

Bauneg Beg Lake: Where eagles soar?

Sanford News, Thursday, January 24, 2013

Editor's Note. This is the fourth installment in a series about Waban Projects' Therapeutic Recreation and Environmental Education (TREE) program.

SANFORD — As winter approached, Waban Projects' Adventure Program lived up to its name when participants reported observing a rather fantastic sight! While gathering data about water quality and weather, the Adventure Program members stated they saw "a large-sized bird flying lazy, low circles" over Waban's Therapeutic Recreation and Environmental Education (TREE) Center on Bauneg Beg Lake. They described the bird as having "a body larger than a normal hawk, with a white head and tail, and a dark body."

Did they see a bald eagle? According to Jon Stimmel, the Adventure Program's leader, the bird was too high in the sky for everyone to be absolutely certain, but participants were excited to investigate the strong possibility that they observed a bald eagle over Bauneg Beg Lake.

"It wouldn't be unusual to see a mature bald eagle in the area," said Scott Lindsay, a wildlife biologist from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "You could see nesting adults, migrants, and overwintering birds that can remain inland over the winter if there is access to open water and fish remains from ice fishing."

Waban employee Luke Levasseur, of Sanford, said he hears many accounts of eagle sightings. He sees a bald eagle that regularly travels along Number One Pond and often perches in a tall pine tree near the central intersection in Springvale. Residents of Square Pond in nearby Shapleigh will tell you with pride that they have a nesting pair of bald eagles with chicks on the pond.

According to experts from Center for Wildlife and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the eagle population is on the rise here in Maine, which means with a bit of luck this won't be the last time the Adventure Group spots a mature bald eagle soaring above them.

On another note, regarding the water quality at Bauneg Beg Lake, the Adventure Group members recorded that they found the pH to be 7 (neutral), the DO (dissolved oxygen) level to be 5, the lake temperature to be 42°F, and the visibility of the lake to be moderately clear.

Camera catches grey fox in action

Sanford News, Thursday, February 14, 2013

Editor's Note. This is the fifth installment in a series about Waban Project's Team-building Recreation and Environmental Education (TREE) program.

SANFORD — People always wonder what animals do when humans aren't around. How do they hunt? What paths do they take through the forest? Was Walt Disney right, and they all sing and dance?

Waban's Adventure Group decided to investigate, so they placed a camera at a remote location off one of the trails of the TREE Center in Sanford. Four days later, the group downloaded the pictures and discovered a fox had visited very early one morning. Sadly, it wasn't dancing, but the group could see that it was clearly on a mission. Based on the markings found on the fox's tail, the group discerned that the fox is most likely a grey fox.

The grey fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, is similar to the red fox, but with some distinctive differences. The grey fox's coat is grey in color, with red-colored regions on its neck, sides and legs. According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife (COSEWIC) in Canada, the grey fox also has a distinct black stripe running down its back to the tip of the tail. It prefers a habitat of forest edges and open woods that its prey also inhabits. The grey fox's omnivorous diet consists of mice, rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, ducks, small birds, berries, nuts, and grasses.

With the first trial so successful, the Adventure group is eager to keep using the trail camera to discover what is going on in the Bauneg Beg Watershed and Waban's woodlands.



courtesy photo: A motion-detecting camera captured a fox (lower right) early in the morning on the trails of Waban's TREE Center in Sanford.