

March 2025

12 Months of Wildlife Management

From Joe Roy, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist



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March

You have probably heard the saying that the weather in March “comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb” here in Maine I think that reigns especially true. March, in my mind, is one of the months that is really a transitional month between seasons. Through much of the state, the month will begin with ample snow still on the ground, frozen lakes, and very few signs of spring. The month may end with those conditions in parts of the state, but in other parts of the state, you may have bare ground and the first inkling of spring at the forefront of your mind. Where you are in the state, and the kind of march we are having may have a great impact on the on the ground conditions. That being said, there are still many things we can focus on this month that provide a benefit to our wildlife species, and the habitat condition on our woodlots.

There are few activities that I have discussed over the last two months that we can still think about in March. **Seed and tree ordering** is one of the biggest tasks to

keep in mind. You will want to get those orders early this month. In March, you should also be getting all your **pruning** needs taken care of for the year on your fruit trees. You don’t want to delay after March for pruning in most of the state. Checking on the fruit trees and packing down the snow around the young ones to prevent rodents from having easy access is just as important in March as it was in February. The final weeks of **frozen ground** access are among us for much of the state as well, so wrapping up winter operations should be on the forefront of your mind as well as continuing **to evaluate winter use** and getting out new **nest boxes or maintaining** existing boxes. All that in mind there are still some things that we will want to get a start on this month that we may not have started yet in the new year.

Tree Growth and Current use tax designation

If you are enrolling or re-enrolling in tree growth, or other Current Use tax programs like Open Space, Farmland, or Working waterfront, now is a good time to get your application ahead of April 1 deadline.

Culvert Checks

In preparation for the rainy/mud season that generally begins in April, getting eyes on your culverts and waterbody crossings is a good step to take in March. Making sure that these culverts and crossings are intact and free of any blockage



now will help you when the water starts flowing next month. This free-flowing water will be essential for many of our wildlife species. Ice may make it difficult to clean these culverts in parts of March, but it is always better to identify a blockage sooner than later so you can plan to address it. Unrestricted water flow is important for both our aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

Finding Potential Vernal Pools

While amphibian breeding activity doesn't start until early/mid April in the southern half of the state, and early May in the northern half, in March the areas where vernal pools are present, may begin to show themselves. As snow melts towards the end of the month, low lying, wet depressions may begin to emerge on the landscape. These areas you may want to identify for future review in April when amphibian activity begins to take place. Identifying the spots on your property now as they emerge, may save you some time in the future when snow melt is happening rapidly and more broadly. Vernal pools are critical habitat for many amphibians and provide seasonally important resources to others. These areas are sensitive to disruption, identifying them early and checking back in when they are active, can help you develop a good plan to avoid and minimize any negative impacts.

Fish Orders



If you have a pond and a stocking permit, many brook trout suppliers now have their pre-ordering open. Often your local Soil and Water Conservation District will be the best point of contact if you are interested in putting in an order. Getting a task like this done early, and scheduling your pickup date will help you stay on top of what is always a busy spring season.

Sugarbush Maintenance and Prep

For many Mainers spring means it's time to tap your maples to begin collecting sap for maple production. But before that happens you need to do some maintenance sugarbush and upkeep on your tubing. For many this activity will begin sometime this month. When conducting this maintenance, keep birds and wildlife in mind. Our wildlife species benefit from a diversity of tree and plant species, trees of different diameters, and the inclusion of standing dead trees or "snags."



When maintaining your sugarbush you may be inclined to remove everything but the maples, but we can keep our sugarbush more wildlife friendly if we keep as many trees and plant, and size diversity within the stands as possible. Some tree removal will need to take place to run the tubing, or create access for equipment, but where we can avoid excess removal and impact, we can benefit wildlife.



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This newsletter article was originally written for our partner Small Woodland Owners of Maine.