

2009 Birding Festival

During May 2009, 80 people from Maine, 15 other states, and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island attended the Sixth Annual Down East Spring Birding Festival in Maine's Cobscook Bay area and the associated Fifth Annual Birding Elderhostel program on Campobello Island. Participants and staff found (saw or heard) 154 different birds. The festival was well timed this year to the warbler migration, and participants and guides reported seeing numerous migrating warblers. During the festival's first six years, birders have found a total of 214 different bird species.

During three days of the festival, the America's Birdiest City/County (ABC/C) birdathon was also held, Washington County retained its title as America's Birdiest Atlantic Coast County, initially won in 2007 and maintained in 2008. In 2009, participants found 154 different birds for the ABC/C birdathon, 2 fewer than the total festival count since birds spotted in Canada are not included in the ABC/C competition.

Festival participants reported they enjoyed the trips to Machias Seal Island, Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, and the little-known and less-visited sites around Cobscook Bay. Folks also appreciated meeting other birders from all around the country. According to one participant, *"There were so many excellent options that it was difficult to decide on a schedule. But that is what makes this festival so good. Next year we can do other things."*

We were pleased that Fiep Debie of Stratford, Prince Edward Island, won the Framed Limited Edition Print of Northern Maine Birds, donated by Fred Hartman, DownEast Drawings. Fiep and a group of friends were the first folks from PEI who participated in the Down East Spring Birding Festival. We welcome folks from all provinces and states to the 2010 festival.

2008 Birding Festival

During May 2008, 110 people from Maine, 19 other states, and New Brunswick attended the Fifth Annual Down East Spring Birding Festival and the associated Fourth Annual Birding Elderhostel program on Campobello Island. This was a record attendance; 80 birders participated in the festival and 30 participated in the Elderhostel program.

Participants and staff found (saw or heard) 175 different birds. Six new birds were added to the festival's running total (Gadwall, Long-tailed Duck, White-rumped Sandpiper, Black-legged Kittiwake, Eastern Screech Owl, and the Orchard Oriole). During the festival's first five years, birders have found a total of 214 different bird species. All the species found are identified in the pdf list available for download above.

During three days of the festival, the America's Birdiest City/County (ABC/C) birdathon also was held — and Washington County retained its title as America's Birdiest Atlantic Coast County. In 2007, Washington County, Maine, won its first title, after finishing third the two previous years. In 2008, participants found 165 different birds for the ABC/C birdathon. This

year's ABC/C count also includes 7 birds found only on Machias Seal Island, claimed by both the U.S. and Canada.

This year during the festival, two birders from Connecticut found the most birds by individuals. Adrian Nichols, from Chester, found 116 different birds, and Bill Asteriades, from South Glastonbury, found 108.

The planning committee determined the rarest bird found this year was the Eastern Screech Owl. Barry Southard, from Machiasport, ME, the Elderhostel's resident bird guide this year, heard the owl one evening during an "owl prowling" on Campobello Island, NB.

Tom Finlay, of East Machias, ME, won the Framed Limited Edition Print of Maine Warblers, donated by Fred Hartman, Down East Drawings. Ila Post, an Elderhostel participant from Dallas, Texas, won the One Year Maine Audubon Membership and tote bag full of goodies, donated by Maine Audubon. The highest bidder on the \$300 Swarovski Extremadura Backpack, donated by Swarovski Optik North America LTD, was Ann Vassey of Winslow, ME.

2007 Birding Festival - see PDF with chart of bird sightings, for more info these years.

2006 Birding Festival

During May 26-29, 2006, 90 people from Maine, 21 other states, and New Brunswick, Canada, attended the third annual festival. We had 60 people sign up for the festival itself and 30 people attend the associated birding Elderhostel program.

Festival participants and staff found (saw or heard) 167 different birds this year. All the species can be found in the 2006 sighting results pdf list above.

Once again, Washington County came in third place in America's Birdiest Coastal Atlantic County birdathon, with 151 species.

2005 Birding Festival

During May 27-30, 2005, 84 people from Maine, 14 other states, and New Brunswick attended the Second Annual Festival. Besides Maine and New Brunswick, participants came from California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, and Wisconsin. 64 people signed up for the festival itself, and another 20 signed up for a new birding elderhostel program that included the festival in its activities.

Festival participants and staff found (saw or heard) 176 different bird species during the four days. All the species can be found in the 2005 sighting results pdf list above.

The festival offered three prizes. Theresa Lindsey of Tennessee won the raffle prize, a beautiful framed color print of Atlantic Puffins on Machias Seal Island drawn by Fred Hartman. The prize for the "most species found" was won by the local team of Frank Marengi and Barry Southard (101).

The prize for the "rarest bird species found" was awarded to Mel Hochhalter of North Carolina for his sighting of a Worm-eating Warbler. After considerable deliberation, the planning committee decided that was a slightly rarer find in this area over the Memorial Day Weekend than the other two special sightings that also were in contention — the Orange-crowned Warbler and the Yellow-throated Warbler. Congratulations to all for these unusual sightings!

As part of the festival, we entered Washington County, Maine, in the national contest for America's Birdiest City and County. Our ABC count was 153 species. We came in third place in the category America's Birdiest Coastal Atlantic County, behind King's County, NY (169) and Richmond County (Staten Island), NY (161).

2004 Birding Festival

Over 75 people from Maine, 8 other states, and New Brunswick, Canada, attended the First Annual Down East Spring Birding Festival over Memorial Day Weekend 2004. In total, 151 different bird species were found (seen or heard). All these species can be found in the 2004 sighting-results pdf list above. The festival offered two prizes — one for the rarest species found, won by Tom and Lindsay Hodgman (Three-toed Woodpecker) and one for the most species found, won by Bob and Sandi Duchesne (114 species).