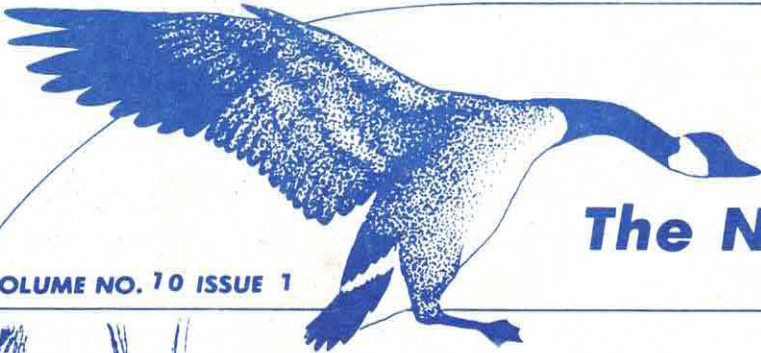



Winter 1989

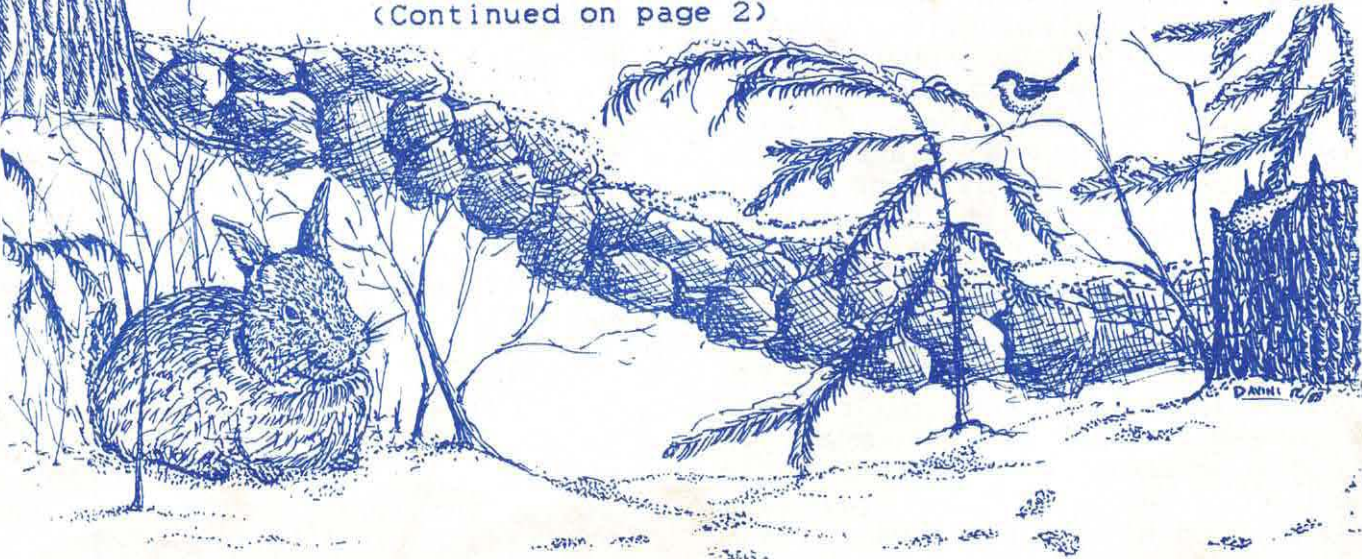
ANIMAL SIGNS IN WINTER



I love the excitement of an early morning walk at the Sanctuary, particularly after a fresh snowfall. Snowy winter days can be a time for solving the mysteries of all the different animal signs we may see along the trails leading through the forests and fields. It's often difficult to see wild animals because of their nocturnal feeding habits. Watching for signs of animals can be a way of determining what creatures live in our local environment. Here are a few guidelines to follow while you are hiking and exploring for animal signs. Look for these clues: tracks, scat (droppings), and evidence of feeding. Now's your chance to be a detective.



Across the open fields and through the forest, I have seen signs of the Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). This predator hunts from dusk to dawn, covering a range from 1 to 5 square miles. The tracks are like those of a dog, its canine relative. The print is about 2 1/2" and the claws are visible. House cats have tracks about the same size, though they have the ability to retract their claws. The gait of the Red Fox is also distinctive, going off in a straight line, unlike a dog's. Look for other signs of fox, such as scat. It's about 2-4" long. (Continued on page 2)



(continued from page 1)

1/2" in diameter and often consists of fur, bones, and seeds. Urine marks in the snow and a strong musky odor, similar to a skunk's, are also sure signs of a Red Fox.



Usually, it's the flash of a white tail that brings my attention to the Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*). It's the only wild rabbit on Aquidneck Island. The distinctive tracks are formed when the rabbit places its tiny front paws, about 1" in size, first and then places the stronger, longer, hind legs in front, about 3" in size. Cottontails will leave trails through the winter weeds in snow and also leave depressions in the snow where they rest. Look for the small oval scat near their feeding area. Twigs and bark are the main winter food source for rabbits.

Once, I thought I was following cottontail tracks until I came to an Oak tree. Since I know that rabbits do not climb trees, these must have been left by the Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). This is one way to distinguish squirrel tracks from rabbit tracks - look where they begin and end. The shape and pattern of the tracks are similar to each other. The other way to distinguish between the two is to notice whether their front feet are placed side-by-side or one behind the other. Animals that live in trees place their front feet side-by-side, and animals that live on the ground place them one behind the other.

Squirrels are active during the day and are frequently seen searching for food such as acorns, hickory nuts, or even bird seed. Squirrels rarely leave scat in visible places, but knowing their habitat can be helpful in recognizing signs. They build leafy

nests, conspicuous in winter, for use in the Spring, Summer, and early Fall, preferring tree cavities for shelter during the colder months.

The other day I was walking through the clearing beneath Indian Rock when I was surprised by all the tunnels networking here and there. These tunnels were probably made by the Meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), a short tailed, plump rodent sometimes called a meadow mouse. Voles are one of the most abundant mammals in Rhode Island with sometimes as many as 100 voles to an acre of land. The tunnels are passageways to feeding areas and also nesting sites. Grasses, seeds, roots, and tree bark are all part of a vole's diet. The scat of a vole is about 1/4", cylindrical, and can often be found in the tunnel.

Sometimes, the tracks of a White-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) can be seen in the snow. The tracks are tiny, 1/4 to 3/8" long, with a line from the tail between the prints.

Small bits of chewed seed and gnawed nuts are a sure sign of this small mammal. The scat is tiny, about 1/4" long and is usually found near the feeding areas. The White-footed mouse prefers to nest above the ground in an old bird nest or in a small cavity in a tree.

What kind of an animal would leave a track like this? The print is about 3" long and it looks as if this animal was walking, not hopping. It's a Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*). The pheasant prefers walking to flying and will fly only when flushed by man or beast. Good habitats for pheasant are fields and shrubland. The scat of a pheasant is often packed with seed from bittersweet, multiflora rose, cherry, and if available, cracked corn. Along field and woodland edges are good places to start tracking pheasant. (Continued on page 11)



PRESCRIBED BURN

Fire is a natural element which throughout time has been a key force in shaping the distribution of plant communities. Fire is also an effective and "natural" tool for the wildlife manager to maintain open fields. It kills the woody plants that invade abandoned fields and releases nutrients back into the soil. After a burn the "lushness" of the field returns and there is a larger percentage of high protein forbes and annual grasses for wildlife.

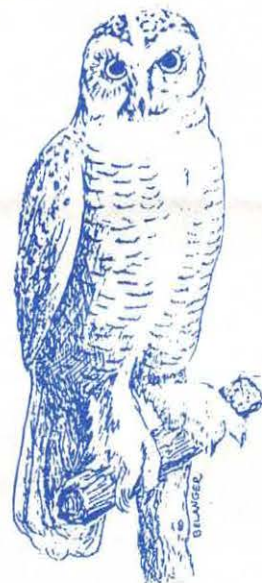
Among the habitats that the Sanctuary manages is an old field area which provides food, cover and nesting areas for a variety of birds including woodcock, pheasant, meadowlark, bobolink, tree swallow, and barn owl. To maintain these areas in an "old field" stage they are regularly mowed. Although mowing helps slow the encroachment of shrubs and trees, it is inefficient and, in time favors certain plant species over others.

We are currently studying the feasibility of using fire as an alternative method to manage and improve these old field habitats. To do this we are consulting with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the D.E.M. Forestry Division and the Middletown Fire Department. If all works well, we will conduct a small experimental prescribed burn in one of these areas in the Spring.

After the Holidays Wish List

Our animal care and educational programs depend on membership dues, as well as contributions and donations made by those who are able to help. Here is our after the holidays wish list:

- A VCR and TV or \$600 to purchase them.
- A 35 mm camera or \$300 to purchase one.
- \$280 for one newsletter printing.
- \$100 for Hawk and Owl food (3 months).
- \$100 for Barn Owl Nesting Box Materials
- \$75 for veterinary services or supplies.
- A bird bath with heater or \$60 to purchase one.
- Stale cereal or bread for animals.



COMMUNITY GARDEN MEETING

Sunday, April 2, 1:00 pm.

Any Sanctuary member who is interested in having a community garden plot for the summer of 1989 must attend this meeting. Returning gardeners - you must also attend or it will be assumed that you do not wish to retain your plot.

During the meeting we will assign plots and review garden policy. An organic gardening workshop will follow.

WINTER NIGHT OWL PROWL
FOR FAMILIES

Saturday, January 21 7 pm

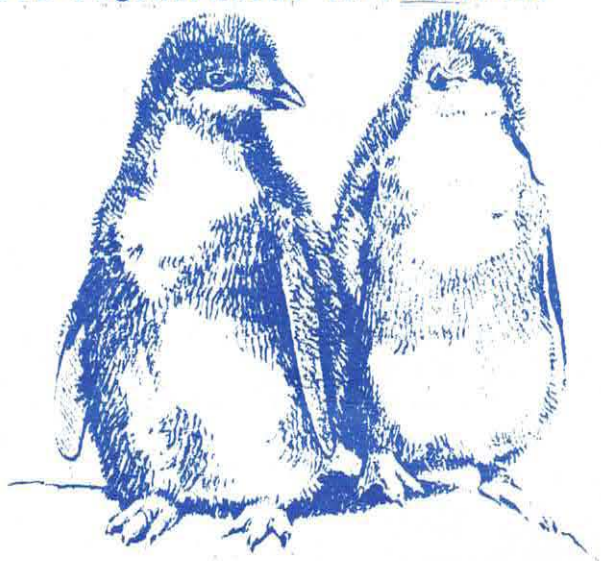
For children and their parents who would like to go for a winter night walk, we will look and listen for owls hooting for their mates. Lisa Pritchard will give a brief introduction about owls indoors prior to the walk. Whoo knows, we may be lucky enough to see a feathered friend! Dress warmly.

Fee:\$3 (\$2 NBS adult members)

\$2 (\$1 NBS child members)

Limit: 12

Pre-registration is required.



AN ANTARCTIC SUMMER

Thursday, February 16 7:30 pm

Local artist and illustrator Lucia deLeiris traveled to the Antarctic peninsula in 1986 with the Natural Science Foundation. Join her during this evening slide and lecture program as she recounts the fascinating wildlife - penguins, cormorants, petrels, albatross, and seals, and the glacial landforms that she came to know during her four month stay. She'll also have set up the painting tent she designed complete with an enclosed heating system to paint in during the everchanging weather. For nature lovers who dream about faraway places, this program should not be missed!

Fee:\$5 (\$4 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

SPECIAL EVENTS



NATURE IN INDIAN MYTHS: THE WAYS OF
THE NEW ENGLAND INDIANS

Sunday, January 29 2-3 pm

Experience the Indian ways of nature brought to life with stories, dance, guided imagery, and artifacts shared by teacher, author, and storyteller, Michael Caduto. This celebrated program will emphasize the American Indian's great respect for earth and all living things. Each participant will create a necklace with four wooden beads, symbolizing the Indian lessons of silence-respect-sharing-circles. Families and adults are invited to attend this special hour.

* Michael Caduto is the author of three environmental education books, Pond and Brook, Environmental and Cultural Education, and Keepers of the Earth. These books will be available for purchase and book signing after the program.

Fee:\$5 (\$4 NBS adult member)

\$4 (\$3 NBS child member)

Pre-registration is required.

"The children were spellbound."

Teacher,
Mountain School, Vermont

"Excellent program"

"Very good rapport with the audience".

"Kept audience active and engaged".

Participants from
Maine Audubon Society



Volunteer Corner



- Another Harvest Fair has passed-hard work, dedication, enthusiasm, and loads of fun. Of course, the Sanctuary is indebted to all of you who helped in any way to make this fundraiser a success. We cannot mention everyone by name (over 200 of you!), but our appreciation goes out to you. You know who you are and thanks!

- To those of you who chaired one of the many committees for the fair, enduring long hours of meetings, phone calls, and preparation, not to mention two full days of back breaking work at the fair, we are grateful! You are: Gini Laughlin, Fran Holmes, Greer Silvia, Ginny Purviance, Betsy deLeiris, Toni Murphy, Bonnie Williams, Dierdre Roettinger, Lenny DeAngelis, Mola Martland, Linda Michaud, Ann Damon, Larry Allen, Bev Murphy, Norman Hall, C.G. King, Morris Hirsch, Roger Gilman, and Peg Hughes.

- Lastly, to our two Harvest Fair Chairpersons - Kathy Finn and Sharon Pelletier who pulled it all together from the beginning to the end (and then some!)... Thank You!

- And... the Sanctuary sends a special thank you to our volunteers who have helped with Fall projects and programs and general support: Barbara Christian and Sharon Culberson of Hilltop Gardens, Cally Gottlieb, Dr. Goos, Bill O'Connell, Dario Diaz, George Mallineux, Jocelyn Sherman, Jennifer Warren, Taff Roberts, St. George's students - Narissa Willever, Sarah Light, Eleanor Lucas, and Sissy Dent, SMU Interns - Greg Davini and Michael Ballanger, Charles Donald, Erika King, Monique Roeder, Jennifer DeSimone, June Warren, and the NBS Advisory Committee.

TRANSITIONS

The Sanctuary welcomes June Doolittle as our new Receptionist. June has been here since the third week of October. June is also pursuing a music degree at U.R.I. She comes here from her former post as Assistant Director of Admissions at St. George's School. She is replacing Jean Ballantine, who had been at the Sanctuary since 1985. Jean has moved on to new endeavors, and we wish her well!

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$   CHAMPLIN FOUNDATION GRANT   $
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$   The Sanctuary was awarded a  $
$   $15,000 grant from the       $
$   Champlin Foundation toward  $
$   the purchase of a new tractor $
$   for land management purposes. $
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DONATIONS

The following individuals and businesses have donated services and items to the Sanctuary this Fall. We are grateful.

- Newport Animal Hospital, Dr. Allen, and Dr. Cates for veterinary care and advice.
- Cally Graphics and PDQ for our school brochure.
- New England Wildlife Clinic for raptor care.
- Charles River Labs and Mitchell Kundrat for mice.
- Newport Garden Club for a framed botanical print.
- Adele's Pet Emporium and Linda Yeargin for bird supplies.
- Daniel Morlock for a rabbit cage.
- Buzz Hooker for photos.
- Fran Merony for office supplies.
- Steven Clark and Ray Smith for animal cages.
- Joceyn Sherman for a holiday wreath.
- Amy Wright for graphics.
- Gladys Silveira for a children's book.
- Bob Barry and SMU Illustration students for graphics.

WINTER NIGHT OWL PROWL

Friday, January 20 7 pm

Walk through the trails of NBS in the winter stillness to listen for the mating calls of our resident owls- Great Horned and Screech. Before venturing out, Lisa Pritchard, NBS Education Coordinator will give a brief introduction on the natural history of these predatory birds. Dress warmly. This program is for adults.

Fee:\$3 (\$2 NBS members).

Limit: 10

Pre-registration is required.

WOODBURNING SAFETY WORKSHOP

Thursday, January 26 7-8:30 pm

Safe woodburning in your stove or fireplace is an important life-saving habit to learn for the cold winter months. Phil Rondina, retired Middletown Fireman and owner of Colonial Chimney Sweeps will give a lecture and slideshow as well as a "heated" demonstration to get you and your family into a safe practice.

Free and open to the public.
Pre-registration is required.

POT POURRI MAKING

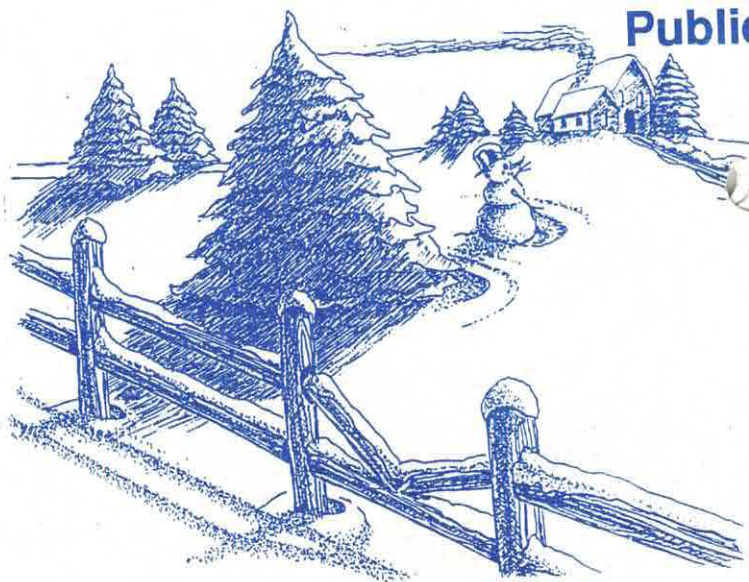
Saturday, January 28 1-3 pm

The pleasant aromas of mixed herbs in a pot pourri can send a heartfelt message to your valentine this year. Join Barbara and Sharon from Hilltop Gardens as they provide all the mixings including lavender and rosebuds letting you prepare a unique batch of pot pourri to entice a special heart. Bring a covered glass jar or container.

Fee:\$10 (\$8 NBS members).

Limit:15

Pre-registration is required.



SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

Every Sunday 8 am.
Weather permitting

Join Sanctuary Director, Larry Taft for these free guided bird walks. During the winter months explore the NBS trails, nearby ponds and rocky shores. Dress warmly and bring binoculars if you have them. Walks may be cancelled due to very cold weather.

NATURAL HISTORY WALK

Saturday, January 28 10 am

Follow the tracks of animals in winter and look for other signs as well. Join Sanctuary Naturalist Hap Morgan on this informal walk. Children and adults are encouraged to come.

Fee: \$3 (\$2 NBS adult member)
\$2 (\$1 NBS child member)

Limit: 15

Pre-registration is required.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

Any snowy weekend

Anne Truslow- MacIntosh will be available to give cross country ski instructions on snowy weekends this winter. Call NBS for details to arrange for a time on Saturday or Sunday. We'll try to get a minimum number of 6 participants.

Fee :\$10 (\$7 NBS members).

Programs

ENDANGERED SPECIES IN NEWPORT COUNTY

Wednesday, March 1 7:30 pm.

Many of the wildlife species in Newport County are endangered due to current land use trends.

Biologist Rick Enser, Coordinator of the RI Natural Heritage Program, will present a slide lecture which will discuss the threats, successes and possibilities facing local wildlife.

Free and open to the public.
Pre-registration is required.

WINTER WEEDS

Saturday, March 4 2 pm

A rose is but a rose... but winter weeds are everywhere. This natural history walk will focus on the various remaining dried weeds of Winter. We will identify the plant, learn how the seeds are dispersed and discover if it is used for food by birds and mammals. Dress warmly.

Fee: \$3 (\$2 NBS members).
Limit: 15
Pre-registration is required.

EASTER EGG BASKET MAKING WORKSHOP

Saturday, March 11 1-4 pm

Weave colorful strands of fibers into a beautiful round bottomed egg basket for Easter. Sharon, from Hilltop Gardens will guide participants through the steps toward creating a handmade basket to treasure for years to come. This is an intermediate-skill basket, though beginners are welcome. Participants should bring clippers or heavy scissors, wooden clip clothespins, and an old towel.

Fee: \$19 (\$17 NBS members).
Limit: 8
Pre-registration is required.

LLOYD CENTER FIELD TRIP

Sunday March 12 10:30 - 12 pm.
Meet at Sanctuary parking lot at 9:30 am

Join us as we carpool to the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies located on the scenic Slocums River in South Dartmouth, MA. We will take a tour through the exhibits, aquaria, and up to the observation deck in the main building. Afterwards, we'll hike the coastal trails through some of the 55 acres of saltmarsh, forest, and freshwater wetlands. Those who would like to stay through lunch can participate in a Sunday afternoon ecology walk led by the Lloyd Center staff.

Fee: \$6 (\$5 NBS adult member),
\$4 (\$3 NBS child member).
Pre-registration is required.

WOODCOCK WALK

Saturday, March 18 5:30 pm.

Spring will soon be here and as a prelude, the male woodcock performs its annual courtship flight. Welcome the warmer season and learn more about this fascinating bird as we hike the "Woodcock Trail" and then toast Spring's return with champagne.

Fee: \$3 (\$2 NBS members).
Limit: 15
Pre-registration is required.

HERBS AND NATURAL HEALING

Thursday, March 30 7-8:30 pm

Folk medicines are as close as your own backyard. A slideshow of local medicinal plants, along with an herbal tea formulation and blending will start you on your way toward learning about herbs and natural healing. Hap Morgan, NBS Naturalist will share his knowledge during this program. Participants will take home a blend of "Vitali-Tea" and recipes for salves and liniments.

Fee: \$4 (\$3 NBS members).
Pre-registration is required.

Children's Programs

PRESCHOOL NATURE HOUR

Wednesday afternoons 1-2 pm

Warm up to nature this winter with your preschooler (ages 3-5). We'll be learning about the natural world through stories, songs, crafts, and hands-on props. If the weather allows, we'll take short walks outdoors. This program is for preschoolers accompanied by one parent or guardian. One adult may be responsible for up to 2 children.

Winter Session:

Jan.18: Animal Tracks
Jan.25: The Red Fox
Feb.1: Needles and Cones
Feb.8: Snowflakes and Ice

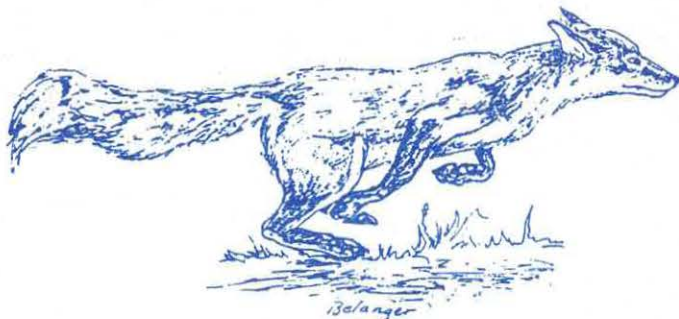
Early Spring Session:

March 1: Soil
March 8: Eggs
March 15: Baby Animals
March 22: Peepers and Toads

Fee per session: \$12 (\$10 NBS members)

Limit: 10 child/adult pairs

Pre-registration is required.



THE GOOD OLD PIONEERING DAYS

Saturday, February 11 1-3 pm

This special program, for 2nd - 6th graders, will explore some old fashioned crafts and lifestyles of R.I. pioneers led by Alton Jones Environmental Education staff. Spinning, natural dyeing, and storytelling will be included in this 2 hour program.

Fee: \$5 (\$3 NBS child member)

Limit: \$32 children

Pre-registration is required.

WINTER VACATION WEEK

Mon.- Fri. February 20-24
9:30-12:30

Spend your vacation with nature during this winter season! We'll be learning about this fascinating time of year with activities for indoors and out through songs, crafts, games, and exploration. The week is open to boys and girls in grades K-4. A mid-morning snack will be served. Children should dress warmly, in layers.

Fee: \$45 (\$40 NBS child members)

Limit: 20 children

Pre-registration is required.

NATURE CLUB

Saturday mornings 9:30-12:30

Saturday mornings at the Sanctuary are a time for learning about nature while having a lot of fun. Children in grades K-4 can safely explore the natural world through games, songs, crafts, and hiking. Each week is a new discovery! A mid-morning snack will be served. Children should dress warmly, in layers.

Early Spring Session:

March 4: Dinosaurs
March 11: Recycling for the Birds
March 18: Weather
March 25: NO NATURE CLUB
April 1: Signs of Spring

Fee per session: \$36 (\$32 NBS child member)

Limit: 10 children

Pre-registration is required.

NATURAL EGG DYEING

Wednesday, March 22 3:30-5 pm

Onion skins, red cabbage, and berries leave colorful patterns on eggs for Easter. Children will decorate three eggs and a basket to carry them in. Bring in a green plastic berry basket if you have one. This program is for children age 5 and older.

Fee: \$4 (\$3 NBS child member)

Limit: 8

SPECIAL EVENTS



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKSHOP

The Norman Bird Sanctuary is one of a few places in R.I. which provides a natural laboratory for archaeological research and education.

In addition to an Indian shell midden that has been discovered on the property, the Sanctuary has strong potential for containing other archaeological sites, including camps, rock shelters, quarries, and even a village.

At the archaeological workshop you can receive hands-on, training in archaeological field and laboratory methods. The 20 hour course will consist of a 2 hr. orientation session, followed by 2 full weekend days in the field, learning surveying and excavating techniques, and a follow up lab day, analyzing and identifying artifacts.

The workshop will be conducted by Dr. Jordan Kerber of the Public Archaeology Laboratory

Orientation: April 18, 7:30-9:30 pm
Field Days: April 22-23, 9 am -3 pm
Lab Day: April 30, 9 am -3 pm

Fee: \$100.00
Limit: 12 participants
Pre-registration is required by April 14th.

NEW ENGLAND BIRDS OF PREY

Sunday, February 26 1 pm
(at Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge in Middletown)

A detailed look at the biology and behavior of our hawks, owls, eagles, and vultures will be presented by New England Wildlife Clinic from Hingham, MA. Once regarded as pests, these birds are now recognized as essential components of our environment. Live birds will accompany speaker, Victoria Smythe from NEWC. The clinic offers wildlife rehabilitation, research, and public education about our local wildlife. This program is for both children and adults.

Fee: \$4 (\$3 NBS adult members)
\$3 (\$2.50 NBS child member)
Pre-registration is required.



EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 25 1 pm

The excitement of Spring is in the air after a long winter. Join the fun as we celebrate the earth's awakening by searching for brightly colored eggs hidden around the Sanctuary buildings. Children, ages preschool - 6th grade and their parents can participate. Older children will be challenged by a hunt further out on some of the trails. This program is for NBS members only.

Fee: \$4 One child/parent pair
\$6 Family
Limit: 30 children
Pre-registration is required

The project was started two years ago to encourage the propagation of Tree Swallows (and other tree cavity nesting birds) by the construction and placement of nesting boxes mounted on poles in the open fields on the Sanctuary. The boxes make up for the lack of natural cavities that otherwise would be found in an older, more developed woodland.

Throughout the spring and early summer Sanctuary visitors also enjoy a close-up look at tree swallow behavior including courtship, territorial display, nest building and feeding of young.

This year we hope to continue the project with the involvement of our members. Your family can "adopt" a tree swallow family by purchasing and assembling a nesting box to be erected here at the Sanctuary. Your house should last for years and produce generations of tree swallows. Your initials and a special number will be put on your box.

The boxes will be monitored regularly through each season and the progress of each "family" will be reported in the summer issue of the Flyer.

The pre-cut kits are available at the Sanctuary office. The fee to adopt a tree swallow family is \$7.50 (1/2 the cost of the wood, 8 foot pole and clamps).



tree
swallow

Director's Notes

Dear Members,

Below is a letter to the editor reprinted from the Newport Daily News, December 8, 1988.

The development of the estate is of major concern to Sanctuary, and we would greatly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Larry

Gray Craig development a concern

To the Editor:

The Middletown Planning Board is currently evaluating plans for the development of Gray Craig estate. It is an issue which should be of concern to all residents of Aquidneck Island because of the negative impact this development will have on the Norman Bird Sanctuary.

Gray Craig estate, which adjoins the Norman Bird Sanctuary along the Sanctuary's western boundary, is a large, scenic property whose higher elevations provide a panoramic view of the Sanctuary, Second Beach, Sachuest Point, and beyond. The 81.3-acre project entails the development of the estate into a community of 56 single family, duplex townhouse, and multi-resident dwellings.

From a high point within the Sanctuary's borderline, Gray Craig estate appears as a forested park, the only visible sign of habitation being a partial view of the empty manor house. Below, forming a natural boundary, Paradise Brook empties into Nelson's Pond and the surrounding marshes, a haven for migrating waterfowl. It is a beautiful, remote setting, pleasantly out-of-place on our busy island.

Unfortunately, the Sanctuary's western boundary is also a very vulnerable area. It is a mixture of wetlands and forest inhabited by birds, mammals, and other life forms rarely seen along the Sanctuary's more accessible well-used network of trails.

There are three significant threats which this project creates for the Norman Bird Sanctuary and Aquidneck Island:

First, the potential for contamination of wetlands, Paradise Brook and Nelson's Pond, a source of drinking water for Newport and Middletown.


Second, environmental damage caused by the inevitable intrusion of people and pets across the sensitive western border (construction plans show five home sites in proximity to Paradise Brook, one of which appears to be within 120 feet of Sanctuary property).

Third, the adverse scenic impact resulting from dwelling construction at elevations clearly visible from Sanctuary property — work that will require both tree removal and the leveling of granite ledges.

More than 10,000 people visit the Norman Bird Sanctuary's 450 acres each year. Both adults and children participate in year-round programs with the underlying theme being environmental awareness and protection. The habitat offers beauty and solitude, a sense of being away from it all, without having to drive three hours. I sincerely hope that Aquidneck Islanders care enough about this invaluable resource to voice their concerns to Middletown's elected and appointed officials

Barry Murphy
Advisory Board Chairman
Norman Bird Sanctuary

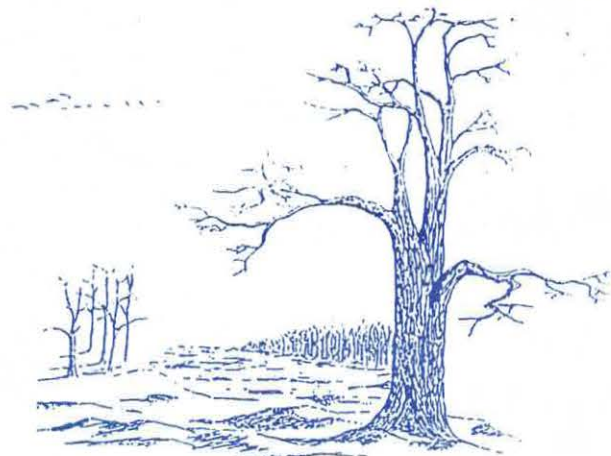
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Winter nights are quiet cover for a member of the weasel family, the Mink (*Mustela vison*). Minks will hunt mostly at night, though sometimes seen during the day. Food consists of mice, fish, frogs, insects, and birds. Tracks near streams, ponds, or marshes will show the characteristic "bounding" prints -  when the front feet land together and the rear feet land exactly where the front feet were. Scat, if found, is usually in an obvious place, such as on top of a rock or log. In this way, the mink has defined its territory. The scat often has fur, bones, and possibly fish scales. Another weasel family member, the Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) is dormant during the winter, occasionally awakening during a warm spell.

Of course, winter is full of sounds too. The dee-dee-dee of chickadees, the squawk of bluejays, tap-tap-tap of a woodpecker, or even the honking of Canada geese flying overhead are all signs of animals. If you take a walk outside at night in December through February, you may hear the sound of a Great Horned Owl or Screech Owl calling for a mate from the deep winter woods. Winter is also mating season for the fox and a high pitched bark can sometimes be heard from this nocturnal hunter.

There are other animals of winter - raccoons, hawks, many different ducks on the ponds and bay, and birds at your feeder. The season is here to practice tracking skills and to look and listen for all the animal signs of winter.

Hap Morgan



Dear Henny Penny,

My family feeds the birds in the winter. Is there any food that would be harmful to them. Would peanut butter be ok?

Concerned Bird Feeder

Dear Concerned Bird Feeder,

I speak for all those birds that you feed - Thank You! As far as this chicken knows, there are few foods that are really harmful to the avian species (of course, junk food should not be given as we would not like to indulge in poor dietary habits!). Even some salt is needed by birds. Birds such as finches, siskins, and grosbeaks are quite fond of salt in the winter. Most birds tend to know "what is good for them", except in cases of pesticides and other poisons.

Peanut butter is a good winter substitute for insects, providing protein and fat for birds. Nuthatches, chickadees, and woodpeckers, (not to mention starlings) all appreciate a bit of peanut butter spread on a pine cone or on a log hung from a tree. Beef suet is also a good winter protein source for birds.

Perhaps the greatest harm that can be done when feeding birds is forgetting to put food out once you've started and winter arrives. Birds learn where their food stations are during the Fall. When extremely low temperatures hit, it could be devastating for birds to find an empty feeder. Once you begin to feed the birds, make a commitment to continue at least until the Spring when the insects are out.

Happy birdfeeding with warm regards,

Henny Penny



P.S. If you have more questions about winter bird feeding, call us at NBS.

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
THIRD BEACH ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, RI 02840



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02840
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OR TO CURRENT RESIDENT

Plantings for Wildlife

The Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District will be sponsoring its annual seedling program for the Spring of 1989. They will offer shrubs and trees, such as Serviceberry, Siberian Dogwood, Red Barberry, Beach Plum, Rosa Rugosa, American Cranberrybush, Japanese Black Pine, White Spruce, Douglas Fir, and Blueberry. These species provide food and shelter for our local wildlife. If you are interested in ordering these plants, call the district at 847-9196. Orders must be made by March 17 for an April 15 delivery.

* NEW WINTER HOURS *
* *
* We are now open DAILY 9 - 5. *
* Cross country skiers are *
* welcome on our trails. *

FOR SALE:

1960 model Ford tractor 33 Hp.
Equipped with front-end loader and
brush mower. \$3500 or best offer.

The Norman Bird Flyer is published quarterly by the Norman Bird Sanctuary, a non-profit nature preserve established under the will of Mabel Norman Cerio.

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