

Remembering Spring: The 8th Warblers and Wildflowers Festival May 25-30 2006
by Michael J. Good, MS

An event occurred the other day that finally shocked me out of my summer procrastination to write this editorial about the **8th Annual Warblers and Wildflowers Festival May 25-30, 2006: Making the Connection with Nature**. I was guiding a kayak trip on July 27 with a group of children and their parents when we approached a small flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers and Plovers standing at the end of a sandbar not more than 20 feet away from us. Tired from their tundra journey, the birds did not seem to mind one bit that a group of loudish teenagers were so close to them, until one of the kids said they wanted to hold them! Interestingly, the birds did move a few feet at that point! It was at that moment, at the height of summer, that I realized winter was on its way and Fall Migration had begun.

Mount Desert Island was alive with birds this spring especially during the week of the Warblers and Wildflowers Festival. We saw 110 species and approximately 2051 birds. Events were held across MDI and in every village people commented on the number of Warblers/birds that were heard calling. In Tremont, a few Swainson's Thrushes and Black-throated Blue Warblers were heard. Southwest Harbor has retained many uniquely old trees which attract Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Magnolia Warblers and Red-eyed Vireos. In Bar Harbor, Window Panes furniture store owner, Greg Veilleux commented that he "had never heard so many Yellow Warblers in Town before". During May, Mount Desert Island was the destination for thousands of Neotropical Migrant birds making the transition from southern winter grounds to northern breeding destinations throughout North America.

Almost everywhere you go on MDI this summer there are baby Warblers in our forests and wetland habitats. Young-of-the-year Redstart's, Black and White, Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers are the hope of the future for these species and the unique wetland habitats and forests of Maine and Canada are the life-line connection in the interconnected ecological web.

Every year Birds make decisions about when to leave their wintering grounds based on weather and wind and they do it with precision or they die. When the winds are favorable, they take a leap of faith that is tied to generations of ancestors before them. For example, I have been watching a wetland habitat "less than one acre in size" where Canada Warblers have been coming from Ecuador or Columbia for the past 11 years. Every year our Canada Warblers have return in the spring between May 20th and 30th to our unique small Alder swales found along the Gulf of Maine. It is the security of that entangled web of shrubbery that allows them to raise their young and pass on their unique DNA/genes. When species start to "decline or fall out of your neighborhood", for example Hermit Thrush, habitat is being lost and it is this "habitat fragmentation" through destruction of wetland habitat or forests that is one of the causes leading to the decline of our bird populations. By talking about these issues we can make a better

Maine for our children and through our festival send them a positive message of hope for the Gulf of Maine.

Ecotourism is an important aspect of our Island economy captured during our 5 day event. Mount Desert Island has been the destination for many bird watchers over the years. This June 19-25 2006 we were graced with the presence of 625 participants during the American Birding Association annual Convention in Bangor. These fine people spent hard-earned money to come to Maine and have an opportunity to observe, with expert guides, Maine's unique assemblage of Neotropical Migrants in their full breeding plumages and communication calls. Educational across a broad range of interests and specialties the **Annual Warblers and Wildflowers Festival May 25-30, 2006: Making the Connection with Nature** has offered a similar experience. All of the presenters and workshop leaders are experts in their field and incredibly knowledgeable about the detail of our Island and Maine Avian Ecology. Our festival is an opportunity to begin to understand how intensely important Maine's ecology is and the multiple connections it plays in our daily lives.

Thanks to the help of an excellent committee the 8th annual Warblers and Wildflowers Festival ran smoothly and on budget. As chair of this year's committee, Susan Braley from Birch Bay Village must be commended for weathering the spring storms which are still having an effect on our chamber. Bob Bahr, Gina Farnsworth, Pat Samuel, Julie Adams, Marian Burns and Todd Graham brought a high level of skill and knowledge into our committee and deserve a loud round of applause. Thanks also to the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce staff for making the transition into our new head-of-the-Island building during the Festival.

The festival committee wanted to thank all these generous donors of door prizes, talent, time and in-kind services in support of the 8th Annual Warblers & Wildflowers Festival. We would especially like to thank The Mira Monte Inn, Bluesboy Music owner Mark Kanter, Acadia National Park, Alone Moose Gallery and carver Ed Hawkes, Graycote Inn, White Columns Inn, Birch Bay Village, Acadia Wildlife Foundation owner Ann Rivers, Scott and Ruth Grierson, Representative Bob Duchesne, our featured lecturer US Fish and Wildlife Ron Joseph, Capt. Winston Shaw, The Wendell Gilley Museum Southwest Harbor, Thuya and Asticou Gardens, Carl Kelly, Down East Nature Tours, Robert Shaw and National Park Sea Kayak Tours, botanist Allison Dibble, Z Studios and all of the volunteers. The Art Exhibition was made possible through Greg and Julie Veilleux proprietors of Window Panes Furniture store on Cottage Street. Through their efforts we were able to present Island artists, Maryanne Holt Starbird, Marion Smith, R. Scott Baltz and Mari C. Fox-Szauter. Thank you also to Acadia Shops, Alone Moose Fine Crafts, Cadillac Mountain Sports, Down East Nature Tours, Gladstone's Under the Sun, Willis Rock Shop and Bar Harbor Bed and Breakfast Association (refreshments) for all of those fabulous prizes for our opening night gala..

Overall we had an excellent turn out and our participants contributed positively to the economy of Mount Desert Island in a significant way. Warblers and Wildflowers Festival is a good example of how ecotourism contributes to our economy and why this is an important niche market to continue to pursue. Planning for next years festival has

already begun and we are looking for suggestions to make this grand event better. Below is a list of birds seen or heard during May 25-30, 2006.

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Number of Species Observed: 110 species 18 species of Warblers

The following birds were recorded during the 8th Annual Warblers and Wildflowers Festival, Mount Desert Island, Maine May 25-30, 2006. The following list was birds seen or heard by all of the participants during the walks and programs of the festival.

Common Loon	23	
Greater Shearwater	2	
Northern Gannet	14	
Double-crested Cormorant		136
Great Cormorant	8	
American Bittern	3	
Great Blue Heron	3	
Turkey Vulture	14	
American Black Duck	2	
Mallard	21	
Blue-winged Teal	2	
Common Eider	100	
Surf Scoter	1	
Common Merganser	1	
Osprey	13	
Bald Eagle	10	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	
Northern Goshawk	1	
Broad-winged Hawk	2	
Merlin	2	
Peregrine Falcon	9	
Sora	1	
Killdeer	2	
Spotted Sandpiper	2	
American Woodcock	2	
Laughing Gull	33	
Ring-billed Gull	25	
Herring Gull	188	
Great Black-backed Gull	21	
Common Tern	27	
Arctic Tern	15	
Common Murre	2	
Razorbill	50	
Black Guillemot	88	
Atlantic Puffin	39	
Rock Dove	55	
Mourning Dove	21	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	
Barred Owl	2	

Common Nighthawk	7	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		17
Belted Kingfisher	2	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1
Downy Woodpecker	4	
Hairy Woodpecker	7	
Northern Flicker	4	
Pileated Woodpecker		5
Eastern Wood-Pewee		3
Alder Flycatcher	8	
Least Flycatcher	3	
Eastern Phoebe	5	
Great Crested Flycatcher	13	
Eastern Kingbird	2	
Blue-headed Vireo	5	
Red-eyed Vireo	24	
Blue Jay	18	
American Crow	40	
Common Raven	6	
Tree Swallow	18	
Cliff Swallow	4	
Barn Swallow	1	
Black-capped Chickadee	32	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	
Brown Creeper	1	
Winter Wren	5	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	16	
Veery	2	
Swainson's Thrush	7	
Hermit Thrush	25	
American Robin	19	
Gray Catbird	2	
European Starling	5	
Cedar Waxwing	84	
Nashville Warbler	6	
Northern Parula	31	
Yellow Warbler	2	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	19	
Magnolia Warbler	20	
Cape May Warbler	2	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	14	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	41	
Black-throated Green Warbler	93	
Blackburnian Warbler	31	
Pine Warbler	3	
Blackpoll Warbler	20	
Black-and-white Warbler	10	
American Redstart	49	
Ovenbird	25	
Northern Waterthrush	3	
Common Yellowthroat	50	
Canada Warbler	6	
Scarlet Tanager	3	
Eastern Towhee	6	
Chipping Sparrow	13	

Savannah Sparrow	2
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	12
Song Sparrow	19
Swamp Sparrow	32
White-throated Sparrow	9
Dark-eyed Junco	23
Northern Cardinal	3
Indigo Bunting	1
Bobolink	35
Red-winged Blackbird	7
Common Grackle	17
Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Purple Finch	23
House Finch	10
Pine Siskin	4
American Goldfinch	50
House Sparrow	53