

Anglers look forward to good fall fishing

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

Many anglers wait all winter long for the state's lakes and rivers to shed their winter coats, then spend the spring and early summer hop-scotching from spot to spot, enjoying the most popular of Maine's fishing seasons.

But after the dog days of August arrive and the fishing slows, many of those fishermen head elsewhere — the beach is a good option. Some pack their rods away until the next year.

Others know that if they bide their time, they'll be able to enjoy some top-notch fishing once the mornings turn nippy and the leaves begin to change color.

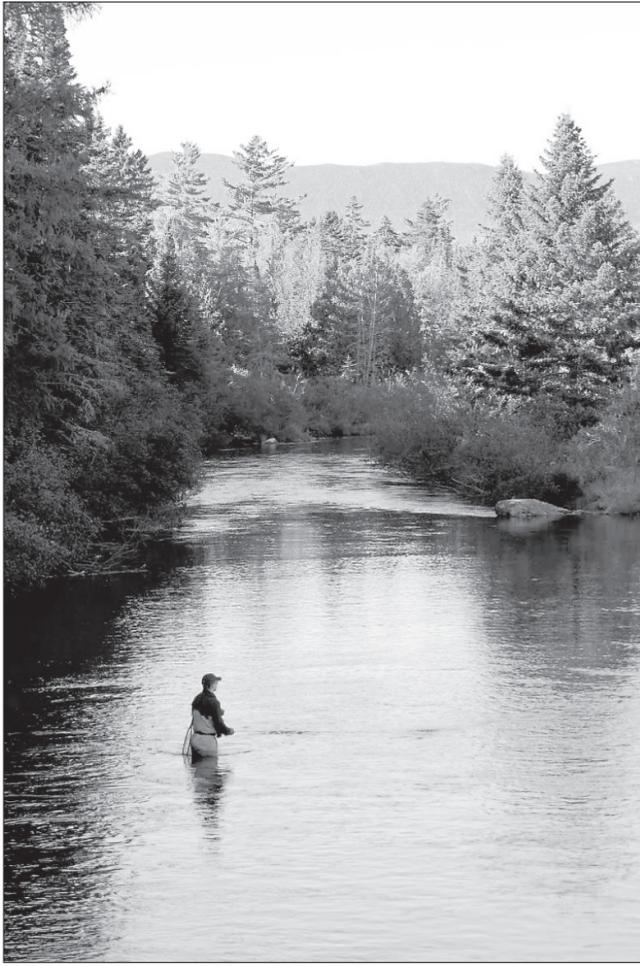
Fall fishing has been upon us for a few weeks now, and those diehard anglers have been busy. What is it about fall fishing that makes the activity special? What drives those anglers to keep fishing after so many have given up? Those were the questions the BDN posed to a few fishermen and biologists.

Here are a few of their responses:

From Jeff McEvoy, the owner of Weatherby's, a traditional sporting camp in the tiny outdoor-oriented village of Grand Lake Stream: "Fishing in GLS in the fall — Cool air, foliage, rising mist on cold mornings," McEvoy wrote in an email. "And the fish are just freaking awesome! Fat, colorful and aggressive. [It's] not always easy fishing, as the fish have other things on their minds, but the quality of the fish is usually far superior to the spring fish, as they have been feeding on smelt all summer long in West Grand Lake."

From Gregory Burr, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's regional fisheries biologist for the Grand Lakes Region: "I think what attracts anglers to fish in the fall is the cool, crisp air, the beautiful foliage and the chance to catch some larger fish in their spectacular spawning colors (the size quality will often be larger in the fall just prior to spawning as fish are gravid with eggs and milt and are just coming off their best growth season)," Burr wrote.

"One of the best fall fisheries we have is for landlocked salmon in



An angler fishes the Roach River in Kokadjo, Maine, in late September. JOHN HOLYOKE | BDN

Grand Lake Stream. The stream is open to fly fishing only and catch and release until Oct. 20. [In late September] Woodland Pulp has increased flows [at the dam at West Grand Lake] at our request and this will start pulling in salmon to the stream from West Grand and Big lakes. As we get closer to Oct. 20, the fishing will get better and better and salmon will be located in all pockets of the stream. Colorful streamers work best in the fall here (The Montreal, Barnes Special, Mickey Finn, Black Ghost and Marabou Muddler).

"Also, your readers shouldn't forget about fishing the many small stocked brook trout ponds that we have open in the fall. Many

of these ponds produce brookies between 13 and 16 inches and are great fun on a light spinning rod or fly rod. These fish have been feeding down in the cold, deep depths all summer and are now coming up into the shallows to feed on insects and small fish and are easily accessible from a canoe, kayak, small boat or float tube. Colorful Rapalas, lures and streamers work the best," Burr wrote.

From fisherman Steven Mogul of Bangor, who looks forward to annual trips to popular fly fishing spots during the fall: "What makes fall fishing special? Color!" Mogul wrote. "The brookies look spectacular in their vibrant spawning colors,



STEVEN MOGUL

A landlocked salmon is netted during a fall fishing adventure.

and holding one (briefly) with the fall foliage behind it ... well, it just about makes me swoon! And the male landlocked salmon have a vicious kype in the fall, so that when you bring a good one to net you might fear a vicious attack. I also enjoy the cool weather and the fleece that comes with it. And maybe the best part of fall fishing: the absence of black flies and mosquitoes. I'd much rather apply sunscreen than DEET ... I'm still hoping to get to [Grand Lake Stream] before it closes, and then maybe to the East Outlet to put the season to bed. I need two more days on the water to reach 25 for this season!"

While the fishing can be fantastic and the scenery unparalleled during the fall, one fisherman said that just being able to spend time on the water made a huge difference during a particularly trying time of his life.

From fisherman John Kirk of Winterport: "Simply put, no hunting on Sundays is not the only reason I didn't hunt in Maine for the first seven years I lived here. The fishing was (and is) good; really good," Kirk wrote. "As summer was winding down in 2004, I was finishing up a fairly epic summer of fishing. From stripers to trout to salmon to bass, it had been an outstanding season.

"From what I had been told, the best what yet to come — just wait for September and October. Little did I know that other life changes were in store for me that made the

need to be on the river that much greater. Not only was summer winding down, but so was my marriage of 11 years.

"For the month of October, I lit out for the East Outlet, mostly by myself, in the dark every Saturday morning from Bangor. I would set up camp at the Sluice, have everything ready for dark and then hit the river. I fished long, demanding days and caught lots of fish. I spent a lot of time, by myself, thinking about my life and what was happening to it. Every so often, that reverie would be broken by the take of salmon or a brook trout, the sound of the drag of my reel and me mumbling to myself, 'Wow, another big salmon.'

"I would return to my campsite after dark. I would make a big fire, cook supper, drink some whiskey and listen to the Red Sox march towards the seemingly impossible. I would get up in the dark, make coffee and breakfast and fish again, grateful for the intrusion of the fish into my brooding.

"When October ended, the East Outlet closed and I moved from my house in Bangor to a small camp in Orrington. Fall fishing was quickly followed, but by no means replaced, by ski season.

"I started hunting again in 2010. I don't seem to fish as much in the fall as I did 10 years ago. The relentless drive has left. What are left are those memories of how that singular purpose in October of 2004 kept me sane."

Willow and Alder Flycatchers nest in Bangor, and the little buggers cannot be told apart visually. But they sound different.



BOB DUCHESNE

Birding

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just weeks before the change. Ouch.

I grew up admiring the solitary vireo. I like the way its bright eyerings join across its beak to give it the appearance of wearing spectacles. Alas, the solitary vireo is no more. In 1997, the American Ornithological Union split it into three different but nearly identical species. Ours became the blue-headed vireo. The two western varieties became Cassin's and plumbeous vireos.

In 1998, the American Ornithological Union split the Traill's flycatcher into two species: willow and alder flycatchers. The two species are virtually identical, and they can only be separated in the field by voice. That same year, the American Ornithological Union split the gray-cheeked thrush into two species, elevating the Bicknell's thrush from subspecies to

full species status. The latter nests on Maine mountaintops. The former flies over the state on its way to Newfoundland to breed.

The thrush split gave me a particular problem. I identified my first gray-cheeked thrush on a slope in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Happily, I checked it off my life list. But when the American Ornithological Union split the species two years later, which bird had I seen? We have loads of winter wrens in Maine. In 2010, the American Ornithological Union decided the western subspecies was different enough to be reclassified as its own species. It is now the Pacific wren. Have I seen one? I don't know.

Every year, the American Ornithological Union takes input from scientists and considers changes to nomenclature and taxonomy. A committee of experts considers the evidence, and if two-thirds agree, a change is made. I dread the annual report. Sometimes, it's good news, as when a split gives me a new bird for my life list. This

happens if I have seen the new bird before it being elevated from a subspecies. Sometimes I lose a bird, as happens if two species are lumped into one. Sometimes, I can become totally confused, as will happen if the American Ornithological Union accepts recommendations to split the white-breasted nuthatch into three species and red crossbills into several. Those proposals have been around for a while, and if it happens, I won't have any idea which birds should remain on my life list and which new birds I'll have to chase.

This year's American Ornithological Union report gave me no trouble. Still, maybe I'll take up stamp-collecting. The names never change.

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sisted of the two guests, the two TV hosts and a camera person.

"Any sort of on-land footage, they would have hair and makeup and have one set of mics on," she said. "They would have to film there, and then before they even got on the river they would change their outfits, probably change mascara and also change [to a microphone that could be immersed in water]."

McDonald said she's happy that viewers will see a slice of wild

Maine in the show. And she said she was amazed at how much work was required to make the filming process work out.

"I think for maybe 25 minutes of footage they took they were out there for eight hours," McDonald said. "It was a very long day for them, but what an experience."

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Things to Do Outdoors

BANGOR — Penobscot Valley Ski Club's annual ski and snowboard equipment sale, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17, at Bangor Parks and Recreation, 647 Main St. New and used equipment including cross-country and downhill skis, boots, poles, apparel, helmets and snowboards available at discounted prices. Bring your used equipment to sell 5-7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, at \$1 per item. Name your price, and the club will sell it for you with a 15 percent commission. For information, visit pvskiclub.org or the Facebook page.

BLUE HILL — Blue Hill Rifle and Pistol Club annual fall shoot and open house, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, at 54 Range Road. Outdoor activities include running and standing deer events, cowboy fast draw, a turkey shoot, archery for children and trap shooting. Indoor range will be open for shooting with air pistols, rifles and .22s. Food available all day, dinner at 5 p.m. Club members on hand to assist and instruct. For more information, visit bluehill-rpc.org.

BLUE HILL — Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's free Firearms Safety Course for hunters, 6-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, at Blue Hill Public Library. You must attend every day of the class to receive your certificate, which is required with first-time license applications. Participants must be at least 10 years old, and all minors will be required to have a signed parental consent form, available at the first session. Registration required at bhpl.net or by calling the library at 374-5515. For more information, visit maine.gov/ifw/education/safety/firearm.htm.

GREENVILLE — Retired music teacher and avid backpacker Ron Dobra will present "Trails Every Which Way," 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21, at Center for Moosehead History, 6 Lakeview Ave. Dobra will give a narrative with occasional slides comparing and contrasting thru-hikes of the Appalachian, International Appalachian, Pacific Crest,

Continental Divide and American Discovery trails. Admission by donation to support Moosehead Community Chorus. For more information, call Keyth Carter at 695-3837.

OWLS HEAD — Trekkers' fifth annual Autumn Auction, Saturday, Oct. 17, at Owls Head Transportation Museum. Includes raffle for three-course dinner for four at chef Laura Cabot's Waldoboro home. Raffle tickets are available at Trekkers office and during the live event. Cost is \$5 for one ticket, \$10 for five tickets, \$20 for 15 tickets. Winning ticket drawn at end of auction. Auction preview, 6-7 p.m.; silent auction, 6 p.m. Appetizer and dessert buffet is \$5. Event admission and bidding are free. Proceeds from the event will be applied to students' program dues. For information, email Shari Closter at shari@trekkers.org, call 594-5095 or visit trekkers.org.

ROCKLAND — Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Friends of Maine's Seabird Islands series of lectures and films about different National Wildlife Refuges in October and November, at the Visitor Center, 9 Water St. Admission is free. Lectures begin at 6:30 p.m. and include the following: William Kolodnicki on Moosehorn, Oct. 19; Michael Langlois on Sunhazey Meadows, Oct. 26; Steve Aguios on Aroostook, Nov. 9; and Ward Feurt on Rachel Carson, Nov. 16. For more information, visit fws.gov.

WINTER HARBOR — Bird observation, 7-8:30 a.m. Wednesdays, Oct. 21 and 28, at Schoodic Institute. Frazer Point Early Bird Flight is the third and newest migration monitoring program being conducted by the Schoodic Institute Bird Ecology Program. Witness songbird migration, learn identification tips, gain bird conservation knowledge and find out about a variety of opportunities to participate as a Schoodic Institute citizen scientist. Bring binoculars and remember to dress for the weather. For information, email sbenz@schoodicinstitute.org or call 288-1350.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Holyoke

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meet us at 8 o'clock in the morning, get on the bus and go rafting with other people' type of trip," McDonald said. "Usually, you have one staff member for eight people in a raft, and you have someone following along on the trip. They couldn't do that."

Instead, this rafting group con-