



# Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

## Weekly Report

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

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Thursday, March 22, 2012

### OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Week of March 19 - 23

- The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife met on Wednesday the 21st and discussed LD's 1652 and 1849. Commissioner Woodcock was in attendance.
- The Commissioner spoke to the Seminary Hill Daylight Lodge at a luncheon held on March 22nd in Bangor.
- The Commissioner attended the Mollycokett Chapter of TU Fly Fishing Show in Bethel on Saturday, March 24th.

On March 14th Game Warden David Ross received information in reference to a subject in the town of Standish killing deer in closed season. On March 15th Warden Mike Pierre and Sgt Jason S. Luce went to the residence located on the Bliss Road. After a short interview the subject admitted to killing a deer over bait during the month of February. A brand new PSE compound bow (purchased the week before the deer was killed) and several packages of deer meat were seized. The subject was charged with killing a deer in closed season and was also arrested by the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office for an outstanding arrest warrant.

### MAINE WARDEN SERVICE

On March 14th, 12-year-old Micah Thomas did not return home after getting off the school bus. He was located alive but cold the following afternoon by searchers along the Eastern River. The search began on the east side of the Eastern River but ended on the west shore after Thomas crossed the river over night. Thomas told authorities he did not hear searchers or airplanes until the morning when he began hollering. At approximately 2:00 pm, a civilian searcher who lives in the area heard Micah hollering and came to his aid. He was found without his boots and showing signs of hypothermia.



A nearby Maine Marine Patrol boat responded and brought Micah on board. He was transported to the boat landing on Route 197 where he was treated by medical personnel and transported to the hospital for evaluation.

On Saturday Wardens Steve Allarie and Troy Thibodeau responded to Readfield for a male subject that went through the ice while riding an ATV on Torsey Pond. The male subject was able to get out of the water and crawled to a nearby Island and called 911. Wardens Mike Joy and Rick LaFlamme responded with an airboat and were able to rescue the subject from the island. The ATV is in about 8 feet of water. The subject is making arrangements to have the ATV recovered.

Game Warden Gary Sibley was called out to a serious personal injury snowmobile crash at two thirty Friday morning. The operator who was under the influence of alcohol failed to negotiate a corner on ITS 85 and went careening into a tree. The end result was two broken femurs, a head injury and possible internal injuries.

Wardens Neal Wykes, Josh Smith, Tony Gray, and Sergeant Tim Spahr responded to a plane crash on Pleasant Pond on the Casco Otisfield line. Wardens assisted Maine State Police and the Federal Aviation Administration in the investigation. As ice conditions were becoming unsafe, the plane full of aviation fuel was at risk of sinking. In an outstanding display of ATV operation, Warden Wykes towed the wrecked plane to shore. Maine Department of Environmental protection also responded. The pilot suffered a broken ankle.



### INFORMATION CENTER

Last week the front office of the Department received and replied to:

- 964 Phone calls
- 704 Emails
- 73 Walk-ins



Missed an issue?

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## FISHERIES & HATCHERIES DIVISION

### Excerpt from an e-mail to Biologist Francis Brautigam regarding Donations and Department Support:

*"We have another DIF&W donation check on its way which was a percentage of proceeds raised from the Patriot Polar Plunge. That money will also be earmarked for DIF&W Region A trout management. We also request that the donations be solely controlled by you (Lead Biologist of Region A). We want to make sure the money is used for Region A trout management and not something else. Most of all our volunteers (over 100) trust you and know the money will be used properly under your control and not shifted to another account.*

*It's obvious and clear to our volunteers that Region A DIF&W fish biologists and hatcheries need additional financial support to maximize efforts led by the hard working staff. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out just by walking through the Region A hatcheries or the DIF&W Region A office. I hope someday my 2 1/2 year old son's grandkids still will be able to catch a trout in Maine. Without hard working staff like you, Greg Bell and many others that make every penny count we would of failed a long time ago. It's the people behind DIF&W that make it possible. THANK YOU for all your hard work and dedication to make Maine and trout management possible Francis!"*

Surveys were conducted on a number of lakes this winter throughout Region F, including West Lake, Nicatous Lake, Duck Lake, Lower Pistol, Spring Lake, Cold Stream Pond and Upper Cold Stream Pond. With a late start because of poor ice conditions in January, and an earlier than normal finish because of warm temps and eroding ice conditions, it appears that angler effort this winter is about half what we would have expected. Success rate for anglers checked ranged from parties with limits of trout (brooks and browns), landlocked salmon and lake trout, to a number of parties with no fish, which is about what is expected on average during the course of the winter.

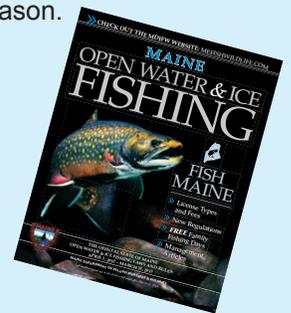
Region F staff set trapnets at Pushaw Lake last week in anticipation of pike spawning. The early ice out on the inlet and outlet have Northern pike on the move to the spawning grounds, and we were able to start our annual monitoring effort after clearing some shell ice around the edges of the channel. After only a couple of days set we have captured 5 female pike in pre-spawning condition, so we feel confident that we will have a good spring. Last year we captured 78 pike preparing to spawn, and our expectation this year is for a higher kill. Pike were illegally stocked into Pushaw 10+ years ago, and much time and effort has been spent there, trying to eliminate them in years since.

*-Provided by Nels Kramer, Biologist*

It's with great pleasure that I can announce the promotion of Joe Overlock to the Assistant Regional Biologist position in Jonesboro. Those of you that have worked with Joe know that he brings to us an outstanding and varied skill set, great enthusiasm, and a strong interest in fisheries science and management. He truly is a "keeper"!

Also, we welcome Kevin Dunham as the new Assistant Regional Biologist in Enfield. Kevin comes to us from the Department of Marine Resources where since 2001 he worked on a variety of Atlantic salmon restoration projects in the Penobscot River drainage. Kevin also held seasonal project positions in our Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions prior to being hired by DMR, and he is a UMaine graduate.

Ice is rapidly disappearing in southern Maine....Sebago is ice free, including the major public launches at the state park, Jordan Bay, and the Standish "station". A number of new regulation changes are in place on Sebago this year, including a new suite of lake trout regulations designed to reduce and restructure the lake trout population and increase smelt abundance. Anglers should review the new law book for these and other changes. Mousam Lake is reported to be open, with other area lakes in York and Cumberland Counties likely to be more or less ice free within the week. Recently adopted regulations allowing anglers to fish most lakes and ponds in the 12 coastal Maine counties year round will afford open water anglers an opportunity to fish well before April 1, the traditional start to the open water fishing season.



## INFORMATION & EDUCATION



A selection has been made and we would like to welcome Doug Rafferty as the new Director of Information and Education. He will be joining us the first week of April. We are very pleased and excited to have Doug joining IF&W.



The Merrymeeting Bay Trust recently granted \$2500 to Swan Island to be used specifically for scholarships to the wildlife/conservation education programs offered twice weekly in May, June, September and October. Within days of announcing the availability of the scholarships, most of the programming was filled – a real boost for Swan Island and for the approximately 500 kids that will participate.

## WILDLIFE DIVISION

### Winter Habitat Management Activities on WMA's

By: Ryan Robicheau, Lands Management Biologist

This past winter was an active one for the Wildlife Division's management on Wildlife Management Areas. Several timber harvests were conducted for the improvement of wildlife habitat, three of which are briefly described below.

- In Region A, work was conducted in thinning red pine plantations at the Vernon S. Walker WMA, with a goal of improving the health and vigor of the stands as well as initiate regeneration of desirable native, natural forest. Over time, these planted stands of red pine will be replaced for naturally regenerated white and pitch pine.
- In Region B, at the Frye Mountain WMA, timber harvesting operations were focused on providing softwood cover for wildlife species as well as continuing early successional habitat management begun in the mid-1980's. Early successional habitat is a necessity for numerous wildlife species, including ruffed grouse and woodcock.
- In Region C, work at the R. Lyle Frost WMA was completed to promote diverse age classes of softwood cover, mainly for winter deer shelter. The efforts focused on the release of advanced regeneration currently established, as well as increasing the forest stand compositions to longer lived spruce and hemlock; as opposed to the relatively short lived balsam fir.



Joe Wiley, IFW wildlife biologist assigned to the Bureau of Parks and Lands, spoke to 50 members of the Rangeley Region Guide's and Sportsmen's Association at their monthly meeting on March 15. The title of Wiley's talk was "How deer survive the Winter". A lively question and answer session followed the presentation.

During the afternoon Wiley evaluated two local public lots for potential wildlife plantings beneficial to deer with a representative of the RGSA.

## LICENSING DIVISION

With the recent warm weather, Licensing and Registration Division personnel have been very busy this past week answering questions and helping people to get their boats registered and purchase their fishing licenses for the spring season.

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**AND**

[Click here](#) to get your fishing license!

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The Department will be attending the 2012 Sportsman Show in Presque Isle this weekend, and the State of Maine Sportsman Show in Augusta next weekend.

**Visit our booth and talk to our knowledgeable staff!**



The Duck Stamp contest is also being held during the Augusta Sportman Show. Come witness the judging and see the great work of local artists! Judging will take place on March 30, 2012, starting at 5pm, in the Art Room.