



# The Norman Bird Flyer

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2 NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY, THIRD BEACH ROAD, MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02840 PHONE 401-846-2577 \*

## MAKIN' TRACKS

The greatest puzzle in the spring time at the Norman Bird Sanctuary may be trying to decipher the cacaphony of bird songs in the cool early morning. However, it is still winter - if you were at all wondering - and surely in winter, bird songs, though a joy to hear on those cold bleak mornings, are not as boggling as a woods crisscrossed with animal tracks. These interwoven patterns are more challenging than the NY Times crossword puzzle of the year, and they're better, because they tell stories.

On one Sunday morning ski trip we saw red fox prints across the big field by the barn.

Hard to distinguish from dog tracks, fox prints follow each other in a fairly straight line. A horizontal raised bar across the hind pad on each paw print separates the red fox from other canids.

House cats, unfortunately, are another sanctuary visitor and dweller we saw ample sign of. They, like the fox, have 4 distinct toe pads and a hind pad. Since cats have the ability to retract their claws, their prints show no claw marks. Dogs and foxes do not have this ability. Of the tracks we found in the sanctuary, none but those of the fox, cat and dog seem to be those of an animal walking. The others show pairs of prints which are the front and hind paws of animals on the run.

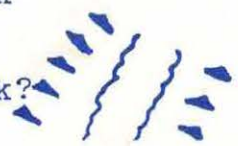
A cottontail rabbit's trail disappeared into the bare rose thickets. That rabbit was moving! The front prints in each foursome are made by

the large and powerful hind legs. The rabbit lands on his front feet, then his hind legs catch up and are planted ahead of the front ones for the great push forward. You can tell a right-footed rabbit from a left-footed one. A right-footed rabbit's right front paw will be slightly in front of the left (but still behind the large rear feet); left-footed rabbits put their left foot forward. (Is this why rabbits seem to run in circles?)

Deer mice or white-footed mice are in great abundance at the sanctuary. They tunnel through the grass under the snow to the stores of seeds and roots tucked away. We saw their tracks just pop up out of the snow in a clearing or near a sapling trunk. Look for the tell-tale tail marks. Gray squirrels were out and about, too, though they probably would rather not be. Was he going up the tree, or down it?

The wind makes tracks as it blows bits of snow across a field or loosens up a snowy branch. Don't be fooled. We saw many bird tracks throughout the sanctuary, but were hard pressed to identify any but those of the pheasant, and these we guessed at only by their size. Habitat is a good clue, as well as whether the bird appears to have walked or hopped.

We saw a mystery track around Maple Swamp Pond. Can you guess what animal might have made this track?





## Sanctuary Mailbox

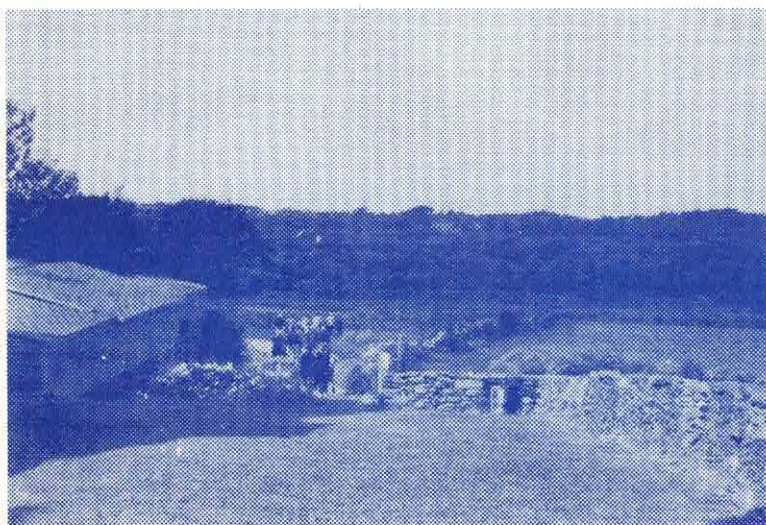


Interesting natural history sightings? Trips? Ideas or suggestions for the sanctuary? Send us a letter!

### BARN RENOVATION NEARLY COMPLETED

The sanctuary barn, nearly two hundred years old, is getting some attention on the inside this winter. Under the planning and direction of architect George Warren one side of the barn is being walled in. The front sanctuary office, a large museum room, kitchen, and bathrooms will be contained within it. A new window on the west side and 3 sliding glass doors along the new wall will shed lots of light on the barn's beauty. Mr. Warren has in mind opening up and returning the barn to a point closer to its original state, making a practical as well as esthetically pleasing working and learning place.

Bitter cold has slowed the workmen down, but the walls are up, insulation is laid, and floors, ceilings, and wall siding are ready to go.



This picture was taken in the early 1950's. The bird sanctuary fields were much more open then, as this view from the woodland trail shows.

## Director's Notes

1981 blew in cold, windy, and snowy, but the sanctuary remains open to visitors, of both the human and the animal variety. White-throated sparrows, cardinals, jays and mourning doves crowd our feeder and decorated entrance tree, where the suet/peanut butter logs have proved a real favorite. A mauling skunk has made his presence known.

A raccoon, brought in from Bristol is sleeping through most of it. Every morning when I put my hand in he grabs it with a soft paw as if to say, "Yeah, I'm OK, just sleepy." A black duck with a bad hip will now eat out of your hand but is very choosy: "Rice or barley - cooked, please." A house finch can't walk but loves thistle seed and drinks from a blue-striped straw. Bob-white quail huddle together in the animal house to stay warm. The geese complain about the cold, but jump right into the fresh cistern water every morning and honk for jobs. Thumper, the rabbit, could use more fresh salad. Can anyone oblige?

Our membership stands at 508, and grows almost every week. Thanks to all of you we can accept and care for injured animals from throughout the region, maintain miles of trail, manage acres of undisturbed wildlife habitat, and offer programs for the enjoyment and enrichment of everyone. With a greater membership, our services and management capabilities will be that much better. Tell a friend about us!

Winter seems overbearing at the moment, but spring has already started in little ways. Dormant seeds will soon start germinating and a January thaw could get the sap flowing in the trees. It's not too far off now!



## NATURE CLUB!!

This winter we're offering a nature club at the sanctuary for children aged 10 - 13. Children will study the natural world and its relationship to human populations through walks, presentations, crafts and games. They'll become involved in sanctuary projects, contributing skills as they learn them. They'll get to know other children with similar interests and above all, have a lot of fun!

Saturday mornings - 9:00-12:00

Two 4-week sessions:

February 7 - 28

March 7 - 28

Members: \$16.00/4-week session

Non-members: \$20.00/4-week session

Limit 10 per session

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS GROWING

Over one thousand students visited the Norman Bird Sanctuary this Fall, and Spring is expected to be even busier. An hour and a half isn't enough time at the Sanctuary, yet students do go away with increased appreciation of what goes on in natural systems, and best of all, some go home with a spark of new interest.

Teacher-naturalists are needed for Spring classes. If interested please call us between 9 and 5 Wednesday through Sunday.

## TEACHER-NATURALIST POSITIONS

Applications are now being accepted for teacher-naturalist positions in this summer's Nature Day Camp. We're looking for people with a good background in natural history and some experience working with youth, for a morning session for younger children and an afternoon "Summer Challenge" session for young teenagers. Interested persons should send a resume and cover letter to the Norman Bird Sanctuary.

## NATURE CLUB RESERVATION FORM

Yes, I would like to enroll my child in the Norman Bird Sanctuary's Nature Club.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Session: \_\_\_\_\_ February 7 - 28

\_\_\_\_\_ March 7 - 28

\_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_ Non-member

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We will cut off enrollment for each session at 10 participants.



Delia Clark shows leaf parts to a class from JFK Elementary School.



## Synergy

When two people work together they can produce more than twice what each could have done alone. That's called synergy and that's volunteer power!

Bill O'Connell and his kids worked several full days on a new trail connecting second and third ridge. Guthrie Nickolson has put in countless hours wiring our animal house and caring for our raccoon occupant. Sylvia Hampton entertained at story hour with her guitar and fine voice. Tim Moore, Jeff Hall, Bill King, and Lincoln Barber all put in hours toward the completion of the animal house by sheet rocking, building, and cleaning. Don Lemmens is our official sign man and general consultant. Beth Shonting manned the office when the staff was off visiting another center. To you and the many others we didn't mention, thanks.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR  
WHO ISN'T A SANCTUARY MEMBER ?

The Norman Bird Sanctuary  
PO Box 378  
Middletown, RI 02840

### Annual Membership

- Individual...\$10	- Business...\$30
- Family.....\$15	- Patron....\$100
- Sustaining...\$25	- Life.....\$1000

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions and membership dues are deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes.



### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee of the Norman Bird Sanctuary is a group of sanctuary members dedicated to the purposes and objectives of the sanctuary as originally established in the will of Mabel Norman Cerio. They assist in the overall operation, maintenance, management, and development of the sanctuary.

At their annual meeting this November, the committee welcomed three new elected members: Harriett Phelps of Jamestown, Peter Randall of Middletown, and Patty Vaillancourt of Portsmouth. Elected as officers for 1981 were: Luise Tower as Chairperson, Albert Sherman as Vice Chairperson, Norman Hall as Secretary, and Richard Koziara as Treasurer, all of Middletown. Also serving on the advisory committee are Christine Callahan, Stephen Erickson, Barbara Sturtevant, Happy Van Beuren, and George Warren of Middletown, Robert Edenbach and Charlotte Van Hof of Portsmouth, and Linda Kenfield of Newport.

Our thanks go out to these dedicated individuals for the time and energy they put in to maintaining the sanctuary as a preserve for all forms of life, including people!



# *What's Happening at the Bird Sanctuary ?*

## EVERY SUNDAY

Sunday Morning Bird Walks - 9:00 AM  
Come join us in our new winter hours!  
Everyone welcome, from first-timers  
to experts! Meet in the parking lot.

Children's Wildlife Film Series -  
2:00 Sharks, penguins, Africa,  
Australia, rivers, the sun, and much  
more! (Adults welcome, too!)

## TUESDAY EVENINGS

Rare and Endangered Plants and  
Animals of Rhode Island - January  
27 at 7:30. Presented by Rick  
Enser of the Rhode Island Heritage  
Program.

Star Walks - February 3 and March 10  
at 7:30 (February 4 and March 11 if  
cloudy) We'll study some of the  
beautiful stars and constellations  
of the winter sky, and learn the  
myths behind them. Dress warmly.

Owl Walks - February 17 at 7:30  
Come join us on a moonlit walk as we  
hoot up some of our local owls,  
using recorded calls.

Snowshoes - History and Use - Date  
to be announced. Roger Gilman will  
speak from his published research  
and his many years of personal ex-  
perience with snowshoes.

## WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS

Nature in Winter - January 21 at 2:00  
A look at some of the ways that  
plants, animals, and insects survive  
the winter. Presented by Delia Clark.

An Introduction to the Norman Bird  
Sanctuary - February 18 at 2:00. A  
preview showing of the new sanctuary  
slide and tape program, followed by  
discussion. Bring an interested  
friend or neighbor!

Native Americans of the Narragansett  
Bay Region - March 4 at 2:00.  
Mrs Millicent House will present a  
slide illustrated lecture.

## FIELD WALKS

Nature in Winter - January 25 at  
12:00 noon. How have plants, an-  
imals, and insects adapted to survive  
the winter? We'll take a close look  
as we walk, ski or snowshoe along  
the sanctuary's trails.

Valentine's Day Hike - February 14  
beginning at 10:00. We'll carpool  
to western Rhode Island and hike in  
search of Cupid's home from there.  
Call the sanctuary for more infor-  
mation and to reserve a spot.

Owl Walk - February 28 at 7:30  
We'll walk through the sanctuary  
using voices and recorded calls  
to search for the wintering owls.

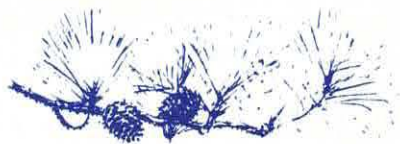
Search for Spring - March 8 at  
12:00 noon. Spring begins in small  
ways, slipping in under the edges  
of winter. We'll scour the sanc-  
tuary for signs.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Cross Country Ski Clinic - February  
1 at 12:00 noon. Peter Powell of Base  
Camp will present the basics of ski  
equipment, clothing and maintenance  
inside, then take us outside for  
some waxing and technique instruc-  
tion, weather permitting. We'll  
regroup later for a ski movie and  
some hot cocoa.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- \*Gardening workshops with Agricul-  
tural Extension agent Lee Gardner
- \*Woodcock walks
- \*Spring wildflower jaunts
- \*Canoe trip down the Wood River
- \*Birding trips and a banding  
demonstration with a representative  
from the Manomet Bird Observatory
- \*Tour of the New Alchemy Institute  
on Cape Cod
- \*Spring picnic





# Norman Bird Sanctuary Events

JANUARY 11 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	12	13	14	15	16	17
		●			● - NEW MOON ○ - FIRST QUARTER	○ - FULL MOON ● - LAST QUARTER
18 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	19	20 PENUMBRAL LUNAR ECLIPSE 2:49 AM ○	21 NATURE IN WINTER TALK 2:00	22	23	24
25 BIRD WALK 9:00 NATURE IN WINTER WALK 12:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	26	27 RARE AND EN- DANGERED PLANTS AND ANIMALS OF RHODE ISLAND 7:30	28	29	30	31
FEBRUARY 1 BIRD WALK 9:00 X-C SKI CLINIC 12:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	2 GROUND-HOG DAY! ●	3 STAR WALK 7:30	4 ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE 4:57 PM ●	5	6	7 NATURE CLUB SESSION #1 BEGINS 9:00
8 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	9	10	11 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY ●	12	13	14 ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ VALENTINE'S DAY HIKE 10:00 ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥
15 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	16 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY	17 OWL WALK 7:30	18 INTRODUCTION TO THE NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY 2:00 ○	19	20	21
22 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	23	24	25	26 ●	27	28 OWL WALK 7:30
MARCH 1 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	2	3	4 NATIVE AMERICANS OF THE NARRAGAN- SETT BAY REGION 2:00	5	6 ●	7 NATURE CLUB SESSION #2 BEGINS 9:00
8 BIRD WALK 9:00 SEARCH FOR SPRING 12:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	9	10 STAR WALK 7:30	11	12 ●	13	14
15 BIRD WALK 9:00 FILM SERIES 2:00	16	17	18	19	20 VERNAL EQUINOX !!! ○	21

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY  
Third Beach Road  
Middletown, Rhode Island

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