

# Researchers find 2 sturgeon in Milford

BY JOHN HOLYOKE  
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — University of Maine researchers went to the Penobscot River with new optimism this spring, as they hoped to find evidence that endangered short-nose sturgeon had spawned in the river. Documentation of that would be the first since two dams were removed from the river in recent years.

That wasn't the case, but the team did receive some good news:

Two shortnose sturgeon were captured at the Milford Dam fish lift, marking the first time since those dams were removed that sturgeon have accessed the entire range of their original native habitat.

"We knew that, historically, they made it up that far in the river," said Gayle Zydlewski, a UMaine associate professor in the School of Marine Sciences, who has been a member of the research team for the past 10 years.

But the team had no evidence that sturgeon had moved that far

upriver, graduate student Catherine Johnston explained.

In October, the research team learned that three tagged female sturgeon that could be detected by acoustic receivers in the river had moved upriver to a spot about 6 miles downstream from Milford. The hope was that the fish were searching out spawning territory, and Johnston spent time mapping the river to find probable spawning habitat.

This spring, egg-collecting mats and larvae traps were deployed in

the river in hopes of collecting evidence of spawning activity.

That didn't happen, but the upstream move by at least two fish was encouraging, Johnston said.

"The Milford fish lift is at River Kilometer 62, and the farthest upstream that we had seen any fish travel last fall was River Kilometer 52, 10 kilometers farther [downstream]," Johnston said.

"The dam removal [as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project] restored 14 kilometers of habitat, so now we can say that short-

nose sturgeon have explored the entirety of that. That was exciting."

Johnston, who defends her master's thesis Thursday and is seeking full-time employment, will likely step away from the project soon. She has been studying sturgeon along with the rest of the team since 2014. She said the fact that sturgeon made it to Milford was gratifying.

Sturgeon are bottom-dwellers that are not especially strong

*See Sturgeon, Page C2*



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN

The Porcupine Islands can be seen from an outlook on the Gorge Path on the east side of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park.

## 1-Minute Hike: Gorge Path

**Difficulty:** Moderate-strenuous. From the Gorge Path trailhead on Park Loop Road, the trail is 1.9 miles to the top of Cadillac Mountain, making for an out-and-back hike of about 3.8 miles. The trail starts out gradual but becomes very rocky and steep as it climbs the eastern slope of the mountain.

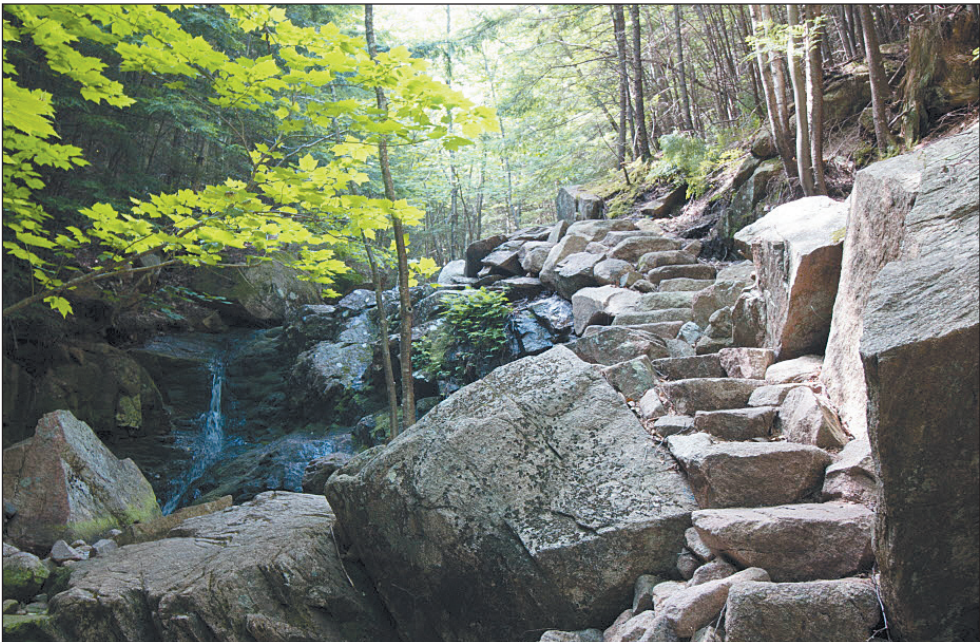
**How to get there:** Drive to Mount Desert Island on Route 3. After the causeway, veer left at the fork, staying on Route 3 toward Bar Harbor. Drive 7.7 miles on Route 3 and turn right into Acadia National Park at the entrance of Hulls Cove Visitor Center. At the first intersection, turn right and drive south on Paradise Hill Road for about 3 miles, then take a sharp left onto the one-way Park Loop Road. Drive about 0.9 mile, and the trailhead to Gorge Path will be on your right, just after the road crosses a stone bridge. Limited parking is available along the right side of Park Loop Road. The trailhead is marked with a subtle wooden sign.

Another option is to start at the Cadillac North Ridge Trailhead, where there is a larger parking area, and hike the Kebo Brook Trail 0.4 mile east, then hiking south 0.4 mile on the northernmost section of the Gorge Path to the trailhead on Park Loop Road.

**Information:** Running through a dra-



AISLINN SARNACKI



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Gorge Path travels through the middle of a gorge between Dorr Mountain and Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park and sections of it are made up of hundreds of granite steps.

**Watch the video**  
bangordailynews.com

matic gorge between Dorr and Cadillac Mountain, the Gorge Path is a special hiking experience that includes hundreds of granite steps, tiny waterfalls and breath-

taking views of Dorr Mountain and beyond that to Bar Harbor and the Porcupine Islands.

From the Gorge Path trailhead on Park Loop Road, the Gorge Path heads down a slope on stone steps to Kebo Brook. There

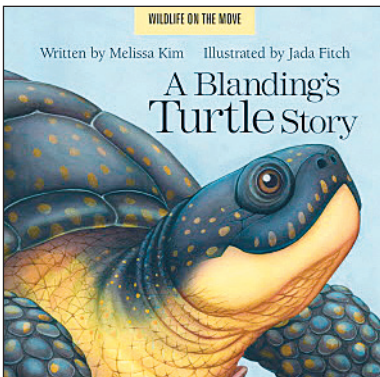
*See Hike, Page C4*

## Rare turtle stars in new children's book

BY AISLINN SARNACKI  
BDN STAFF

With a spotted shell, scaly skin and a bright yellow neck, one of Maine's endangered species is brought to life in "A Blanding's Turtle Story," a children's written by Melissa Kim and illustrated by Jada Fitch. Published in May, the board book is based loosely on a true story about a family that finds a Blanding's turtle on the side of the road.

"I think the story is really great," said Fitch, a Portland artist who has developed a reputation for her realistic yet charismatic wildlife illustrations. "It was based on a true story that happened to Linda Woodard, who works at the Scarborough Marsh Audubon Center. She's actually a



character in the book."

"A Blanding's Turtle Story" is the third book in the "Wildlife on the Move" series, published by Islandport Press of Yarmouth in partnership with the Maine Audubon. Geared toward children in pre-K through second grade, the

Blanding's turtle.

series focuses on different Maine animals and addresses the topics of wildlife migration, conservation and respectful human interaction with nature.

"Kids are never too young to hear stories like this," said Kim, who has traveled to a number of

Audubon centers throughout Maine this summer to read the book to children. "Kids are interested in animals and their life cycles, where they go and what they do."

The first book in the series, "A

*See Turtle, Page C4*



DEREK YORKS | DIF&W BIOLOGIST

*My sister will love this part,* I thought, knowing she'd be the one in charge of the bat-stomping. Oops. Not stomping. Stepping.

Then it got worse. What I heard the warden say was, "Then, put it in the crisper drawer of the fridge and deliver it to our headquarters tomorrow. They'll send it away to be tested for rabies. Or you could put it in a cooler, on ice. Either way works. But don't put it in the freezer."

Turns out freezing a bat's brain before it gets tested for rabies is not a good idea.

Mark that down on the list of things I never thought I'd need to know: Don't freeze bat brains.

I relayed the instructions to my sister, and I could sense her revulsion. I'm good like that. I'm a regular revulsion-sensor.

Of course, it didn't hurt that her initial reaction was something like, "Ewww. Really?"

I assured her it had to be done, then grabbed a beer, flipped my chicken one more time and finished cooking dinner.

*Better her than me,* I thought. Not that I'd ever say that to her, of course.

The calls continued as my sister updated me on the progress. I began answering my phone, "You've reached the bat cave, this is John. Can I help you?"

She didn't think that was too funny.

Eventually, my warden source called back for a progress report. I told him I'd opted to advise my sister to use the bat-in-the-cooler option, because if she'd put a dead bat in my mom's refrigerator — even just in the crisper drawer for a night — mom would never use it again.

"No!" he said, breaking into laughter. "Not the kitchen fridge."

*See Holyoke, Page C2*



JOHN HOLYOKE