

The difference between birding, birdwatching

It's inevitable. Whenever I'm standing along a remote roadside, peering at a bird, every passing tourist slows down, thinking I'm looking at a moose. I'm going to design a T-shirt that says: "No, it's not a moose."



BOB DUCHESNE
GOOD BIRDING

I dread the next question: "What are you doing?" I can explain that I am "birding," but then I have to explain what "birding" means. If I say I am "birdwatching," no further explanation is necessary.

There is a difference between birding and birdwatching, but the difference is unexplainable. Naturally, I'm going to try anyway.

There is no semantic difference between the two terms, and they are often used interchangeably. However, everyone engaged in actively pursuing birds perceives a difference. You know who you are. It's roughly equivalent to the difference between golfing and golf-watching. Birdwatching is a pastime. Birding is a sport, sort of.

In my mind, it's the difference between passive and

active. When finches come to my feeder and I observe them out the window, I'm a casual birdwatcher. When I grab the binoculars and locate a secretive warbler sitting in the treetop above the feeder, I'm a birder. When I go for a walk and appreciate the birds I see, I'm a birdwatcher. When I veer off the path and chase them into the woods, I'm a birder.

Over time, even the most casual birdwatcher gets better at identifying birds. But birders are continuously working to improve their skills. They go on walks, field trips and tours. They learn from experts. They read. They practice.

A review of antiquated dictionaries reveals that the term "birdwatcher" is older than "birder" by a couple of decades. Before 1918, birding was like fishing — the intent was to bring the quarry home for dinner. "Bird" has been a noun for a long time. It has been a verb for less than a century.

There is no bright line between birdwatching and birding. It's a continuum. But, in an effort to settle the matter, I'll borrow an incontestable standard of evidence from Deflategate's Roger Goodell. If you meet any of the following tests, you are "more likely than not" to be guilty of birding.



A bald eagle perches in the shade of a tall oak tree at the edge of Hermon Pond last July.

If you notice birds while traveling, you're a birdwatcher. If you travel to see birds, you're a birder.

If you drive to see a rare bird in Maine, you're a birder. If you go because your friend drags you along to see it, you're a birdwatcher.

If you can recognize a hawk, you're a birdwatcher. If you can recognize the difference between a sharp-shinned hawk and a Cooper's hawk, you're a birder. Actually, if you even know

there is a difference, you're a birder.

If you can identify a gull, you're a birdwatcher. If you can tell how old it is, you're a birder. (In my case, I know how old it is; I just don't care that much.)

If you can identify a warbler by sight, you're a birdwatcher. If you can recognize it by sound, you're a birder. If you can recognize it by behavior or habitat, you're definitely a birder.

If you have binoculars,

you are a birdwatcher. If you have binoculars that cost more than your monthly mortgage, you're a birder. If you are concerned about binocular qualities such as close focus, eye relief, field of view and image brightness, you're a birder. Heck, even if you know what those things mean, you're probably a birder.

If you have a spotting scope, you're a birder. Who else would spend a thousand dollars to identify a duck?

If you have an identification guidebook on your bookshelf, you're a birdwatcher. If you have every guidebook on your bookshelf, you're a birder. If most of those guides are obsolete, but you would never consider parting with one, you're definitely a birder. Seek help.

All birders and most birdwatchers know what a life list is — a list of birds that have been seen in one's lifetime. Even the most casual birdwatcher may keep a life list. But if you have a life list ... and a yard list, a county list, a state list, a year list ... you're a birder. If you know that an "official" list conforms to guidelines set forth by the American Birding Association and that a bird is only "countable" if it wanders into the listing area on its own, you're definitely a birder.

If you read this column, you're a birdwatcher. If you disagree with anything in today's column, you're undeniably a birder.

Bob Duchesne serves as vice president of Maine Audubon's Penobscot Valley Chapter. He developed the Maine Birding Trail, with information at mainebirding-trail.com. He can be reached at duchesne@midmaine.com.

Hike

Continued from Page C1

are open to snowshoers and fat-tire bikes — bicycles with special, large tires made for riding over packed snow.

Also on the property is a popular sledding hill and skating pond. Throughout the trail network are warming huts and bonfires, where visitors can toast marshmallows and warm up.

The farms on the property feature an equestrian center, dairy operation and creamery, gardens and a variety of livestock

Using the trails in the winter requires a pass, which you can pick up at the Pineland Farms Welcome Center. Snowshoe passes are \$6 per day. Children ages 6 and under are free. Ski passes are \$13 per day for adults, \$9 for seniors and youth ages 7 to 17, and children 6 and under free. If you arrive after 1 p.m., these prices are reduced. Season passes also are available.

Rental cross-country ski equipment — boots, poles and skis — and snowshoes are available at the Pineland Farms Outdoor Center, as are several fat-tire bikes and a variety of snowshoes for all ages. The cost to rent equipment varies from \$10 for snowshoes to \$16 for an adult classic ski package to \$24 for a skate ski package.

During the warmer months of the year, the trails are open to the public for hiking and mountain biking. The property also includes a disc golf course and tennis courts and is home to the state's largest orienteering course, with 2,500 acres mapped.

Trail maps can be picked up at the Outdoor Center, which is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. They can also be picked up at the Welcome Center, which along with the Pineland Farms Market and Cafe, is open 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Dogs are not permitted at Pineland Farms. This policy was made to ensure safety for all visitors, wildlife and



AISSLIN SARNACKI | BDN

Cross-country skiers warm up by a fire beside a trail at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester recently.

livestock on the property.

Hunting is by permission only and is strictly prohibited in and around areas where farm or recreational activities take place.

Pineland Farms has a varied and fascinating history starting in 1908, when it was established as the "Maine School for the Feeble-Minded" and housed people with disabilities. Over the years, the institution transformed and became the Pownal State School, housing people without economic means, problem youths and others, according to Maine Memory Network, which provides a timeline of the property online at mainememory.net.

In 1939, the Pownal State School included 51 buildings and some 200 employees. The facility was like a town, with its own water system, farms and power plant.

Again, the focus of the center shifted. In the '60s, it became the Pineland Hospital and Training Center, a psychiatric hospital for children and a facility for people with mental disabilities. The hospital kept running for several decades, but because of continued criticisms of this state facility and the rising costs of run-

ning it, Pineland closed in 1996.

Today's version of Pineland began in 2000, when the property was purchased by the Libra Foundation, a Maine-based private charitable foundation created by the late Elizabeth B. Noyce that supports charitable projects in Maine or that benefit Maine causes. Today, all the real estate and buildings at Pineland — the campus and three working farms — have been owned by the October Corporation, a nonprofit title-holding company of the

Libra Foundation.

Pineland Farms, Inc. is a standalone nonprofit corporation that staffs and runs all farm and education programs at the farms surrounding the Pineland Campus with the mission to provide a productive and educational venue that enriches the community by demonstrating responsible farming techniques, offering educational opportunities and encouraging a healthy lifestyle through recreation.

The farms on the property feature an equestrian center, dairy operation and

creamery, gardens and a variety of livestock, including Holstein cows, sheep, chickens and goats. Tours and educational programs are offered at these facilities year-round.

For more information, visit pinelandfarms.org or call the Pineland Welcome

Center at 688-4539 or Outdoor Center at 688-6599.

Personal note: I couldn't even come close to exploring all that Pineland Farms has to offer when I first visited Jan. 23, a cloudy day with a high temperature of 23 degrees Fahrenheit. A biting wind whipped over the snow-covered fields as I met the Maine Beginner Hiking and Snowshoeing Meetup for Women, an online group that plans outings throughout southern Maine. Despite the cold, more than 30 members of the group showed up for the group snowshoe that day, and I was tagging along to write a story about how Meetup.com can be a great tool for people who want to be active outdoors and meet new people in the process.

Pineland Farms educator Kathryn Daly led us along the Muskrat Hollow Trail, and I did my best to be social while shooting video and photos. The trek led us to a small log cabin — a warming hut that recently had been constructed to replace a yurt on the property. There, a few women unstrapped their snowshoes with clumsy, frozen fingers so they could enter the hut and escape the cold for a few minutes. Meanwhile, Daly told us about the history of the property. Being a fan of ghost stories, one tidbit that stuck with me is that Pineland Farms is said to be home to one of the most haunted cemeteries in Maine.

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN
**CLINICAL MENTAL
HEALTH COUNSELING**

Classes meet one weekend a month in Brunswick
Preparation for Licensure as a clinical professional counselor
and certification as a substance abuse counselor.
**Accepting applications. Students may begin classes
in January, May, and September 2016.**

Specializations offered in
Integrated Mental Health
and Addictions Treatment
for Children, Youth and
Families or Adults

**Southern
New Hampshire
University**

FEBRUARY 2016

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MAINE

**COLLINS
CENTER
FOR THE ARTS**

MAINSTAGE SHOWS

2.14 Avner the Eccentric

2.21 The Wailers

2.27 Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane
Dance Co.

2.29 Béla Fleck & Abigail
Washburn with the
Del McCoury Band

CHAMBER MUSIC

2.7 Laurie Smukler
& Robert McDonald

BROADCAST SERIES

2.6 Turandot (Met Opera)

2.11 Coriolanus (NT Live)

207.581.1755 • collinscenterforthearts.com

SEASON SPONSOR
**Bangor
Savings Bank**

MEDIA SPONSOR
BDN

The University of Maine is an equal opportunity affirmative action institution.

the Y

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PARTY UP
VEGAS
COMES
TO CAMP!**

**ADULT PROM
2016**

**100% OF PROCEEDS GO TO
SUPPORT Y PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH

At The Bangor YMCA Wilderness Center at Camp Jordan
101 Camp Jordan Way, Ellsworth, ME 04605

Ages 21+ | Doors Open at 8am & Close at Midnight

TICKETS: \$35 per Person | \$50 per Couple | \$250 for Table of 10

Hors d'Oeuvres buffet included. Cash Bar. Music provided by DJ Disco.
Advance Ticket Purchase Required. Available Online or Stop by the Y.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SHUTTLE SERVICE: \$15 per Person
Must be reserved by Friday, February 5th.

941-2808 • www.BangorYMCA.org • 17 Second Street, Bangor