

## Photo Itinerary - Maine: From The Coast to Katahdin

Text and photography copyright © Gary Melnysyn. All rights reserved.

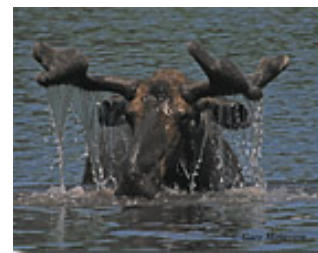
**In my opinion, a trip to Maine during any time of the year is a wonderful photography experience.** The diversity of this great "Vacationland" always makes for an awesome experience. It just so happens that spring is the time of year that provides some of the most memorable wildlife opportunities anywhere in the lower 48 states.

The coastal route heading northward from New Hampshire across the Piscataqua River is the gateway to quintessential Maine. As you wind along the rocky coastline, some of the most majestic ocean views will suddenly appear before you. Stopping off at historic lighthouses such as the Nubble, perched on a rocky outcropping on Cape Neddick in York, will drop you into a gallery of seaside beauty. For the adventurous among us, a kayak visit to one of the many islands that dot Penobscot Bay just east of Rockland may be the ticket for a day of exploration, followed by an authentic lobster feast. If time permits, visit the unprecedented beauty of Acadia National Park and stand atop Cadillac Mountain with clear views of Bar Harbor and the expansive North Atlantic.



The first destination of my two-part adventure was a small island called Machias Seal Island. Located 10 miles off the coast at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, this small island's only inhabitants are a lighthouse keeper, hundreds of puffins, Razor billed Auks, and Common Murres.

Captain Andy Patterson of Bold Coast Charters provides a memorable trip from scenic Cutler Harbor, where moorings of brightly colored lobster boats set against a background of rock ledges and evergreens paint a picture of both the life's blood and aesthetic reality of coastal Maine. Arriving just off the Coast of Machias Seal Island in 4- to 6-foot seas is commonplace, but Captain Andy manages to maneuver the skiff up to the slippery dock for your first encounter with the "Clowns of the Sea." The brightly colored bills and portly bodies of the puffins are why they are sometimes referred to as the penguins of the Northern Hemisphere. The next two hours are spent shooting images from blinds and experiencing the social interaction and nesting habits of these birds. Enjoying the comical behavior of the puffins is an experience of a lifetime.



With land legs again beneath me, I headed westward toward the little town of Millinocket, home of Baxter State Park. In my estimation, this is Maine's finest site for moose viewing. Although Baxter is filled with many shallow ponds that moose will often frequent, my favorite spot is Sandy Stream Pond.



Sandy Steam is a looking glass for Mount Katahdin, which looms upward some 5000 feet to the west. Upon my 5:30 a.m. arrival, I instantly hear the familiar sound of sloshing water, indicating a wading moose in the area. As the morning light begins to warm the rocks along the shore, a stately bull tears grass from the pond's bottom. He emerges after several minutes with water streaming from his velvet-covered rack with eyes cast directly at me. Before I set up my camera equipment, I notice twin calves about to wade into the pond but are reluctant since mom hasn't yet led the way. Yes, a bad day of moose viewing at Baxter is better than a good day just about anywhere else in Maine.



Baxter State Park in Maine is a quiet paradise where both man and beast interact freely. It is not uncommon for a young, curious Bull Moose to approach within a few feet, just to check you out. Throughout the next few days there were some long periods of silence with no moose at all, but the ever-present deer made for some wonderful images during those times.

Now I have my trip for autumn already penciled in. Surely I will experience these same specimens, some a little larger with a full rack and a richer, thicker coat in preparation for a long Maine winter.

Comments on NPN nature photography articles? Send them to the [editor](#).

---

**Gary Melnysyn** resides in Connecticut and is mainly a wildlife photographer. His work is featured in Outdoor Photographer Magazine, and he's a frequent contributor to the Connecticut Audubon with images of Connecticut raptors. Gary exhibits his work in local New England galleries and establishments and is a member of the [Granby Artists Association](#). To see more of Gary's photography and writing, visit [www.fiddleheadfoto.com](http://www.fiddleheadfoto.com).



[Site Map](#) • [NPN Membership](#) • [Front Page](#) • [Reader's Forum](#) • [Links](#) • [Gift Shoppe](#) • [Terms of Use](#)

**Copyright 2000 - 2007, Nature Photographers Online Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved.**