

## Acadia Birding Festival 2009: Connecting Land and Sea through our Watersheds and Birds

by Michael J. Good, MS

As old man winter pulls us farther from the warmth of the summer sun, there is time to reflect on the people, organizations and birds, that made our 11<sup>th</sup> Acadia Birding Festival June 11-14, an island-wide success. Bird watchers from around the United States, Barcelona, Spain and Canada, came to Mount Desert Island (MDI) this June to experience the unique spring migration and early breeding season of our Neotropical migrant and year round resident birds. They also enjoyed vibrant flowering plants and our amazing Asticou Azalea Garden where Rhodora and flowering Cherry tree dazzled their olfactory senses and offered opportunities to see Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Warblers by the waters edge.

Acadia Birding Festival (ABF) is a celebration of avian life on Mount Desert Island, promoting thriving ecosystems and a healthy productive Gulf of Maine bio-region. This year's festival focused on the Penobscot River Restoration Project and those important watershed connections between land and sea that sustain our Maine economy and make us free people. Understanding the relationship between human networks and natural ecosystems is an important goal of Acadia Birding Festival. ABF celebrated this project because it heralds wide-ranging ecological benefits for the Penobscot River and Gulf of Maine by opening 1000 miles of riverine habitat .

For example, the wetland transition zones where birds forage on insects are the same wetlands nourishing the commercial fisheries allowing lobsterman to feed their traps with Alewives. Important species like American Eel, Atlantic salmon and American Sturgeon will thrive from the nutrients of Maine's open riverine systems and traditional breeding grounds. The Penobscot River Restoration Project is vital for the restitution of our faltering fishing industry and will prove itself with return on investment through enhanced and thriving coastal ecosystems. Protecting our natural resources is not a luxury for good economic times, on the contrary, policy makers must understand that thriving ecosystems and environmental concerns are tied to a sustainable economy and keeping Maine people and our tourists safe and secure through an enhanced food production system and job development. Americans must become better stewards of our watersheds and important ecological resources like the Gulf of Maine.

During Acadia Birding Festivals' public forum: **Connecting Land and Sea: Engaging people in the Natural Landscape through Poetic Interpretation** , it was a privilege and honor to host COA president **David Hales, Bill Carpenter, Cheryl Daigle, Kristen Lindquist, Stuart Kestenbaum, Catherine Schmitt and Candace Stover**. This amazing and talented panel of literary writers and poets lead us to a deeper understanding of watersheds, native sea-run fish populations, and the importance of thriving ecosystems. How we view the world around us will be shaped by the stories and poems that are written for future generations. A special thanks to technology specialist Zack Soares at the College of the Atlantic for helping preserved this event at <http://www.vimeo.com/7453780>.

Acadia Birding Festival participants experienced the open ocean aboard the Friendship V, where pelagic birds and whales have evolved over millennium. Pelagic birds live at sea except for the brief breeding period on land and are "life birds" for many people from around the world. Acadia Birding Festival would like to thank the expert staff and naturalists aboard the Friendship V and

the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company. Thank you for your continued support for a healthy Gulf of Maine fishery.

The 2009 Acadia Birding Festival had an outstanding group of featured guests including **Leslie Clapp, Alison Dibble, Jennifer Greene, Ed Hawkes, Billy Helprin, Steve Ingraham, Craig Kesselheim, Becky Marvil, Zack Klyver, David Lamon, Abby McBride, Wayne Petersen, Robert Shaw, and Scott Swann**. This is a talented group of people and we would like to thank them for their lifelong commitment to a deeper understanding of birds, bird communication and outdoor education. Alison Bell has been the “go to” person and coordinator of the daily field events and has smoothed over many rough spots. These experts are the core of Acadia Birding Festival and our community.

I would like to give a special thank you to our guest speaker, **Wayne Petersen**, director of the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He has been an inspiration for his dedication and understanding of New England ornithology and communicating that information to the public. His jovial and engaging personality mixed with the torrents of rain falling all week produced a steady stream of laughter and fun for participants. Everyone enjoyed his broad understanding of ornithology and in depth analysis of particular species. The Northern “Rain” Forest was in rare form and everyone was impressed by the 3.09 inches of rain on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. A special thanks to Barbara Petersen for recognizing the importance of outdoor education in our schools and promoting a new awareness of environmental issues.

The following organizations made the 2009 Acadia Birding Festival possible through financial and in-kind services. Their contribution is greatly appreciated by the organizing committee and the MDI community. **Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Hutchins Cottages, College of the Atlantic, Down East Nature Tours, Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company, Friends of Acadia, National Park Sea Kayak, Abbe Museum, The Water Research Institute of Blue Hill, Southwest Harbor/Tremont Chamber of Commerce, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The West Eden Village Improvement Society, Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Alone Moose Fine Crafts and Waterfront Suites, Mike! Woodard Realty, Thurston’s Lobster Pound, Down East Audubon, Union Trust, First Express, Rhoades Building Products, Lynam Insurance, Miguel’s Mexican Restaurant, Havana, Guinness & Porcelli’s Italian Cuisine, Rupununi: an American Bar and Grill, Quarterdeck, Window Panes, Bar Harbor Bank and Trust, Two Cats, Massachusetts Audubon, West Street Café, The Inns at Ullikana, Holland Inn, Ann’s Point Inn, Mira Monte Inn, Ann’s Point Cottages, Aysgarth Station, Bass Harbor Cottages and Country Inn, Acadia Cottages and Graycote Inn.** Please support these local businesses by going to our sponsors’ page at [www.AcadiaBirdingFestival.com](http://www.AcadiaBirdingFestival.com).

ABF would also like to recognize the important conservation work of the “Beginning with Habitat” coalition including Maine Inland, Fisheries and Wildlife. Every town government in Maine should familiarize themselves with this document and the concept of beginning with habitat as a landscape approach to assessing wildlife and plant conservation needs and opportunities.

Acadia Birding Festival has started to prepare next year’s program June 10-13, 2010. We are pleased to announce that keynote speaker Paul Kerlinger, past director of Cape May Bird

Observatory, author and ornithology expert, will address the issue of “Bird Migration, Wind Turbines and Communication Towers”.

Many ecological questions arise from our increased use of these technologies. ABF will offer an opportunity to look more deeply and find solutions to the number of bird fatalities and the role of night time lighting systems associated with communication towers. Land use and night sky issues greatly affect bird migration and will a focus of this year’s festival. We look forward to hosting Paul on June 10, 2010 and seeing you there.

Michael J. Good, MS

Founder and director of Acadia Birding Festival

[www.AcadiaBirdingFestival.com](http://www.AcadiaBirdingFestival.com)

## 2009 Acadia Birding Festival Bird List

This year's event started in the rain on Thursday June 12, heavy rain on Friday, clearing to perfect blue sky and calm on Saturday and drizzle on Sunday. The birding was good with **101 species seen or heard and approximately 10,834 individual birds observed.**

Canada Goose	6
American Black Duck	4
Mallard	15
Common Eider	232
White-winged Scoter	2
Black Scoter	3
Hooded Merganser	7
Common Loon	11
Northern Fulmar	7
Greater Shearwater	12
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	3,500
Northern Gannet	6
Double-crested Cormorant	40
American Bittern	1
Great Blue Heron	3
Turkey Vulture	10
Osprey	7
Bald Eagle	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Northern Goshawk	1
Peregrine Falcon	4
American Woodcock	3
Parasitic Jaeger	1
Laughing Gull	1,184
Ring-billed Gull	35
Herring Gull	450
Gt Black-backed Gull	18
Roseate Tern	1
Common Tern	2,602
Arctic Tern	1,337
Common Murre	16
Razorbill	204
Black Guillemot	95
Atlantic Puffin	268
Rock Dove	35
Mourning Dove	12
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1
Common Nighthawk	1
Chimney Swift	4
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	4
Belted Kingfisher	1
Downy Woodpecker	5
Hairy Woodpecker	7
Northern Flicker	3
Pileated Woodpecker	2
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	5
Alder Flycatcher	8
Least Flycatcher	2

Eastern Phoebe	4
Eastern Kingbird	1
Blue-headed Vireo	10
Red-eyed Vireo	20
Blue Jay	16
American Crow	65
Common Raven	8
Tree Swallow	2
Cliff Swallow	1
Barn Swallow	6
Black-capped Chickadee	35
Red-breasted Nuthatch	24
Brown Creeper	4
Winter Wren	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	25
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Swainson's Thrush	2
Hermit Thrush	12
Wood Thrush	1
American Robin	40
Gray Catbird	5
European Starling	29
Cedar Waxwing	25
Nashville Warbler	6
Northern Parula	5
Yellow Warbler	3
Chestnut-sided Warbler	10
Magnolia Warbler	4
Black-throated Blue Warbler	4
Yellow-rumped Warbler	18
Black-throated Green Warbler	25
Blackburnian Warbler	15
Pine Warbler	3
Black-and-white Warbler	5
American Redstart	16
Ovenbird	10
Common Yellowthroat	18
Scarlet Tanager	1
Chipping Sparrow	10
Song Sparrow	16
Swamp Sparrow	7
White-throated Sparrow	8
Dark-eyed Junco	12
Northern Cardinal	3
Bobolink	5
Red-winged Blackbird	7
Common Grackle	3
Purple Finch	10
White-winged Crossbill	5
Pine Siskin	27
American Goldfinch	18
House Sparrow	12

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Total birds seen and heard= 10,834