



Since its 2004 opening, the Bay Club has earned Silver certification from the National Audubon Society every year.

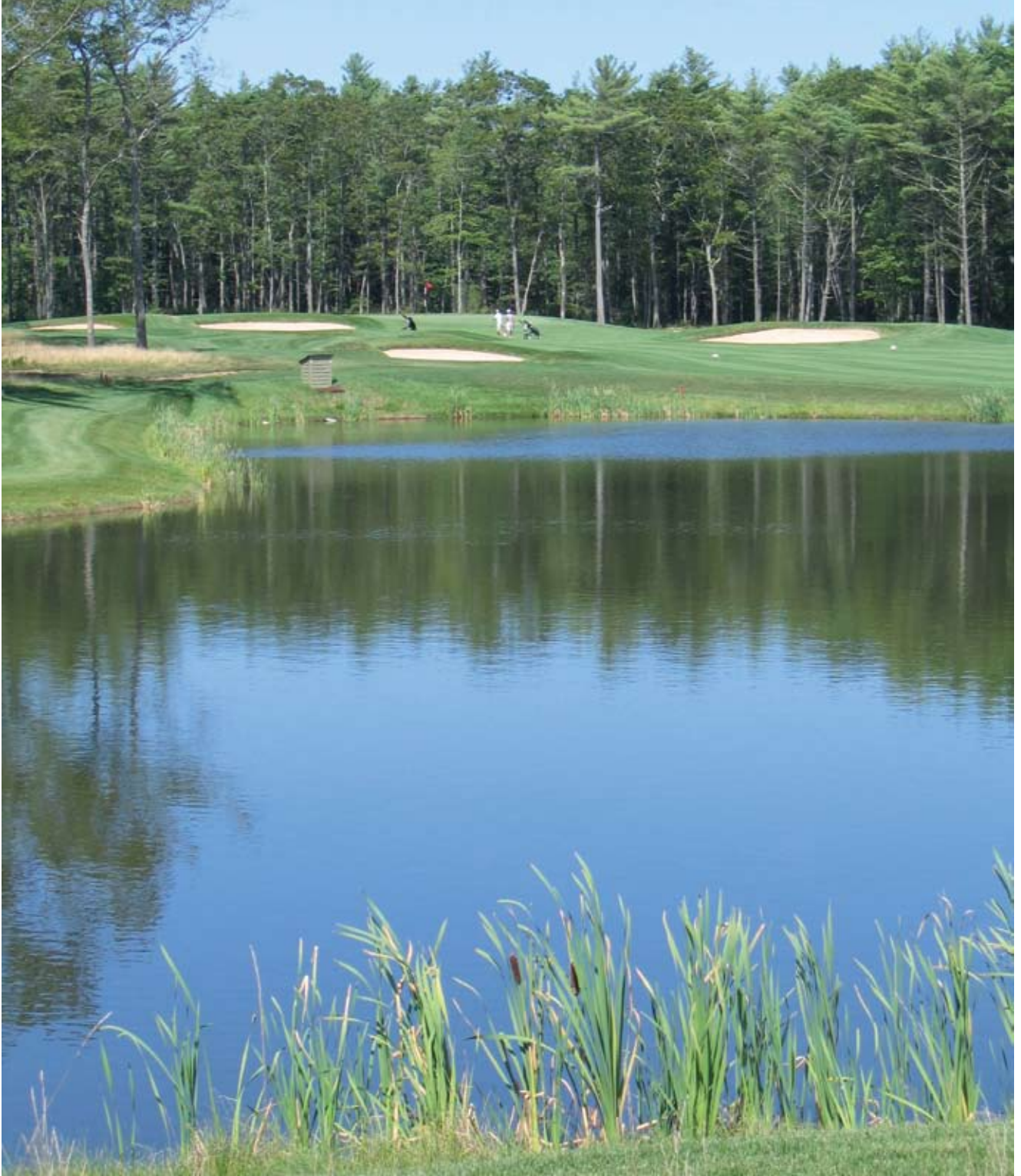
scoring big with Audubon

MATTAPOISETT'S BAY
CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
GOLF COURSE SPORTS
RARE AUDUBON
SOCIETY SILVER
CERTIFICATION

The Bay Club at Mattapoissett was "going green" before the term became a constant in the national energy conversation. When construction began in 2003 on the private club that encompasses nearly 700 acres and includes a championship golf course, a restaurant, a fitness center, a swimming pool, tennis courts, and lots for 175 homes, the club's owners were already following guidelines established by the National Audubon Society to insure the least possible impact on the environment.

Including the managed landscape of the golf course, 93 percent of the acreage was preserved and remains green. "We followed the guidelines 100 percent," says Jon O'Connor, the Bay Club's golf course superintendent.

by rob duca



Through careful, eco-sensitive planning, the Bay Club protected nearby wetlands.

Those guidelines extend right down to placing transmitters on Eastern Box turtles—an endangered species discovered during the original site examination—and diligently monitoring their movements during construction. Whenever turtles were spotted—and they were on numerous occasions—workers shifted them to a safer location. Ultimately, the turtles were placed in naturalized nesting areas created alongside the 11th and 12th fairways. “There was zero mortality,” O’Connor says, “and if you had seen this place during construction, you would have said, ‘How?’ But they all came back out of the woods with their transmitters on.”



To reduce the use of pesticides and other chemicals, the club employs integrated pest management on its grounds.

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open space.*

Such fastidious attention to environmental concerns has earned the Bay Club the Audubon Society's silver certification every year since it opened in 2004. "Many clubs can say they're Audubon certified, but we're a bit different," says Craig Fleming, the Bay Club's general manager. "We are a development that went through the entire Audubon process. They were involved in everything we did from the day we started digging. They put together a research management plan to follow. It dealt with irrigation, wildlife, water quality, pesticide use, and how your buildings are maintained. Even to the point of how you rinse off equipment and then capture that water."

The Audubon International Signature Sanctuary program is catered specifically to new golf developments. With the guidelines in hand, the club was able to forecast, budget, and implement the guideline into construction plans. With the backing of the Audubon Society, the club sailed through the often lengthy permitting process in less than one year. "That's unheard of. But a lot of it was due to our approach. We tried to work with the town," Fleming says.

The par-71 golf course plays 7,068 yards from the championship tees and spans 150 acres. Designed by PGA touring pro Brad Faxon and his business partner, Brad Booth, the course meanders around 300 acres of conservation land. One example of how the layout was designed with the environment in mind is that the first six holes and the final 12 are separated by a bridge that stretches a quarter-mile over natural preserves. "We didn't encroach on any wetlands," Fleming says.



Unlike most gated golf-course communities, the course was designed before the housing lots were sited. Usually, it's done in the opposite fashion. Therefore, homes at the Bay Club are located on only seven holes, and on only one side of the fairways. More than 200 acres on the property are permanently committed to open space.

The insulation of storm sceptors and the construction of retention basins also followed Audubon guidelines to allow areas to mature as ecosystems, create wildlife habitats and efficiently manage storm water. "It's being filtered by plant life before ultimately bleeding into a mass wetlands area," O'Connor said.

The golf course has undergone dramatic changes since its opening as owners sought to reduce water usage by converting 30 acres of bluegrass rough to fescue over a three-year period. Because fescue is not dependant on water, many sprinkler heads have been eliminated—in some cases, up to 20 in a single area. On average, a sprinkler head will pour out 35 to 40 gallons of water per minute. Each head normally runs 10 minutes, and is used 60 or 70 times during the growing season. "That's a tremendous amount of water to save in one area," O'Connor points out. "You've also saved electricity to power the water and wear and tear on the mechanics of the irrigation system."

Whenever a golf course speaks of "going green," the

first question many ask concerns their use of pesticides. O'Connor, who came to the Bay Club after serving as golf course superintendent at Ballymeade Country Club in Falmouth, relies on the term "integrated pest management" to explain the club's philosophy. "It's about establishing thresholds," he says. "How much disease or how much insect activity can there be before that turf becomes unacceptable? How long can I let this go and how much will it cost to fix it? The longer we can stretch it, the fewer chemicals we use."

The process is ongoing. In order to maintain the silver certification, the club is recertified annually with a site audit. "We've had our challenges, but it's been a fun experience," Fleming says. "It has made sense for us environmentally and financially. And bringing in the fescue actually makes the course look better. It has given it more definition." 🏌️

Rob Duca was a sports columnist for the Cape Cod Times for 25 years and is a member of the Golf Writers Association of America.