

Minutes of the Swan Lake Association September 14, 2015 Meeting

The Swan Lake Association met at the Nickerson School at 6:00 P.M. for the last membership meeting of the season. We enjoyed a potluck supper (thanks to all contributors), brief meeting, and an address by a Maine Audubon spokesman.

President Marty Stout convened the business meeting at 6:40 P.M, with 20 people in attendance. Our Treasurer, Bill Baxter, was away, but in Bill's absence Marty noted that we are operating in a deficit mode, due to promised donations from surrounding towns, as well as grant monies, not yet paid.

The Minutes of the August meeting are posted on the Swan Lake Association website.

Marty introduced our speaker for the evening, Doug Hitchcock, staff member of the Maine Audubon Society. He spoke to us about winter ecology - "How Maine Animals survive the Maine Winter". Migration, hibernation (jumping mice, bats and woodchucks), torpor/deep sleep (bears, chipmunks), and staying active describe our animal population's choices. In addition to beautiful photographs, he showed us some fascinating videographs, called STEM maps, detailing the time/space sequence of various migrating species. He also introduced us to "eBird", a worldwide scientific project involving detailed individual reports of bird sightings made by the general populace. These are carefully tracked and checked as far as possible for accuracy, and have produced some surprising results. Noting the challenges faced by several species, Doug strongly encouraged us to leave hibernating bats alone, should we see them – their population is in danger due to several diseases, notably white nose syndrome, for which there is no known cure. Doug also explained how weather variations affect several species, particularly the snowy owl, which last winter was very challenged. The deep snow allowed its prey to escape notice/capture – the owl couldn't penetrate the snow to capture the little voles and mice that are the mainstay of its winter diet, and many first year snowy owls died of starvation. The flexibility and resourcefulness of northern birds and animals was very much on display, raising our awareness of the winter world around our lake. Doug recommended two picture books for our children: *A Snowy Owl Story*, and *The Little Brown Bat*.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted
Charlotte Kerrigan