

*Dedicated to Conservation and Education in the Somes Pond Watershed*

Summer 2012

Issue No. 13

SOMES-MEYNELL  
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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1898 – 1990

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## Message from the Board

**A**t a meeting this spring in Somesville, our volunteer Board of Directors gathered to discuss the current issues facing our organization and the Somes Pond watershed we serve. As we went around the table, the ideas and comments were remarkably diverse: educational programming for local schools; the early ice out and changing climate; funding needs and strategies; invasive plants and erosion concerns; maintaining the fish ladders; caring for our walking trails; building an ethic of stewardship throughout the watershed.

At one point in the discussion, one of our long-term Board members wondered aloud, “What would Virginia think?” (referring to Virginia Somes Sanderson, the Sanctuary’s founder). The response soon followed: she would be proud to see the commitment of those around the table, and pleased that the circle of support for the SMWS has rippled out through the community in recent years to include so many of you. Twenty five years ago, it was Dr. Sanderson and a handful of her close friends and advisors who shouldered the work and responsibility for protecting the pond. Today, many of you have joined the effort, attending our programs, helping monitor nesting loons or the annual alewife run, enjoying the trails, or supporting our work financially with a charitable contribution. Through your involvement, you are stewards of this land and watershed.

*Continued on page 5*

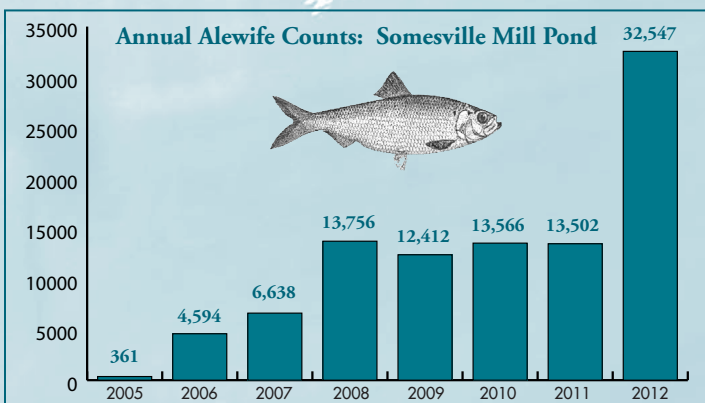
## They’re Back!

**I**n this issue of the Sanctuary newsletter we celebrate the return of one of nature’s most remarkable migratory events. Imagine massive schools of alewives (also known as River Herring), numbering in the millions that swim in the Gulf of Maine, as far as 120 miles out. Then the adults move, in huge waves, back inshore and up into freshwater to return to their natal spawning waters. Once they have spawned, adults migrate back downstream, followed later in the summer and fall

by the juveniles. During this cyclic journey the adults and young provide a food source for many animal species, including striped bass, haddock, brown trout, salmonid species, eels, ospreys, eagles, kingfishers, herons, cormorants, loons and aquatic fur bearing mammals.

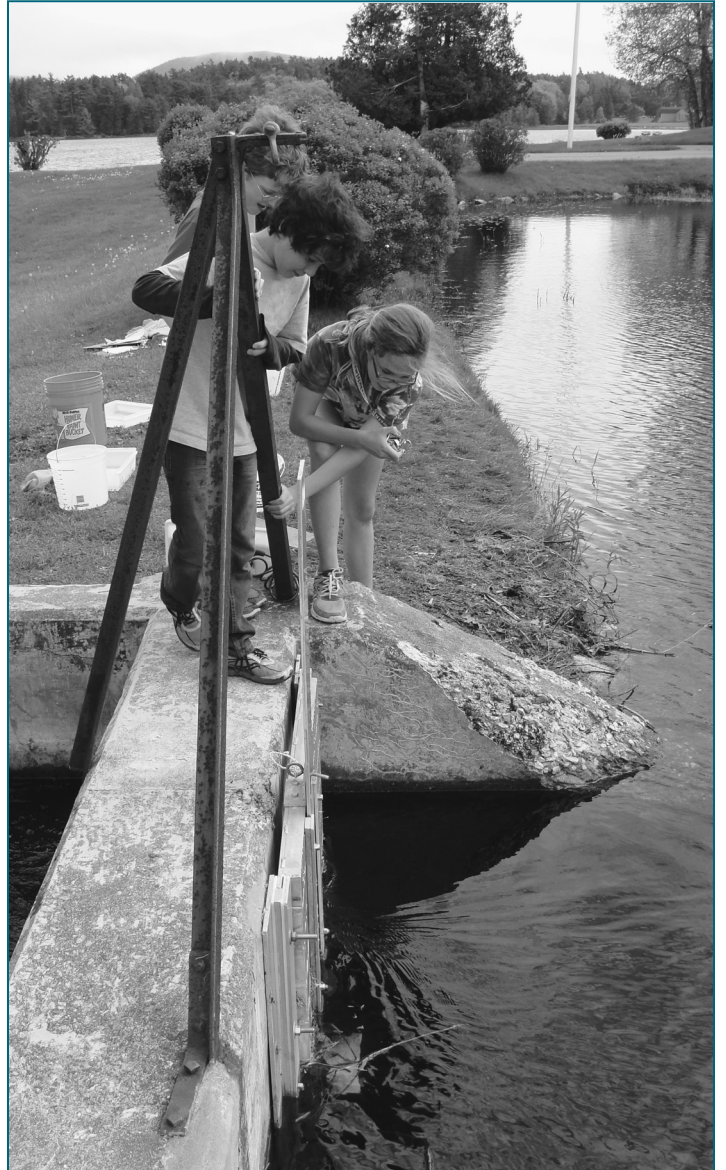
Historically, New England’s coastal towns and villages eagerly anticipated the influx of millions of alewives each spring. Only a small fraction of these historical fish runs remain today and Somesville is luckily one of them.

When the Somesville Fish Passage Restoration Project began over eight years ago the Sanctuary began to collect research data on the numbers of migrating alewives entering the Mill Pond each spring. The accompanying chart is evidence of the many years of dedicated work to restore this awesome natural event.





*This spring, students from the Mount Desert Elementary School visited the fishways in Somesville during the annual alewife migration. They were captivated by the fish!*



ALEWIVES TIE OUR  
OCEAN, RIVERS, AND  
LAKES TOGETHER,  
PROVIDING VITAL  
NUTRIENTS AND FORAGE  
NEEDED TO MAKE  
HEALTHY WATERSHEDS!



## First Graders Learn About the Sanctuary and Alewives By Mount Desert Elementary School First Grade

Mr. Lamon visited our class and told us about all kinds of things the Sanctuary does like making and maintaining trails, participating in the loon project, checking boats for bad plants, teaching people about the flora and fauna, and working on the alewives and fish ladders project. Our class decided we wanted to learn more about the alewives, so we went on a field trip.

First we went on a walking tour and saw three of the fish ladders. We saw the fish swimming in the stream and jumping up the ladders. They were trying to get to Long Pond, so they could lay their eggs.

Next we went back to the Mill Pond and counted fish. There was a time when there were not many alewives, because the ladders were broken and people caught too many. So, the Sanctuary has been trying to help them by fixing the ladders and helping to protect them.

We helped by counting some fish and moving some from the ladder to the pond. It was pretty awesome!

We think Alewives are important, because they are part of the food chain and lobstermen need them for bait. We are very glad the Sanctuary is helping them. We hope you think so too!

### Did You Know?

- Alewives can live in salt and fresh water.
- Alewives go back to the place they were born.
- Ospreys really like to eat alewives.
- Alewives spend three years in the ocean, before they go back to where they are born.
- Alewives have a black back so predators can't see them.

### Help The Alewives!

We made alewives fish prints and sold them at our art sale. We donated \$47 to the Sanctuaries Alewives Project. You could help the alewives too by sending donations to the Sanctuary.

## Alewives

*By Ella Pappas, 6th grade*

Imagine looking down into a pond and seeing a pool of glimmering fish. Right now, that could be possible. Alewives are fish that need our help. We learned from David Lamon and our science teacher, Mr. Cote, that these fish are anadromous. This means that alewives live in the ocean and swim up rivers into the fresh water to spawn. When the 6th grade class from Mount Desert Elementary School went to the Somesville Mill Pond, we helped these small silver fish up a fish ladder and into the mill pond. Before we could do this, we got to take a scale sample from each fish so that researchers can find out how old each fish is. You have to move quick to save the fish, but it is worth it.

Mr Lamon is in charge of the Alewife Project and he took us on a tour to see fish ladders. He told us that many of the alewives die in the process of migrating due to large birds and other predators. David Lamon is working hard to save the small fish by working on this project at the Somes Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary. This organization is filling up that pond full of fish to make it almost jumping full of life. Alewives are important and I believe that we should all help to take care of this resource.

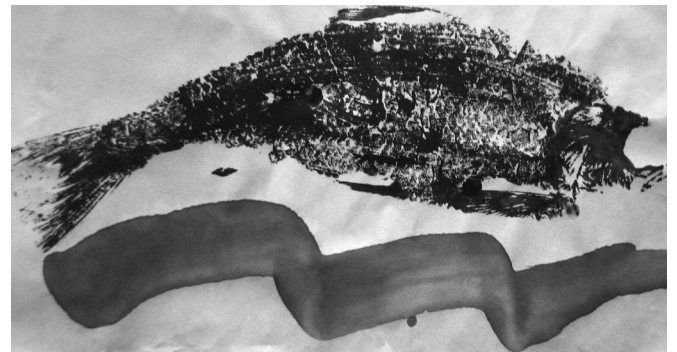


*MDES 1st graders created this mural in honor of their visit to the Somesville fish ladders.*

## GYOTAKU

*by Peter Jones, MDES 6th Grader*

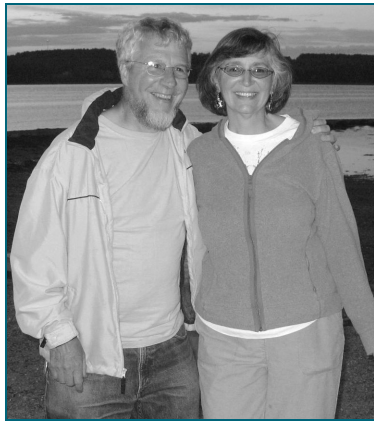
We got to make prints of fish with Ms Shutt, our art teacher. We worked with the 1st graders and all got to make three prints using alewives. This process is called Gyotaku. You take a fish, put paint on it and press rice paper onto it. The paint gets transferred to the paper. You're left with a pretty cool print. Gyotaku is Japanese. Gyo means fish in Japan and Taku means rubbing. Gyotaku was used to prove that a fisherman caught a fish that size. It is also used in Japan as a way to make art. It is a good way to learn about a fish and have fun.



*Message from the Board continued from page 1*

Wondering "what would Virginia think?" is a deep obligation of our Board to look back to our roots and honor the vision and intent of our founding donor. But just as important is our determination to understand how the world has changed over the last quarter century and look ahead to ensure that our work is meaningful to our neighbors and friends today, as we will need your involvement to carry out the mission now and into the future. Our thanks to all of you who supported the Sanctuary financially or as a volunteer over the past year, and may you be inspired this summer - by a swim or paddle, a quiet walk or interpretive program at the headquarters, or by all of the good work reported by our Executive Director David Lamon in this newsletter - to join us again this season. Many thanks!

## VOLUNTEER PROFILES



*Enoch Albert and Sharon Knopp*

**E**noch Albert and Sharon Knopp love to explore new places. Since permanently moving to Bar Harbor from Readfield, Maine over six years ago both Sharon and Enoch have explored many facets of MDI's landscape. Their explorations and activities have included volunteering for a wide array of local organizations including: Acadia National Park, Friends of Acadia, Island Connections, Southwest Harbor Library, Bar Harbor Conservation Commission, Safe Family Exchange, DownEast Dancers, and the Somes-Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary.

Sharon and Enoch first started helping out the Sanctuary with the MDI Loon Monitoring Project. After their first year watching a pair of loons on Eagle Lake nest and raise a chick, they were hooked. Sharon describes the process of watching these ancient birds as "magical." "The more you learn the more remarkable and mysterious they become," says Sharon.

In addition to the loon project, both Sharon and Enoch help collect data during the annual alewife migration in Somesville. "It's been incredible watching the numbers increase each year," says Enoch. "Friends and family that we've taken along to see the fish counts have been amazed!"



### *Meet this year's summer field intern*

**S**arah Duff is a student at College of the Atlantic, and will be a junior in the fall. She is majoring in Human Ecology with a focus on environmental science and ecology. Sarah's interests include photography, gardening, and music. Sarah says "I was drawn to this position by the opportunity to work in the field, study loons, and experience life at a wildlife sanctuary. I'm particularly interested in loon behavior and breeding success and what that can tell us about the greater environment. I'm so happy to be here, and am excited for the rest of the summer!" We are equally excited to have Sarah here; welcome!

## Somes Pond Access Improvement

**O**ver the past years, the Oak Hill Road landing at the edge of Somes Pond has gone through tough times. It has been subject to serious erosion from use and poor drainage rushing down from the road. The quality of pond water has been impacted by sediment, salt and bacterial deposition from chronic water run-off in the adjacent drainage area. That was the bad news.

Now there is good news. The landing is actually the private property of The Somes Pond Center (a non-profit organization dedicated to the history of local landscape design), but public access is allowed and grandfathered for traditional use. After conferring with the Somes-Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary, staff from the Mt. Desert public works department, environmental officials from the State and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which holds conservation easements for some of the surrounding land, the owners have provided for a greatly improved and handsome restoration designed by Dennis Bracale and executed by Jay Robbins. The work will prevent further erosion and run off and provide a wide and handsome path for gaining access to swim and carry canoes and kayaks to the pond. Boulders and newly planted vegetation will enhance and beautify the opening to the Pond.

Please help maintain the area by

- 🌿 walking only on the established path   🌿 cleaning up after dog waste,
- 🌿 keeping dogs leashed on the landing at all times   🌿 and carrying out all trash.

*Thank you!*



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



# 2012 SUMMER PUBLIC PROGRAM SERIES

Space is limited and registration is required

For more information or to register, please call 244-4027 or email: [wildlife@gwi.net](mailto:wildlife@gwi.net)

## LOOK AT THE SKY! SKY OPTICS

*Thursday, July 12th, 7 PM*

No matter where you live, everyone can enjoy nature in the sky. Summer is famous for rainbows, but there are also ice crystals high in the atmosphere that combine with sunlight creating optical feasts. Learn where and when to watch for ice haloes, super bright upside down “rainbows” called circumhorizontal arcs and the green flash. **Lynn Havsall** is a naturalist trained in botany, zoology and geology but she enjoys all aspects of nature including sky-watching by day and night.

## NATURALIST WALK

*Thursday mornings, 8 AM - 9 AM, July 19th, Aug. 2nd, Aug. 16th*

Join Sanctuary staff and volunteers for a leisurely walk along the Sanctuary's trails. Each session will have a specific theme –call the Sanctuary for details.

## MAINE'S RARE PLANTS

*Sunday, July 15th, 7 PM*

Maine supports diverse habitats across its length and breadth, from the sandy plains of York County, to the remote shores of Aroostook County's St. John River; from the rich hardwood forests of western Maine, to the bold coastline of Downeast Maine. There are forests, fields, woodlands, and barrens on the uplands and bogs, fens, swamps and marshes in the lowlands. Countless lakes, ponds, rivers and streams dot the landscape. Each of these habitats supports a suite of plant species, numbering over 2000 statewide. Maine's official rare plant list includes over 300 plant species. What does rarity mean? Who decides? Why are these plants rare in Maine? Are they rare outside Maine? And, perhaps most important to us, what rare plants grow on Mount Desert Island? **Jill Weber** is a consulting biologist and ecologist who has worked in Maine for over twenty years. She and coauthors Glen Mittelhauser, Linda Gregory and Sally Rooney published *The Plants of Acadia National Park*, a guide to the vascular flora of the region in 2010. In addition to studying the natural world, she delights sharing nature with others, both as teacher and student.

## AQUATIC PLANTS

*Thursday, July 26th, 7 PM*

Aquatic plants can be both beautiful and bizarre. Uniquely adapted to living in their wet environments, these plants demonstrate true versatility and provide a fascinating glimpse into plant evolution. Sanctuary Director, **David Lamon**, will be our guide on this illustrated exploration of our local aquatic flora.

## AQUATIC PLANT PADDLE

*Saturday, July 28th, 9-11 AM*

Somes Pond is home to the highest diversity of aquatic plants on Mount Desert Island; with 41 different species. Several species of locally rare plants make this watershed their only home on Mount Desert Island. Most notable are the water willow (*Decodon verticillatus*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), and hornwort (*Ceratophyllum echinatum*). Bring your boat and join the Sanctuary staff for a leisurely paddle around the pond as we take a close-up view of nature's botanical water garden. Call the Sanctuary for details.

## COASTAL EUTROPHICATION: CAUSES, IMPACTS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

*Sunday, August 5th, 7 PM*

Coastal eutrophication is both a natural and human induced phenomenon, with both positive and negative ecosystem impacts. We will examine those impacts with an emphasis on human induced phenomena. We will then look more closely at the eutrophication status of estuarine systems on Mount Desert Island and discuss the estuarine monitoring program developed for Acadia National Park. **Dr. Jim McKenna**, is Associate Professor of Marine Biology at Maine Maritime Academy and serves as Assistant Director for Research with Maine Sea Grant.

## LOON APPRECIATION DAY

*Saturday, August 19th*

*Open House: Noon to 3 PM & Evening Presentation at 7:00 PM*

Interested in loons? Would you like to find out more about the latest research and information on the loon population of MDI and throughout Maine? Join us for our annual appreciation day dedicated to loons. Stop by the Sanctuary Headquarters on Somes Pond during our Open House or join us for an informative evening presentation. Registration is required for the evening program.

## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NATURAL KIND

*A participatory story swap with storyteller Jackson Gillman*

*Monday, August 20th, 7 PM*

One's love of nature is often sparked by a memorable encounter. So what's your story of a peak moment? Whether it being witness to a dramatic sighting, or a pastoral outdoor experience, share your tale. Jackson will model some personal nature stories of his own, and encourage others to recount theirs. In so doing, we'll help each other widen our appreciation of natural wonders.

Since 1978, Jackson has been entertaining and educating all ages with his interactive songs and stories. Much of his repertoire reflects his ecology background from the College of the Atlantic.

## KEEPING TRACK OF WINGED JEWELS: A STATEWIDE ATLAS OF MAINE'S BUTTERFLY FAUNA

*Thursday, September 6th, 7 PM*

Butterflies play an important ecological role both as *pollinators* of many wildflowers and as *prey* to larger species ranging from dragonflies to neotropical migrant birds. Butterflies are also widely recognized for their value as ecological indicators of ecosystem stress due to climate change, pollution, and habitat loss. Many neighboring states and provinces have compiled updated atlases of their butterfly fauna, but despite growing local interest in butterfly identification and conservation Maine has only a baseline level of knowledge of the group. This talk provides a basic introduction to the biology and identification of major butterfly families and provides an update on recent progress by the Maine Butterfly Survey – a comprehensive effort to document the distribution and status of the butterflies of Maine. **Phillip deMaynadier**, has worked as a wildlife biologist for Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife since 1999 where he currently serves as leader for the Reptile, Amphibian, and Invertebrate Group.



## Somes · Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary

*Dedicated to Conservation and Education in the  
Somes Pond Watershed*

57 Pretty Marsh Road  
PO Box 171  
Mt. Desert, ME 04660  
Phone: 207-244-4027  
Email: [wildlife@gwi.net](mailto:wildlife@gwi.net)

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# Thank You!

*The Somes-Meynell Wildlife Sanctuary would like to thank  
the following individuals and organizations:*

- All those who have helped with Sanctuary programs, projects and trails this year, including: Chris Peterson, Bruce Connery, Bik Wheeler, Dennis Smith and grandson Basil Mahaney, Roberta Sharp, Gerard Haraden, Bill & Barbara Lawless, Jim & Priscilla Keene, Enoch Albert & Sharon Knopp, Mary Gilliland, Doug Monteith, Debi Blank, Sandy Swinburne, Meghan Goff, Maureen Fournier, Bob & Linda Thayer, Eben Salvator, Students from Mt. Desert Elementary School, Julianne Kearney, Rustin Taylor, Michael Ho, John Rivers; Torie Hallock, Raina Benson, Anne McGowan.
- The following organizations for their support and cooperation: Acadia National Park, BioDiversity Research Institute, College of the Atlantic, Friends of Acadia, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program
- All those individuals who have supported the Sanctuary's work this past year through their financial contributions – thank you!

## EVERYONE EATS ALEWIVES!

Photos by John Rivers

