



Denise Buckley, fisheries biologist at Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery, sorts through Atlantic salmon eggs at the hatchery recently. The eggs came from salmon captured on the Penobscot River and spawned at the hatchery.

Salmon in the Spotlight

NOAA devoting resources to Maine fish

BY AISLINN SARNACKI
BDN STAFF

Efforts to save Maine’s wild Atlantic salmon from extinction will be ramped up in the coming years thanks to the new “Species in Spotlight” initiative launched by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The campaign’s five-year plan includes an estimated \$25 million in federal funding for projects aimed at stopping the decline of the species and moving them toward recovery.

“We’re not throwing in the towel on the Atlantic salmon,” Dan Kircheis, one of the co-authors of the Species in the Spotlight Atlantic Salmon Action Plan, said. “We see the populations are low and in trouble, and we see this as a call to action to step it up. We’re going to do everything possible to turn things around for the Atlantic salmon.”

The “Species in the Spotlight” initiative is a concerted agencywide effort to save and bring public attention to species of the United States that are among the most at risk of extinction in the near future. The Atlantic salmon of the Gulf of Maine was among eight species selected for the initiative.

The other seven “species in the spotlight” are central California coast coho salmon, Cook Inlet beluga whales, Hawaiian monk seals, Pacific leatherback sea turtles, Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon, Southern Resident killer whales in Puget Sound and white abalone.



Atlantic salmon swim in a holding tank at the Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery recently. Salmon tend to vary in hue and the abundance and shape of spots on their bodies. Some salmon are dark, others pale. Some are covered in spots. Others are spotless.

Funds for the campaign will come from existing grants for endangered species restoration. The money will simply be prioritized for species that have been identified as “spotlight species,” Kircheis explained.

“We’re working with state, tribal and other partners to find ways that they can go after some of this money and

take advantage of it,” Kircheis said.

For example, NOAA is seeking applications for \$9 million in community-based habitat restoration. This funding be focused on projects that will improve protected species recovery and support sustainable fisheries. The deadline is April 6.

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A man and his maps: Worry for DeLorme

When news of GPS giant Garmin’s purchase of DeLorme, the iconic Maine map-maker, reached the newsroom, I nearly jumped out of my chair, rushed to a bookstore and bought every copy of the Maine Atlas and Gazetteer that I could find.

Irrational? Probably.

But the question that prompted my panic bears pondering: What if, at some point in the future, Garmin decides actual books of maps — such as the Atlas and Gazetteer — don’t fit into their plans?

To be clear, Garmin has not said it’s doing any such thing. Neither is the company saying it will continue making the map books until I’m retired, dead and gone.

So I’m worried. And as I’ve learned through casual conversations and responses to an online post late last week, so are many of you.



JOHN HOLYOKE

Some folks say L.L. Bean boots are a key possession most Mainers have in common. That’s probably true. But when you’re deep in the woods, turned around and realizing all the logging roads look the same, the most welcome face you’ll find belongs to the guy who stops, pulls out his dog-eared DeLorme and shows you exactly where you are. That guy? He’s a true Mainer, no matter what kind of boots he’s wearing.

While DeLorme has been a technological company, even those of us who’ve never purchased any of their more modern, electronic products couldn’t imagine going out into the back of beyond without that handy book of maps tucked away next to the ice scraper or stuck in the seatback pouch.

How iconic is that book? Well, in my circle of friends it’s up there with one-name superstars, such as Madonna, Kobe and LeBron. We don’t call the book by its full, tongue-twisting title. We don’t even call it The Atlas or The Gazetteer.

When we want to check our location or plan for the next day, we ask a simple question: “Where’s the DeLorme?”

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Cold snap leads to typical winter birding activities

I found winter! Admittedly, after last week’s column, a number of readers told me where to look. As you may recall, I lamented the lack of Canadian invaders due to the mild winter so far. Common redpolls weren’t common. Northern shrikes stayed northern. Pine grosbeaks never came south. Bohemian waxwings were absent. Crossbills were few and far between.

That all began to change when temperatures dropped. Bohemian waxwings are now showing up in huge numbers in some locations. Watch for a cloud of birds feeding in a fruit tree. Even from the highway, I spotted one flock of 250 flying above Essex Woods in Bangor last weekend. At a distance, you can identify waxwings by their tight flock formations and bouncy flights.

Then I went to Grand Lake Stream last Saturday for a morning bird walk co-led by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and the Fundy Chapter of Maine Audubon. It was minus-2 at daybreak, but the morning warmed to a balmy 6 degrees. By finch standards, that’s toasty. Hundreds of pine siskins were swarming around the village in full, cheerful voice. We estimated 300, but it

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BOB DUCHESNE
GOOD BIRDING

1-Minute Hike: Young Tunk Mountain

Difficulty: Moderate. The trail is 0.67 mile long, from the trailhead to the top of the mountain, making for an out-and-back hike of about 1.4 miles. The first part of the trail is a bit rocky, especially where it follows a small brook, and there is a series of narrow bog bridges to navigate about halfway up the mountain. The climb is gradual but almost constant, so it will certainly get your heart pumping faster.

How to get there: From the intersection of Route 182 and Route 1 in Cherryfield, drive east on Route 182 (Blacks Woods Road) toward Ellsworth 1.9 miles and turn right onto Spragues Falls Road, which is marked with a colorful, wooden sign instead of the typical green or blue street sign. Drive 2 miles down Spragues Falls Road and the trailhead will be on the left. In front of the trailhead is a small graveled parking area that will fit one vehicle. This parking area is just before a driveway marked with two large



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Watch the video
bangordailynews.com

white posts. It’s also across the road from a private, roped-off gravel road.

Information: A bald-topped hill in Cherryfield known locally as Young Tunk Mountain has long been a place for area residents to hike and pick wild blueberries. Local children who have climbed the hill call its granite summit the “Top of the World” because it provides wide open views of their towns below.

But it wasn’t until this past fall that an official, blue-blazed hiking trail was opened on Young Tunk Mountain for the general public to enjoy.

Savage Bloomer, a senior at Narraguagus High School, spent the past summer and fall improving the trail by clearing away brush and installing a series of wooden bog bridges over a soggy area of the woods. He also marked the trail with blue blazes, designed and posted a sign at the trailhead and improved the trail’s small parking area on Spragues Falls Road.

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Derek Runnells of Dedham carefully walks along exposed granite atop a hill that locals know as Young Tunk Mountain recently. A new 0.7-mile hiking trail leads to the top of the hill, where hikers are greeted with great views of the area.

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