

THE ALLAGASH TAILS COLLECTION • VOLUME 13

PREVIEW COPY

STELLA'S ODYSSEY

BY
TIM CAVERLY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FRANKLIN MANZO JR.



Newport, Maine

Preview Copy

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the express written permission of the publisher. While the incidents mentioned are based on my experiences as a Maine Park Ranger; if a reader finds any similarities to themselves or to another, it is purely a coincidence and was not my intent.

© 2024 by Tim Caverly
Illustrations copyright © 2024 by Franklin Manzo, Jr.
Allagash Tails LLC, 2024
Millinocket, Maine

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Caverly, Tim.
Allagash Tails: A Collection of Stories from Maine's "Wild and Scenic River"
Vol. XIII:
Stella's Odyssey

Written by Tim Caverly
Illustrated and compiled by Franklin Manzo, Jr.
P.cm.-(wildlife)

Summary:

Have you ever followed someone's advice and regretted it? At the suggestion of Bart the Raven, Stella the loon leaves the Allagash to fly to western Maine for a vacation, leaving her friend Sandi behind. There she finds herself in the worst situation possible. She vows never again to ask Bart the raven for advice. Will Stella ever return to her wilderness home or ever see her friend Sandi the golden retriever again? Follow along with Stella and Sandi as you read about a day in the life of a Maine Common Loon.

Leicester Bay Books
PO Box 536
Newport, Maine 04953
www.leicesterbaybooks.com

First Print Edition - 2024
ISBN #: **978-1-7322456-9-3**

Preview Copy

DEDICATION

Frank and I wish to extend our appreciation for the support, encouragement, and assistance to teacher Mrs. Ouellette and the students of the Alton Elementary School RSU 34. Their participation, review and recommendations were used to create my latest adventure.

Enjoy!

Tim Caverly

Franklin Manzo Jr.

Millinocket, Maine

April 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>(previous page)</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>(next page)</i>
Chapter I • Where oh where can Stella be?	1
Chapter II • Sandi hears a story	8
Chapter III • Stella has a hard landing	12
Chapter IV • Could rescuers be at hand?	19
Chapter V • Stella gathers an audience	23
Epilogue	26
Vocabulary	27
Golden Retriever Award	30
About the Author: Tim Caverly	32
About the Illustrator; Franklin Manzo, Jr	34
Books in the Allagash Tails Collection	36

PREFACE

Dear Reader,

The following story is from a motorcycle trip my wife and I took one summer to western Maine. At the time, we were passing by the Dead River, an area so rich in American history, it felt like we were retracing our country's heritage.

The day was bright and sunny as we rode along on freshly hot-topped Route 16. As I enjoyed the scenery of nearby Bigelow Mountain, Susan tapped me on the shoulder, pointed down the road and said, "Be careful there is something on the pavement ahead!"

Drawing near I was surprised to find a loon sitting in the middle of the highway. Other than appearing dazed and confused, the wild bird did not seem hurt. Slowing to a stop, I pulled over to park along the shoulder of the pavement. When I approached the **aquatic** creature, she gave a **tremolo** call as a warning not to come any closer.

In the pages to follow, you'll learn the story of our real-life adventure.

Sincerely,

Tim & Susan Caverly

TIM CAVERLY AND FRANKLIN MANZO, JR.



Ledges of Umsaskis Lake in T11R13 Allagash Wilderness Waterway
Artwork by Jon Luoma

Preview Copy

STELLA'S ODYSSEY

CHAPTER 1

“Where oh where can Stella be?”

Sandy the golden retriever is worried. For three days the family pet has been sitting on the dock of her Umsaskis Lake home. Anxiously waiting and watching for the return of her friend Stella, a Common Loon.



Home of Tim and Susan Caverly

TIM CAVERLY AND FRANKLIN MANZO, JR.

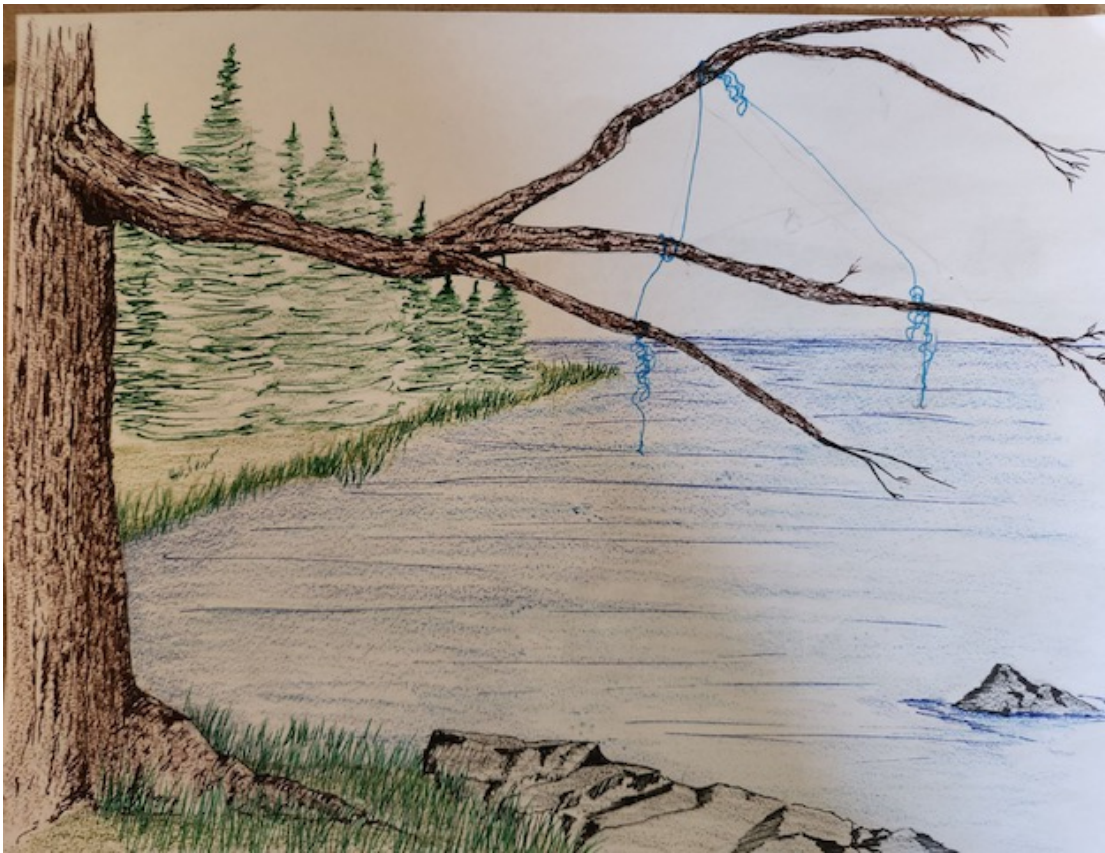
But the aquatic bird is nowhere to be seen. Living along the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in the heart of the Maine woods, Sandi has lots of woodland friends, but none are as close as Stella.



A worried Sandi watches and waits

STELLA'S ODYSSEY

The first time they met was when the loon's wings accidentally became entangled by a piece of fishing line. An entrapment caused when a fisherman casting into nearby Drake **Brook**, had caught his line on the twig of an overhanging alder branch.

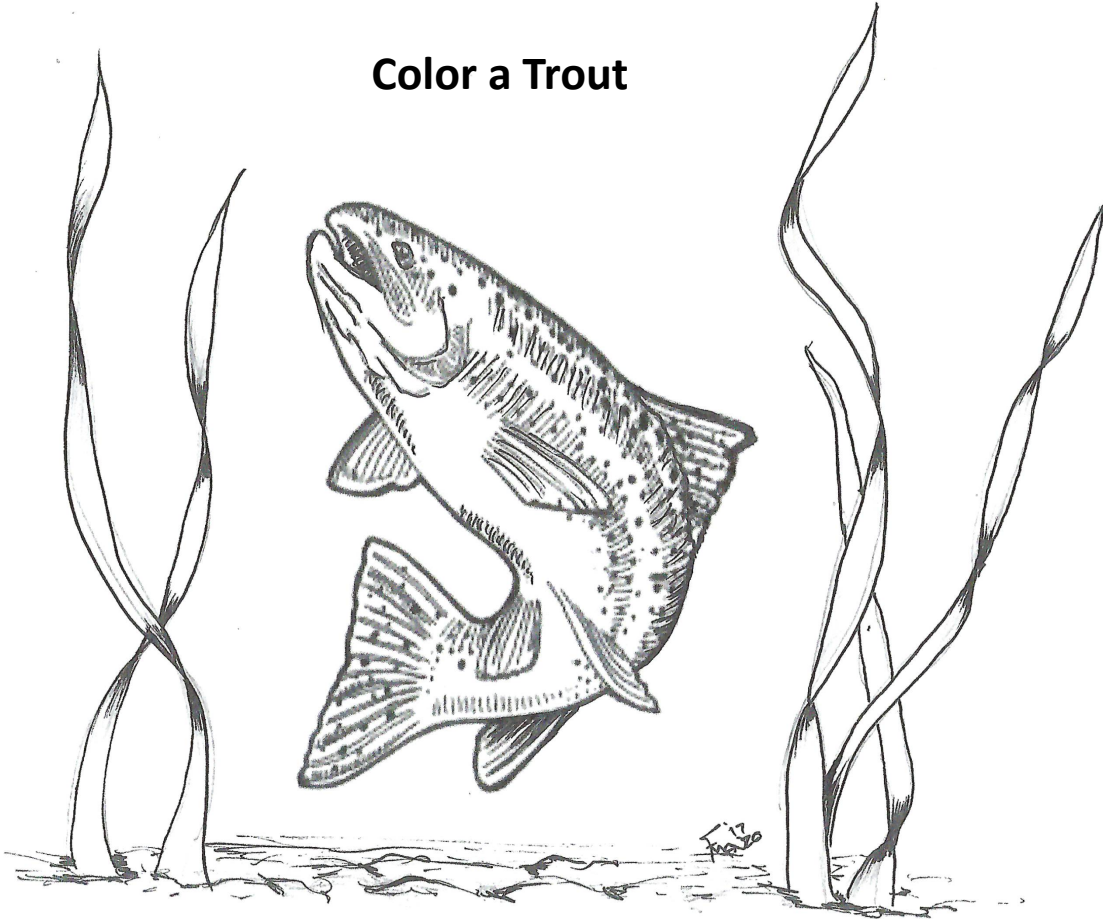


Fishing line caught on tree limb

While the hardwood stem held one end of the **monofilament**, on the further end of the line a large brook trout frantically tugged to break free from a fishhook.

Unable to unwrap the 20-pound test nylon line from the branch, the frustrated outdoorsman used his pocketknife to cut the string from his rod. At the same time, a large squaretail on the other end won his battle when the line let go. The combined acts broke free a single long strand allowing a soft breeze to carry the thread down over the brook.

Color a Trout



Large brook trout attacks a fishing line

Just by **happenstance**, at the same time, Stella flew by the spot where the stream entered Umsaskis Lake.

Carried along, the loose nylon section collided with Stella, causing it to wrap around the bird's 46-inch-**girth**. Immediately restricting her wings. Now hog tied, the loon couldn't fly, so she **plummeted** onto the lake's surface. There, without any other choice, Stella used her webbed feet to paddle as she searched for someone to unsnarl the knots.

In about an hour Stella saw a golden retriever standing on a boat dock closely watching her approach. Desperately needing aid, the loon called out, "Hey dog, can you help me? My wings are wrapped tight, and I can't fly!"

Concerned, she replied, "Maybe? My name is Sandi, and I can see you are in quite a fix. But what can I do?"

Begging, Stella said, "Look what a human did to me? If I swim over, can you gnaw off this fishing line?"

"I think so." Sandi said, "Come a little closer and I'll try."

Gently nibbling to avoid hurting the bird, the retriever was able to free the line. Feeling better, the waterbird first stretched her wings to work out the kinks and then **waggled** each leg. Grateful, Stella introduced herself and rested while she visited. Soon the two became fast friends.

STELLA'S ODYSSEY

Afterwards, whenever Sandy would go for a swim, Stella would paddle alongside and talk. The conversations were always light and good hearted. The loon would brag about the frogs she'd caught, and always offered one to her new buddy. While chit chatting Stella would explain the history of her loon family; an ancestry that traced back millions of years.

Then Sandi would share stories about the kindness of her masters and offer to let the loon hold her favorite tennis ball. But the golden never took a toad, and the loon never reached for the dog toy.

Late one August day Stella dropped onto the lake where Sandi lived. There she gave a soft hoot to invite her canine friend to visit.

Happy to finally see Stella home, Sandi left her spot on the porch and trotted to the water's edge wagging her tail. Immediately the dog saw something unusual which made her stop and stare.

CHAPTER 2

Sandi Hears a Story

Stella looked different, but how? Gazing, the dog finally realized her friend had a band aid on her dagger-like bill, and one on her webbed left foot, but that wasn't all. Speckled across the loon's belly there were hints of black fragments. Worried Stella may have been in an accident, Sandi asked, "What in the world happened to you? Why are you wearing band aids? Have you been hurt?"

STELLA'S ODYSSEY



Sandi notices Stella's Band-Aids

The Common Loon answered feeling very embarrassed. “Do you remember that I spoke about taking a vacation, but I wasn’t sure where to go?”

“Yes, I recall you wanted to get away,” replied Sandi.



Bart Recommends a vacation spot to Stella

So, Stella continued, “Well last week I was talking with Bart the Raven, and I noticed that he’d gained weight; so, I asked where he had been. My so-called friend replied that he had visited the Dead River in western Maine; I was a little shocked. Because that didn’t sound like a very nice place, and certainly not somewhere I ought to go.

“When I said so, Bart explained that the Dead River **corridor** was a famous part of our country’s history. In 1775 during the Revolutionary War, a Colonial Benedict Arnold led an army of 1,100 men north from Massachusetts. They marched 180 miles through the wilderness, to fight the British in Quebec, Canada.”

Stella continued, “Ravens are well known **chatterboxes**. So, patiently I listened to him carry on.” Bart cleared his throat and said, “Today, the Dead, as the locals call it, flows through Flagstaff Lake, near the Bigelow Mt. Range. It is a beautiful area, and the fishing is great.”

With his encouragement, and due to my love of small crayfish and frogs, I decided to fly over. You won’t believe what happened next!”

Here, Stella paused to reflect about her **episode**.

CHAPTER 3

Stella Has a Hard Landing

The **blaring** beeeeeeepp of a car's horn brought Stella back to her senses, forcing her eyes open against her will. *Cough, cough* the loon choked on the acrid smell of a vehicle's exhaust as the toxic cloud enveloped the creature's head. The automobile's tires screeched in protest when the driver swerved to avoid hitting the stunned water-diver sitting in the middle of the newly hot-topped road.

Why did I ever leave Umsaskis Lake, why are people always so mean? Can't they see I'm in trouble? moaned Stella. *I was perfectly happy fishing at the lake and occasionally visiting with my friends. But nooo! I had to listen to the stories from Bart about cool water and the delicious minnows, frogs, and crayfish found along the South Branch of the Dead River. Now look at the mess I'm in! Why did I ever let him talk me into leaving home?*

STELLA'S ODYSSEY



Umsaskis Lake Thoroughfare
Steve Day photo. T. Caverly Collection