



VOLUME NO. 8 ISSUE 4

The Norman Bird Flyer

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Fall Migration

Fall 1987

In the warm days of early fall the flocking activity of local bird species is a subtle reminder that winter is just around the corner. In September the flocks of Tree Swallows over the Sanctuary salt marsh had grown so thick, and moved about so frantically, they resembled swarms of locusts when viewed from a distance.

Such restlessness is common in birds that are about to undertake a major migration. These birds have stored up large amounts of fat which will provide the fuel needed for their long journey south.

Chickadees, finches and other birds that will not migrate are also flocking together at this time. The reason for this is that by working as a unit they will have more success finding food during the winter months.

Migration restlessness begins long before the first frosts, and long before the food supply starts to run low. For insect eaters such as swallows and flycatchers, an early frost could wipe out the entire food supply overnight. In the northern climates the weather is too variable to be a dependable cue for birds to start moving south. Instead, the decreasing period of daylight which is predictable serves as a clue. Weather does play a role though. Birds are known to hitch a ride on the winds of a storm front if they blow in a favorable direction.

How does an eight and a half inch flycatcher find its way from its summer home in New England to its winter home in Panama or Colombia? Is it learned by experience or is it something instinctual? How do birds avoid getting lost? These questions still

defy adequate explanation, but after many years of research in bird navigation, biologists have made some pretty surprising observations.

Some migrations follow along coast lines and river valleys or along mountain ranges. Perhaps these landmarks supply material signposts to mark migratory routes. But many migrations, particularly of smaller birds, occur at night, and in many cases birds migrate over the ocean which lacks obvious "landmarks". It appears that birds are capable of navigating by the sun, moon and stars and are able to correct their course according to the movement of these celestial markers.

continued on next page



Lawn Care Update

Somehow birds possess in their tiny brains, the equivalent of a sextant, chronometer, navigational tables and the knowledge which human navigators study diligently for months to master. In one experiment young birds somehow instinctively "knew" the route without having followed an experienced bird.

Seasonal migrations are full of hazards. A late snowstorm here in Rhode Island could spell disaster for returning flycatchers or swallows in the spring. If food and all of the necessities of life are available year round in the tropics, what is the advantage of risking a migration back north in the spring?

One advantage to spending the summer up north is that a large area is temporarily available to the migrants. Space for establishing nesting territories is plentiful and while predators are always present, the nesting birds can scatter widely to reduce the chance that their nests will be discovered.

Another advantage gained by migrating to higher latitudes is the increased hours of daylight during the summer months. Most birds are active only by day, and longer days mean more hours available for the daily chore of feeding the young. This may help speed up the nestling phase, during which both parent and young are most vulnerable to predation.

Lawrence Taft

Reference: Bird Migration; Donald Griffin;
Dove Publications; 1974

In the summer 1987 issue of the Norman Bird Flyer, we printed an article, "Where are the Robins and Goldfinches" written by Dr. Richard Ellis, about the toxic effects of chemical spraying by a lawn care company. The response from our members was great. Some members vowed never to be fooled by the clever advertisements again and asked us about alternative natural lawn care. We consulted the Rachel Carson Council of Maryland. They mailed us three informative brochures about Lawn and Landscape care. The first brochure, "Pesticides in Contract Lawn Maintenance" by E. Rainer and C. French explains the hazards and characteristics of 48 pesticides currently used by commercial lawn treatment companies. The second, "Healthy Lawns without Toxic Chemicals" by D. George Bean identifies fungus diseases of turf grasses, with ways of curing them by cultural and mechanical methods. The third brochure, "Pesticides and the Naturalist" by Dr. C. Clarke is about a naturalist who considers his essential philosophy in terms of attitudes to lawns and pesticides. All three brochures may be purchased as a set for \$ 4.50 or individually for \$2.50, \$1.50, and \$1.00 respectively. To order the brochures, and for more information about pesticides, contact the Rachel Carson Council, Inc. 8940 Jones Mill Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815.



NATURE CLUB

Saturday mornings. 9:30 - 12:30

Spend Saturday morning with Nature this Fall! Nature Club is back in swing, offering your child a safe outdoor alternative to Saturday morning T.V. Each week, a new nature theme will be explored that provides children with a learning experience through games, crafts, hikes, and songs.

Sessions are limited to 20 children in grades K-4. Participants must sign up for a complete session.

Session #1:

10/17: Trees
10/24: NO NATURE CLUB
10/31: Halloween Adventure
11/7: The Pond
11/14: Birds

Session #2:

11/21: Seeds
11/28: Local Mammals
12/5: Explore's Day
12/12: Helping Wildlife

Fee: \$32.00 (\$28.00 NBS members)
Pre-registration is required



PRE SCHOOLERS WITH PARENTS NATURE HOUR

Wednesday afternoons 1:00 - 2:00 P.M.

This season, we are offering our popular Nature Hour for Parents and children (ages 3 - 5) to explore the wonders of nature together. These one hour programs are a great way to spend time with your pre-schoolers and to begin fostering positive feelings toward the natural world. Parents often learn as much as their children!

* Please note: We cannot accept any child under the age of 3 years old.

One adult may be responsible for two children. Participants must sign up for one complete series.

Series #1:

10/21: Trees
10/28: Spiders
11/4: Feathered Friends
11/11: Gray Squirrels

Series #2:

11/18: Rocks
11/25: Nuts and Seeds
12/2: Owls
12/9: Getting Ready for Winter

Fee: \$12.00 (\$10.00 NBS members)
Pre-registration is required
Children and adults should dress warmly

YOUNG NATURALIST'S CLUB

Wednesday afternoons. 3:30 - 5:00 P.M.

This program is for enthusiastic explorers in grades 5-7 who are interested in Nature study for learning fun. Participants will explore themes for a four week session and come away with more of an appreciation for the natural world as junior naturalists. If there is interest, this club may be continued throughout the school year.

October 21: Observing Wildlife
October 28: Puddingstone and Ridges
November 4: Trees and Seasonal Adaptations
November 18: People and Our Environment

Fee: \$28.00 (\$24.00 NBS Members)
Pre-registration is required
Limit: 10 children



OLD FASHIONED HALLOWEEN

Saturday, October 31. 6:00 - 7:30 P.M.

Stop by the Sanctuary on Halloween night for traditional games, Wanda the Witch fortune, treats, and a costume parade. If you are brave enough, come along on a guided tour of the Sanctuary woods at night and learn about the superstitions that surround nocturnal animals and other things that go bump in the night. Costumes are required. Refreshments will be served. Children in pre-school - 4th grade will be admitted.

Fee: \$5.00 (\$4.00 NBS Members)
Pre-registration is required.
Limited to 30 registered children



NATURAL HOLIDAY CRAFTS FOR CHILDREN

Saturday, December 19th. 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Children can experience the joy of making holiday gifts and decorations from natural materials. Each child will bring home three finished crafts to be used at home for the holidays or to be given as gifts.

Fee: \$5.00 (\$4.00 NBS Members)
Pre-registration is required
Limit: 30 children in grades K - 4

BIRD WALKS

Sunday mornings. 8:00 A.M.

The Sanctuary offers a free guided bird walk every Sunday at 8:00 A.M. (weather permitting) Please join us as we hike along the Sanctuary trails and the rocky shore of the Sakonnet River, to observe Fall migration. Walks last from 1 - 2 hours and are open to all levels. Bring binoculars if possible.

No Fee

WILD MUSHROOM WALK

Saturday, October 17, 1:00 P.M.

Spend the afternoon with U.R.I. Mycologist, Dr. Roger Goos searching the meadows and woodland paths for mushrooms. Feel free to bring along questions, a notebook and pencil, and mystery samples from home.

Fee: \$4.00 (\$2.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required

ATTRACTING WINTER BIRDS TO YOUR BACKYARD

Sunday, November 8 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

See last page of newsletter for description.

GRAPEVINE AND HERBAL WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

Saturday, November 21. 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Learn how to create a naturally attractive Autumn wreath using grapevine, dried herbs, everlasting flowers. Sharon and Barbara from Hill Top Garden will provide materials and instruction for each participant to create and uniquely decorate his or her own wreath. Participants should bring clippers.

Pre-registration is required.

Limited to fifteen participants

Fee: \$12.00 (\$10.00 NBS Members)

There will also be a materials fee Charge based on each participants choice of decorating materials.

Programs

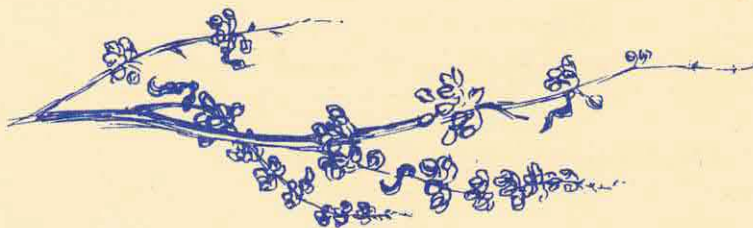
FALL FOLIAGE WALK

Sunday, October 18, 1:00 P.M.

Autumn is the most popular season for hiking the trails at the Sanctuary. The splash of colors that cover the area during this time make it a visual delight. The Sanctuary staff will guide participants through the refuge explaining some of the mysteries of Autumn.

Fee: \$3.00 (\$1.00 NBS Members)

Pre-registration is required



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Weekend of December 19-20
call Norman Bird Sanctuary for details

HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING

Sunday, December 6, 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Create a beautiful holiday wreath from fresh sprigs of Spruce, Cedar, Pine and Holly. Learn the technique that keeps these greens alive through the season. Joslin Sherman will demonstrate this process and will provide the needed materials. Participants are asked to bring ample greens for added variety, clippers, and gloves.

Pre-registration is required by
Monday, November 30.

Limited to twelve participants.

Fee: \$15.00 (12.00 NBS Members)

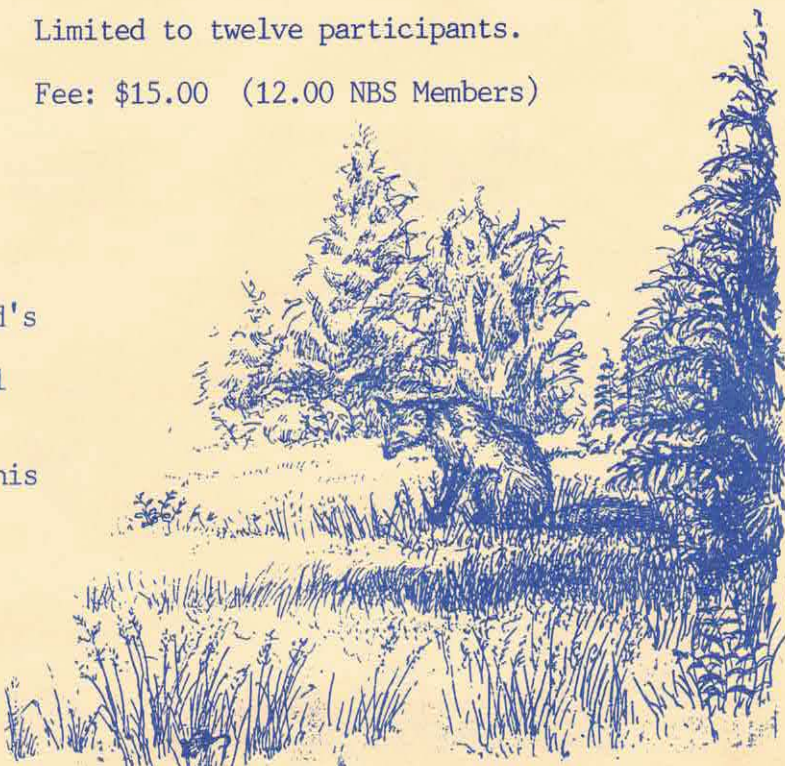
THE GEOLOGY OF HANGING ROCK

Saturday, November 28. 1:00 P.M.

Have you ever wondered how Aquidneck Island's most familiar natural history landmark was formed? Hanging Rock has a long geological history. Take an informal walk with NBS Naturalist Hap Morgan, to learn about the exciting geological process that made up this beautiful Sanctuary.

Fee: \$3.00 (\$1.00 NBS Members)

Pre-registration is required



Summer at NBS

Nature Day Camps completed another summer season of learning fun. Children entering grades K-4 participated in Nature Day Camp, with up to three weeks of hiking, exploring, discovering, and creating.



A quiet circle game begins the day for Nature Day Camper



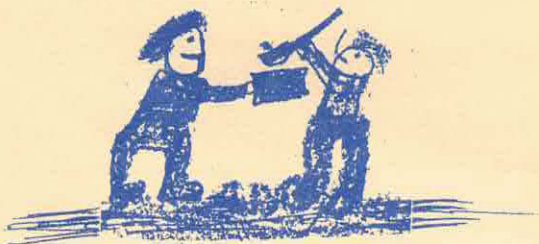
A monarch butterfly finds nectar from our famous Buddleia (Butterfly Bush).



Preschoolers with Parents Summer Program was a great introduction to Nature for Moms (and Dads!) and their 3-5 year olds. Parent-Child pairs grew sprouts, sang like birds, and romped in the swamp, all the time enjoying how fascinating nature can be.



Summer Challenge offered a more serious look at outdoor adventure for those entering grades 5-7. Participants learned about group cooperation, rock climbing, canoeing, and camping out.



After a campout under the stars, a Summer Challenge group poses for a parting shot.

Winter Bird Feeding Clinic

Sunday, November 8, 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

What kind of feeder should you be using to attract the greatest diversity of birds this winter? John Brown from the Brown Co. will be at the Sanctuary to present detailed and enlightening information on winter bird feeding. Included will be displays, and information on do-it-yourself feeders, what birds eat in the wild, and bird feeding projects for kids. All major types of bird feeders and seed will be available for purchase at very reasonable prices. Refreshments will be served.

Pre-registration is not required. There is no fee.

15 % OFF

ALL FEEDERS AT NBS WHEN PURCHASED
AFTER ATTENDING THE BIRD FEEDING

CLINIC ON NOVEMBER 8, 1987

See you there!



NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY Bird Seed Sale

Stock up now for a long winter ahead. Feed the birds and help support programs at the Sanctuary at the same time. Get high quality wild bird food at competitive prices. To order:

- (1) Fill out the order form below and mail it with payment to the Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, R.I. 02840. Orders must be received by October 30, 1987. Make checks payable to the Norman Bird Sanctuary.
- (2) Pick up your seed on November 7 or 8 from 9 am -5 pm in the Sanctuary barn.

Bird Seed Order Form

Name _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____

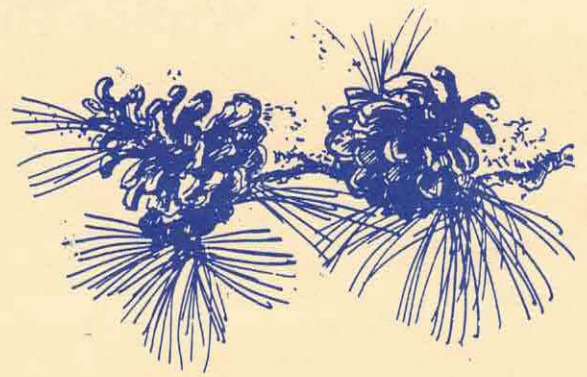
Sanctuary Member _____ Non Member _____ Please send membership info _____

QUANTITY	TYPE OF SEED	PRICE PER BAG	AMOUNT
_____	Black Oil Sunflower Seeds - 20 lb bag	\$ 9.48	_____
_____	Black Oil Sunflower Seeds - 50 lb bag	\$18.51	_____
_____	Black Oil/Striped Sunflower Mix - 20 lb bag	\$ 9.48	_____
_____	Black Oil/Striped Sunflower Mix - 50 lb bag	\$18.48	_____
_____	Hulled Sunflower Seeds(Sunflower Chips) - 20 lb bag	\$11.85	_____
_____	Hulled Sunflower Seeds - 40 lb bag	\$23.95	_____
_____	"Bird Snack" high quality mixed seed - 20 lb bag	\$ 7.08	_____
_____	"Bird Snack" - 50 lb bag	\$15.75	_____
_____	Thistle - 10 lb bag	\$12.46	_____
_____	Suet Seed Cakes 11 oz. square	\$ 1.79 ea.	_____

TOTAL\$ _____

You're Invited...

The Norman Bird Sanctuary would like to invite its members to the annual reading of Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales" by Taffy Roberts on Saturday, November 28, 1987 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary barn. This event is scheduled early in the season to accommodate Taffy who will be going home to Wales for Christmas. Please join us for this special night. Cider and cookies will be served.



Volunteers and Donations



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.
Trustee: R.I. Hospital Trust National Bank
Advisory Committee: Norman Hall - Chairman, Lawrence Allen, Joyce Botelho, Christine Callahan, Patty Corgan, Ann Damon, Frances Holmes, Virginia Laughlin, Gary MacDonald, Julie Morris, Barry Murphy, Gay Sheffield, Barbara Sturtevant, Mark Vissman, George Warren.
Director: Lawrence Taft
Education Coordinator: Lisa Pritchard
Teacher/Naturalist - Caretaker: Hap Morgan
Secretary: Jean Ballantine
Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, Rhode Island. 02840 Telephone: (401) 846-2577

Graphics by Amy Wright and Lucia deLeiris

- Thank-you to Barbara Alpert, Valerie Long, and Ann Cooper for donated Educational supplies.
- Many thank-you's to Jen Reed who cared for our feathered, furred and scaled friends every Saturday this summer.
- The Sanctuary could still use donated baked goods or cereals - stale or otherwise for our animals.
- If anyone has a working but in-the-way Chest Freezer to donate, please look our way!



NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
583 Third Beach Road
Middletown, Rhode Island 02840

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