

## Things to Do Outdoors

**ALTON** — Full Moon Paddle, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26, at Hirundo Wildlife Refuge, 35 Hudson Road. Canoes, paddles and life jackets are available or bring your own. Meet at Gate 3. Reservations and cancellations requested by Sept. 25 by calling 394-2171. Bring a flashlight. Suggested donations are \$5 for adults; free for school-aged children.

**BANGOR** — Burning Moon Eclipse Party for all ages, 8:30-11:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27, Bangor Municipal Golf Course, Webster Avenue, weather permitting. Telescope viewing of the moon and stars during the total lunar eclipse and other celestial targets by Penobscot Valley Star Gazers astronomers. For information, visit the PVSG website at gazers.org, where a weather-related cancellation will be posted if necessary.

**BAR HARBOR** — Car-Free Morning in celebration of National Public Lands Day, midnight-noon Saturday, Sept. 26, on Park Loop Road in Acadia National Park. Free entry all day. Sections of Park Loop Road closed to private vehicles: Cadillac Summit road, road between Hulls Cove Visitor Center and Jordan Pond and the entire one-way section. Roads that provide direct access from Route 3 to the Hulls Cove Visitor Center, Schooner Head Overlook, Sieur de Monts and Jordan Pond will remain open. Island Explorer will be operating. Roadside parking will be prohibited at the Cadillac Mountain entrance on Eagle Lake Road (Route 233) and bicyclists will be required to ride only in the direction permitted on the one-way section of the Park Loop Road.

**BLUE HILL** — Join Blue Hill Heritage Trust and Blue Hill Coop for a Great Maine Outdoors Weekend Harvest Moon Eclipse Night, 8:30 p.m.-midnight Sunday, Sept. 27, at the base of Blue Hill Mountain, Hayes Field. There will be a telescope on hand, hot cocoa and snacks.

**ELLSWORTH** — Come view the total lunar eclipse, 9-10:15 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27, at Woodlawn Museum, Garden and Park, 19 Black House Drive, off Route 172. Bring hot chocolate or tea. Moon cookies provided. Free and open to the public. Donations appreciated. Call Woodlawn at 667-8671 or email events@woodlawnmuseum.org to reserve a seat. For details, visit [www.woodlawnmuseum.org](http://www.woodlawnmuseum.org).

**HOLDEN** — Talk and photos by Karen Herold, who with her husband and sister hiked the Haute Route from Chamonix, France, to Zermatt, Switzerland, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, at Fields Pond Audubon Center, 216 Fields Pond Road. Presented by Appalachian Mountain Club and Maine Audubon Society. Free and open to the public.

**HOLDEN** — Full moon paddle, 6-8 p.m., and lunar eclipse, 8:30-10 p.m. Monday, Sept. 28, Fields Pond. Coffee, doughnuts and a telescope available to view from shore. Cost \$5 for one event, \$10 for both. Canoe rental with life jacket and paddles, \$5. Headlamps and flashlights encouraged for the paddle; flashlights encouraged for eclipse event. For questions or to register, call the Fields Pond Audubon Center, 216 Fields Pond Road, at 989-2591.

**For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit [www.bangordailynews.com](http://www.bangordailynews.com).**

# Ducks

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“They call it a clover leaf trap,” he said, referring to the assembly of wire fencing that rests in the shallows of the stream. “It’s the same concept as a lobster trap. There’s a funnel that [ducks] get into, and then they kind of mill around and have difficulty finding the way out because of the shape of the funnel.”

At the end of that trap is a wire catch box that looks nearly identical to a lobster trap, which the ducks retreat into as Sullivan approaches from the other side.

Then it’s a simple matter to pull a rope that closes the catch box’s door, capturing the ducks inside.

The ducks don’t seem to mind too much and only flutter their wings briefly as Sullivan transfers them to the holding crate.

“Most ducks are very docile when you handle them,” Sullivan said. “That’s ducks. With geese, they definitely fight back.”

After taking a box full of ducks and putting leg bands on all of them, making sure to clinch the bands down tight so that fishing line isn’t a hazard, Sullivan takes a few notes to record band numbers and other vital details. Then what?

One by one, he tosses the ducks aloft and watches them fly away. Then he waits. Eventually, weeks or months later, receives the data he’s been waiting for.

When a banded duck is shot by a hunter, that hunter passes the data along to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the results are used by biologists in management and planning projects.

“The banding records inform harvest rates, which in turn informs the regulations and what basically is allowed,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan said that in any given year, about 12 percent of Maine’s wood ducks are taken by hunters. If that percentage rises precipitously, that would help biologists justify

more stringent bag limits.

In 2008, the bag limit on wood ducks was raised from two to three, Sullivan said, after data indicated the population wouldn’t be harmed by increasing the limit.

But that doesn’t mean research ended that year.

“If we do something like [raise the limit], we’ve got to make sure that we monitor very closely to make sure that if harvest rate changes [we respond].”

Sullivan explained that because ducks are migratory, the federal government sets a maximum bag limit for them. States can decide their own bag limits for the birds but can not exceed the federal standard.

Sullivan knows plenty of about wood ducks and was happy to share his knowledge. Among those tidbits: Wood ducks are called “wood ducks” for a reason.

“Their feet are adapted to scale trees. They scramble up trees,” Sullivan explained. “They’re cavity nesters, so they’ll nest in a branch that’s dead that has a hole that has rotted out. They’ll land and then climb up into it.”

In order to do that, the wood ducks rely on their claws — tiny toenails that extend from the ends of their webbed feet.

Doubt it? Try to muckle onto a wood duck that wants to take to the air, and you’ll quickly learn that their feet have sharp edges.

Wood ducks were Sullivan’s targets in Hermon, but he said biologists recently completed trapping other species of ducks in Aroostook County.

“[We put on] 605 bands from the beginning of August until the first week of September,” he said.

Among those: 500 mallards, along with some black ducks and wood ducks.

And in addition to learning about duck populations, the annual banding project can turn up some pretty amazing results.

Those migratory ducks aren’t just short-hop travelers, you see. And wherever a hunter bags a bird and



LINDA COAN O’KRESIK

The bands that a put around the wood duck’s legs have an identification number and contact informations to record it with DIF&W. Banding these ducks helps DIF&W keep track of the overall population.

reports the band number, data are shared with biologists.

“Wood ducks? Florida [is the farthest a Maine-banded bird has been found],” Sullivan said. “And then as far west as Missouri.”

But wood ducks don’t stray as far afield as some other species.

“The blue-winged teal that have

been banded in Maine have ended up in Venezuela and Argentina,” Sullivan said. “The furthest banded duck that I know of, that was banded in Maine, ended up in Portugal one year. ... I think what happened was it was in its migratory flight south and a storm hit and it drifted off to sea and ended up in Portugal.”

## Hike

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road to the lighthouse. Along the way, a side trail leads to a view of the ocean atop dramatic cliffs.

Vehicles and pets are not allowed on the road to the lighthouse.

At the entrance of the light station property is an educational display about the lighthouse’s history. It states that a lighthouse was first established at Owls Head by the United States Lighthouse Board in 1823, and that the present tower was built in 1852 and stands 30 feet tall. Atop the cliffs, the light shines about 100 feet above sea level and can be seen for 16 nautical miles.

Below the tower is the lighthouse keeper’s house, which was built in 1854 and has served as the home for many lighthouse keepers and their families. When the light was automated in 1989, there was no longer any need for a

lighthouse keeper. The dwelling became housing for the US Coast Guard personnel stationed in Rockland, and in 2012, it became the headquarters for the nonprofit American Lighthouse Foundation.

No fees are charged at Owls Head State Park or at the lighthouse station, but there is a suggested donation of \$1 to climb the tower, and younger visitors must be at least 42 inches tall to climb. A long wheelchair-accessible ramp climbs to a nice view of the tower.

Owls Head State Park also features an easy, wide gravel path that leads from the parking area to a rocky beach where visitors often go swimming on hot summer days. Keep in mind that there is no stationed lifeguard at this beach.

The park also is a great place for picnicking and wildlife watching, with several benches and picnic tables located near the parking lot and the beach.

Hunting is not permitted on the property. Dogs are not

permitted on the road and path beyond the parking area, however, there is a large picnic area beside the parking area where dogs are allowed.

For more information about the park, visit [maine.gov/owlshhead](http://maine.gov/owlshhead) or call the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands at 941-4014.

**Personal note:** If you look at the dates of my recent outdoor adventures, you’ll notice that I haven’t actually been on a hike for a couple of weeks now. And here’s my reason. Last week, I was on vacation, and just a couple days ago, hiking buddy Derek Runnells and I tied the knot on the shore of Millinocket Lake. But more about that later.

In anticipation of those busy weeks of wedding planning, I stocked up on some “1-minute hike” material by visiting several outdoor locales at the end of August and the beginning of September. One of those locations was Owls Head State Park, which I explored with my mom, Joyce, on Sept. 2.

have created “my first rifles,” guns [that are] pink for little girls. Killing is an activity not to be taken casually, especially by children who have recently learned the names of the animals they are killing. Taking 10-year-olds hunting — that saddens me. I’d like to think they need to hold onto that sense of wonder a little longer. But kids younger than 10? That scares and disturbs me.”

**Harris Cohen of Lakeland, Florida, and Williamantic:** “The key to success, no matter what sport or adventure, there has to be good parenting! Without that, there will be missteps. Age is not the issue.”

**Nan Bradshaw of Dennyville:** “I am not anti-hunting. However, putting a hunting rifle or shotgun in the hands of a child under any circumstances is dangerous. Is a child under the age of 10 capable of learning all of the lessons in a hunter safety course? I took the hunter safety course along with our young son so I could reinforce what I learned, but I do not hunt. I have not read the new law, but I think it should have a provision that a parent who violates the provisions of the law should have his or her hunting license taken away for life.”

**Richard Laffey of Lincoln:** “The 10-year-old minimum [age] has always been a reasonable and relatively safe place to start. The law should have been left alone. I am afraid of some tragic event to follow.”

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## Holyoke

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parents/mentors: thank you, and I commend you. But I do not see the harm in keeping the minimum age at 10. With any restriction or law there will be exceptions to a seemingly arbitrary age requirement, but it provides a certain level of protection from those who are clearly not ready. [As the father of two boys younger than 10], under the current law they can enjoy the great outdoors and come hunting with their grandfathers and I before they are 10, but just not carry a firearm. What better time to teach safety lessons and prepare young hunters than bringing them along without any added danger?”

**John Guay of Corinna:** “My grandson turns 8 in October, and I have two seasons without a youth hunter accompanying me in the great outdoors come November. This new law makes me happy: I can enjoy starting a new person [as a hunter] one year earlier than I had anticipated. The safety and a fun experience will come first, then we will start the actual hunting experience.”

**Larry Ferrell of Newport:** “I would/will gladly take any kid hunting or sponsor them for hunting, but only after that kid has shown the responsibility to take the hunter safety course, either alone or with a parent or other adult. No kid should be allowed to carry a gun, even with a parent beside them, without taking this course. I think Maine has dropped the ball on this one. There is just

too much covered in the hunter safety course. Even the most knowledgeable of parents can’t cover all the safety issues as the course does.”

**Mike Dyer of Blue Hill:** “This law change is just another example of lawmakers wasting their time on senseless legislation. Truly responsible parents will, no doubt, still wait until the youngster is at least 10 to introduce them to the joys of hunting. I can’t say as I’ve heard a huge public outcry on the need to allow 6-year-olds the right to hunt. ... By the way, how does one arm a 55-pound 7-year-old for deer hunting? Surely most will have trouble handling most of today’s accepted deer rifles.”

**Chuck Peters of New Gloucester:** “My big concern has more to do with the effect on the deer population. I see this law as a good opportunity for many parent hunters to fill the tag of their child. I know many hunters who don’t think twice about tagging a deer with their spouse’s or hunting partner’s tag when given the opportunity. Doing this in the presence of a child hunter is not teaching good hunting ethics and the result is a greater number of deer taken. I realize that this is probably already taking place with some parent/child hunters. This law would increase the number of years that a parent has to fill their child’s tag.”

**Diane Smith of Holden:** “Insane.”

**Beverly Roxby of Belfast:** “I fear that as people continue to arm themselves to the hilt with weapons made for use in combat zones, that children will learn that there’s only one reason to go out into a natural area. Gun manufacturers

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