tallamy’s side.) One photo clearly showed the nature area filled with young Bradford Pear seedlings. In fact, our protected natural spaces are too small and too scattered to be effective in maintaining native species. Which makes our homes and gardens a pivotal source of refuge for natives. Instead of the millions of acres of lawn we cherish, and the thousands of non-native ornamental plants we admire, we need to allow our native plants to flourish and provide a resource for our native insects, birds, and animals.

Although it might sound like this was a depressing topic, it was anything but! Dr. Tallamy fills his talks with humor, gorgeous images, and hope. What most stuck with me was Dr. Tallamy describing how easy it can be to get natives into your landscape. On his property, he planted an acorn. He just let it grow. In fifteen years it was a pretty big tree, in twenty, it had real presence. And it hosted hundreds of species of native insects. One tree. In my own yard, I once gathered milkweed seeds from the roadside, and scattered them throughout my garden. The next year, nothing happened. The following year, nothing happened. A total bust, I thought. The third year, milkweed began to appear. Now I have so much that it’s almost a nuisance. It’s always got lots of holes. I never knew I should be so happy about that, and about those caterpillars in my oaks.

York County Audubon worked with nine other organizations to bring Doug Tallamy to southern Maine. They were the Ogunquit Marginal Way Committee, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Marginal Way Preservation Fund, Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea, the Wells Reserve at Laudholm, the York County Master Gardener Association, the York Land Trust, and the Ogunquit Playhouse. The outcome was a wonderful success, and we thank all the other groups for the chance to share this with them. Special thanks to Joan Griswold, representing the Ogunquit Marginal Way Committee, whose idea it was to organize this event, and who did so much to bring it to fruition.

### For more information:

- A video of the talk and slideshow that Dr. Tallamy presented in Ogunquit can be viewed online here: [vimeo.com/174067253](https://vimeo.com/174067253)
- Doug Tallamy’s book, [Bringing Nature Home](#) is available at [Amazon.com](#)
- [Gardening to Conserve Maine’s Native Landscape: Plants to Use and Plants to Avoid](#) is available online at: [extension.maine.edu/publications/2500e](http://extension.maine.edu/publications/2500e)

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For all upcoming events and general information, please visit our website:

**[www.yorkcountyaudubon.org](http://www.yorkcountyaudubon.org)**

And for the latest news, photos and updates, please visit us on Facebook at:

**[www.facebook.com/yorkcountyaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/yorkcountyaudubon)**

## **The Forest is a Wonderful Place – A Hog Island Report - By Katie Brodeur**

For a young and emerging naturalist, the experience of waking up to the chattering of red squirrels and the squawking of osprey was truly invaluable. Our very first evening on the island, one of the amazing counselors read an excerpt from Rachel Carson's *Sense of Wonder*, and this phrase followed me for the rest of my time on the island. From the breathtaking landscape to the incredible brushes with wildlife, I found myself in a state of awe almost constantly. This passion and wonder is what I hope to pass on to all of my students, and with our non-releasable animal ambassadors at the Center for Wildlife I'm sure this can be accomplished. I have seen many jaws drop at the first sight of our hawks and owls, and it's incredibly rewarding to know I have passed on the same wonder and curiosity that has inspired me for years and was deepened and rejuvenated by my time on the island.

Another theme that permeated my week was that of responsibility. Dr. Steve Kress spoke to his sense of duty towards the puffins on Eastern Egg Rock and when asked if he ever thought his work would be finished, he dryly and calmly answered no. We discussed at length the importance of stewardship and vigilant management if we are to have any hope of preserving the species we love and enjoy. A large part of my job as the Education and Outreach Fellow at CFW is teaching simple and effective ways we can act as stewards of wildlife in our everyday lives, and I left Hog Island inspired and with many tools to help me toward this end. I am so grateful for the opportunity and hope to someday be able to return to this wonderful place.

*Katie Brodeur was the 2016 recipient of York County Audubon's June Ficker Hog Island Scholarship. She attended "Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week" there in July.*

*Since 1936, some of the world's most well-known and highly respected naturalists have come to Hog Island and inspired thousands to learn about and protect birds and the environment. Roger Tory Peterson was among the first teachers on the 335-acre island. Rachel Carson described her visit to*

*Hog Island in her landmark book, *Silent Spring*. Kenn Kaufman, only nine years old when he read Peterson's account of Hog Island, is now an international authority on birds and nature.*

*A variety of programs are offered there each summer. FMI: [hogisland.audubon.org](http://hogisland.audubon.org)*



*A View of Hog Island - from Katie Brodeur*

## **Our 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Seed Sale is coming! Early Bird Pricing through 10/28**

Keep your feathered friends happy this winter by treating them to tasty and fresh, premium quality bird food and help support two of your favorite environmental organizations at the same time. Profits from our annual sale support the educational programs of both York County Audubon and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve. A wide variety of types of seed and suet is available, with great pricing, especially if you order early.

Early bird pricing is available if you place your order by 4 p.m. on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Order pick up will be at the Wells Reserve November 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, with easy access and volunteers on hand to help load your car.

***Please refer to the enclosed blue order form for more information.***

## Quest for 300

How many bird species can be seen in York County in a single year? A dedicated birder can tally 200 or more with reasonable effort, but what if a bunch of birders ranging from casual watchers to serious listers contributed to a single list?

That's the question behind the Quest for 300. We wondered if it was even possible for such a single-year tally to occur in York County, but on our second year of trying in 2012, we tallied 301! Since then, our highest total was 289 in 2015, but we keep trying.

Feel free to join the effort, or just take a look at our multi-year list to see what birds have been seen each year. "Quest for 300" is in the drop down menu under "Birds & Birding" on our website. We monitor eBird and maine-birds, and update the list regularly. As of July 31<sup>st</sup>, our 2016 total was 257. Only 43 to go!



On July 1<sup>st</sup>, a Swallow-tailed Kite, a very rare bird for Maine, was seen at the Sanford Lagoons by Josh Fecteau, potentially the first time it has ever been reported in York County. (Note the photo above is not of *that* Swallow-tailed Kite.)

## YCA welcomes its New Members!

*March - July*

James Stoops	Lebanon
David Thompson	Hollis Center
Wayne and Pamela Wilson	Old Orchard Beach
Robert Witham	York Beach
Lisa Allen and Jacob Owen	Wells
Dan and Theresa Ammons	Eliot
Edward and Louise Barsalou	Kittery Point
Shaun Dillon	Kittery
Antigone Evangelou	Wells
Susan Kinkeleaar	Kennebunk
Robert & Alexandra LaPauloue	Old Orchard Beach
Kristen & Michael Marinaccio	Biddeford
Molly Nelson	Cornish
Sally Olsen	Kennebunkport
Lori M. Pelletier	Arundel
Lou, Nan and Alek Beard	Old Orchard Beach
Judith Beauchemin	Saco
George and Elaine Blum	Ogunquit
Michelle Bozeman & Tim Nickerson	Ocean Park
Sarah Harvey & Charles Poole	Saco
Jane and Legrande Howell	Eliot
Mitchell Phariss	Biddeford
Jeff Pride	Kittery
Marilyn Sloet	Kittery
Linda J. and Michael Somerset	Buxton
Gail Sara Stern	Old Orchard Beach
Sandra G. and Dale E. Stout	Hollis Center
Corey Tackett	Kittery Point
Jayne Thomas	Saco
Wayne Archard	Wells
Judy Dawson	Old Orchard Beach
Louise G. and Raymond A. Gagnon	Ogunquit
Melissa and Josh Jewitt	Buxton
Ann Kellegher	Old Orchard Beach
Anne Parsons Marchant & David Marchant	Old Orchard Beach
Alexandra and Rick McCabe	Buxton
Jonathan McCarthy	Berwick
Mrs. Denise Sopchyk	Wells
Lynn and Carol Zimmerman	West Newfield
Erin and Derek Curtis	Buxton
Adrienne B. and Tyler Emery	Biddeford
Barbara Fox	Old Orchard Beach
Marc and Joanne Girard	Buxton
Charlotte Hendee	Wells
Marianne Hubert	Old Orchard Beach



Rich Lewis	Saco
Amanda Retus	Buxton
Kristi Turcotte	North Berwick
Karen and Ray Wieczorek	Biddeford
Cherry Baker & Mark Arsenault	Old Orchard Beach
William Bell	Saco
Daniel and Paulina Pope	South Berwick
Janice Hamilton and Harold Rosenberg	Biddeford Pool
Jeffrey and Joan Pozner	Wells
Ellen Pyle	Buxton

## Support for Stratton Island

Did you know that Maine's most diverse waterbird colony sits right in Saco Bay? Stratton Island sits just 3 miles east of Old Orchard Beach. Terns have nested there since at least 1900, but their numbers were decimated by gulls in mid-century. Restoration work began in 1986 using decoys and sound recordings, combined with seasonally resident island stewards. By 2001, there were over 2000 nesting pairs of terns.

York County Audubon has helped sponsor the work at Stratton Island for many years. In 2016, we were able to donate \$2000 to help support the staff there. Your contributions and membership dues make this possible.

Stratton Island is now notable for having the highest diversity of nesting waterbirds of any Maine island. It provides nesting habitat for several species that are at the northern limit of their range (Glossy Ibis, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Tri-colored Heron, American Oystercatcher and Least Tern). Likewise, several northern species reach the southern limit of their ranges there (Arctic Tern, Black Guillemot and Common Eider). The interior provides breeding habitat for several waterfowl species (Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal and Gadwall) and Sora and Common Moorhen. The island's beaches provide nesting habitat for Common, Roseate, Arctic and Least Terns.

Migrant songbirds abound in May and a number of Maine rarities have been seen on the island in recent years including Yellow-nosed Albatross, Fork-

tailed Flycatcher and White-winged Tern. Two hundred and forty species have been seen on and around the island. In late July and August large numbers of migrating shorebirds and staging terns roost on Little Stratton. Several hundred harbor eals also haul out in large numbers on Little Stratton.

## November Elections

Every election is determined by the people that show up, but turnout should not be a problem this November. So many critical issues will be addressed on the local, state and national ballots, it's doubtful that any Audubon members will need a reminder to get out and vote.

But one important consideration to keep in mind is the environmental records of our state legislators. The last few years have been very challenging in Maine for those concerned with conservation and the environment. The second session of the 127<sup>th</sup> Legislature started out on a positive note with the Governor releasing the Land for Maine's Future bonds, and the Legislature unanimously supporting the extension of the expired 2010 bond. Unfortunately, the rest of the session proved very difficult. The defeat of the bill to expand solar power in Maine was particularly disappointing. It was vetoed by the Governor, and the House fell two votes short of overriding that veto. We strongly urge you to review the voting record of your legislators, and let them know your concerns as well as your thoughts on their votes.

**Jenn Burns Gray**, Maine Audubon's Staff Advocate and Attorney, spends much of her time in Augusta working on these issues. We're delighted to welcome her to provide us with a legislative update at our November 15<sup>th</sup> program meeting. At that point, we'll know the election results and what the composition of the 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature will be. She'll provide us with insight into what's likely to transpire over the next two years.

But let's help make her job easier! Our votes for candidates who support the environment can make all the difference!

## The Christmas Bird Counts are Coming

Beginning on Christmas Day in 1900, the Audubon Society has been sponsoring Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) to help monitor the health and status of bird populations throughout North America. In that first year, there were 25 count circles with a total of 27 birders. Now, there are over 2300 count circles each year with over 70,000 birders participating, with the locations stretching from Alaska to South America.

Each year, York County Audubon sponsors two counts. The Southern York County circle extends from Kittery to Ogunquit, while the Biddeford/Kennebunkport count circle reaches from Kennebunk to Saco. Each count territory is a geographic circle, carved out into six or more territories. Each territory has a team that scours it during "count day" looking for all bird species, and recording the numbers seen of each. It can, at times, be a bit more art than science, as we attempt to count - but not double count - the birds we find. We also have supporters who monitor their home feeders during the day and contribute their totals. To avoid double counting, we ask them only to report the greatest number of each species that they see at any one time during the day.

At the end of the day, we meet to compile the counts and share highlights. Once compiled, the counts are forwarded to National Audubon for their master compilation. Both locally and nationally, the totals are reviewed to assess trends in the populations of all species. While the totals can vary fairly dramatically year to year due to the weather that happens to grace us on count day, the bigger picture over time can be very informative. This year, the Southern York County CBC will be held on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, while the Biddeford/Kennebunkport CBC will be on Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> (which will be the legal holiday this year for New Year's Day). If you might like to find out about participating in one or both, please contact Pat Moynahan at 207-284-5487 or [pmmoynahan@maine.rr.com](mailto:pmmoynahan@maine.rr.com) for the Southern York County CBC, or Kathy Donahue at 207-967-4102 or [kadonall@roadrunner.com](mailto:kadonall@roadrunner.com) for the Biddeford/Kennebunkport CBC.

## Consider Participating in FeederWatch this Winter

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.



Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. You can count birds as often as every week, or as infrequently as you like: the schedule is completely flexible. All you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

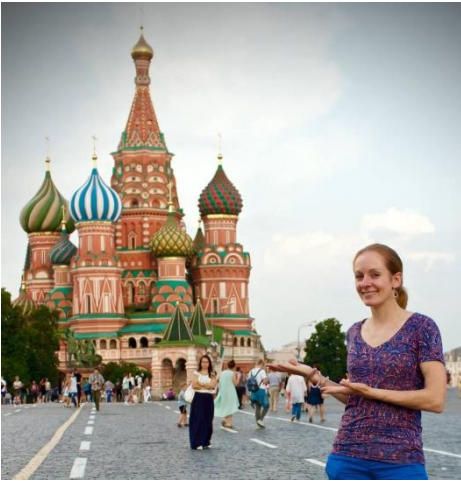
New participants are sent a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster and more. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. Then each fall, participants receive a 16-page, year-end report, [\*Winter Bird Highlights\*](#). Participants also receive access to the digital version of *Living Bird*, the Cornell Lab's award-winning, quarterly magazine. There is a \$18 annual participation fee for U.S. residents (\$15 for Cornell Lab members).

All kinds of interesting information is available at the website: [feederwatch.org](http://feederwatch.org) You can review the results of past years, either nationally or by region or state. You can see where the feederwatchers are located. There were only about 135 participants spread across the state of Maine last year, so your observations can definitely be a valuable contribution.

## \*\*\* Upcoming YCA Programs at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm \*\*\*

Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

### Title: Lake Baikal—Beautiful Birds, Bad Beer, and Buddhist Babushkas



Lake Baikal, also called the “pearl of Siberia,” is a truly astonishing place. It is Earth’s deepest lake, holding a fifth of the world’s fresh water. At 25-30 million years old, it is also one of the most ancient geographical features on the planet. Perhaps this is why the lake’s water alone is home to 1,500 plant and animal species, 80% of which are found nowhere else on Earth!

Diverse habitats around Lake Baikal—from expansive shorelines and mountain ranges to taiga forests and steppe meadows—attract numerous birds. Some sought-after species include Siberian Blue Robin, Daurian Jackdaw, Amur Falcon, Siberian Thrush, Booted Eagle, and the endangered Yellow-breasted Bunting and Swan Goose. Mammals such as Long-tailed Ground Squirrel, Siberian Chipmunk, and the endemic Baikal Seal are also a treat to see. And, of course, no trip to Siberia is complete without its human highlights, as culture, cuisine, and comedy weave themselves into a rich tapestry of local tradition.

This July, YCA board member Lena Moser co-led a birding tour to Lake Baikal with Wildside Nature Tours. Join Lena for an entertaining evening of photographs and stories as she recounts her journey to the remarkable region.

Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

### The Outlook in Augusta: a Legislative Update with Jennifer Burns Gray

What will be happening in the Maine Legislature after the November election? How will environmental concerns fare in Augusta next year? What’s the outlook for advancing solar and other alternative energy sources in Maine, and for protecting Maine’s forests, waterways and wildlife?

Jennifer Burns Gray has been Maine Audubon’s staff attorney and advocate in Augusta since 1997. She has served on an assortment of commissions and committees, and has been extensively involved in the legislative process. She will talk about the upcoming 128<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislative session and what’s likely to be high on Maine Audubon’s priority list of issues.

Jenn holds a B.A. from Trinity College in Connecticut, where she majored in Political Science with a concentration in American Government. She received her J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law in 1996.



Visit us on  
**Facebook**

Our Facebook page has experienced a steady increase in activity, rewarding visitors with “hot off the digital camera” photos of local unusual birds and other treats. Please visit the page, “like” us if you wish, and post a photo, sighting or comment of your own.

*And visit our website - [YorkCountyAudubon.org](http://YorkCountyAudubon.org) - to see the photos in this newsletter magically transformed from Black & White into Color!*

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Maine Audubon

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York County Chapter

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☐ I'm enclosing an additional \$10 to receive *Audubon*, National Audubon's magazine  
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## Membership Level

Annual:

- ☐ \$25 Senior/Volunteer
- ☐ \$35 Individual
- ☐ \$45 Household
- ☐ \$65 Contributing
- ☐ \$100 Patron
- ☐ \$250 Sustaining
- ☐ \$500 Benefactor

Monthly:

☐ **Frequent Flyer** (\$5 min.)