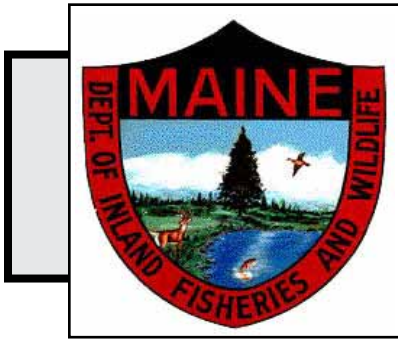


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IF&W INSIDER

02/09/10

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Maine Wildlife Park earns Governor's tourism award

Gray destination honored for commitment to growth

The Maine Wildlife Park in Gray, owned and operated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, received the "Commitment to Tourism Growth" Award from Gov. John E. Baldacci on Monday evening during the 2010 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

This award recognizes an outstanding company, organization or person that not only strives to grow its business, but works with others within the industry to grow tourism in Maine through leadership roles in regional and statewide tourism initiatives, facilitation of tourism networks and development, and contributions to the local economy.

The Maine Wildlife Park is managed by IF&W Natural Sciences Educator Lisa Kane, who also schedules or teaches education programs at the park. MWP Superintendent Curtis Johnson handles day-to-day operations, including the care of more than 25 different species of native wildlife. The park has four full-time employees, up to 12 seasonal employees, and more than 100 volunteers.

"Over the last several years, through the tireless efforts of Lisa, Curtis and the entire park staff and volunteers, the Maine Wildlife Park has grown to become the must-go-to



destination of residents and visitors who want to see and learn more about the wildlife that lives among us in Maine," according to Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin. "I wholeheartedly congratulate Lisa, Curtis and everyone at the park on their receipt of this tremendous honor. Your commitment to Maine's outdoors is demonstrated by your desire to share and promote it to all through activities at the Maine Wildlife Park. This award is well deserved."

Despite the rainy weather last summer, the Maine Wildlife Park played host to more than 102,200 visitors, up 9 percent from 2008, and revenues were up 24 percent. According to Kane, the Maine Wildlife Park is self-sufficient, with all personal services and capital expenses

Continued on Page 2



MOOSE LOTTERY CALL

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SEE STORY ON PAGE 3

Maine Wildlife Park earns Governor's 'Commitment to Tourism Growth' Award

Continued from Page 1

covered by its dedicated funding account.

The Maine Wildlife Park works with many Gray businesses to promote the town and the park as a destination. Among the partners in promoting the area are the Maine Office of Tourism, Maine Tourism Association, Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau, Gray-New Gloucester Business Association, and Gems of Route 26, a consortium of five businesses along the Route 26 corridor from Gray to South Paris.

"We do as much business locally as possible, supporting Gray-area grocery, lumber, automotive, printing, hardware and computer stores, as well as restaurants, contractors and other businesses," according to Kane.

The Maine Wildlife Park is a 200-acre haven on Route 26 in Gray, 3.5 miles from Maine Turnpike Exit 63. It is open from mid-April to Veterans' Day, and visitors are guaranteed to see a moose! Also visit www.mainewildlifepark.com. A schedule of educational programs for the upcoming season will be posted soon.



Gov. John E. Baldacci (left) and Maine Office of Tourism Executive Director Pat Eltman (right) present Maine Wildlife Park Superintendent Curtis Johnson and MWP Manager Lisa Kane with a "Commitment to Tourism Growth" award.



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2010 MOOSE PERMIT LOTTERY

Applications available online; deadlines set

AUGUSTA – It's time to enter the 2010 Moose Permit Lottery!

For the last couple of years, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has encouraged hunters to apply online for the lottery through its website, www.mefishwildlife.com. It's an easy and convenient way to submit an application!

The deadline for online applications is 11:59 p.m. on May 14, 2010.

MDIF&W no longer prints or mails paper applications for the moose lottery. If an interested hunter is unable to apply using the online licensing system, the Department suggests:

- Printing out a paper application from IF&W's website at www.mefishwildlife.com, fill it out, and mail it with your payment to the Department;
- Coming to IF&W's main office to fill out a paper application. The address is 284 State Street in Augusta;
- Sending a *stamped self-addressed envelope* to IF&W



at the address below. Department personnel will mail a paper application that can be filled out and mailed with your payment to IF&W. The address is:

*Moose Permit Application Request
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries
and Wildlife
41 SHS, 284 State St.
Augusta, ME 04333-0041*

Paper applications must be post-

marked or hand-delivered to MDIF&W in Augusta by 5 p.m. on April 1.

The April 1 deadline for paper applications provides adequate time for department employees to process the paperwork before the lottery.

This year, 3,140 permits will be allocated in the state's 28 Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs). Season dates are:

- September 27-October 2: WMDs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 19
- October 11-16: WMDs 1-14, 17, 18, 19, 27, 28
- Nov. 1-6: WMDs 2, 3, 6, 11
- Nov. 1-27: WMDs 15, 16, 23, 26

A "Maine Residents Only Day" is set for October 30, in WMDs 15, 16, 23, 26. Maine hunters need a lottery-drawn permit to hunt these districts on that day.

For complete 2010 Moose Lottery rules, please visit www.mefishwildlife.com. Please call 287-8000 or e-mail us at info.online@maine.gov if you have any questions.

ifw
blogs,
etc.

www.mefishwildlife.com

twitter.com/mefishwildlife

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inlandtracks.wordpress.com

maineheron.wordpress.com

registremblay.wordpress.com

IFWinsider.wordpress.com



FREE FISHING DAYS

**GO FISHING WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVE
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IT'S FREE TO FISH ON FEB. 13 AND 14**

Want to try your hand at ice fishing to see if you'll like it? Want to get your kids on the ice to experience the joy of hooking a fish?

Valentine's weekend is the time to do it as the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife promotes Family Fishing Days.

On Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14, people can fish for free on Maine's waterways. This free fishing event is open to any person except those whose license has been revoked or suspended. All fishing regulations apply.

Fishing, whether on open water or on ice, is one of the most popular activities in Maine, drawing thousands upon thousands of residents and out-of-state visitors to the state's nearly 6,000 lakes and ponds and almost 32,000 miles of rivers and streams.

This weekend is the first of two free fishing weekends offered this year. The second is June 5 and 6, the weekend after Memorial Day.

"Family Fishing Days provides adults a chance to give children the same enjoyment they had as a youngster, and for free," said Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin. "If they find they love it, we hope that children and adults will be encouraged to buy a fishing license and spend more time on Maine's waterways throughout the year."

Want to continue the fishing experience throughout the year? Fishing licenses are available for purchase on IF&W's Web site, www.mefishwildlife.com, at any of the more than 285 MOSES licensing agents statewide, or at town offices and other locations.

Numerous fishing license options are available. The most popular is an annual license. Residents also can purchase a one-day license. For non-residents, one-day, three-day, seven-day and 15-day licenses are available for purchase.

They also are available at our Augusta office at 284 State St.

For a complete list of fishing regulations, including limits and sizes, visit www.mefishwildlife.com and click on "fishing."

THIS ONE'S STILL THE ONE!



IF&W LAWBOOKS

In an effort to save money, all lawbooks will be printed every two years.

KEEP YOURS!

Ice Fishing and Open Water Fishing lawbooks will be combined into one book that will be available April 1.

2009 DEER SEASON

A Wildlife Biologist's Deer Season

By Chuck Hulse

Regional Wildlife Biologist

Though the calendar from early October to early December shows that there are 60 days in-between, I swear it feels like there are only half that many. Time really flies by.

This part of the year starts with setting up and running five moose hunting registration stations in the region. It ends with summarizing of all the biological data and samples collected through the week following the close of firearms on deer.

"Our" deer season starts a week before the hunter's begins. We begin by making sure we have all our sampling supplies as well as making sure that our cooperators are ready to go. Many meat cutters who handle deer, as well as taxidermists, are the source of 75 percent of the deer we check in order to get an accurate biological breakdown of the harvest.

We have an objective to physically see 15 percent of the deer harvested to determine the breakdown of the harvest by sex and age. Age is determined by observation of pre-molars and molar teeth and how those teeth are replaced (by age) as well as the amount of wear.

For any yearling bucks we encounter, we also measure the antler beam diameter as an indicator for carrying capacity of the habitat as they were sub-dominant individuals during the previous winter. In other words, an older dominant buck might handle and hide hardships that are affecting younger and smaller animals within the population.

And when the opportunity arises we collect weights as well. These data and winter severity data will be



Regional Wildlife Biologist Chuck Hulse inspects a deer during last fall's hunting season.

used by regional wildlife biologists in making regulatory proposals for the 2010 deer hunting season.

Since 2002, we also have been sampling about 800 hunter-harvested deer statewide for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). This is a fatal disease of the nervous system of members of the deer family. Confined mostly to free-ranging and captive/farmed deer or elk in states west of the Mississippi River, in recent years CWD has been detected in New York and West Virginia. As a result of our monitoring efforts, to date there is no evidence that CWD is present in any wild white-tailed deer or moose in Maine, or any captive farm deer (red, sika, fallow) or elk in Maine.

Sampling for CWD involves collecting lymph nodes from the back of the throat as well as the end of the spinal cord inside the skull of the

harvested deer. We do this concurrent to meat locker and taxidermist visits. However, while we want to check all deer brought to a butcher as part of our biological sampling, our CWD sampling is stratified (targeted) by blocks of towns within a Wildlife Management District (WMD), and more heavily for those towns with either a commercial deer farm or where substantial winter feeding of deer is carried out by the public.

Getting CWD samples from towns with a high deer harvest, or a lower deer harvest but with a cooperating meat cutter, is relatively easy. Unfortunately, a lower deer harvest or multi-sample towns in areas with no meat cutters presents quite a challenge. Between myself, assistant regional wildlife biologist Bob Cordes,

Continued on Page 6

A Wildlife Biologist's Deer Season

Continued from Page 5

and contractor Eldon McLean, we were able to collect about half our CWD samples through meat cutters and taxidermists. The remainder had to be collected through what we all call "the search method".

This was our toughest year by far. We did not collect our final CWD sample until the Wednesday following the close of firearms season. Last year we finished the Monday following the firearms season with only one-half a contractor. Prior to that we'd finish CWD sampling at the end of the third week of the season.

Since sampling effort has remained fairly constant, the longer time required to get those samples is probably a reflection of the lower expected harvest. That, in turn, is most directly related to fewer deer on the landscape owing to a couple severe winters in a row.

Though less of a factor, I believe hunter effort has been lower in recent years compared to the past couple of decades. How many hunters are out there and how much time do those hunters hunt are also factors affecting how many deer we intercept at the meat cutters. Several non-resident hunters I spent time with while collecting a CWD sample from their deer noted far fewer hunters than years past.

The search method involves visiting a Game Registration Station and looking for a deer registered in the past few days, by a resident, in a town needing a CWD sample. That part is easy. The increasingly difficult part of the process is contacting the hunter. Though a hunter must provide their address as part of the registration process, finding that person listed in a phone book is a challenge. Because of cell phones many people

no longer have land lines.

I'd say we are successful in contacting about one in five hunters who register a deer.

In several towns fewer than 10 deer were registered, and some are always by non-residents. The good news is that nearly every hunter lets us collect samples from their deer if we contact them in time. Further, changes in the Big Game registration books have included new space for cell phone and internet hunter-contact information to aid biologists starting next year.

We still have our deer data to sort and organize before "our" deer season concludes. All the regional wildlife biologists as well as our deer/

moose biologist invest a great deal of time and effort towards deer season. Over a six week period we drove a lot of miles and worked with a lot of people in western Maine in order to collect important biological data and samples concerning Maine's deer population.

If you drove the number of miles that Bob, Eldon and I combined drove, just in western Maine you could drive from Portland, Maine to Anchorage, Alaska and back, with several hundred miles to spare. I'm hopeful that having a hunter's cellular and internet contact information included in future game registration records will reduce our cost and increase efficiency in future years.



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2009 DEER SEASON



Photo by Travis Barrett

IF&W Deer and Moose Biologist Lee Kantar talks with a hunter at an Orrington tagging station during last fall's hunting season.

‘Everything’s Compounded’

Numerous factors affecting Maine’s deer herd

By Travis Barrett
IF&W Public Relations Rep

I already know what you’re going to tell me.

You hunted all season last fall and never saw a single deer. Not a single member of your family filled their tag during November. Your uncle’s friend said it was the worst he’d seen in 30 years at hunting camp up north.

You think it’s because of the bursting coyote population. Your father said it had to do with how bad

the last couple of winters were. Your uncle tells you that his friend said it was because there aren’t enough winter deer yards.

Problem is none of the theories is entirely right. Yet, none of them are entirely wrong, either.

It’s just that it’s impossible – and unfair – to look at any of those reasons as the sole contributing factor to a smaller deer herd in 2009. In fact, you can’t even look at any of them as significant on their own. The three major factors which hurt the deer harvest – recent winter sever-

ity, coyote predation and the loss of over-winter habitat – are working in tandem.

“Let’s take the most extreme example – let’s say we had a completely mild winter with absolutely no snowfall at all and no deer yards,” said Lee Kantar, Maine’s lead deer biologist with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. “Would we be talking about the effect of coyotes then?”

“Coyotes are only able to (easily) kill deer when there’s a lot of snow,

Continued on Page 8

‘Everything’s Compounded’

Numerous factors affecting Maine’s deer herd

Continued from Page 7

even healthy adults.”

Deer, in fact, are faster than coyotes, able to elude their predators when the ground isn’t covered in three feet of snow.

And if there were enough winter yards for the deer, they could – in many cases – curtail predation and even winter severity.

“But everything’s compounded by the hard winter,” Kantar said.

Everything. Every vehicle collision, every coyote kill, every diseased whitetail that succumbs to weakness.

With milder winters, we’d hardly be talking about typical loss here and there.

But as Kantar points out, we were just hit with “a one-two knockout punch, the third- and ninth-worst winters” on recent record. While those deer herds in the 1970s were whacked with 54 percent of the northern part of the state still covered in large, mature softwood forests providing cover, today’s landscape shows a 40 percent loss of those same forests. Our last two winters weren’t just bad, they were bad under present-day circumstances, which isn’t especially good for deer.

The state’s management goals have changed, too.

From 1985-1999, Maine outlined its goals for the whitetail deer population – and those goals were clear. People wanted the deer herd to grow, plain and simple.

But as that herd grew as high as 30 deer or more per square mile in Wildlife Management Districts across central and southern Maine, IF&W was given another set of marching orders from the Big Game Working



Travis Barrett writes a blog about what’s going on in the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

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Group for the 15-year period from 2000-2015.

Deer population goals are now set in many central and southern Maine districts at around 15-20 deer per square mile, varying slightly from one management district to the next. Hunters, obviously, won’t see as many deer as they did just a decade ago when there were nearly another 10 whitetails per square mile, but they will see healthier deer.

Additionally, fewer deer mean fewer vehicle collisions and less of a threat from Lyme disease, which has been documented to spread rapidly with population densities above 20 deer per square mile.

As Kantar said to me last month, if people really want to lobby for changes in the deer populations where they live, then they should be lobbying to change the management goals as they currently exist.

It’s not that IF&W, and Kantar specifically, don’t know what is hap-

pening to the deer herd. Combining all of the above mentioned factors – winter severity, predation and loss of over-winter habitat – with the management goals paints a clear picture of our herd, far clearer than some in the public realize.

In 2007, Kantar and other biologists predicted that the total deer harvest for the autumn hunting seasons would be 24,628 deer and hunters killed 24,652. He was off by a total of 24 deer.

“Hunter behavior is the big unknown,” Kantar said of being “off” on the numbers, referencing hunters’ individual decisions on everything from passing up shooting does when they have any-deer permits to limiting their travel due to high gas prices.

The year before, his first as the state’s lead deer biologist, Kantar was off by just 525 deer from a total of nearly 25,000 deer – or, two percent. In each of those years, 2006 and 2007, Kantar estimated a number under the actual kill – instead of offering up some trumped-up, pie-in-the-sky number of false hope. In his first three seasons with Maine’s deer herd under his watch, Kantar has never been off by more than 9 percent.

Going back through the last 10 years, biologists have only missed projecting the total hunter kill by more than 15 percent once (in 2003), and in seven of the last 10 years they actually predicted fewer deer would be killed than were actually harvested.

So, yes, there are fewer deer out there – but it’s not as easy as saying it was because of a big snowfall or an increase in the coyote population.

It takes a lot of adding to come up with the right solution.

Residents encouraged to make donation to Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund

“Chickadee Check-Off” on state tax forms a great option

While filling out their 2009 tax forms, Maine residents are encouraged to make a donation to the state’s Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund by marking the “Chickadee Check-Off” box.

“Chickadee Check-Off” is located on Schedule CP 2009, a separate form that is included in the 1040-ME short form booklet and 1040ME long form booklet.

Residents’ donations are greatly needed to fund nongame wildlife programs that have been experiencing a decline in revenues, according to Richard Dressler, supervisor of MDIFW’s Wildlife Resource Assessment Section.

“Stable funding to address these wildlife programs is desperately needed,” according to Dressler. “Contributions to the Chickadee Check-Off, Maine Outdoor Heritage funds, and the purchase of conservation registration license plates (loon plates) provide the core ‘state’ funding for Maine’s endangered and nongame species programs. However, the many conservation needs exceed the funds being contributed ... and contributions continue to decline. We must reverse this trend to protect species that are a vital part of Maine’s outdoors.”

Contributions to the Chickadee Check-off have declined from \$129,122 contributed by 29,200 Maine givers in 1984 to \$34,929 contributed by 2,757 givers in 2008. The average donation has increased from \$4.57 to \$12.67.

“If 30,000 Maine people contributed \$5 each, the total contribution would exceed the 1984 amount,”



Dressler said.

All money donated, whether through the Chickadee Check-off, conservation license plate sales, grants or direct gifts, are deposited into the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund -- a special, interest-bearing account from which money can only be spent for the conservation of Maine’s nongame wildlife, which includes rare, threatened or endangered species.

Funding for wildlife management comes from many different sources. Most of the Department’s work with game animals and furbearers, many of the salaries, and most of the administrative costs of the Wildlife Division, are funded by hunting license revenues, which are matched by federal Pittman-Robertson Funds (based on an 11 percent excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition and archery equipment, and a 10 percent excise tax on handguns).

Funding for other species comes

from a variety of sources. In addition to state wildlife grants, a recent federal program based on Maine’s Wildlife Action Plan, a large portion of the funds also comes from the sale of hunting licenses and permits.

Other sources of money include “Section 6” funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the recovery of threatened and endangered species, the Oil Spill Conveyance Fund, contributions to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund (“Chickadee Check-off”), and purchases of Conservation License (Loon) Plates. Some of these funds are used as match to obtain federal funds.

(The Wildlife Action Plan can be viewed at www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife/groups_programs/comprehensive_strategy/index.htm.)

Some people are unaware of the contribution hunters and trappers make toward the conservation of rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife. Also, you may be surprised to know that many of the financial supporters of the endangered species program are also sportsmen who are committed to the conservation of all Maine’s wildlife. Wildlife belongs to all of the people of the state and sportsmen’s dollars can’t be expected to do it all.

Given our limited financial resources, Maine can be proud of the accomplishments made for nongame and endangered wildlife in the last 20 years. We thank those of you who buy a Loon Plate, participate in the Chickadee Check-off, or purchase a

Continued on Page 10



Snowmobile season topic of press conference

For the second consecutive year, Gov. John E. Baldacci spoke at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife-Maine Snowmobile Association annual press conference that kicks off the season. Gov. Baldacci highlighted the economic impact of the sport on Maine while emphasizing safety on the trails. Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin, MWS Col. Joel Wilkinson (both pictured), and MSA executive director Bob Meyers discussed the season with the media. A snowmobile safety public service announcement, which features Gerry James, the father of a sledder who died last season, was unveiled at the press conference. It is airing on state TV stations. "If it can happen to my son, it can happen to anyone," Mr. James says in the psa.

Check off 'Chickadee Check-off' on state tax forms

Continued from Page 9

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund lottery ticket. Your voluntary support and generosity deserves a special "thank you." We are all working hard to keep Maine a special place. Take pride in your accomplishments - and please, as you fill out your tax return this year or register your car, join with us again in conserving Maine's wildlife diversity!

Our most pressing need is a stable and adequate source of funding for all of our programs. The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies evaluating the Department and the Wildlife Division recognized this need in a report. In 2001, the Citizens'

Advisory Committee identified several possible sources of funding – here are a few of those ideas to consider:

- That the Constitution of Maine be amended to require that at least 1/8 of one percent of the State Sales Tax be dedicated to fish and wildlife conservation programs to be distributed to the various state agencies that administer those programs.
- That the share of state gas tax revenues distributed to state agencies for operation of boating, ATV and snowmobile and related programs should be at least equal to the portion of the gas

tax revenues generated by watercraft and recreational vehicle gas sales.

- That every 4 years hunting and fishing license fees should be reviewed by the Legislature and adjusted as appropriate to reflect the cost of providing hunting and fishing-related services.
- That the Maine Income Tax return be revised to restore the Chickadee Check-off to the main part of the tax form.

What do you think about these ideas? Your support to establish a stable funding source to continue the work of the Wildlife Division is appreciated.

MINING DATA

Technology allows biologists to track trends

By Donald Katnik

IF&W Habitat Group Leader

Like many agencies, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is digging through old handwritten field forms, maps, and other documents hunting for "new" information.

How we think about data has changed significantly over the last decade. New technologies allow us to store, handle, and use vast amounts of detailed information compared to just a few years ago (consider how a tiny MP3 player can now hold and play your entire CD collection).

Scientists try to collect as much information as possible. Sometimes we do not know which data will be most valuable and unexpected things may be observed during a site visit. While you are there, it makes sense to record as much as you can.

Distilling those detailed field observations into discrete rows and columns in a database, however, requires high-grading the most usable information. Complicated data are generalized into manageable categories.

How much high-grading and

simplifying is necessary depends on the storage and processing capacities of the computers and the software currently available. As a result, many computer databases even just 10 years old hold only a fraction of the information contained on the original field data forms, paper maps, and other documents. Our modern databases could hold much, much more.

It is not just about the volume of information, although that alone is valuable, but also about being able to put different types of information together in ways we never could before, enabling us to make better, more sophisticated decisions.

Geographic Information System (GIS) software has revolutionized how we think about spatial information. It was developed by the military, along with Global Positioning System (GPS) units, as tools to manage the location and movements of both assets and targets across a battlefield or within an entire geopolitical region. "Smart" bombs employ GIS and GPS to deliver payloads with sub-meter accuracy.

This technology has diffused into the private sector and supports popular software like GoogleEarth

and MapQuest. It is used by power companies to respond to outages, school districts to improve bus route efficiency, and fast food franchises to strategically locate new stores. In the wildlife world, GIS is enabling us to extract detailed location information from old field forms and put it together with other natural resource data to map critical habitat areas across the entire state of Maine.

The Habitat Group at MDIFW is building a consolidated database to hold all of our information on Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species, including detailed locations. We are scanning paper documents into Adobe PDF files to create a digital library that is linked to the ETSC database, allowing a biologist anywhere in the state to view the original field form just by clicking a button.

This process is ongoing. As new information is collected each year, the database will grow.

This effort requires a new kind of wildlife biologist equally versed in species ecology and emerging technologies with the end result of having better information to make better decisions about the future of Maine.

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fans? cool.**

BIRD GROUP

Mid-winter waterfowl survey results mixed

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife earlier this month conducted its annual mid-winter waterfowl survey and recorded numbers identical or lower than 10-year-average figures.

The mid-winter waterfowl survey is conducted at the same time each winter in every state in the Atlantic Flyway. MDIFW wildlife biologists Brad Allen and Kelsey Sullivan and U.S. Geological Survey biologist Dan McAuley flew with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pilot John Bidwell for nearly 40 hours to conduct the low-level survey between Jan. 4-16.

This year, the team counted slightly more than 56,000 ducks and geese, a figure significantly lower than the latest 10-year average count of 69,000.

According to Brad Allen, leader of MDIFW's bird group, this year's count likely was low because of the relatively mild, ice-free coastal conditions encountered during the survey. In years when the survey is preceded by cold, harsh weather conditions, waterfowl become concentrated along the coast and are more likely to be counted. In years when the weather is mild, waterfowl are either along the coast or are dispersed in freshwater sites near the coast that remain ice free. These inland areas are not searched by the survey team.

Despite the mild conditions, a relatively good number of black ducks were recorded at 16,388 birds. This figure is nearly identical to the latest 10-year average for this species.

The most disappointing numbers



Male and female eiders are viewed by biologists during the mid-winter waterfowl survey. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife plane was used for the survey.

recorded this year were for the sea ducks, according to Allen. Fewer than 1,000 scoters were encountered during the survey. Long-tailed duck numbers also were low at 1,253.

Common eider numbers were the lowest ever recorded during this year's survey. The survey team tallied fewer than 15,000 eiders, well below the latest 10-year average of 26,500 for this species.

Other numbers recorded for waterfowl in Maine in early January were as follows:

- Mallards: 2,778
- Scaup: 232
- Goldeneyes: 7,549
- Buffleheads: 6,561
- Mergansers: 2,613
- Ruddy ducks: 107



Harlequin ducks: 24
Canada geese: 3,286.

While Maine's numbers were low this year, the overall status of winter populations cannot be determined until Maine's data are pooled with the other state's numbers from Maine to Florida. Collectively, these data provide a relative index to the abundance of all waterfowl species and their distribution within the flyway.

MAMMAL GROUP

Recovering Maine's New England Cottontail Population



By Wally Jakubas
Mammal Group Leader

Maine's only native cottontail rabbit, the New England cottontail, was listed as endangered in Maine in 2006. Unlike the snowshoe hare, which is fairly abundant throughout the state, New England cottontails are limited to a small number of areas in York and Cumberland counties in southern Maine.

The primary reason that New England cottontail became endangered in Maine was loss of habitat. These rabbits need dense brushy habitat for cover from predators. This type of habitat is becoming increasingly rare in southern Maine, as the region's abandoned fields mature into forests or is developed for housing or businesses.

One of the biggest management challenges our Department faces with

New England cottontail is the establishment of 18 core management areas throughout the rabbit's former range in York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Sagadahoc Counties. This goal was set by a Public Working Group after reviewing the New England Cottontail species assessment.

Because cottontails no longer occur in many areas of their former range, it will be necessary to move rabbits from occupied areas of the state into unoccupied sites to achieve this goal. Moving these rabbits will pose some unique challenges for Department biologists. When animals are moved into a new area their chances of survival are not great. Animals that are new to an area may not have had a chance to discover the best hiding places or trails to escape a predator by the time they have their first encounter with a predator. Similarly, it may take a rabbit a

little while to find the best arrangement of cover and food that they need to live. While they are looking for a suitable site to live, they will be moving through unfamiliar areas -- not an ideal situation for a rabbit who is trying to avoid the foxes, bobcats, coyotes, house cats, dogs, owls, and hawks of the world.

To improve the rabbits' chances of surviving in a new area, wildlife biologists can do several things. Often biologists will conduct a soft release. That is, rabbits will be released and temporarily held in a large pen in the habitat that they will ultimately be released. This gives the rabbits an opportunity to become familiar with the new area, and hopefully lessens the chance that they will leave the area in the search of familiar habitat once they are released. New England cot-

Continued on Page 14

BIRD GROUP

Winter black duck banding program initiated

By Brad Allen
Bird Group Leader

The Department's Bird Group, based in Bangor, was recently awarded a grant from the Black Duck Joint Venture (BDJV), a partnership-based conservation program under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, to begin a winter black duck capture and banding project along the Maine coast.

The BDJV funds research that addresses any priority aspect of black duck ecology and management.

Two important roles of an effective waterfowl banding program are to provide information for understanding waterfowl population dynamics and evaluating harvest

management decisions.

A high priority research need is to implement a five-year pilot project to assess the potential of a two-period (pre- and post hunting season) banding program to estimate current black duck seasonal survival and harvest rates.

Department efforts to capture and band black ducks during the winter will contribute to this Atlantic Flyway-wide effort.

This project will in fact repeat a Department winter waterfowl banding program that began in 1976 and continued into the early 1980s in Frenchman's and Machias Bays. This effort was also developed to determine flyway-wide black duck survival rates at a time when the black duck

population was declining.

Department waterfowl biologist Kelsey Sullivan, working with biologists Rob Lambert and Steve Aguis and numerous landowners with coastal property where black ducks concentrate during the winter, have begun placing bait for ducks in Brunswick, Verona Island, Lamoine, Somesville, and Machias.

In addition to banding black ducks, we will be assisting a federal avian disease biologist by providing blood samples from a small percentage of captured ducks. These samples will be screened for viruses and diseases that potentially affect black ducks in Maine.

Trapping began in mid-January.

Restoring Maine's New England cottontail population

Continued from Page 13

cottontails do not dig their own burrows but depend on the burrows of other animals, such as woodchucks. To ensure that an adequate number of burrows exist for cottontails that are released into a new area, biologists can construct artificial burrows using plastic corrugated drainage pipes in combination with wooden boxes and brush piles to provide a network of burrows for the rabbits. These burrows may provide important cover to escape harsh winter conditions, hide from predators, or for females to have their young. Biologists may also choose to trap the primary predators at the release site to give the rabbits a better chance of surviving and acclimating to the new area.

Even if biologists take considerable effort to prepare an area for

New England cottontail, there is still a good chance that a rabbit may not survive through the breeding season. Rabbits after all are pretty low on the food chain, and just about everything likes to eat them. On habitat patches less than 6 acres in size, which is the common size of habitat patches in Maine that cottontails live in, 70% of the cottontails may not survive the winter. Although Department biologists will be releasing rabbits in habitats patches greater than 25 acres in size, to improve the rabbits' chances of survival, they may need to release 15 to 30 rabbits at time to ensure that the translocation attempt will be successful. A successful translocation attempt would be one where enough rabbits survive to breed and persist in their new environment. Given that New England cottontail are endangered in Maine,

it may be difficult to remove 15 to 30 rabbits from one or more locations in Maine, without jeopardizing the local populations from which the rabbits are being taken from. Consequently, Department biologists are looking at various ways to propagate New England cottontail. To date, the Department has considered cooperating with the State of New Hampshire on a captive breeding facility or releasing the rabbits on a coastal island that has excellent habitat and few predators. A final plan for propagating New England cottontail has not been made; however, biologists in Bangor are actively working on a solution. Ideally, the Department would like to take full advantage of the rabbits' breeding potential and release them into a relatively safe area where their offspring could be captured and used for future translocation efforts.

PAGE FARM HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Projects-partnerships paying off for wildlife

By Mark Caron

Regional Wildlife Biologist

The Page Farm Unit is within the 6,838-acre Mattawamkeag River System Wildlife Management Area. The WMA also includes the Mattagodus and Mattawamkeag River Units and is associated with the Mattawamkeag River and Mattagodus Stream.

The Page Farm Unit encompasses 1,206 acres and is a mix of fields, reverting fields, and early successional forest.

In 2005, Region F and the Penobscot Valley Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) developed a NWTF Superfund Project. This effort focused on reclaiming 12 acres of reverting fields for the benefit of the wild turkey. A wide variety of other wildlife species also would benefit from this project. The 12 acres of field have been chopped to remove woody vegetation including alders and dogwood, and fields have been herbicided.

Work continued last year to remove the remainder of woody

vegetation. Apple trees, high-bush cranberry and other mature trees were left in the fields for the benefit of wildlife. The fields will then be seeded to a conservation mix and will be maintained by periodic mowing. This project will create wild turkey brood habitat in the area and will likely enhance poult survival and development, as well as benefiting other wildlife species such as grassland birds and woodcock.

Concurrent with the NWTF effort, Region F entered into an agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) utilizing their Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). This five-year agreement focused on a variety of wildlife habitat improvement practices including mowing of fields, tree planting and pruning, and road improvements.

To date, an additional 10 acres of field habitat has been maintained, several soft and hard mast trees have been planted, pruning of several apple trees scattered about the old farm site has commenced, and road improvements have begun.

This winter, Region F and the Department's Land Division began a habitat management project that will benefit both ruffed grouse and woodcock. The Department is partnering with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) on a project focused on benefiting the woodcock. The project will provide habitat conditions for all life stages of woodcock. Sixteen feeding strips 100 feet wide will be created on a five-year cutting cycle and 25-year rotation.

Field maintenance and reclamation efforts as part of the NWTF and NRCS projects will dovetail nicely with the WMI effort. In addition, 69 acres of early successional woodland will be managed for the benefit of grouse, woodcock and other wildlife species. Five-acre clearcut blocks will be created with 10-year cutting cycles and a 40-year rotation.

Without the opportunity to partner with such diverse groups as the NWTF, NRCS and the WMI, much of the work that has been and will be conducted on the Page Farm Unit would never have occurred.



Wildlife-vehicle collisions

Duane Brunell, Safety Performance Analysis Manager at the Maine Department of Transportation, and Richard Bostwick, Environmental Specialist at DOT, present statistics concerning moose/deer and vehicle collisions to the IF&W Advisory Council on Feb. 9. IF&W and DOT continually work together to find ways to mitigate and prevent large animal-vehicle collisions. (Photo by Mark Stadler)

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Dwinal Pond WMA supports largest known population of endangered butterfly

By Mark Caron

Regional Wildlife Biologist

The Clayton's copper butterfly (*Lycaena dorcas claytoni*) is a small orange-brown butterfly with a wingspan of about one inch. The butterfly is an isolated subspecies of the more widely distributed Dorcas copper. The butterfly is known to only nine locations in Maine, and two in neighboring New Brunswick. Of the nine sites in Maine, seven are found within Region F. Clayton's copper was listed as State Endangered in 1997. Justification for the listing included; limited number, size and distribution of its population; limited availability of its habitat; and near-endemic status in Maine.

Clayton's copper is found only in association with its obligate host plant, shrubby cinquefoil. This shrub occupies open wetlands with calcium rich soils, but also wet meadows and transitional old-field habitats. Its yellow flowers bloom in mid-late summer, and are also the butterfly's primary source of nectar.

Clayton's copper take one year to complete its life cycle. Eggs are laid on the underside of the cinquefoil leaves in August. The leaves with eggs attached drop to the ground in autumn and the eggs overwinter. Larvae hatch in spring and crawl back up to feed on the new leaves. The larvae go through five instars (molts) before it turns to pupa. Adult butterflies emerge when the cinquefoil is blooming, again during mid-late summer.

There are very few cinquefoil stands known that are large enough to support viable Clayton's copper



Photo by Beth Swartz

Clayton's copper butterfly

populations. Therefore, what affects the cinquefoil also affects the butterfly. Potential threats to the cinquefoil stands can include; the flooding of wetlands that could destroy the host plant. Conversely, water drawdowns can dry wetlands sufficiently to allow trees or shrubs to invade cinquefoil stands. Forest succession that would shade out the shade-intolerant cinquefoil is also a concern.

The Dwinal Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located in portions of Winn and Lee, is a 2,210-acre WMA, and supports the largest known population of Clayton's copper. Studies to assess and monitor the butterfly's population and habitat characteristics at Dwinal began in 2000. Survey work focused on monitoring the butterfly and cinquefoil populations to detect, measure, and

evaluate changes over time in relation to management activities, to develop a plan to manage existing host plant stands to improve habitat and monitor the response of both the host plant and butterfly, and to develop a habitat management plan to increase the host plant availability throughout the WMA, and monitor plant and butterfly response.

Specific goals included in the Dwinal Pond WMA Management Plan (2006) include; to maintain a secure population of Clayton's copper through long-term management of its habitat. This can be accomplished by improving existing stands of cinquefoil, and to create and maintain new upland stands of the host plant. Specific actions include managing encroachment of woody vegetation in cinquefoil stands by removing trees and competing woody shrubs.

Encroachment of northern white cedar at Dwinal Pond WMA is the biggest threat to these cinquefoil stands located in wetlands. Maintaining upland sites in an early successional stage will provide open habitat conditions for the cinquefoil. Adhering to forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) in and adjacent to wetlands or stands of cinquefoil will also eliminate any potential impacts.

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife is currently working along side the University of Maine's Wildlife Department with several Graduate Studies focusing on various aspects of the butterfly. Studies at the WMA include genetics and population work associated with the butterfly, and also hydrology studies focusing on the shrubby cinquefoil.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Figuring out what to do about beavers

By Arlen Lovewell

Asst. Regional Wildlife Biologist

Forests in northern Maine have seen dramatic changes over the past few decades. Vast areas of young regenerating forests predominate creating ideal habitat for beaver. This, coupled with very low trapping pressure, has enabled beaver populations to increase dramatically throughout Maine's forested lands.

These high beaver populations have consequently created a significant number of nuisance beaver complaints. The major issues involve plugged road culverts and flooded roads.

In mid-September, Huber Land Management Co. hosted a workshop for LURC staff and MDIFW wildlife biologists to visit and discuss nuisance beaver sites at roadside culverts. This meeting provided an opportunity to view not only on-site damage but also discuss possible management solutions to resolve nuisance beaver complaints.

New changes in road culvert design, culvert placement, and streambed site modifications are now possible management options to resolving plugged culverts and flooded roadways. This workshop was a great opportunity for all parties involved in beaver damage issues to meet and collaborate on the best approach to resolving numerous beaver complaints.

Presently, the solution to resolving these damage complaints is by removing the beaver by both lethal and non-lethal control methods. Although effective, these removal methods have major drawbacks as they present a short-term solution and do not prevent future beaver damage at



IF&W staff recently attended a workshop on how to prevent beaver damage to road culverts. With new designs in road and culvert construction, efforts to stop beaver damage to roads and habitat are being reviewed and upgraded.

the same culvert. Sites repeatedly plugged by beaver can result in road damage, expensive repair costs, and repeated payments to animal damage control agents for lethal beaver removal. This is becoming increasingly costly and unacceptable to landowners, particularly when the same culverts are repeatedly plugged by beaver.

Repeated removal of woody debris and mud from road culverts also is causing downstream bank and streambed damage. Clearing plugged beaver culverts often results in a major flush of water and debris downstream of the nuisance beaver sites. This large amount of debris (sticks, mud, etc.) often clogs downstream resulting in stream erosion and scouring. Occasionally, these

clogs of debris are large enough to create new side channels in streams, changing the natural character of the existing stream bank. Some road culverts are flushed 3-4 times in a single summer season resulting in continuous negative impacts to the stream environment.

Many landowners and MDIFW wildlife biologists realize that removing nuisance beaver at road culverts is only a short-term solution to resolving nuisance beaver complaints. Over the last several years more research and collaboration among land managers, engineers and wildlife biologists have resulted in numerous culvert designs and alterations directed at preventing beaver from

Continued on Page 18

Figuring out what to do about beavers

Continued from Page 17

plugging road culverts. Many of these recent culvert designs are not new but slight modifications to existing culverts that result in increased effectiveness in deterring nuisance beaver. In most cases, the key to making any preventative nuisance beaver control device work effectively is to fit the beaver control device with the appropriate road culvert site. It's unlikely that one nuisance control device or technique will work in every nuisance beaver situation, and it will take some time and experience gained by both land managers and wildlife biologists to understand when and how to install water control devices in a manner that prevents plugged culverts and beaver damage.

Many of the so-called culvert add-ons, beaver deceivers, or wire fences will require some site modification to the existing streambed. Generally, all these preventive measures require deep water to effectively deter beaver from plugging the culvert pipe or fence. This may require digging the streambed down 3-5 feet underneath and adjacent to the beaver control pipe. This is not normal practice for road culvert installation and therefore may not follow the existing LURC or DEP rules.

At this time any site modification for installing a beaver control device should be coordinated with



Fencing to deter beavers is one option, but generally is not normal practice for road culvert installation and may require streambed modifications.

the appropriate environmental review agency, and may require a permit. Both landowners and MDIFW wildlife biologists are discussing these culvert site modifications with DEP and LURC staff with the goal of developing beaver control device installation standards that will allow landowners to install without stream alteration permits. Hopefully by collaboration between landowners, LURC and DEP staff, and MDIFW a simple notification or permit process can be developed that will meet everyone's needs and this program can move forward.

Continually removing beaver from nuisance sites is not an effective management program, and very expensive. Landowners, LURC, and DEP are increasingly receptive to discussing alternative management approaches and MDIFW wildlife biologists will be taking the lead to find management alternatives and devices for preventing beaver damage. Hopefully over the next few years we can add beaver deceivers or culvert add-ons and other culvert devices to our toolbox for resolving nuisance beaver complaints.

We're On

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.com

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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

\$1.8 million to fund protection projects

In its inaugural round of grants, the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program has awarded nearly \$2 million to help 11 public and non-profit groups move forward on important resource protection projects across Maine.

The Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program – which is administered by The Nature Conservancy in collaboration with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – announced awards totaling \$1.8 million to help restore, enhance or preserve wetlands and other important habitats at 16 project sites from South Berwick to Argyle and from Sebago to Ellsworth.

“At a time of limited resources, this program has awarded crucial funding that will allow us to preserve a diversity of wetlands, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and deer wintering areas,” said John Pratte of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

“The funding also enables our Department to begin restoration projects that increase wetland health and function.”

“As an organization working to restore fish passage in Maine streams, this new funding program is

critically important to our work,” said Andrew Goode of the Atlantic Salmon Federation. “Our grant allows us to finish the construction of a fishway on Blackman Stream, so sea-run fish can have access to their historical spawning habitat for the first time in over 200 years.”

The program was created to help offset unavoidable impacts on protected natural resources by funding the restoration or preservation of similar resources to maintain ecological benefits. It provides regulatory flexibility for agencies to approve a fee in lieu of traditional mitigation options. In Lieu Fees are collected by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and then transferred to the Natural Resource Conservation Fund at The Nature Conservancy.

“This is an important step forward for the conservation of aquatic resources in Maine,” said Alex Mas, who manages the program for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. “Traditional mitigation projects can often be scattered, small or poorly located; this program allows us to focus wetland preservation and restoration in priority areas and help to ensure their resiliency in the face of climate change and other threats.”

“The real take home message is

that we will be able to conserve more of the highest value wetland habitats in Maine,” said David Littell, Commissioner of Maine’s Department of Environmental Protection. “In some cases, land developers had to find offsite compensation properties on their own; they now have the option to use this program to compensate the public for the loss of significant wetland and wildlife values.”

“After all efforts have been made to avoid or minimize those impacts, this program provides permit applicants an efficient and workable alternative while providing a better outcome for our wetland habitats,” said Ruth Ladd, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District. “The fees are then used to restore, enhance, preserve or create aquatic resources and their associated uplands.”

The inaugural grantees are: Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Chewonki Foundation, Great Works Regional Land Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Coastal Habitat Foundation, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance, Three Rivers Land Trust, Town of Falmouth, Trust for Public Land and the Western Foothills Land Trust.



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Help prevent the importation of invasive insects into Maine.

Do not import firewood. Buy locally.

SIX-DAY SEARCH OF CHINA LAKE AREA



Teenager remains missing after extensive search

The Maine Warden Service and other search and rescue groups spent six days in January searching for a missing China teen around China Lake. Blizzard conditions, freezing temperatures and high winds impacted efforts, and after six days the search was suspended.

Pictures: Wardens go onto China Lake in an airboat, and Major Gregory Sanborn is pushed by the boat's exhaust.

With ups and downs in weather conditions this winter, the Maine Warden Service has issued numerous warnings about thin ice, and has responded to several calls for snowmobiles and vehicles through thin ice.



MAINE WARDEN SERVICE FIELD NOTES

Seven from County arrested on numerous hunt, fish violations

The Maine Warden Service in January arrested or summonsed seven adults and a juvenile from Aroostook County on hunting, fishing or drug charges, the result of a six-month special investigation into illegal fishing and hunting activity that was initiated from a tip to a district game warden.

Charges have since been dropped for one individual.

On Tuesday evening, January 12, 2010, game wardens and supervisors of the Maine Warden Service served four search warrants and an arrest warrant in Aroostook County with the assistance of the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. Two individuals were arrested and six received summonses.

The Maine Warden Service is working with the Aroostook County District Attorney's Office on this case.

In June 2009, the Maine Warden Service received information that alleged that Stephen Resdiker, 30, of Mapleton was committing fish and wildlife law violations. During an investigation, the Maine Warden Service documented more than 90 violations by Mr. Rediker, including the illegal killing of deer and moose. The investigation also revealed that Mr. Rediker had several associates who were participating in the illegal possession of fish and wildlife, resulting in additional search warrants and suspect interviews.

The total number of violations detected by this group exceeded 125, according to Maine Warden Service Captain Daniel Scott.

"This special investigation was a priority for the Maine Warden Service, especially given the struggling deer



Two Game Wardens survey a downed plane near Greenbush in early January. The pilot, from Scotland, died when his plane took on ice and he crashed. Numerous agencies responded to the scene.

herd in northern Maine," said Major Gregory Sanborn. "After much-spirited and emotional debate last summer, policy makers decided that our junior hunters would be prohibited from taking antlerless deer during the special youth hunt day last fall in northern and eastern Maine, and yet this small group appears to have had no such reservations or concerns on the lasting impact as a result of their actions."



On Tuesday, Jan. 12, Mr. Rediker was arrested for night hunting, exceeding the bag limit on deer, and killing a moose in closed season – all Maine Title 12 Class D violations – and criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon (Class C, Title 17A),

and trafficking prescription drugs (Class B, Title 17A). He was taken to Aroostook County Jail in Houlton. Class D violations carry mandatory minimum fines, jail terms and mandatory license suspensions, if convicted.

As the investigation continues, more charges are likely against Mr. Rediker, according to Captain Scott.

During the execution of the search warrants, Game Wardens seized firearms, deer meat, fishing equipment, illegal drugs and other evidence.

Ready ... Aim...Fire...FREE! A moose became caught in guide wire Dec. 23 on the side of Spruce Mountain in Woodstock and was unable to free itself. Warden Norm Lewis responded to the scene, surveyed the

Continued on Page 22



(From left) Warden Joey Gardner, Mr. and Mrs. Webster, Dave Wood, Warden Joe McBrine, Gary Hanscom and Robert Carter pose on the Down East Sunrise Trail. Recently, through Warden McBrine's efforts, the Maine Warden Service received a \$39,790 grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to purchase a snowmobile (with a match from Polaris), a side-by-side trailer and an ATV to use on the trail. Some of the funds will go towards training.



Maine Warden Service Cpl. Aaron Cross, Capt. Dan Scott, Sgt. Dan Menard, Col. Joel Wilkinson and Warden Eric Rudolph took first place in the public safety category of the Mount Desert Island marathon in October with a time of 3:08:39.

Continued from Page 21

situation, and came up with a plan to free the animal. While Dana Edmunds and John Lewis, Norm's son, shined a light on the moose. Warden Lewis pulled out his handgun, took aim and fired. He shot the antler off the moose, and that freed the animal. The moose was not hurt.

Turkey on Straight With Arrow: Warden Thompson has received numerous calls of a turkey with an arrow sticking out of its back in Swanville. The bird is feeding well and

flying with the flock. The bird is being monitored.

Over the Limit: Warden Lefebvre assisted the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department to execute a search warrant earlier this month in Newcastle. Upon entrance, they noticed the resident cutting up an unregistered deer. A search produced 145 fish (143 brook trout and 23 short trout), and salmon. The case remains under investigation.

Operation Game Thief Call: A call to this stop-poaching hotline was right on when Wardens Alan Gillis and

SNOWMOBILE ACTIVITY REPORT

Up to the week ending 2-7-10

Accidents -- Current Week: 19
Accidents -- Total '10: 80
 With Property Damage Only: 18
 With Personal Injury Only: 54
 With PD and PI: 7

Fatalities -- Total '10: 2
 One on trails; one on road (MSP)

Accidents -- Total (Same Time Last Year): 102

Fatalities -- Total (Same Time Last Year): 5
 Four on trails; one on road (MSP)

OUI cases -- '10: 10
Other snowmobile enforcement cases -- '10: 107

Search and Rescues -- '10: 15

Justin Fowlie and Sgt. Bill Chandler went to a home in Orrington, and the resident there confessed to killing a deer out of season. He was in the process of cutting up the deer, a mature buck. Summonses were issued.

WINTER SPECIAL OLYMPICS



Service call a long-held honor, tradition

By Emily Jones
Public Relations Rep

Retired Warden Blaine Holding and his wife, Bonnie, have been involved in the Maine Special Olympics Winter Games for about 20 years. With their ties to the community in Carrabasset Valley and at Sugarloaf Mountain, they are active in the organization and planning of the event.

About five years after becoming involved, Blaine saw an opportunity for the Maine Warden Service to provide assistance with the event. Wardens were able to fill a niche at the games by utilizing their snowmobiles to pull the competitors and their coaches to the top of the race course saving valuable time and allowing more competitors to participate.



Photos by Emily Jones

(From left) Wardens Norm Lewis and Blaine Holding (retired) help a Special Olympiad light the torch. Warden Josh Bubier (top) shares a laugh with Nikki. Wardens who helped out at the Special Olympics pose for a picture.

It became immediately evident back then that the warden's presence at the event had a huge impact on the competitors.

Each year, between eight and 12 district wardens work at the Special Olympics and their responsibilities have expanded to helping set up the lodge for dinner and greeting and seating competitors and their guests, assisting with skating and snowshoeing events, cheering on

and supporting competitors, assisting with lighting the Olympic torch at the opening ceremonies, setting up for the opening and closing ceremonies, serving ice cream at the banquet of champions and even hitting the dance floor for some fun.

The participation from the Maine Warden Service has become a tradition at the Maine Special Olympics Winter Games and enjoyed by the wardens and competitors alike.

ANNUAL FALLEN OFFICERS RUN

Event a remembrance to 14 wardens

By Dan Scott

Captain, Maine Warden Service

On Oct. 29, members of the Maine Warden Service participated in the 2nd Annual Maine Warden Service Fallen Officers' Run.

Colonel Joel Wilkinson initiated that idea of a Fallen Officers Run in 2008. The event honors the 14 Maine Game Wardens who have died in the line of duty since the Bureau's beginnings in 1880.

During the event, wardens run from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro to the Fallen Officer's Memorial in Augusta. They carry the Maine Warden Service Fallen Officers' flag with them, pausing every mile to add the name of a fallen officer and offer appropriate honors. The route covers 13.2 miles, the equivalent of a half marathon.

This year, 22 wardens and several members of warden service staff participated in order to make this event a success. We were accompanied by Special Agent Rob Rothe of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Upon arriving at the Fallen Officer's Memorial, a brief ceremony was held incorporating the Color Guard and Chaplain Don Williams.

Twelve surviving family members also were present at the ceremony to witness the tribute we paid to their relatives. They included:

- Kelly Bourassa and her two children – daughter and grandchildren of Bill Hanrahan
- Jeff Hanrahan and his child – son and grandchild of Bill Hanrahan
- Michael Parker – great nephew of Lee Herbert Parker



Photo by Emily Jones

Maine Warden Service Capt. Dan Scott and Warden Jonathan Parker salute Warden Justin Fowlie at one of the mile-markers during the Annual Fallen Officers Run. At 14 markers, one of the 14 wardens who lost his life in the line of duty is remembered.

- Linda Varney – widow of Richard Varney
- Dean Varney – son of Richard Varney
- Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Shelley – son and daughter-in-law of Randall Shelley
- Marie Cecchetti – great Niece of Lee Harvey Parker
- Joan Anderson – great Niece of Lee Harvey Parker
- The Maine Warden Service has lost 14 wardens to line-of-duty deaths, the most of any law enforcement agency in Maine. They are:
 - November 8, 1886: Lyman O. Hill
 - November 8, 1886: Charles W. Niles
 - July 19, 1921: Arthur G. Deag
 - October 8, 1921: Leslie Robinson
 - November 14, 1922: David F. Brown
 - November 14, 1922: Mertley E. Johnston
 - September 1, 1927: Lee Herbert Parker
 - May 13, 1933: Jean Baptiste Jalbert
 - October 22, 1935: Robert L. Moore
 - June 3, 1946: Randall E. Shelley
 - August 27, 1956: George E. Townsend
 - July 1, 1968: R. Lyle Frost, Jr.
 - September 27, 1972: Richard E. Varney
 - November 21, 1992: William F. Hanrahan

TOP DAUGHTER

Maine Girl an ‘American Girl’

By Libby Carter

Reprinted from American Girl

My dad is a police officer (Maine Game Warden) and his partner, Czack, lives at our house. But Czack isn't a human officer -- he's a dog. As my dad's K-9 partner, Czack helps with police business, including helping to find people who are lost or to track down criminals. And I get to help Czack learn that job! During training, I'll find a hiding spot in the woods, usually under weeds and branches, and I'll wait for Czack to find me. I have to be really quiet. When he finds me, Czack will lie down nearby and bark. Then I give him a treat and tell him, "Good boy!"

I also helped my dad train another K-9 partner, a dog named Buddy. Not long after we started our hide-and-seek training with Buddy, he and my dad helped rescue two girls who were lost in the woods on a cold night. Buddy was a hero again after Hurricane Katrina. He traveled to Louisiana with my dad to locate people lost after the storm. That shows how important K-9 partners are.

Czack is young, but he has already helped my dad track criminals. When my dad gets home from work, it's my job to take Czack out of the vehicle and give him water and food. When my dad's not looking, Czack curls up with me on the couch. He's a 100-pound pillow! Having Czack in my family makes me feel safe. He's always watching out for me.



Libby Carter, daughter of Cpl. Wayne Carter, shared her experiences of helping to train Czack with American Girl magazine editors, and they loved it!

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