

THE HARLEQUIN

York County Audubon

A Chapter of Maine Audubon

Spring 2023

www.yorkcountyaudubon.org

The Field Work for the Maine Breeding Bird Atlas has been completed!!!

It was in November of 2017 that Doug Hitchcox, Maine Audubon's Staff Naturalist and YCA Board member, first told us of the upcoming Maine Breeding Bird Atlas, a 5-year effort that would be headed by a team at Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and would create a record of every species that breeds here in Maine, running from Spring of 2018 through 2022. The last such atlas had been based on information collected from 1978-1983, and any birder can tell you that so a lot has changed in the state since then. We were overdue for an update. Doug said at that meeting that we'd be hearing lots more about this, and yes, we did! (Hats off to Doug and to so many others for working so hard on this for the last 5 years!) We'll use a few people who know more about this to help describe it.

From the Maine IF&W webpage: What is a Bird Atlas? *Bird atlases have been conducted worldwide with the aim at mapping the distribution, and often abundance, of species over a large geographic area and for a fixed amount of time. They follow a standardized methodology and are intended to be repeated at 20-year intervals. In North America, several states and provinces conducted "first generation" breeding bird atlases that collected comprehensive distribution information on breeding birds in their defined region. These atlases now serve as a baseline by which present atlases can be compared.*



Over the last five years, over 3,000 dedicated volunteers have worked to document the breeding birds of Maine, and many of them worked in very difficult environments to do so. (Think of a summer wetland in northern Maine. Think mosquitos, rain, heat.) It was done by surveying "blocks" of territory covering the entire state, each block requiring a set amount of time to be considered complete. Some of these blocks were considered "priority" blocks, based more on geography than species abundance. It was a truly arduous process. However, the effort has paid off incredibly well, and we at York

County Audubon are very proud of our members who participated, and of our donations to the effort. There has also been a Winter Atlasing effort, something that is done in very few places. That ended on March 15, 2023, so the Atlasing project is now officially over, but the work on the data that's been collected has only just begun.

Perhaps the best person to describe the amazing success is the Project Director at Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Dr. Adrienne J. Leppold. In the blog, The Black-capped Chickadee Chronicle, Issue 11, Winter 2022-23, she writes:

Not only did we meet our goal of completely surveying all 974 priority blocks, we exceeded it! When I say we, I mean ALL 3,463 of us! We completed a total of 1,357 blocks and even managed to revisit already "completed" blocks for repeat surveying of target species possibly missed in earlier visits. Even the level of outreach achieved with this project has exceeded my wildest dreams. I hoped at the start of this project to engage a couple thousand birders. Sincere thanks to each and every one of you!

I could not be prouder of what we all have accomplished thus far! We completed the breeding season with 124,288 checklists, documented 249 breeding species, confirmed 217 species, amassed 1.9 million individual observations, and secured the "Big Atlas Weekend Champion" title in back-to-back years. We have collected the most comprehensive data set for Maine breeding birds ever compiled, and based on feedback from other regional atlas organizers, have helped set a new standard for atlasing. In addition, you've helped us embark on the first-ever statewide survey of wintering birds and one of only a handful of winter atlases ever undertaken in the country.



John Shamgochian captured this beautiful photo of a Yellow Warbler carrying nesting material in Waterville.

I'm sure that, as relieved as some may be that this has been completed so successfully, it can be a little bittersweet to see it end. Eventually, a book and online resources will be created, based on all the information gathered. We can't wait to see those results. Our congratulations, and great thanks, to all who took part in this amazing effort.

YCAS OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Bill Grabin, President	Kennebunk
Laurie Pocher, Vice Pres & MYBC	Ogunquit
Kathy Donahue, Treasurer	Kennebunk
Monica <u>Grabin</u> , Secretary	Kennebunk
Britney Fox	York
Dan <u>Gardoqui</u>	Cape <u>Neddick</u>
David Doubleday, Programs	Kennebunk
Doug Hitchcox	Windham
Heather Rutledge	Kittery
Joyce <u>Toth</u>	Wells
Marian Zimmerman	Biddeford
Marion Sprague, MYBC	Westbrook
Mary Bateman	Wells
Rebekah Lowell	Biddeford
Seth Davis	Bangor

For all upcoming events and general
please visit our website:

www.yorkcountyaudubon.org

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

www.facebook.com/yorkcountyaudubon

Piping Plovers are back! 2022 was another record-breaking year for Piping Plovers in Maine, with 140 pairs nesting on Maine beaches, fledging 252 chicks. These numbers are up from 125 pairs fledging 213 chicks in 2021 and 98 pairs fledging 199 chicks in 2020. These great results are thanks to the hard work of countless biologists, landowners, volunteers, town employees, and beachgoers. While the results varied across the various nesting sites, the overall trend was excellent. **FMI:** maineaudubon.org/projects/plovers-terns/



Remember:

1. If signs indicate a Piping Plover or Least Tern nesting area, stay away! Don't cross fenced areas!
2. **Do not let pets roam free on any beach where nests are located, at any time, for any reason.** Dogs and cats are known predators of Piping Plover chicks. **If you encounter unleashed dogs, please ask their owners to leash them.**
3. Don't leave holes in the sand that could trap a chick, leaving it open to predation or starvation.
4. Don't leave food on the beach, which attracts animals and birds which will feed on chicks.
5. Don't fly a kite near nesting areas. Shorebirds see it as a predator and will abandon their nest.
6. Notify Maine Audubon if you observe any disturbance of nesting areas.

YCA Relaunches its May Birding Challenge!

For 15 years through 2015, our Birding Challenge was held each May and it enabled us to fund many of our most popular programs. Finally, in 2023, it's back!



A Scarlet Tanager, one of the birds we'll be looking for on May 20th. Photo by Linda Steele.

From 5 p.m. on Friday, May 19th till 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 20th, we'll do our best to count as many bird species as we can. Both individuals and teams will be joining the effort, and anyone is welcome to participate or support all those who do. (And if you can't join in on the 19th and 20th, you're welcome to do your own count on another day in May.)

Our focus this year is fully funding the Maine Young Birders Club. Launched in 2016, the MYBC has been a great success, giving scores of young birders in Maine the opportunity "to experience the wonder of birds and nature with other teens through birding-related events and activities and to promote engagement with our natural world."

To learn how you can participate and join a team or create your own, please go to our website where you'll find complete information. Hope you can join us!

York County Audubon is delighted to welcome two new Directors!

Dan Gardoqui can't help himself when it comes to talking with birds. A lifelong mimic, Dan turned his attention to the birds as a teenager on camping trips in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. From the evening choruses of Whipoorwills to the scratch-feeding sounds of Towhees - Dan was hooked on trying to decode the language of birds.



For over 30 years, Dan has dedicated his life to sharing his passion for the more-than-human-world with people of all ages. After graduate school at UNH, he co-founded the nature-based learning nonprofit, White Pine Programs, where he served as Executive Director for 20 years. Dan served as science faculty at both Granite State College and UNH while raising a family in the coastal forests of the Agamenticus Region of S. Maine with his amazing partner, Kate.

Dan's contributions include: science & audio editor for "What the Robin Knows: How Birds

Reveal the Secrets of Nature"(Young 2008); field data contributions to wildlife studies including Flying Squirrel, Moose, Eastern Wolf, and New England Cottontail; and a few field guides as well - "Mammal Tracks & Sign: A Guide to North American Species" (Elbroch 2019), "Peterson Field Guide to North American Birds Nests" (McFarland et al 2022).

In 2020, Dan started Lead with Nature, where he serves as a consultant for nonprofits, small business owners and entrepreneurs. He also leads many walks, talks, workshops, online classes, while also serving as an enthusiastic bird guide. Dan is a Registered Maine Guide and Certified Wildlife Tracker.

When not tuning into birds, Dan loves to spend his deep well of energy running, hunting, foraging, playing music and exploring winter landscapes off trails.



Rebekah Lowell grew up in a house built by her father surrounded by a field of timothy grass and Bobolinks in Biddeford, Maine. Homeschooled by her parents, she learned how to garden, find her way in the woods, and mimic the call of a Barred Owl. Always with a pencil and sketchbook in hand, she ventured outside to explore. Charmed by her grandfather's stories of chickadees eating out of his hands, or deer sleeping under his backyard trees, she learned how to spin narratives from nature. This love of nature and art bloomed into a career as an author/illustrator and surface pattern designer. In addition to creating her own work, she enjoys helping others connect to nature through teaching the practice of nature journaling.

As a survivor of domestic abuse, she's found comfort in art and the natural world. Her debut novel in verse, THE ROAD TO AFTER (Nancy Paulsen Books) offers a story of healing from trauma, and her debut picture book CATCHING



FLIGHT (Doubleday Books for Young Readers) provides hope on the wings of birds. Her artwork has been featured on the Maine Duck Stamp five times and she is this year's MOFGA Common Ground Fair poster artist. Rebekah has a BFA in Illustration from the *Rhode Island School of Design* and an MFA in Children's Literature and Illustration from *Hollins University*. She is currently studying Natural Science Illustration at *RISD*. She is represented by Paige Terlip at the Andrea Brown Literary Agency.

When not in her studio, you can find her outside—gardening, nature journaling, birding, and raising butterflies— often with her daughters, who she homeschools. Her daughters are both members of the Maine Young Birders Club and have participated in events such as the annual CBC, and the Junior Duck Stamp contest. Rebekah also volunteers for Avian Haven as a wild bird rescuer and transporter. To learn more about Rebekah and her work visit www.rebekahlowell.com

YCA welcomes its New Members!

September – February

Laura Benjamin & Mark Wartenberg	Lebanon
Debra Dearth	Cornish
Britney Fox and Robert Hover	York
Marcia E. Hanson	Saco
Lyndsey Colburn	Cape Neddick
Ryan Ford & Elizabeth McBride Ford	Kittery
Abby Hutt	Arundel
Cindy Carroll	Parsonsfield
Joan Hull	Arundel
Brandy Kulaga	Saco
Vickie and Jeff Witham	Wells
Meghan Cotter	Kennebunkport
Robert A. Dempsey	York
Gail and Gwen Fletcher	Lyman
Nancy Hamilton	Biddeford
Karen Lienhard	Wells
Andrew and Gail Marshall	Kittery
Kathleen O'Donnell	York
Mary Parsons	Kennebunk
Steven Tierney & Linda Myers-Tierney	Kittery
Pt The Vasiliauskas Family	Old Orchard Beach
Tiffany Allard and James Wakem	Sanford
Charlotte Carley	Kittery
Martha Clemons and Charlie Miller	Biddeford
Laurie and John Ernst	Saco
Nancy S. Frazier	Kennebunk
Denise Gagnon	Kittery
Corrie and Nate St Saviour	Brownfield
Todd and Cathy Winship	North Berwick
Laura Dauphinais	Kennebunk
Marti DeAnguera	Saco
Eileen and Jeffrey Jacobsen	Kennebunk
Ryan Murphy	Saco

Remember, the best way to protect birds is to keep cats indoors!



*** Upcoming YCA Programs and Workshops ***

There's no charge for our programs, but advance registration is required for watching via Zoom. Please go to our website, yorkcountyaudubon.org to sign up.

Native Plants: Good for What Ails Your Garden – with Shawn Jalbert – Tuesday, April 18th at 7:00 pm – in-person at the Wells Reserve and via Zoom



Native trees, shrubs, and perennials are the glue that holds our ecosystems together and are directly tied to the health of our environment. All of our backyards could use some extra natives planted in them, but sometimes you don't have to recreate the wheel; recognizing and preserving the natives we already have growing around us is important too. Shawn Jalbert is the owner and operator of Native Haunts, based in Alfred, Maine. He has made it his mission to make native plants, and the knowledge of their critical importance, available to the general public.

Birding by Ear Workshop – with Dan Gardoqui – Saturday, April 29th at 7:30 am – at the Wells Reserve

Expert bird mimic Dan Gardoqui will help you connect with birds you can't see by getting to know their songs and calls (as well as what they're saying). In this program, we'll do a little exploring on foot, but a lot more listening with our ears. If you're experienced with visual bird identification, this course will be a good next step in building your birding skills. All are welcome. Please visit the YCA website to register or see a more complete description. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members.



Dan co-founded and led the nature connection nonprofit, White Pine Programs for 20 years. He currently runs Lead with Nature, helping leaders find success and meaning with nature-based consulting services & adventures.

Saving Birds with Maine's Commercial Forest: the 30-Year Bird Project – with Anna Siegel – Tuesday, May 16th at 7:00 pm - in-person at the Wells Reserve and via Zoom



In 2019, an alarming article from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology reported that *three billion* North American birds have been lost since 1970 (about 30%). Maine's nearly 10-million-acres of commercial forest form the heart of National Audubon's largest Important Bird Area of Global Significance in the contiguous U.S. What role does this enormous area play in national-scale land bird conservation? In 2021 and 2022, the "30-Year Bird Project" replicated a groundbreaking 1990s study to understand how bird populations have changed as a result of changes in forest practices. Anna Siegel, the Outreach Lead of the project, will describe what the team has learned

Anna Siegel is climate justice activist, young birder, and high school student. She is the Advocacy Director of Maine Youth Action, a Core member of Maine Youth for Climate Justice, and serves on her town's Climate Action Task Force. She is also a member of the Maine Young Birders Club and is an avid hiker.

Birds of Prey: Our Talon-ted Friends – with *The Center for Wildlife’s Bob Dale* – Tuesday, June 20th - in person at the Wells Reserve – preceded by a short YCA Annual Meeting

What is the difference between a hawk and a falcon? Do we have vultures in Maine? What is our smallest owl? What is our largest hawk? Where do they live? Using our amazing live non-releasable bird ambassadors, posters, and hands-on materials, we will discuss the kinds of birds of prey found in Maine, their habitats, habits, place in the food chain, and why we need to protect them. This program will connect the audience with these beautiful ambassadors of their species as well as provide their natural and personal histories and empower audience members to help to steward the environment that we all share.



Bob Dale graduated from the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources in 2014, and then spent years traveling and adventure sport guiding in both New Zealand and Australia. Upon his return to New England, Bob continued his outdoor guiding career, and joined the team at the Center for Wildlife.

***** Previous YCA Zoom Programs *****

Many of the Zoom programs that we’ve presented are now available to stream from our website, www.yorkcountyaudubon.org. Just go to our website and type “video” into the search box to see the lengthy list!



York County Audubon
P.O. Box 201
Kennebunkport, ME 04046-0201

US Postage Paid
Kennebunk ME 04043
Permit #69

R CURRENT RESIDENT



Frequent Flyers are a group of dedicated supporters who make monthly gifts to sustain Maine Audubon and York County Audubon.

For more information, visit:
maineaudubon.org/support/frequent-flyer/

MAINE 
AUDUBON

MEMBERSHIP FORM

York County Chapter

YES! I want to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in Maine as a **new** **renewing** member.

Annually \$30 Senior/Volunteer/Student | \$40 Individual | \$50 Household | \$100 | \$Other _____

Monthly Enroll me in the Frequent Flyer Program and charge my credit card *each month*:
___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$25 Other \$ _____

View all member benefits online by visiting maineaudubon.org/memberFAQ

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Seasonal Address: _____ from _____ to _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____ Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card (below)

Card # _____ Exp. date: _____ / _____

Join or renew online:
maineaudubon.org/join

Our community of members is integral to our success on behalf of Maine's diverse wildlife and habitat. When you join or renew your Maine Audubon membership, you ensure that work can continue.

Thank you!

Please make checks payable to Maine Audubon | 20 Gilsland Farm Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105 | 207-781-2330 ext. 230