



Swallow Tales

Hirundo Winter Newsletter

Dogsledding Event Returns to Hirundo!!

Stephanie Larouche , Board Chair

We are excited to announce that once again Hirundo is offering opportunity to experience a ride in a dogsled at **Family Day** on **February 8!**

Stephen Madera, a registered Maine guide, has graciously agreed to bring his dog teams from the Moosehead Lake region to Hirundo for your enjoyment. From his website songinthewoods.com: "We pride ourselves in customized back country adventures at affordable prices... My furry friends and I started *Song in the Woods* in 1997 as a dogsled adventure company. I personally wanted to bring a taste of the past to our fast-paced society."

We are so grateful to Stephen for offering this opportunity, and to Machias Savings Bank of Brewer for sponsoring the event this year for Hirundo's 50th Year Anniversary Celebration. Mark your calendars for a day of excitement and fun in the beauty of the Maine woods!



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Snakes in Winter

Bucky Owen

Except for the occasional "snow snake on a branch", snakes disappear from our sight for the winter months. The lack of food and warmth forces the reptiles into 'brumation'. Unlike hibernating mammals, snakes remain alert but are lethargic, do not and cannot feed (even if they could find food) during this time. Their metabolism is slowed down so much that the digestive system shuts down. To avoid freezing snakes seek out rodent burrows or other acceptable locations, below the frost line. They gather in hibernacula to overwinter. These can contain over 200 snakes of multiple species.



See SNAKES page 4

Winter Fun ...



2014 Biathlon Winner



Father and daughter team



Animal adaptation in winter –
searching for the elusive snowshoe hare



Aim...



throw...



... count ...



... and run !



Dog power

Upcoming Programs 2015

| DATE | TIME | PROGRAM | PRESENTER | LOCATION |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Sunday, Jan 11 | 1 pm | Winter Ecology | Bucky Owen | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, Jan. 18 | 1 pm | Introduction to Snowshoeing | Gudrun Keszöcze | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, Jan. 25 | 1 pm | Cross-country Ski Clinic, I | Karen Francoeur | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, Feb. 1 | 1 pm | Snowshoe adventure on Groundhog Day | HWR-Volunteers, Gudrun Keszöcze | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, Feb. 8 | 10:30 am - 4 pm | Winter Family Day & Dogsledding | Song in the Woods, Bucky Owen, volunteers | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, Feb. 15 | 2:30 - 4:30 pm | Cross-country Ski Clinic, II | Karen Francoeur | HWR Gate 1 |
| Sunday, March 15 | 1 - 4 pm | What's in an owl pellet? | Thomas Williams & Gudrun Keszöcze | TBA |



Recap and news

Once again, Hirundo Wildlife Refuge participated in the Old Town Riverfest, thanks to the generosity of the Riverfest committee. Many new people learned about the Refuge and we enjoyed all the familiar faces who took the time to stop by.

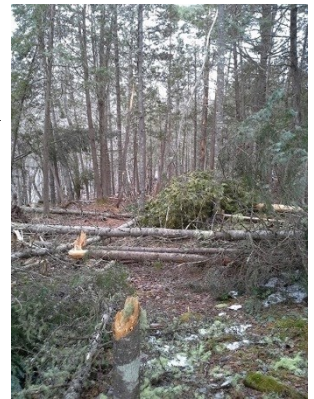
One big event of the autumn was **Halloween at Hirundo**. The idea simmered for several years and energetic Sally Jones of Bangor set it ablaze! She created tombstones of extinct animals which once roamed the Refuge and prepared mask making for everyone. The highlight however was scare-crow making. All the participants helped Sally assemble the pumpkin-headed scare-crow filled with seeds and fruits, adorned with suet and crabapples for animals to feast upon. Students and parents of the Stillwater Montessori School held a **"Trunk & Treat"** at the Pine Tree parking area. Goblins, princesses, knights, ladybugs and many others moved from one decorated trunk to another in search of treats and scares. With the fall of darkness the mood changed. Little chatty goblins gave way to moaning shadows along a dimly lit trail or jumping out of trees. At last we found a light in the distance, crossing the Bridge to the Future we

stepped into the tent of a mysterious old woman who gently took our hands and .. well, ... find out next year! Same place around Halloween. Thanks to all 65 people for making the first Halloween at Hirundo such a success!



John Mitchell a UMaine alumnus who worked with Hirundo's founder Oliver Larouche, and his company Idexx Lab of Portland sponsored two days of work upgrading the trails at the Refuge.

And then there was November. This first snow storm toppled many trees making several path impassable. A BIG thank you goes to the members of the UMaine Woodmen's Team who repeatedly worked with chainsaws and lots of elbow grease clearing trails for safe passage. And we could have not done it without the help of the Alternative Break Teams and Fraternities who worked their way through snow and ice removing yet more fallen trees.



SNAKES continued

Maine is home to nine non-venomous snake species, but only a few species occur as far north as the Greater Bangor area. These include: Redbelly Snake, Ring-neck Snake, Ribbon Snake, Milk Snake, Smooth Green Snake and, by far the most common, the Garter Snake.



Garter snakes are unique, extending their range to Hudson Bay, hundreds of miles further north than any other reptile species. This occurs because they are ovoviviparous, meaning that they are egg laying but bear live young (which is true for four more species, remaining species lay eggs). The female retains fertilized eggs within her body. These hatch internally and emerge as juvenile snakes. The eggs remain in a controlled, internal, warm environment while developing in a northern harsh climate. Garter snakes feed primarily on earthworms but also consume insects and small birds and mammals. In turn, they are eaten by hawks, owls, foxes, skunks, coyotes, and raccoons.

At the Hirundo Refuge there is a hibernaculum called "The Snake Pit." This is a depression into which farmers tossed rocks while clearing their fields as opposed to building rock walls. On warm sunny days in spring, one can observe several species, but primarily Garter Snakes, warming themselves on the rocks and looking for a mate.

Recap and news continued

Green Team raises \$160 through cookie sale



UMaine Green Team members gathered to pass on the gift of \$160. Pictured from left to right Gloria Vollmers, Treasurer, Hirundo Wildlife Trust, Jayson Peltier (Philanthropy Chair), Paige Theberge (member), Gwen Walsh (Social Chair), and handing over the check is Sabrina Vivian (President). **Thank you for your on-going support!**

Welcome new members!

Joanne & Joe Alex
 Dick and Joan Andren
 Larry and Barbara Beauregard
 Melissa Burch and Jim Bulteel
 Elvin M. Drake
 John and Carol Gregory
 Andrew and Patty Hamilton
 Glen Koehler & G. Keszöcze
 Stephanie Larouche
 Roger Merchant
 Merrill Milham & Ann Davidoff
 Scott Mitchell
 Sue and Bucky Owen
 Adriaan & Magriet Van Heiningen
 Paul W. Vienneau
 Gloria Vollmers
 Sharon Wilson
 Diana and James Young

With your membership donations, Hirundo works to connect children and their families with the wonders of nature through programing, educational outreach and free open access to trails, both on land and on the water!

Hirundo celebrates 50th year Anniversary in 2015

In 1965, Oliver Larouche founded Hirundo Wildlife Refuge beginning with 3 acres. Oliver's interest and love for the area and wildlife dates back to his childhood when he and his twin brother Charles, spent summers at the camp called the Twins Nest along Pushaw Stream.



Oliver named the Refuge after the Hirundinidae, the Swallow Family, and distributed his handmade nesting boxes throughout the Refuge. He enjoyed visitors and worked closely with the University of Maine in many social and research projects conducted at the Refuge. Most prominent was the archaeological excavation in the 1970s, unearthing evidence of human occupation beginning 7,500 years ago. Lac D'or was the focus of two fish population studies in 1971 and 1988/1989. A Habitat Cover Type Map and a study of the rare Orono Sedge found at the Refuge occurred the same year. A wetland bird inventory followed in 1993.

Since 2010 new studies, projects and programs have re-kindled Oliver's connections with the University of Maine and created new ones. His foresight, 50 years ago allows us and future generations to enjoy this large parcel of varied forests and extensive peatlands now totaling 2460 acres Thank you Oliver!



Smile –
 a message from Hirundo Wildlife

Thank You Volunteers!

- Jean Adamson - Turtles of Maine
- Lee Kantar, MIFW - Update on Maine Moose
- John Mitchell sponsored by Idexx Lab of Portland - Trail Maintenance
- Sally Jones - Halloween at Hirundo
- Green Team - Halloween Trail Prep, Trail Maintenance
- Brothers of Alpha Gamma Rho - Scary Shadows of the Halloween Forest
- Jo Anne and Jo Alex Stillwater Montessori School & all the parents who made "Trunk & Treat" possible
- University of Maine Woodmens Team - Trail clearing
- Alternative Spring Break Teams lead by Samantha Lemmler & Maddie Shaw - Trail Maintenance
- Scouts from Clifton building bird feeders
- Donne Sinderson – spider ID
- Deanna Fahey, Sarah Pinatti, Jayson Pelletier, Emily Anderson,
- Katie Tilton & Garrett Raymond, Greg Innes - UMaine Homecoming
- Sarah Pinatti – PR
- Deanna Fahey & Glen Koehler – Newsletter
- Sam Hess - Birds-eye-view Video & Quadcopter Demonstration
- Brothers of Sigma Phi Epsilon, UMaine
- Students of the Intensive English Institute and Karen Francoeur - Trail Maintenance

We apologize should your name be missing.



Woodmens Team working on the trail.



Mask making during Halloween at Hirundo.

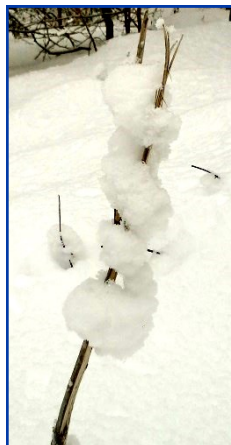
Bobbing for apples on a string



Question of the Quarter:

What is wrapped around the stick and how did it happen?

Remember you have to be specific!



Send your answer by March 15, 2014 to either:

web@hirundomaine.org

or

Hirundo Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 266, Orono, ME 04473

Winner will receive a Blue Bird nesting box.

We thank the following Businesses, Institutions & Organizations for their on-going support:

- Bodwell Center for Volunteers
- Castine Kayak
- Griffin & Jordon, LLC
- Noonan Chiropractic
- Old Town Canoe
- Old Town Rotary Club
- Gossamer Press
- Stillwater Montessori School
- Cyr Bus Lines
- Rose Bike Shop
- La Bree's Bakery
- Owen J. Folsom
- Penobscot RiverKeepers
- University of Maine

Hirundo relies on investments of time and money donated by the local community.

Thank you for your support.
We could not do it without you!



Would you like to share your talents?

We welcome your assistance with any of the following:

Program Committee

- ◆ Publicity ◆ Brochures ◆ Website updating ◆ Photography
- ◆ Lead walks, present a program

Development Committee

- ◆ Fundraising ◆ Grant writing ◆ Data entry

Stewardship and Trails Committee

- ◆ Trail maintenance ◆ Fauna & Flora inventories

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dick Andren, Vice Chair

Laurent Beauregard

Brenda Jackson

Dianne Kopec

Roxane Larouche

Stephanie Larouche, Chair

Veronica Larouche

Rad Mayfield, III

Roger Merchant

Bucky Owen

Gloria Vollmers, Treasurer

....your name could be here

YOUR SUPPORT

Hirundo Wildlife Refuge is a private, non-profit organization that depends on public donations and volunteers to run our programs.

We receive our funding from grants and donations for the preservation of wildlife and forest management and are not supported financially by the University of Maine, or any other institution.

Your support of Hirundo is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Please make your tax deductible donation on-line hirundomaine.org/support
Or mail a check to:

Hirundo Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 266
Orono, Me 04473

Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership categories,

please check level of support

- ☐ \$1000 Bull Moose - Life Time Member
- ☐ \$ 500 Eagle -Friend of Refuge
- ☐ \$ 250 Bobcat—Sustaining Member
- ☐ \$ 100 Fox - Supporting Member
- ☐ \$ 50 River Otter - Family
- ☐ \$ 35 Tree Swallow - Individual
- ☐ \$ 15 Spring Peeper - Student

**"We will conserve only what we love.
We will love only what we understand.
And we will understand only what we
are taught."**

-Baba Dioum
Senegalese conservationist