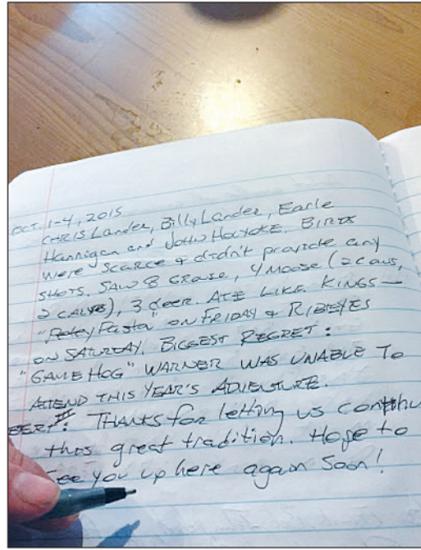


Bird hunting diary



JOHN HOLYOKE | BDN
An entry in the camp log before heading home for another year.

Warden's 3rd book of tales from the woods

Editor's Note: Welcome to the new Outdoors section. Beginning today, the BDN will publish an expanded once-per-week Outdoors section on Fridays. In this section, you'll find all the features you've come to expect, including Aislinn Sarnacki's 1-Minute Hikes and John Holyoke's column. By moving our Outdoors section to Friday, we'll also be able to provide up-to-date calendar information that will help you plan your weekend adventures. For more frequent outdoors updates throughout the week, including columns, features and blogs, check bangordailynews.com.

Back when he was a young man preparing to embark on a career in the Maine Warden Service, John Ford received a valuable piece of advice from his stepfather, Vernon Walker.

Walker was a game warden, you see, and he knew his stepson would encounter all kinds of critters and have hundreds of interesting days afield.

"He was the one who told me, 'You really want to keep a diary and keep track of the things that you really love about the job,'" Ford said. "Thank God he did, because I can't remember what the hell I did yesterday."

For the past several years, those diary entries have been entertaining readers, first in columns published in the Republican Journal in Belfast, then in a pair of popular books, "Suddenly, the Cider Didn't Taste So Good" and "This Cider Still Tastes Funny."

Here's some good news for Ford fans: In late September, North Country Press released his third book, "Deer Diaries: Tales of a Maine Game Warden."

The 274-page book, including nearly 50 stories from the woods, is classic Ford: unpolished, unapologetic and gut-bustingly funny.

Whether tracking "dastardly" night hunters or trying, with some missteps, to keep his bosses happy, Ford takes readers through a joyride — sometimes literally, when pursuing suspects at high rates of speed — and does exactly what his readers have come to expect: He informs and entertains at the same time.

Ford said his first book has sold 22,000 copies and said demand for "Deer Diaries" has been brisk. Readers can find the book in several small stores near his home in Unity, as well as at Barnes & Noble in Augusta and Books-A-Million in Bangor.

And Ford said he'll continue
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JOHN HOLYOKE



JOHN HOLYOKE | BDN
Billy Lander of Dedham (left) and Chris Lander of Orrington check a map while planning the next day's bird-hunting adventure during a trip to Brassua Lake near Rockwood recently.

It was too windy for grouse, and other handy excuses

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

TAUNTON AND RAYNHAM ACADEMY GRANT — The annual weekend adventure began as so many do: with coolers full of too much food — if there is such a thing — and a hunting party practically giddy with optimism.

Sure, Mother Nature had dumped 5 inches of rain earlier in the week. But it was dry! For a week, Hurricane Joaquin had been spinning offshore, and nobody seemed to know where he'd go next. Then, just before our gang headed for Brassua Lake and

our annual bird-hunting and moose-watching adventure, we received word the storm went out to sea.

Dry weather awaited. And so, we were sure, did dozens of birds and moose by the herd.

As has become our custom, we were guests of Earle Hannigan. Hannigan, the father-in-law of my pal Chris Lander, and Chris's brother, Billy, joined us in the Maine woods for our annual ritual.

We'd drive for miles, look for birds and periodically we'd stop, call in a moose and try to take stunning photos of it.

That was the plan, at least.

It didn't take long before that plan began to unravel.

"Oh, shoot," Billy Lander said Friday morning as we prepared to ride the roads and begin harvesting our bag limits of ruffed grouse. "I've only got 10 shells with me."

In retrospect, I recognize that moment as the one when our trip began to go off the rails. In fact, Billy's quote belongs right at the top of the list that would grow, along with our frustration, over the next two days: "The Reasons Why the Birds Did Not Participate in our Bird Hunt."

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1-Minute Hike: Little Spencer Mountain

Difficulty: Strenuous. Little Spencer Mountain is one of the most difficult trails in the Moosehead area because it is extremely steep and rocky. The trail includes a section that is so steep that hikers need to use two long ropes to climb up. This is not a good hike for small children or dogs.

Watch the video
bangordailynews.com

How to get there: Start in the town of Greenville at the intersection of Route 6 and Lily Bay Road near the shore of Moosehead Lake. Turn onto Lily Bay Road and set your vehicle odometer to zero. On Lily Bay Road, drive along the east side of the lake. Early

on, you'll pass Northwoods Outfitters, then farther along, Lily Bay State Park (at 8.7 miles). At 18.5 miles, you'll cross Roach River on a bridge by Kokadjo Camps and Trading Post. Not far after that, at 18.8 miles, veer left to stay on the main road. At 20 miles, veer left onto Spencer Bay Road. At 27.4 miles, turn right. At 28.1 miles, you'll cross a one-lane bridge. At 28.8 miles, veer left at a fork. At 29.6 miles, the trailhead is on your left. Park on the side of the road, well out of the way of traffic.
See Hike, Page C7



AISLINN SARNACKI



COURTESY OF DEREK RUNNELLS

BDN reporter Aislinn Sarnacki and a few fellow hikers sit on ledges of Little Spencer Mountain near Kokadjo recently to take in a view of the mountains, lakes and ponds of the Moosehead region.

We need to tell you something (and you're going to love it!):

Your new section is here!

This section of your Bangor Daily News is now Outdoors

Moved to Friday to help you better plan your weekend, hike or getting ready to hunt, writers John Holyoke and Aislinn Sarnacki will continue to show you the best of what Maine's wilderness has to offer.

