

Merrymeeting Bay

A Self-Guided Nature Tour of Merrymeeting Bay

Terry Porter
Maine Master Naturalist Program

Today's Topics

- More on Wolf Trees
- Bay Bridge Waterfront Park
- Multiple Habitats
- Birds
- Ecological Collapse and Return
- Resilient Landscapes



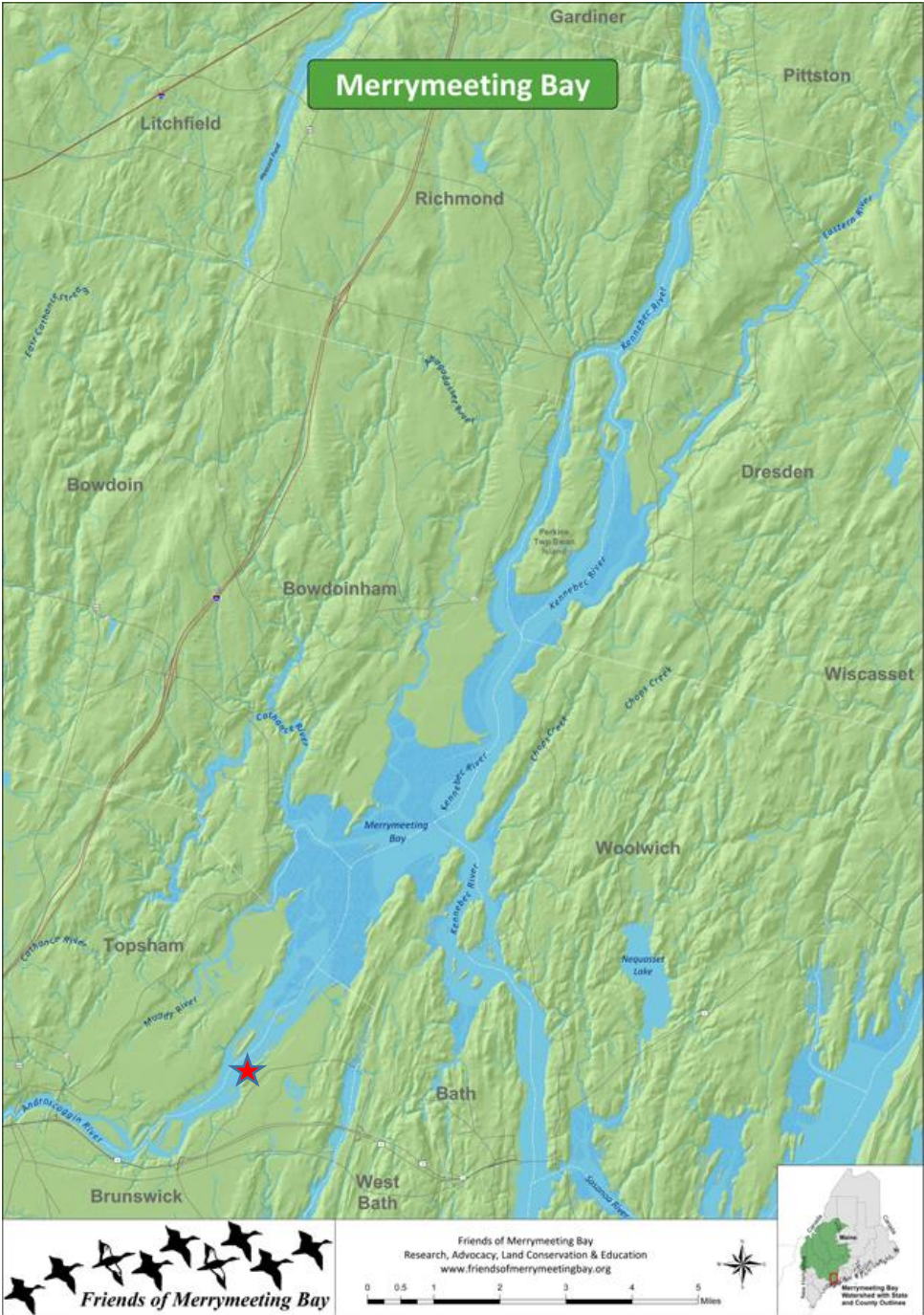
More on Wolf Trees



Wolf Trees

- Shade trees or trees by stone walls.
- Farming change from small scale to larger, for economies of scale, late 1800s – 1900s.
- Small farms abandoned, pastures abandoned to succession.
- Forest managers believed **wolf trees preyed on forest resources** and should be culled – “a forest ulcer.”
- More recently forest managers see value of wolf trees, for ecosystem health, animal habitat, and aesthetics.
- “Wolf trees are like the forest’s town square for animals.”
- In most of the eastern forest, old pasture trees have a 100- or 200-year leg-up on the surrounding trees and thus have had time to develop the features wildlife depend on.
- In the United Kingdom, a similar phenomenon of ancient trees — called “veteran trees” — has attracted attention.

Bay Bridge Waterfront Park, Brunswick



Bay Bridge Waterfront Park



- From Cook's Corner in Brunswick take Bath Road north about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the second stoplight (opposite Lowes).
- Go left onto Old Bath Road. After about 2.5 miles, take a left onto Bay Bridge Road.
- Bear left at the T-intersection to stay on Bay Bridge Road, and proceed about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile all the way to the end.



The Rock Jetty: Remnants of the 1835 Bridge



Birdwatching Trail on Androscoggin River



Accessible Trail



Multiple Habitats

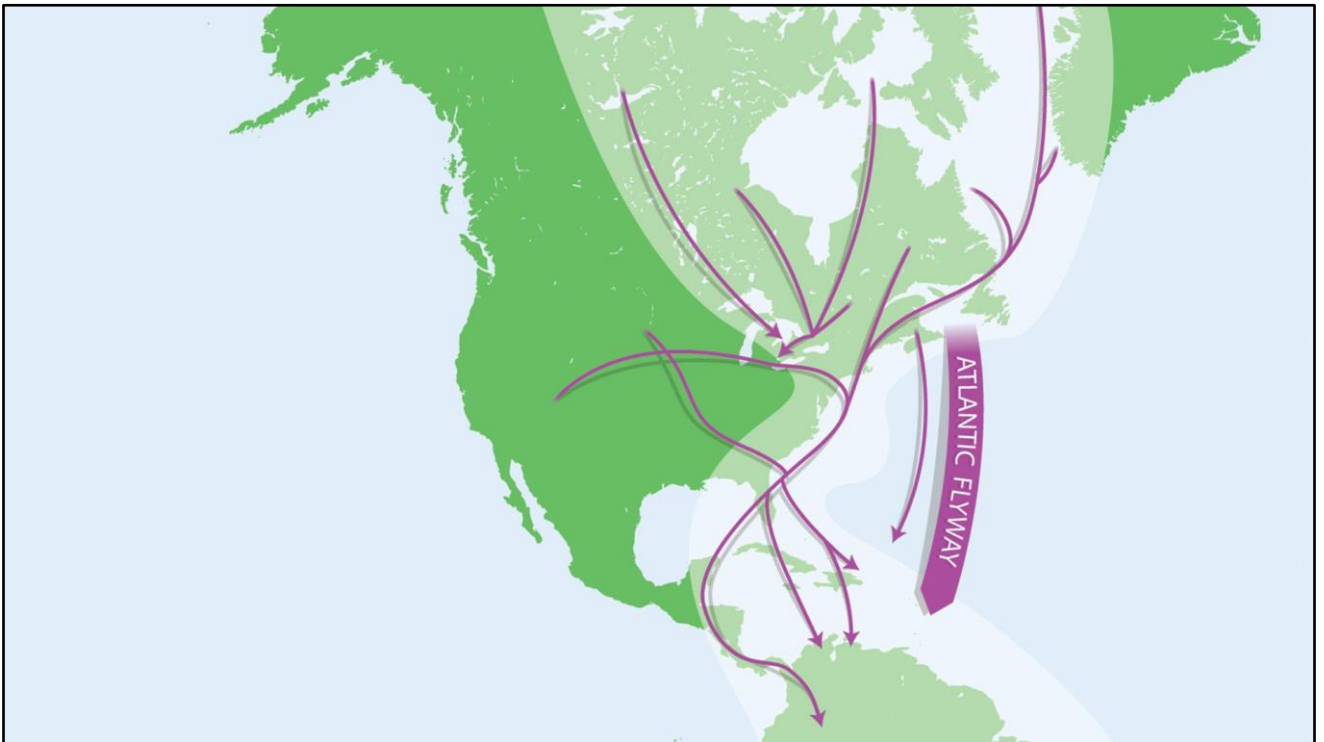
Birds in Flight

One way to enjoy our avian neighbors, the birds, is to keep an eye to the sky overhead. Either close in or far away, it's possible to see many species at Bay Bridge. It can be hard to tell them apart though, even with binoculars. Looking at the silhouettes below, can you identify the heron, eagle, duck and osprey? Notice how the front of the eagle and osprey wings differ—this is one way to tell them apart (osprey in upper right).



Merrymeeting Bay and surrounding waters are especially important to migrating waterfowl, who come here on their spring and fall migrations.

Bird Migration Routes



Flyways

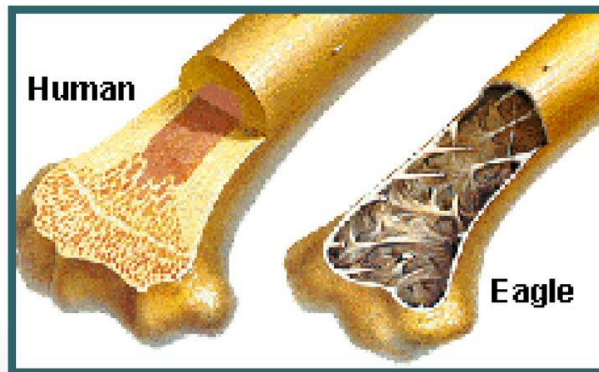
eBird – Cornell Lab of Ornithology



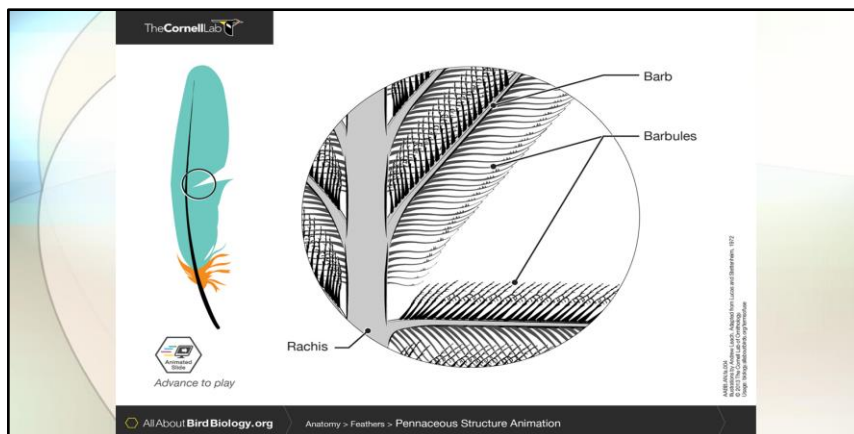
How Do They Do It?

Designed for flight

- Bird bones are hollow, lightweight for flying; have air spaces

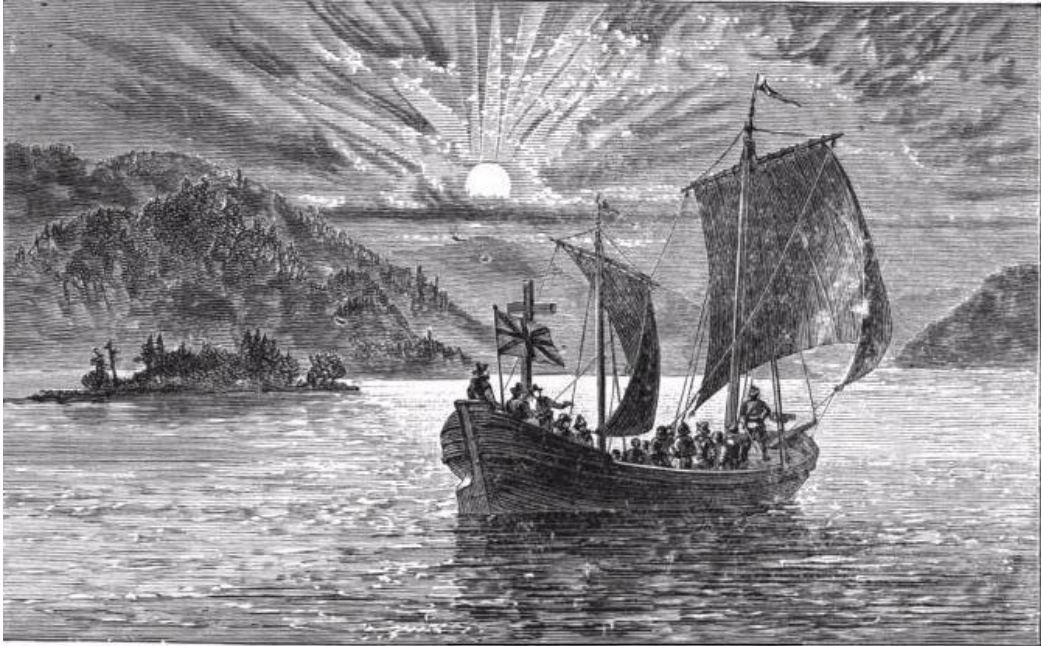


Bird bones are hollow for light weight and strength.



Feather design: interlocking microscopic hooks on barbules form a wind and waterproof barrier that allows birds to fly and stay dry.

Early European Settlement

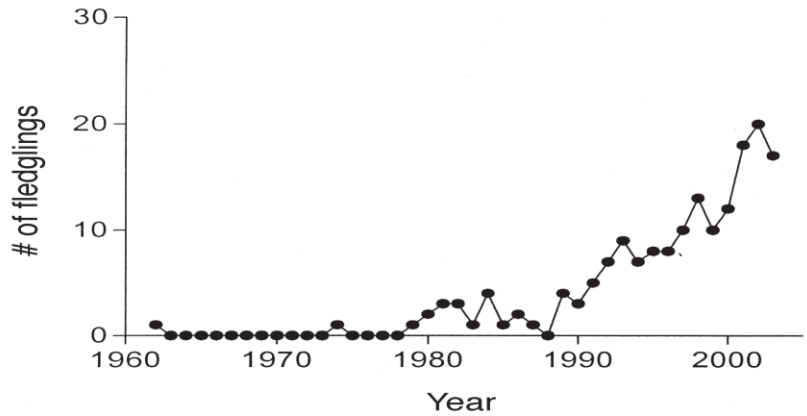
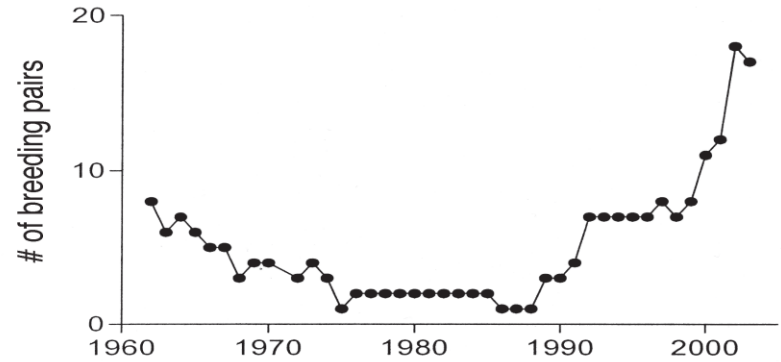


CAPT. WEYMOUTH SAILING UP THE PENOBSCOT.

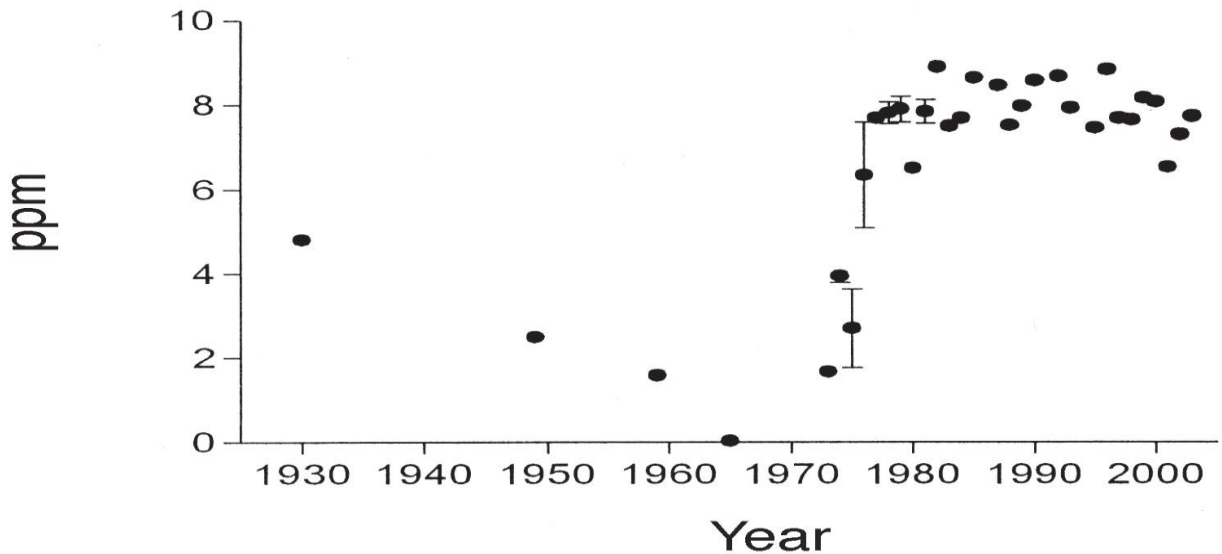


Merrymeeting Bay Ecological Collapse and Partial Recovery

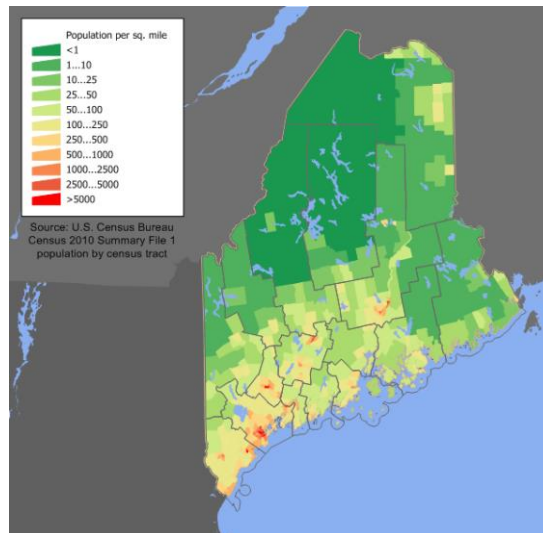
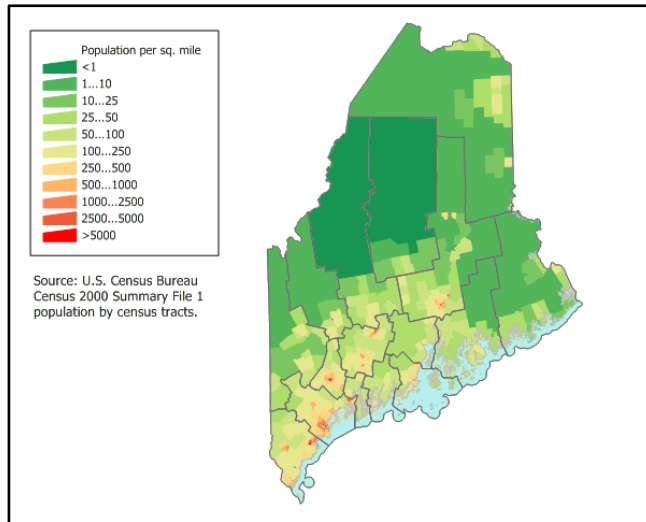
Bald Eagle Time Series



Dissolved oxygen



Population Density 2000 & 2010



[The Nature Conservancy](#)
[Resilient and Connected Landscapes](#)