THE MAINE CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

THE MAINE WILDLIFER

FALL 2017

THE MESOCARNIVORE PROJECT: BACKGROUND, IMPLEMENTATION, AND UPDATE

Background

Maine's primary mammalian predators are mid-sized (meso) carnivores. This group of species is harvested for their fur. They also are valued by non-consumptive users who enjoy seeing them. Of these mesocarnivores, the American marten and fisher are of particular importance to Maine. Currently the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (hereafter the "Department") uses indices developed from harvest data to track the status of marten and fisher populations. Although these techniques are used to manage most hunted or trapped species in the U.S., they have limitations. These techniques perform best when harvest effort remains constant. Since the Department began tracking the harvest of marten, fisher, and other furbearing mammals, multiple events have influenced harvest effort for these species including changes in fur prices, season lengths, bag limits, and trapping methods. Although biologists can compare various indices (e.g., number of trappers catching at least one marten vs. the total marten harvest) to get an idea of how effort has changed, these indices may not always paint a clear picture of population trends. The Department recognizes these shortcomings in its management systems for mesocarnivores and has a strong interest in strengthening its monitoring efforts.

Marten and fisher are of particular interest to the Department. For over 10 years, biologists have observed declines in fisher populations; particularly in central Maine. To lessen harvest pressure, the Department reduced the fisher season length by 50%. However, this shortened season combined with new restrictions limiting the type of trap sets that trappers can use and low fur prices have resulted in a strong change in this species' harvest rate, reducing our ability to compare current harvest information to past data. Marten in Maine, northern New England, and the Adirondacks of New York are in the southernmost range of this species. University of Maine researchers recently concluded that marten populations may not be sustainable at current population levels given the changes in Maine's forest management practices that have occurred over the last 30 years. As result of these changes optimal marten habitat now occurs in smaller more fragmented patches and a greater percentage of the northern forest has been harvested. However, observations of marten in atypical habitat and sustained harvest levels of marten have added uncertainty to what degree new forest management practices are affecting the marten population. With this combination of factors mind, the Department sought to develop a monitoring tool independent of harvest data that could be used to track

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INSIDE *THE MAINE WILDLIFER:*

Six of the more common species detected during the first year of the Maine camera trapping project. From Left to right, top to bottom: American marten, fisher, coyote, snowshoe hare, red fox, and white-tailed deer.

population trends in marten, fisher, and potentially other mesocarnivores across the state.

In 2016, the Department began collaborating with Dr. Mortelliti of the University of Maine with the goal of funding a Ph.D. level project with the primary objective of developing a statewide monitoring protocol for marten and fisher (and potentially other species). This protocol needed to be feasible to implement in the field over a large area, robust enough to reliably identify changes in population trends, and applicable to a range of habitat conditions. With these criteria, developing a monitoring protocol based on an occupancy design utilizing trail cameras was identified as the best approach. An occupancy based approach (presence/absence data) was chosen as opposed to methods that track individual fitness, survival, and/or spatially explicit abundance. An occupancy based approach should allow the Department to non-invasively sample large portions of the state at a reasonable cost. Trail cameras were chosen over other methods (hair snares, snow track surveys, scent post stations) because of trail cameras ease of set up and deployment, reliable species identification through photos, the ability to get substantial sampling efforts (number of days camera is operating) out of a single deployment, and their ability to perform in a variety of environmental conditions.

Implementation

In December of 2016, a PhD student, Bryn Evans, was hired to lead this effort. With a strong background of diverse fieldwork, and a masters degree focused on semiaquatic mammals and camera trapping, she was a

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Mesocarnivore Project, Continued from page 2

great fit for the position. By January 2017, winter field work started. A major component of this first field season was straightforward: conduct a pilot study that identifies the optimal sampling unit. For our project, this meant identifying how many cameras were needed and at what spacing cameras should be placed at a given site to ensure a satisfactory detection probability. While placing more cameras in a site would theoretically increases detection probability, the more cameras per site increases sampling effort and decreases the number sites that can ultimately be sampled on a fixed budget. To identify this best compromise sampling design, Bryn tested how combinations of one, two, or three cameras placed at either 100 or 150 meter spacing affected detection in a variety of locations and habitat types.

Winter Field Season

Between January and early March, Bryn and a technician deployed 5 cameras per site at a total of 32 sites across northern Maine. Sites were randomly selected from three study areas representing varying quality marten habitat as identified from previous modeling efforts at UMaine. Cameras were placed in a "T" formation with the horizontal portion of the "T" having three cameras placed 100 meters apart, and the vertical portion having two cameras placed 150 meters apart. Marten and fisher were lured to the camera with a bait of beaver meat inside a wire cage and a skunk based lure. Baited cameras were deployed for a minimum of 2 weeks. From this initial effort, over 7882 images were captured, resulting in 19 species of wildlife detected; 10 of which were carnivores. The most common species observed included marten, fisher, coyote, red fox, and snowshoe hare (Table 1). Base occupancy rates (before they were corrected for imperfect detection) for marten, fisher, coyote, weasels, and snowshoe hare were all well above 0.3 -- the minimum detection threshold. From these data, Bryn and Dr. Mortelliti analyzed the camera arrays to identify which camera arrangement (spacing between and number of cameras) provided the best compromise of sufficient detection rates and efficient sampling effort. Additionally, several covariates (site, quality of habitat, and distance from accessible road) were

Table 1. A compilation of both unique stations (n=32) and unique cameras (n=156) that recorded a marten, fisher, coyote, red fox, or snowshoe hare during the winter 2017 camera deployment in northern Maine.

Species	Stations/Cameras	Stations Occupied (%)
Marten	24/72	75%
Fisher	16/47	50%
Coyote	16/28	50%
Red Fox	9/17	28%
Snowshoe hare	13/24	41%

investigated to see how they influenced detection. Detection rates varied drastically based on how many cameras place at a site and spacing for marten, fisher, and coyote (Fig. 1,2, and 3). From these data, a clear pattern emerged. First, across multiple species and various covariates that influenced detection (habitat quality, distance to road, or site) a single camera yielded low detection rates, often below the 0.3 threshold. A two camera array performed much better than a single camera, but when the third camera was added detection improves drastically in most situations. Lastly, a three camera array at 100 m spacing usually resulted in the highest detection rates for fisher and coyote, but not marten. After reviewing the different options, it was decided that three cameras

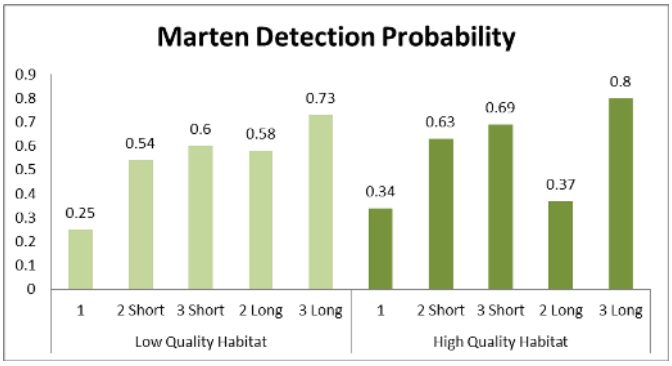

Figure 1. Detection probabilities from the top performing marten model for five different camera arrays (1, 2 short, 3 short, 2 long, 3 long) in areas identified as high quality and low quality marten habitat in northern Maine.

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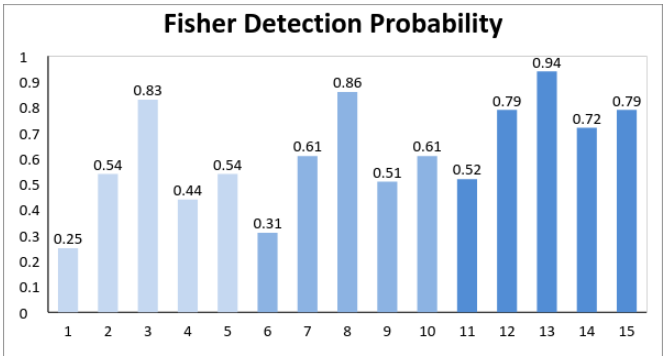

Figure 2. Modeled detection probabilities from the top performing fisher model for five different camera arrays (1, 2 short, 3 short, 2 long, 3 long) in three different distances to a publicly accessible road.

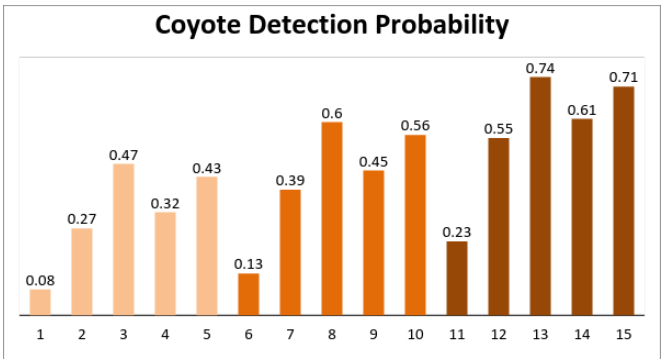

Figure 3. Modeled detection probabilities for the top performing coyote model for five different camera arrays (1, 2 short, 3 short, 2 long, 3 long) in three sampling areas.

at 100 meter (short) spacing yielded the best compromise of use of cameras and high detection rates (well above the 0.3 threshold) of marten and fisher, and additionally provided a high level of detection for another species of interest; the coyote.

Next Steps

With this information in hand, Bryn and her technician are currently sampling approximately 120 sites across the northern part of the state for the summer 2017 season. Site specific covariates of forest stand data including basal area, species composition, and coarse woody debris are also being collected. Site selection is structured around sampling a variety of forest species composition and structure at the landscape scale. As this effort continues over the next few years during the summer and winter sampling seasons, patterns may emerge that indicate which factors affect marten and fisher occupancy and detection rates across northern Maine. While the overarching goal of the project is to develop a monitoring protocol that is feasible to implement by the Department, this is just the baseline. Through Bryn and Dr. Mortelliti's guidance, this project will have the potential to address bigger questions related to how forest structure, harvest pressure, and other species influence the distribution and relative abundance of marten, fisher, and other mesocarnivores. Expect to see updates regarding this project in future newsletters as well as state and regional wildlife conferences.

NEW WEB COMIC HIGHLIGHTS VERNAL POOL ECOLOGY

As ephemeral wetlands across New England dry for the summer, the University of Maine Vernal Pool Team is celebrating the culmination of its weekly web comic. *Vernal Pools for Me* tells the story of two audacious Spotted Salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*), and has been following the progress of the 2017 field season. In April, Andy Ambystoma made his first breeding migration, bravely crossing a road, anxiously finding a mate, and boldly emigrating to new terrestrial areas. His daughter, Amber, hatched in the beginning of the summer, curiously explored the vernal pool, and soon will metamorph and disperse. Along the way, readers met a diversity of other fauna and explored the wetland from their viewpoint.

Vernal Pools for Me was designed to reach audiences "where they are" in the age of social media as part of a larger outreach project providing free, accessible, online material about vernal pool ecology to teachers, nature centers, and the public. Imbedded in the

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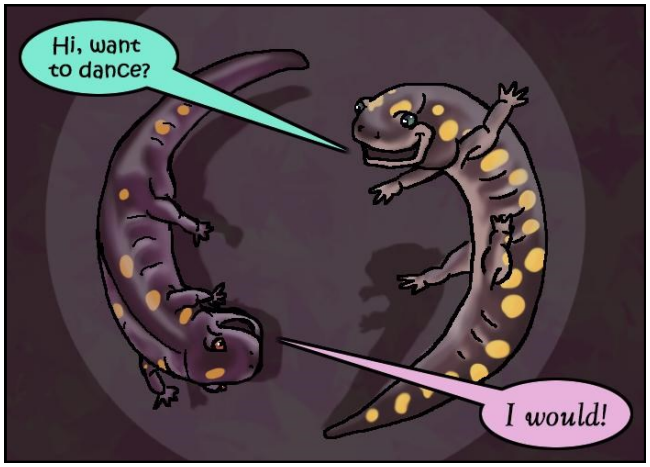
colorful series are lessons on biodiversity, predation, life history, habitat selection, migration, as well as on bravery and compassion while providing a strong female lead character. The comic strip was released weekly on Facebook and is permanently available for binge reading on the Of Pools and People web page (www.vernalpools.me/comic/). To date, the comic has been viewed by over 1,000 people and has been shared by partners such as Hirundo Wildlife Refuge and the Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation.

Laura Bollert used Photoshop and a drawing tablet to illustrate the Vernal Pools for Me web comic during her senior year at the University of Maine.

The comic was skillfully written and illustrated by Wildlife Ecology major Laura Bollert during her senior year at the University of Maine with assistance from Drs. Kristine Hoffmann and Aram Calhoun. Bollert's incredible skill as an artist is matched by her avid enthusiasm for amphibians and reptiles. Before working on the comic, she had worked extensively as a field technician on two vernal pool amphibian studies, giving her valuable knowledge of the system. Each panel is as scientifically accurate as possible for a story about talking salamanders.

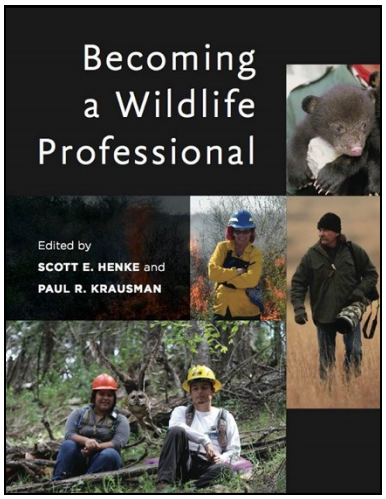
To ensure the panels were jargon free and accessible to a wide audience, Bollert and Hoffmann sought feedback from Joyce Harrison's environmental science class as Bangor High School. Harrison often uses art in her science classroom to help visual learners and was excited to host the team. The students discussed the plot, ecology, and language of several example strips and provided written comments. Many students said they would continue to read the comic as it was published.



This work was funded by the Mitchell Center and the Maine Water Resources Research Institute as part of a larger vernal pool outreach project by the same name (Vernal Pools for Me), as well as by the Foundation for Salamander Conservation. The team will soon be producing more creative outreach material such as coloring books, videos, guide books, worksheets, and sing-along-songs. They hope to create a print version of the comic and make it available to educators. Hoffmann welcomes input on outreach needs from educators who teach about these seasonal wetlands and can be reached through the contacts tab on the Of Pools and People web page.

New from TWS and Johns Hopkins University Press
A must-have book for aspiring wildlifers

by Nancy Sasavage, Director of TWS Publications and Communications



"Becoming a Wildlife Professional" is the first comprehensive book to describe the entry-level jobs available for the next generation of wildlife biologists and conservationists. If you are a student preparing for a wildlife career or new professional looking for career advice, this new book published by The Wildlife Society in cooperation with Johns Hopkins University belongs in your library!

Editors Scott E. Henke and Paul R. Krausman include detailed chapters on how students should prepare for a vocation in the wildlife profession while offering pragmatic advice about applying for and obtaining a job. The book presents over 100 diverse career options that are available to aspiring wildlife workers, including work in biological field research, forestry, rehabilitation, ranching, photography and refuge management. It also details each position's educational and technical requirements, challenges, salaries and opportunities for advancement and offers advice from a range of seasoned experts who actually hold these jobs and have used these techniques to secure employment.

"Becoming a Wildlife Professional" also conveys important philosophical messages about the responsibilities and challenges of a career in wildlife conservation and management.

With all this information in one place, the book is an essential text for wildlife science students interested in making themselves marketable for employers across a wide spectrum of wildlife jobs.

TWS members receive a 30 percent on all titles published by the Society in cooperation with Johns Hopkins University Press. Be sure to enter the discount code HTWS at checkout. The TWS member price is $59.50

http://wildlife.org/a-must-have-book-for-aspiring-wildlifers-pre-order-your-copy-today/

Black-billed Cuckoo by Amber Roth

My English Setter, Maya, found this nestling/fledgling Black-billed Cuckoo on a hike in Old Town, ME on June 25. With the increase in forest tent caterpillar populations from Maine to Saskatchewan (and outbreak levels in some areas), Black-billed Cuckoos seem to be on the uptick as well, based on anecdotal reports. This nest and young bird may be an indicator of what's to come. Also with the start of the second Maine Breeding Bird Atlas only 4 months away, folks in Maine should be practicing their keen observation skills for interesting breeding bird activity especially nests like this one.

Planning for Big Game Management in Maine

by Nate Webb, Wildlife Biologist, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Have you ever wondered how MDIFW determines how many moose permits should be issued in a particular Wildlife Management District? Or how bag limits and season dates are set for wild turkey? While the foundation of most wildlife management decisions lies with biological and habitat considerations, the public also plays a major role. Hunters may prefer that the deer population be allowed to increase in a particular area to increase their opportunity for harvesting healthy, free range meat while other Maine residents may be concerned about risks posed by Lyme disease. Some members of the public might want limits put on hunting so that moose are more visible from roadways, while others are more concerned about the risk of vehicle collisions. All of these perspectives are legitimate and must be considered when making management decisions for wildlife.

For the past 25 years, the Department has used a formal public participation process to develop management goals and objectives for the state's wildlife species. This approach has evolved over time, but is meant to provide an opportunity for the public to share their views on how wildlife should be managed in the State. The publicly-derived goals and objectives are incorporated into Management Plans that summarize the current status, challenges, and desired outcomes for the management of each species. The Department also develops Management Systems that outline the biological data collection, mathematical calculations, and decision process used to achieve the vision set out in the management plan.

Over the past 18 months, the Department has been revising its Management Plan for big game (moose, deer, bear and turkey), which will guide management of these species for the next decade. As part of this process, MDIFW contracted with Responsive Management (Harrisburg, Virginia) to conduct a scientific survey of the general public, hunters, and landowners, and to host regional public meetings and focus groups. The Department also worked with Responsive Management to develop an Online Forum where the public could submit ideas and comments on the management of big game. A steering committee was established to provide guidance and advice to MDIFW during the development of the plan. In addition, MDIFW convened a subcommittee for each species, which formulated draft goals, objectives, and management strategies based on the public survey information and the professional expertise contained with the subcommittee.

Department staff are currently completing a draft of the plan, which will be shared with the steering committee and species subcommittee for review. The draft plan will also be made available on our website to provide an additional opportunity for public input. This planning effort will continue through 2017, but we've already found some very interesting results from the public survey. In general, satisfaction with the Department's fish and wildlife management programs is high, and the public is very supportive of using hunting as a tool to manage wildlife. Nonetheless, it is clear that some challenges remain. Burgeoning deer populations in southern and coastal Maine have been correlated with increased incidence of tick-borne diseases, and bears continue to slowly expand to areas where potential for conflicts with people is high. In northern Maine, we continue to get a clear message, from both the general public and hunters, that deer populations should be increased. The Department and the steering committees have considered these and many other issues during the development of the plan.

Although we've been actively seeking public input throughout the development of the new big game Management Plan, we hope the public will continue to stay engaged as we begin implementing these plans. We're always interested in hearing what the public has to say and we hope that you will take the time to share your perspectives with your local MDIFW biologist or game warden. For more information on the planning process, please check out the Department's website at www.mefishwildlife.com.

Biodiversity Research Institute Common Loon Translocation Study

Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) in Portland, ME translocated loon chicks from Maine to Massachusetts in the last week of July, 2017. Restore the Call project, the largest Common Loon conservation study ever conducted, is in its fifth breeding season. Funded in 2013 by the Ricketts Conservation Foundation, Restore the Call is a five-year science-based initiative to strengthen and restore loon populations within their existing and former range. Research efforts have focused in three key U.S. breeding population centers from the western mountains to the Atlantic seaboard.

"While restoring bird species to their former range is an accepted conservation practice, this project is the first being conducted for the Common Loon," says David C. Evers, Ph.D., BRI's executive director and a leading expert on loon ecology and conservation.

Success for restoring loons to their former range is a three-step progression. "Our first measure of success was to develop a safe and replicable approach for translocation and captive rearing of loon chicks-moving them to a new lake location and confirming that they fledged from that lake," says Michelle Kneeland, D.V.M., director of BRI's Wildlife Health Program. "In the first phase of this project, we have accomplished that critical goal."

Once Common Loons fledge, they spend the next three years on or near the ocean, sometimes migrating thousands of miles to wintering grounds. In their third summer, young loons return to their natal lakes to join the breeding populations. The second measure of success for restoring loons is to confirm that the loon returns in its third summer to the lake from which it fledged (the lake to which it was translocated, not the lake from which it hatched).

"This summer, we will survey the lakes in southern Minnesota for those loons we translocated, reared, and released in the first year of this project," says Kneeland. Typically, loons stake out their own territories and begin to breed in their sixth summer (on average). "Once we know the loons have returned to the release area," says Kneeland, "we will monitor them to confirm that those loons go on to establish successful breeding territories. Then, the restoration will be considered a complete success."

BRI's Timeline for Translocating Loon Chicks

Translocation within Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes. During the 2014, 2015, and 2016 breeding seasons, BRI researchers, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, successfully translocated 17 chicks (five in 2014; seven in 2015; five in 2016) from the large breeding populations in northern Minnesota to unoccupied lakes south of the Twin Cities, Minnesota. Chicks translocated in the first two seasons ranged in age between 6 and 9 weeks old; those in the third season were older than 9 weeks. Surveyors will monitor the lakes this season to identify any loons that had fledged in 2014.

Translocating Loon Chicks across State Lines. In 2015, researchers translocated chicks across state boundaries. In collaboration with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, seven chicks were successfully moved from New York's Adirondack Park to a lake in southeastern Massachusetts-a lake that was the last known breeding site for loons in the state before their extirpation around the turn of the 20th century. While breeding loons recolonized Massachusetts in the Quabbin Lake region in 1975 and today number more than 40 pairs, breeding loons have yet to reoccupy many other parts of the state.

In 2016, BRI successfully translocated nine chicks to the same lake in southeastern Massachusetts (four from New York; five from Maine) with assistance from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and Maine Audubon Society. Of those chicks, six were 4-6 weeks old at the time they were moved; three were older than 9 weeks. The younger chicks were captive reared (they were brought to a holding pen in the lake where they learn to feed on their own). The older

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BRI Loon Translocation, Continued from page 8

chicks, able to feed on their own, were released directly onto the lake.

This summer, researchers will move loon chicks from areas with robust loon populations from Maine to the same release lake used in Massachusetts in 2015 and 2016.

The Restore the Call study area encompasses national parks and other public lands in the West (Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho), the Midwest (Minnesota); and the Northeast (Maine, Massachusetts, and New York). When the study began in 2013, researchers focused primarily on surveying populations in these regions.

Population assessments help researchers identify sources of ecological stressors that may contribute to population declines. "It is important to identify key threats to existing populations," says Evers, "and to create scientifically-based solutions for reducing those threats." Ecological stressors that affect loons include type E botulism, mercury pollution, lead from fishing lures, oil spills, overdevelopment of shoreline property, and improper water level management. Components of the five-year initiative include implementation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation and Management Plan and creation of state-specific working groups to develop restoration plans. "We would not be able to attempt a project of this scope if we did not have RCF leading the way and the cooperation of state and federal wildlife agencies as well as key loon conservation nonprofits."

The loon is a key bioindicator of the health of our lakes as well as near shore marine ecosystems across North America. Beyond the first five years of the study, BRI hopes to develop a program to monitor the new breeding populations in the initial target regions.

For current news and updates on this project, visit: www.briloon.org/loons2017

Funding for this project has been provided by the Ricketts Conservation Foundation, which was formed by Joe Ricketts to support the conservation of wildlife and natural resources. www.rickettsconservation.org

The mission of Biodiversity Research Institute is to assess emerging threats to wildlife and ecosystems through collaborative research, and to use scientific findings to advance environmental awareness and inform decision makers. BRI's Loon Program, a part of its Center for Waterbird Studies, offers an essential resource for local and global communities concerned with loon conservation. Our research studies encompass a variety of ecological stressors: chemical toxins; habitat loss in breeding and wintering grounds and along migratory routes; and diseases. www.briloon.org/looncenter

New Photos from Mao Lin:

While I haven't had the fortune to conduct any surveys specifically for herptiles this season, it's always exciting to come across reptiles and amphibians in the field! The photo on the left is a Northern Redback Salamander (Plethodon cinerus) from Great Pond in June. In the middle is a Common Garter Snake (Thamnophis sirtalis) from Medway in June. On the right is a Spring Peeper (Pseudacris crucifer) from Gray in August.

ADAPT, ADOPT, ADVANCE: RESILIENCE IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

by Steve Pelletier, CWB

The Maine Chapter of TWS, in conjunction with New England Society of American Foresters and Northeastern Forest Pest Council, hosted a 3-day educational forum at the Cross Center in Bangor on March 8-10, 2017. The conference theme "Adapt, Adopt, Advance: Resiliency in Natural Resource Management" focused on a broad range of natural resource issues and new solutions and targeted advancement of healthy forests in the northeast, with a wide variety of presentations designed to maximize interaction between researchers and practitioners.

The event was kicked off by three keynote speakers who gave past, current, and future perspectives on the conditions of our forests and the myriad of influences that shape them - with an eye towards how our professions may adapt, adopt, and advance in a rapidly urbanizing, globalizing, and diversifying environment. Richard Judd, McBride Professor of History at the University of Maine and co-author of Historical Atlas of Maine, Kathy Fallon Lambert, former first executive director of the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, current Science & Policy Project Director at the Harvard Forest, and co-author of Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape, Changes to the Land, and Ingrid C. "Indy" Burke, Dean at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, provided unique viewpoints on our ever evolving forestlands and the past, current, and future challenges faced by our resource professionals over time.

Over 100 speakers gave presentations throughout the 3 -day course of concurrent sessions.

Six wildlife panel sessions, each involving a Session Chair and diverse group of individual panel speakers provided in-depth perspectives on a wide range of resource topics of interest. Topics (and Session Chairs) included: Rare Species/ Natural Communities (Steve Walker, MCHT), Mammals (Cory Mosby, MDIFW), Avian (Linda Welch, USFWS), Herpetiles (Derek Yorks, MDIFW) Invertebrates (Susan Davies, Midwest Biodiversity Institute), and Effects of Forest Practices on Wildlife (Henning Stabins, Weyerhaeuser). A variety of topical posters were also presented, providing recent and ongoing research findings from regional USFWS staff and students from both Unity College and the University of New England. These sessions were followed by a diverse series of field and classroom sessions on Friday, targeting specific topics of professional concern and interest. The depth, breadth, and diversity of expertise and experience shared through these Panel and Poster presentations were testament to the vitality and strength of our profession, and the topics presented provided multiple learning opportunities of interest for all.

Maine's Chapter of TWS received numerous enthusiastic kudo's regarding the breadth and depth of presentations offered over the course of the different TWS sessions, as well as many sincere compliments regarding the high level of audience interaction (an audience that also included many foresters and other traditional non-wildlfers). That participation was a testament to not just the relevance of the topics but also of the quality of the individual presenters. Many thanks to all Session Chairs and panelists, and in particular, Committee members Kara Moody, Dale Knapp, and Sarah Boyden, Katelin Craven, and others who diligently worked over many months to help organize the events. To obtain copies of individual presentations, go to http://wildlife.org/maine-chapter/maine-chapter-news/ and click on the "2017 Spring" link under "ME TWS Public Folder".

The Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society recently donated $250 to The Wildlife Society's Student Travel Grant Fund, which has been awarded to a University of Maine student to aid in presenting at the TWS 2017 annual conference.

The Maine Chapter of the Wildlife Society's Involvement with the 128th Maine Legislature; First Regular Session – 2017

Legislative Document (L.D.) 5: Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Exclude Wildlife Issues from Citizen Initiatives

This resolution proposed to amend the Constitution of Maine to provide that the laws of the State governing wildlife management may not be amended by the citizen initiative process. On January 4, 2017, this document was referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs and a day later it was Tabled as unfinished business. On January 26, it was taken from the table and referred to the Committee. On April 26, it was voted Ought Not to Pass in the Committee; then on May 2, it was placed in the Legislative files as Dead. This means it would not proceed to the floor for a vote and it will not become a law; at least during this session of this legislature.

As part of its work, The Maine Chapter of the Wildlife Society (METWS) Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) follows the State legislative happenings, determines if METWS will be involved with specific proposed legislation, and if we decide to move forward we prepare written testimony that is provided to committees as public testimony at hearings with the goal of providing scientifically supported information to the committee to help them make informed decisions. The CAC used the Action Item Flowchart to determine that we should monitor this bill and most likely take action. However, part of the flow chart is to gage the membership's opinion and in this case, we did not know how the membership would want to proceed. This was viewed as a potentially controversial issue and we wanted to make sure that the CAC best represented the membership. On one hand this bill would allow the trained and informed State biologists to make decisions on how to manage wildlife, and it would remove these important decisions from a highly-politicized referendum process. However, it would also remove "the people"/general public from the decision-making process and this could be a way to disenfranchise the voter and remove their power to have a say on how to manage a natural resource that belongs to all people of the State.

On April 4, the METWS Board sent this email to the membership to ask for their input on how METWS should proceed with such an important issue.

As the Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) chair I am reaching out to ask the membership to vote and help decide whether the Maine Chapter of the Wildlife Society should submit a public comment in support of this bill. In the past, we have opposed bills that limit the power of Maine's wildlife biologists to manage wildlife, such as the bear baiting referendums. Supporting this bill would be consistent with our previous positions of reserving the decision-making power for wildlife management issues for Maine's wildlife biologists. Additionally, our members, the public, and Maine's legislators may expect a comment from METWS since LD 5 directly pertains to wildlife. Public perception of LD 5, however, has moved beyond wildlife and those in opposition to the bill say that it is fueled by Maine's hunting lobby, and that the bill will restrict Maine's citizen initiative process. Therefore, if METWS supports LD 5 the chapter could be perceived as supporting legislation that takes power away from the people of Maine. Similar bills have been proposed over the last few years and never made it through the legislative process. Therefore, our involvement may not be meaningful if the bill follows the same pattern as previous bills. Please help us decide: Would METWS involvement be meaningful, helpful for state legislators in their decision-making process, and is it worth risking potential negative public perception of METWS?

After many members responded to the poll, voted and left thoughtful and compelling comments on both side of the issue the METWS Board again responded with this email follow-up on May 8.

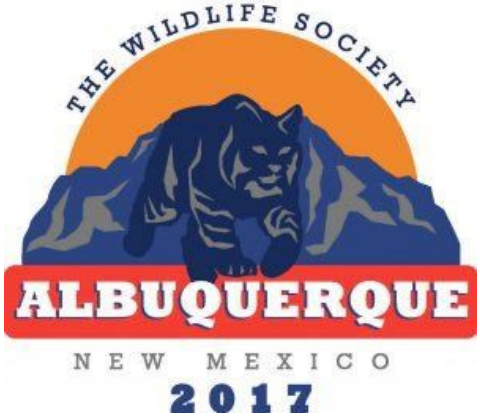
To follow up on the status of the membership poll regarding METWS's stance on LD 5 (see below), we would like to share that the people who voted were split 52% in favor of support of LD 5 and 48% against.

Continued on page 12

LD 5 Discussion, Continued from page 11

There were a variety of comments associated with the votes and both sides had very compelling reasons. We have continued to follow the status of the bill. There was a Committee work session on April 26th and the Committee voted "Ought-Not-To-Pass". At this time the bill will not be moving forward, therefore METWS will not be making a comment. Though this issue is currently dead in the water, the Board would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote and especially those who took the time to comment. I'm sure we can all agree that we should continue the conversation of how our group responds to legislation in the future.

We are following up on this topic in the newsletter to help inform the membership on how this bill was resolved in the legislature and why METWS did not move forward with public comment. We felt that there was no way to represent the majority of the membership on such a controversial topic and therefore no action was the best approach. If the membership is interested we can schedule time during a meeting or at a workshop (or over beers after a meeting) to further discuss this bill or a more general discussion on how the CAC represents METWS in the future.



New Mexico will be hosting The Wildlife Society's 24th Annual Conference at the Albuquerque Convention Center September 23-27. Details at: http://wildlife.org/2017-conference/

PENNSYLVANIA TWS MEETING MARCH 23-24, 2018

Toftrees Resort, State College, PA

MAINE TWS FALL MEETING SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us on Thursday, Oct 19 at The Ice Vault at 203 Whitten Rd. Hallowell. The tentative schedule includes lunch at noon, welcome and announcements at 1:00 pm followed by speakers and the fall business meeting at 3:30 pm. We will be announcing the theme and speakers soon so stay tuned!

BIO BREWS

We have happy hours popping up all over the state this fall! It's always great to hear what our fellow biologists have been up to and to meet new people in the field. Students may benefit from meeting with local biologists in a relaxed and social setting to learn about what is going on with wildlife in the area, hear about possible volunteer opportunities, ask questions about career paths, and meet a possible mentor (you don't have to be 21 to get in at these venues).

There is often not enough time for socializing and networking at the fall and spring meetings of the Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society, so come join us for a happy hour at the Gin Mill in Augusta (300 Water Street) immediately following the Fall Meeting on October 19th. Join local host Sarah Boyden, to socialize and grab some beer and appetizers.

Other happy hours include the Bangor area's Bio Brew hosted by Katelin Craven. Let's meet on Thursday Sept 14 at 5:30 pm at Mason's Brewing Company in Brewer (15 Hardy St.). Mason's has great beer and food and provides the perfect atmosphere for catching up with old friends and getting to know our fellow biologists better.

Finally, Mao Lin will be hosting the Portland Bio Brews at Hella Good Tacos (500 Washington Ave.) on Sept 27 at 5:30 pm. Come relax after a day at the office and enjoy some great tacos and even better company!

Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conservation Affairs Committee—2017 Fall Update

The METWS CAC continues be active in 2017 to promote research and scientific management of wildlife and their environments and disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, values of wildlife and their habitats; in accordance with the Chapter Code of Ethics and Bylaws.

We provided an update in the spring newsletter detailing actions through late 2016 and early 2017. This is a short list of what we have been up to since then. Another article in this newsletter provides a more detailed discussion of the METWS involvement with Maine LD 5.

The CAC and METWS Executive Board provided the support of METWS for the following items:

1. Reviewed a TWS Draft Position Statement on Managing for Biodiversity in Northeastern Forests.
2. Signed a letter in support of keeping the Endangered Species Act funded.
3. Signed the letter to support USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers - TWS, the National Wildlife Federation and others distributed a letter in support of adequate funding for USGS National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) (formerly known as the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and the Department of the Interior Climate Science Centers). This program is slated for a 34% cut under the proposed FY18 budget. This proposal would gut regional cooperative research capacity by cutting the program's eight existing Regional CASCs down to four. These science centers provide fish and wildlife managers working on the front lines with climate adaptation research tailored to their specific regional needs.
4. Sign-on Support for Dedicated Wildlife Funding - TWS and the National Wildlife Federation circulated a letter that called on members of the U.S. Congress to support dedicated funding for fish and wildlife conservation; it was designed to build support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which will be reintroduced in the coming months and would direct $1.3 billion in federal funds to states for implementing state wildlife action plans. TWS has long been supportive of this concept - we'd like to express that support throughout the organization to be able to relate to each congressional district in this letter.
5. Supported funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants FY 2018 Interior Programmatic Appropriations.
6. Continue watching the process for HR 861: To Terminate the Environmental Protection Agency; this was referred to the Subcommittee on Environment on April 25th with no additional action taken.
7. Watching LD 399: An Act to Revise Maine's Environmental Laws, which was a concept draft with no details other than to revise laws governing environmental protection. A work session was held on May 11 where it was Tabled and a Carry Over was requested on May 12th. So, this document is still alive and can be resurrected in the next session.
8. TWS National is working on a major priority to move forward legislation on Recovering America's Fish and Wildlife (see http://ournatureusa.com/), so we could become involved with this effort.
9. The Western Section put out a letter supporting keeping national monuments. Since we have two monuments under consideration in the NE (Katahdin Woods and Waters and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts) the NE Section proposes we should perhaps consider sending a similar letter and is currently working on a draft letter.
10. Continue participating in national TWS Conservation Affairs Network conference calls discussing how TWS CAC's can best promote the organization's goals.

If you are a METWS member and want to be a member of the CAC please email me with your contact information; Rodney.kelshaw@stantec.com

President's Corner
By Katelin Craven

I hope everybody had a fun and productive summer! As the new Chapter President, I am looking forward to serving the Chapter over the next year and strengthening my relationships within the wildlife community. When I first joined the METWS, after moving to a new community, it was a bit overwhelming because everybody seemed to know each other. Several members went out of their way to introduce me around and over a short period I have made numerous connections that I value. We are lucky to have a small, close-knit, and supportive wildlife community here in Maine. Our entire Board and I strive to continue to bring in new faces, make them feel welcome, and provide opportunities to learn, socialize, and build bonds and collaborations.

The Board and I hope to revisit the METWS Strategic Plan, which aims to provide an approach for serving the membership to the best of the Chapter's abilities. In March 2010, a small group of Chapter members met to discuss the status of METWS and plot a strategy for ensuring its relevance and vitality. The meeting provided insight into possible improvements by the Chapter to better serve its members. A commitment by the Executive Board to develop a 5-year strategic plan was met and established the following goals:

- Increase membership in the Chapter among practicing professional wildlife biologist who live or work in Maine;
- Provide forums for professional biologists to share their work and seek input from fellow professionals;
- Provide continuing education opportunities for professional biologists;
- Provide forums for social interactions among professional biologists;
- Be recognized as one of the primary sources of unbiased information regarding the science of wildlife management in Maine;
- Be a strong advocate for appropriate funding for wildlife research management, and conservation;
- Reinvigorate the Chapter's relationship with the TWS parent organization and the Northeast Section of TWS;
- Improve communication with members and strive to address the issues that are most important to the membership, while recognizing the capacity limitations associated with a small organization that is exclusively run by volunteers; and
- Provide opportunities for mentoring and career development among students through meeting participation, representation on the Executive Board, and other Chapter-related activities.

Five years have passed and it is time to revisit our strategic plan to see what has been effective, what still needs improvement, and what new avenues might better serve our members and wildlife. We'll start with an online survey, which was effective in 2010 for gathering input from the membership.

When this short survey reaches your inbox, please take a few minutes to send us your thoughts and opinions. The questions will gauge who represents our member base; your involvement with the Chapter; the Chapter's relevancy to you; and your satisfaction with the Chapter, its activities, and management. Finally an open section for suggestions of ways we can do better, for new ideas on how to bring in new members, new activities, and where should the Chapter be focusing its energy: provide more social aspects, more technical talks, more workshops for continued learning, better involvement with students, or Maine centered mentor program. The results of the survey will help guide the activities of the Chapter over the next five years.

Even though the current structure and the work of the chapter has helped me and others, the Board and I want to ensure we continue to build on past successes and give you what you need and want from the chapter. If you have interest in helping with the development of the survey and/or strategic plan, please contact me or the Board. I look forward to your input.

Enjoy the last moments of summer and I hope to see you all at the fall meeting!

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