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The President's Perch

By Jeri Maurer, President

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

— [Rachel Carson, Silent Spring](#)

In his book, “*Feathers*”, field biologist Thor Hanson suggests that the activity known as birdwatching is a misnomer for many of us. “For the most part, the phrase should really be bird identification. Though we may set out intending to watch birds, we don’t often meet the definition: “to observe attentively, typically over a period of time. Our binoculars seem to have minds of their own, swinging quickly away as soon as we can put a name on a species....It’s a dangerous trap because the true wonder of birding lies in the watching, soaking up the fine details of plumage, behavior and habit...every sighting is worth more than a glance and a tick on a checklist.” This hit home the other day as I noted the flock of goldfinches that has been visiting our feeders all winter. Binoculars in hand I looked at one male that was starting to show his spring colors but what really stuck me was the black and white pattern of its tail feathers. In all the years of looking at goldfinches I had never really noticed. Take a look at the winter issue of Audubon magazine with the close-up photography of feathers and be amazed.

Often when I’m at Thorncrag or Woodbury visitors will ask where all the birds are. The answer, of course, is that they are there if we slow down, quiet ourselves and watch. When you sit in the woods or in a field it is very likely that birds will begin to be more apparent. Slowing down, quieting ourselves is good for more than bird watching. It is also good for our own health.

A recent article in the Wall St. Journal reinforced what many of us already know – that a dose of nature can be healthy not only for our physical health but also for our mental health. The article spoke of research by two scientists at the London School of Economics and Political Science which found that people were significantly happier outdoors especially in natural settings.

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Other research cited found that the more time we spend in nature, the “better you will do on measures of vitality, wellness and restoration”. The article goes on to talk about the efforts many cities around the country are making to integrate natural elements into everyday life. We in the the Lewiston/Auburn area are blessed to be surrounded by the natural world living in Maine. Among those blessings are our Thorncrag and Woodbury Sanctuaries.

This time next year we will be kicking off a celebration of these sanctuaries and the Stanton Bird Club as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Club. A number of Board members have been involved in planning activities and would welcome any of you who would like to help. If you are interested please contact me at jerigary@fairpoint.net. We welcome your ideas and your energy!



Last fall members of the Jr. Naturalists participated in an educational day at Thorncrag. Using funds donated by Fred Huntress Jr. and the Mary Huntress Fund, the students spent time at Longfellow’s Nursery in Manchester learning which shrubs had more appeal for wildlife. They then chose their plants and headed back to Thorncrag where with the help of their parents and Jr. Naturalist leader, Nancy Long they planted their selections. Over the next few years the Jr. Naturalists will continue to help maintain the plants.

Stewardship at Woodbury

In an effort to attract a greater variety of birds to the Woodbury Sanctuary, we have been doing some selective timber harvesting this winter under the direction of the Club forester, Harold Burnett of Winthrop. Using guidelines developed by Maine Audubon’s new program of Forestry for the Birds, Burnett divided the original Woodbury Sanctuary into 5 parcels. One parcel, the height of land saddle between the two highest points, will remain untouched. Sequentially the other 4 parcels will be thinned, one every five years with a few ½ acre and 2 acre clearings made in each. At the end of the 20 year period the plan is to start over again working on the parcel which is presently being thinned.

The Board unanimously voted to use this approach in an effort to provide a more diversified habitat. After this winter’s harvesting, it will be interesting to watch the woods ‘green up’ the next few springs and see the effects of this stewardship. Take a walk up the White Trail to the height of land and you can see the cuttings on both sides of the trail as you ascend.



LEWISTON / AUBURN AREA GUIDED BIRD WALKS SPRING / SUMMER 2017

The Stanton Bird Club is pleased to announce our 10th year of **Guided Bird Walks** in the Lewiston / Auburn area. All walks are **free** and open to everyone, beginning naturalist to advanced birder. Walks are led by Stan and Joan DeOrsey, who identify and comment on birds seen and heard.

Anyone interested in walking, seeing new places, fresh air, and nature is welcomed. Walks are held in a variety of interesting and diverse local habitats, plus some areas less often visited. Please mark your calendar and join us every other Wednesday on the dates listed, or pick and choose the one or two which most interest you.

May 3	Papermill & Ricker Farm Trails, Lisbon for spring migrants. Meet at the Promenade Mall / Staples.
May 17	Sylvester's, Auburn for spring migrants. This is a Stanton Bird Club walk, meet at the Sylvester home, 1128 Riverside Dr., Auburn at 7:30AM.
May 31	Small-Burnham Conservation Area, Litchfield for spring migrants. Meet at the Farm, Pine Tree Rd., Litchfield.
June 14	Brunswick Landing (former Navel Air Station), Brunswick for spring migrants. Meet at Food City Shopping Center.
June 28	Riverside Trail, Sunnyside Park to Tall Pines, Lewiston for breeding birds. Meet at the Promenade Mall / Staples.
July 12	Androscoggin River Trail, Lisbon for breeding birds. Meet at the Promenade Mall / Staples.
July 26	Jillson's Farm, Sabattus for resident summer birds. Meet at the Promenade Mall / Staples.

Meeting Locations as noted above. Please park away from the business parking.

--Promenade Mall parking lot, near Staple, 855 Lisbon St., Lisbon Falls.

--Food City Shopping Center, 583 Lisbon St., Lisbon Falls.

Except for May 17 and 31 (see above) walks leave meeting location at 8am to be at the walk site at about 8:20am. Walks end by 11am but you may leave early.

Walk will be held even if its drizzling, but if there is a steady rain at 7am and projected to continue to 10am, the walk is cancelled.

Walks are approximately 2 miles on a generally even and basically dry surface. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather; layers work very well.

STANTON Bird Club
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Lewiston, ME 04243-3172

Visit the Stanton website
at www.stantonbirdclub.org



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Stanton Goes Green continues strong. If you would prefer to receive your Newsletter on-line vs. paper, please send us your e-mail address to Linda Seamans at seamans.linda@gmail.com