



The Norman Bird Flyer

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY, THIRD BEACH ROAD, MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02840 PHONE: 401/846-2577

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Searching for words that best describe a full year of activities at the Sanctuary is about as difficult as trying to count spring warblers in a tall maple tree. They both give you a stiff neck. New programs, facility improvements, and an expanded and enthusiastic membership have contributed to positive growth and change at the Norman Bird Sanctuary. What follows is a scaled-down version of the annual report presented by the various sub-committees of the advisory committee and the co-directors at November's annual meeting.



MEMBERSHIP

Our membership now stands at 763 (as compared to 516 last November), which represents a 48% increase. We are now in the middle of annual renewal, so a final tally of renewing members is not yet available. As it now stands, our membership breaks down as follows:

individual	30%	sustaining	10%
family	56%	patron	01%
business	02%	life	01%

VISITORS

Visitation has increased significantly this year, as the Sanctuary has become more visible through press and radio. Though partly due to improved registration procedures, a one-month average of fall day visitors shows 10.8 visitors/day fall 1980 vs. 16.2 visitors/day fall 1981, which represents a 60% increase.

DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The most significant facility development of the year is the remodeling work done in the barn. Started last November and completed in June, it greatly improves the appearance and practical operation of the barn. New partitions, ceilings, windows, and a lab room, completed as an Eagle Scout project, in the animal house continue to move us toward full utilization of that building.

Maintenance tasks, seemingly never-ending, and new projects have included courtyard and entrance relandscaping, new flight and mammal cages, entrance signs, and new trail signs.

A reopening of the old horse trail gives walkers greater access to the northern part of the Sanctuary, and skiers a long north-south run through the woods, and a self-guided nature trail for the curious naturalist nears completion. We also now have a bridge through the marsh between middle and third ridges.

EDUCATION

Nearly 2000 youth visited the Sanctuary this year. The Sanctuary

staff reached another 1300 youth through in-school programs, and reached 250 youth through civic group guided tours. We served 208 individual campers, adding up to a total of 331 camper weeks for an average of 41 campers/week. Three campers came to us under a program we established offering Sanctuary members the opportunity to anonymously sponsor needy children.—

The newly instituted nature club continues to be a hit with youngsters K-6. On Saturday mornings at 9:00 sharp up to 40 free-spirited young people converge on the Sanctuary for 3 hours of activity with one of the Sanctuary counselors.

PROGRAMMING

This year in public programming we have emphasized trying to reach out to community members of all ages and related interests. We have offered 93 field walks on such topics as birds, stars, and the signs of spring; 19 lecture and slide programs on such topics as endangered species in Rhode Island; 11 seasonal programs including Christmas tree decorating for the birds; 24 children's programs including our nature film series; and 12 mini-classes on such topics as herbs and drawing from nature. Field trips to other centers, canoe expeditions, and whale-watching excursions have rounded out our activity calendar.

TREASURY

Major fundraising events included the spring art exhibition and the harvest fair, which together raised \$14,000.00 for the Sanctuary. Total revenues for fiscal 1980-81 were \$47,981.70, with expenses running at \$48,352.20.

VOLUNTEERS

We continue to be supported largely through volunteerism. Thanks to the Newport Boys Club, URI, CETA, and most importantly our membership, we have managed to keep abreast of maintenance, animal care, and classroom visits and group tours. Two hundred fifty-four individual volunteers have donated time to the Sanctuary this year.

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

Trustees: RI Hospital Trust National Bank, Louis Lorillard
Advisory Committee: Norman Hall - Chair, Patty Vaillancourt, Happy Van Beuren, George Warren, Robert Edenbach, Cathy Moore, Barbie Sturtevant, Chris Callahan, Stephen Erickson, Fran Holmes, William Horton, Ginny Laughlin, Harriet Phelps, Peter Randall, Albert Sherman
Co-Directors: Timothy Traver, Deborah Clark

PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

An expanded and more involved membership is a goal toward which we are continually working. With that in mind we must look at ways we can better reach the increasing number and various kinds of groups and individuals who use the Sanctuary. A more comprehensive intern and volunteer naturalist program would serve to take the burden of day-in, day-out teaching responsibilities off the shoulders of the co-directors and would introduce and train students in various natural science areas.

At this point in our continued investigations of the land we can set as a goal completing a set of management objectives and beginning their implementation. The museum will continue to be a priority this year and in the ensuing years.

The improvement of the Sanctuary's appearance through landscaping, painting, and cleaning will continue to be a high priority.

The staff and the advisory committee look forward to the challenges and discoveries the new year is sure to bring. We look forward especially, to the chances offered to learn more about our natural world and hope all of you will continue to join us.

SUMMER JOBS

The Sanctuary is now accepting applications for positions as teacher naturalists in our summer camp programs for 1982. We are looking for people with backgrounds in natural history and experience working with youth. Applicants should be at least 18 or should be high school graduates by the beginning of the season. Anyone interested should send a resume and cover letter to the Sanctuary by April 1. Contact us for more information.

CONSERVATION 4-H

NBS will start a 4-H club with a special emphasis on conservation. Some possible activities include maintaining wildlife habitat, caring for wild animals, helping to build a nature trail, and hiking and canoeing trips. Interested youth ages 7-19 are invited to attend an introductory meeting on 23 January at 10:00. Adult volunteers are needed!

WINTER TREES

When the winter winds blow the last few dry leaves off the trees, marking the end of autumn's spectacular show, most otherwise-dedicated natural history buffs turn their attention from the forest to the wood burning in their fireplace and relegate tree study to evening reading or next spring. With their cloak of leaves gone, trees can seem to lose their identity; oaks, maples, locusts, and willows become "trees," while spruces, junipers, pines, and firs get lumped together as "evergreens," and honeysuckle, privet, and spice bush all become "brush."

This needn't be so. As any brief winter walk, ski, or snowshoe will demonstrate, winter trees are anything but featureless. The subtle variations in bark texture and shades are a photographer's delight. While some, such as the smooth, grey bark of the beech or the chalky white bark of the grey birch provide immediate clues to the tree's identity, others, such as the vertical brown ribbed bark of the red maple and white oak need an experienced eye to be deciphered.

The twigs, with their leaf scars, bundle scars, and buds holding next year's embryonic leaves and flowers, often have personalities rivaling those of some animals, as the butternut twig shows. The arrowwood bud appears to be a stoic sentinel, while the red maple buds are reminiscent of coconuts from the South Seas.



red maple



pignut hickory



arrowwood



scotch pine



butternut

Additional clues abound in the form of leftover seeds and seed cases, such as the pignut hickory nut (a favorite of squirrels) and the scotch pine cone (this one from a Sanctuary tree lost to December's snow storm). Winter also provides an ideal time to examine tree shape and form. The overall shape of each tree species is as different as that of its leaves. Location is a good clue, as well.

When all else fails, it's certainly not considered cheating to take a peek at the dried leaves lying under the tree in question. If you're lucky, you might find that your stumper has a sibling living along the Sanctuary's nature trail, with an identifying sign tacked to its trunk!

For more info, come to our winter trees walk on March 7!

NOTES

The Christmas Bird Count turned up some interesting sightings. An american bittern flushed from the Maidford River below Middle Ridge was the second sighting in 3 years. A yellow-breasted chat was located for the second consecutive year in its honeysuckle surrounded sink hole. Short-eared owls have turned up on Sachuest Point after a year's absence. Harlequin ducks are back in force too. The sanctuary abounds with white-throated sparrows, carolina wrens, jays, doves, downy woodpeckers, and cardinals.

Vegetable gardeners watch for storm-tossed seaweed piles on second beach. Seaweed is an ideal top-dressing manure. The reverend Philip Falle from the island of Jersey hailed it, "A weed more valuable than the choicest plant that grows in our garden." Fresh seaweed is lovely looking too. Deep purples, greens, red and brown filaments, bladders, and sprigs of what look like fresh parsley are piled sometimes 4 feet deep. It's there for the taking.

Those who feed the birds keep an eye out for small flocks of evening grosbeaks. They are unusually abundant this year. These black, white, and yellow birds are real show pieces.

THE HUMBLE BOARDER

NBS is host to a room and boarder about 8" long and 2 ozs. heavy. She has large brown, protruding eyes, thick cinnamon fur, and a loose fold of skin on each side of her body. She rarely goes out during the day and practices acrobatic tricks all night. She is Glaucomys volans, the southern flying squirrel who has a penchant for pig nuts and an occasional proffered fingernail.

Volans, the word, comes from the Latin verb volare: to fly. Glaucomys means gray mouse. Flying gray mouse. But the fairy diddle, as southern flying squirrels are not so commonly called, don't really fly. They glide-sometimes up to several hundred feet-on a descending curve at between a 30-50 degree angle. It's called volplaning. Remarkably, they can turn easily at right angles while in flight by altering the positions of their front and hind limbs.

Our squirrel came from a mature deciduous forest in Perryville when her keeper moved to Ireland. She will be released in Perryville next summer.

Southern flying squirrels will move into vacated woodpecker holes where they can sleep safely through the day. They are active nights throughout the winter. Occasionally the eaves of a house or a dark attic become home for this squirrel.

The NBS volans feeds on sunflower seeds, peanuts, grapes, and hickory nuts. She takes the hickory nuts, nearly as large as her head, between her two front paws and, while rotating thenuts, neatly cuts the husks away. She then makes a rather futile attempt to bury the nut in some secret corner of her cage. This takes some hunting for her cage is neither very large nor very secret. When she finally chooses a spot, she places the nut down then tamps it a few times with her two front paws. Often she dips a delicate paw into her water bowl and takes a spin around the sides and ceiling of her cage before returning to the nut bearer.

Volan's house is an upturned cardboard doorknob box filled with bits of cloth, paper, and straw. She seems to like it in there. No amount of knocking will bring her out until 5:00 these days. Her photoperiodic clock seems well fixed.

Even taking into account her infrequent appearances, volans certainly makes winter more fun.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

New Year Evolutions: The resolutions we make on the new year are a product of a privileged species able to nearly sidestep the immediate problems of survival and even regard and analyze this problem in itself and in other species. We are evolving in part by a process that allows us to look back and thus alter our future path. At least ideally so. Yet resolutions are hard to keep. We often continue along the old path until something larger than good intentions move us. New Years is a good time to re-examine our relationship to the environmental problems we read about and hear about.

Chickadees, hawks, and other birds don't make resolutions. As naturalist Charlton Ogburn points out. "Few other creatures seem so alive in very fibre of their beings, so quick in response to inner promptings, so fully given to the action, whether in song, in motion or in display." Chickadees don't need to make resolutions, but they may need us to.

Support a clean and healthy Earth this year.

December's snow storm is still with us at NBS. Trails are clogged most seriously in the four directions with fallen trees, branches, and briars. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED! Chainsaw are especially welcomed, but many hands are necessary. Those interested in the adult trail crew, this is a good time to start. 16 January at 9:00 am. Let us know if you will be coming.



SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL, "VOLANS"

CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

NATURE CLUB

children grades K-5

John Braman is a teacher/naturalist in the Sanctuary's Nature Club. He writes:

For the past few months I have anticipated Saturday mornings with tremendous excitement. Saturdays have meant getting together with a small group of kids and doing things--letting them use their boundless energy to build, play, hike, and explore.

With the guidance of an equally enthusiastic staff, the kids have had the chance to try rock climbing, rappelling, beachcombing, map reading, orienteering, and cider making. They've also learned to sing songs, recycle and make their own paper, create toys and games from materials around them, build igloos, and most of all, have fun.

What it boils down to is we have created a place where kids can safely do things that always excited their curiosity. They are learning to work both together and alone and to have lots of fun at the same time. SAT. MORNINGS 9:00-12:00

LEARNING ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

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ENERGY DISCOVERY

children grades 6-8

Wind mills, geiger counters, solar heating devices, and mirrors will be used to explore the properties and qualities of energy. Program will also enhance the child's understanding of today's complex energy production/consumption situation. SAT. AFTERNOONS 1:00-4:00
2 sessions

WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

children grades 6-8

Children will discover ways they can help animals by altering their habitats. Animal trapping, tree planting and removing, mapping with compass, group problem solving, and lots of fun!
SAT. MORNINGS 9:00-12:00

WINTER WEEK

children grades K-8

A vacation at the Norman Bird Sanctuary. Crafts, films, hikes, games, nature discovery activities.
MORNINGS 9:00-12:00 Feb. 15-Feb. 19

PROGRAM RESERVATION FORM

NAME _____
STREET _____
TOWN _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____
AGE _____ GRADE _____

Please enroll my child in the following program:

_____ nature club _____ energy discovery
_____ winter week _____ wildlife habitats

SESSION: _____ Session 1 - Jan 30-Feb 27
_____ Session 2 - Mar 6-Apr 3
_____ Winter Week Feb 15-Feb 19

_____ Member _____ Non-Member

Check Enclosed \$ _____
Saturday mornings - 9:00-12:00
Members: \$20.00/ 5 week session
Non-members: \$25.00/5 week session
WINTER WEEK \$20/\$25-Member/Non-member

CONSERVATION 4-H

For youths ages 7-19 and adult group leaders. Conservation 4-H exposes youth to the values, practices, and rewards of sound use of our natural resources including air, water, soil, forests, and wildlife. If you are interested come to the organizational meeting on January 23 at 10:00 am.



"What is the use of a house
if you don't have a decent
planet to put it on?"

Henry David Thoreau

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY



NATURAL HISTORY

LECTURE SERIES

OWLS OF NEW ENGLAND

George Goetz - Rhode Island Ornithological Society

A discussion of the life histories of our native owls, illustrated with slides, mounted specimens and a live owl, followed by a walk to listen for owl mating calls.

January 27, 1982 at 7:30

HERPING IN RHODE ISLAND

Chris Raithel - Department of Environmental Management

An introduction to the frogs, toads, and salamanders of Rhode Island, illustrated with slides and live specimens, emphasizing where and how to look for these amphibians in your area.

February 24, 1982 at 7:30

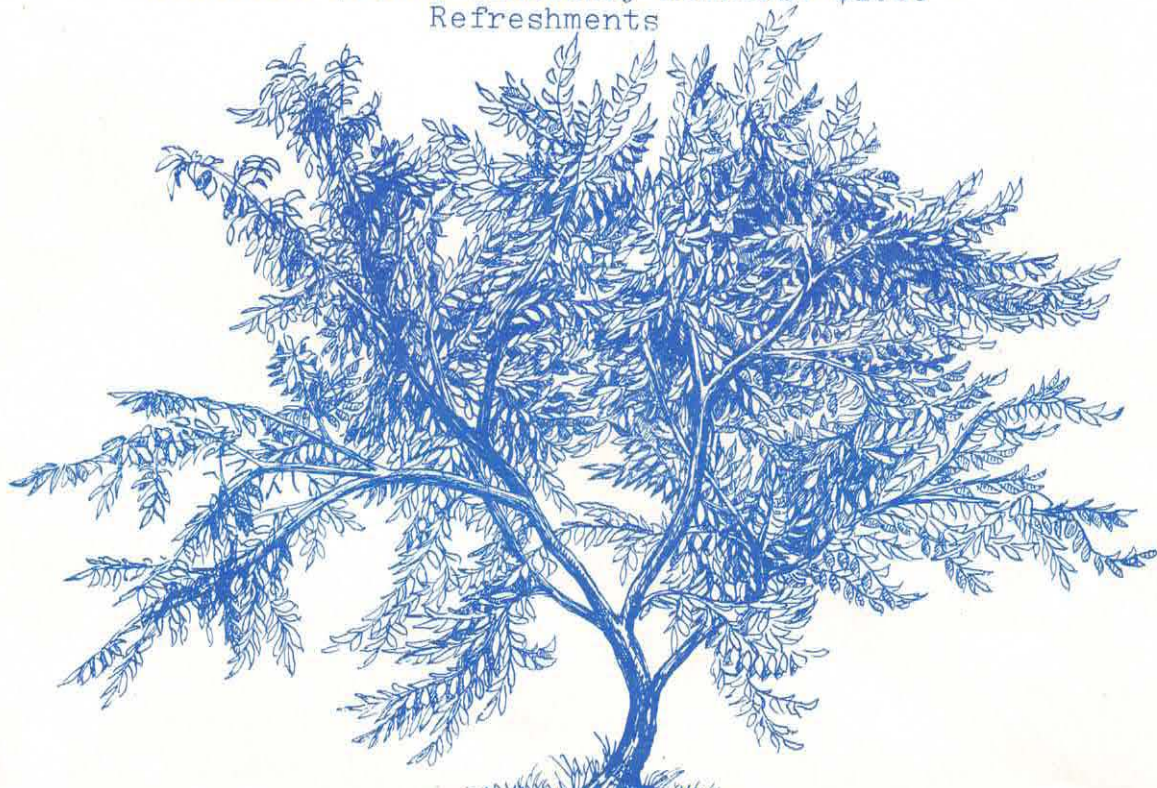
BIRDS OF THE FAR NORTH - ELLESMERE ISLAND

Chris Rimmer - Manomet Bird Observatory

A slide presentation of research done with the Canadian Fish and Wildlife Service this past summer on the birds of this large uninhabited arctic island.

March 31, 1982 at 7:30

Donation: \$2.00. Sanctuary members: \$1.00
Refreshments



What's Happening at the Sanctuary?

SUNDAY AFTERNOON PROGRAMS

Our Sunday afternoon programs are designed with everyone in mind. Come sample these various outdoor topics!

Cross Country Ski Workshop - Peter Powell of Base Camp will speak on equipment selection, proper clothing and waxing methods. If snow conditions permit, he'll follow this with a ski technique demonstration.

The World of Snowshoes - Roger Gilman will display his extensive snowshoe collection and speak on the history, construction, and use of snowshoes.

Family Nature Films - A series of films to cure mid-winter fever!

Jan 31 - "Following the Tundra Wolf" Robert Redford on the gray wolf.

Feb 7 - "Snakes and How They Live", "Snails: Backyard Science", and "Birds of Prey" followed by a close up look at our hawk & owl.

Feb 14 - "Whitethroat", "Eye to eye with Wild Animals", and "Bird Who is a Clown".

Spotting Ducks and Geese - Jeff Hall will lead a spotting tour of the many different beautiful ducks and geese wintering on Aquidneck Island.

Fur, Teeth, and Tails - How do small mammals such as mice and chipmunks survive the winter? Karen Comstock will answer this and other questions with the study skin collection she has developed as this winter's sanctuary intern.

Winter Trees - Delia Clark will lead a workshop in identifying trees by their buds, bark and form - especially useful for wood burners and cross country skiers.

GARDENERS

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HAVING A GARDEN AT THE SANCTUARY THIS SUMMER?

STILL HAVE SOME COMMUNITY GARDEN PLOTS UNSPOKEN FOR. AS A SANCTUARY MEMBER YOU ARE ENTITLED TO USE ONE FREE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, COME TO OUR GARDEN ORGANIZATION MEETING ON SUNDAY MARCH 14 AT 2:00.

FIELD PROGRAMS

Trails Day - A work day for sanctuary members to get together and clear the trails of the branches damaged by December's snow storm. Everyone is welcome! Bring chain saw, pruning tools and work gloves if you have them. We have plenty of extras, too. Children can help carry branches.

Morning crew will go out at 10:00, and afternoon crew at 1:00. Come when you can.

Star Walks - Starring Orion, the Long Sash, the winter constellations are brighter than at any other time of year. We'll explore their shapes and stories and study the several mysterious nebulae prominent at this time of year. Dress warmly. In case of clouds, call 846-2577 to check for cancelation.

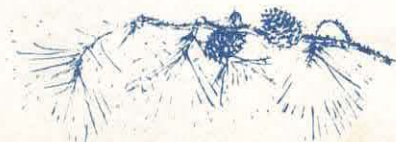
Moon Walk - The winter forest comes to life in a special way under the full moon. We'll listen for owls as we stroll the moonlit paths. Dress warmly!

Valentine's Cross Country Ski Trip - Pack up your skis, your sandwich, and your Valentine cookies and come for this day-long trip. We'll find the best snow in the area. Instruction provided. Meet in the sanctuary parking lot at 10:00.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks - Weekly walking and driving trips to local birding spots. During these winter months we'll concentrate on hawks, owls, wintering waterfowl, and shy year round residents. Novices and experts welcomed. The walks average 1½ hours. There are hot tea and coffee to warm up afterwards.

Other Organizations Using the Sanctuary Facilities:

Independance/Dependance - a day long workshop for women. February 7
Information: 847-0398 or 848-2202



Norman Bird Sanctuary Events

<u>JANUARY 1982</u> 3 BIRD WALK 9:00 AM	4	5	6	7	8	9
BIRD WALK 9:00 AM 10	11	12	13	14	15	16 TRAILS DAY • ALL DAY PLEASE COME HELP!!! ①
BIRD WALK 9AM 17 CROSS COUNTRY SKI WORKSHOP 2:00	18 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	19 STAR WALK 7:30	20	21	22	23 CONSERVATION 4-H INFORMATION MEETING 10:00
BIRD WALK 9AM 24 THE WORLD OF SNOWSHOES 2:00 ●	25	26	27 NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES: OWLS OF NEW ENGLAND 7:30	28	29	30 SESSION #1 NATURE CLUB LEARNING & ADVENTURE BEGINS
BIRD WALK 9AM 31 FAMILY NATURE FILM 2:00	<u>FEBRUARY</u> 1	2 GROOND HOG DAY	3	4	5	6 MOON WALK 8:00 PM
BIRD WALK 9AM 7 FAMILY NATURE FILMS 2:00	8	9	10	11	12	13
BIRD WALK 9AM 14 VALENTINE'S SKI TRIP 10:00 - 5:00 NATURE FILMS 2:00 ♥	15 CHILDREN'S WINTER WEEK 9:00 - 12:00 WASHINGTON'S BIRTH DAY ①	16 CHILDREN'S WINTER WEEK 9:00 - 12:00	17 CHILDREN'S WINTER WEEK 9:00 - 12:00	18 CHILDREN'S WINTER WEEK 9:00 - 12:00	19 CHILDREN'S WINTER WEEK 9:00 - 12:00	20
BIRD WALK 9AM 21 SPOTTING DUCKS & GEESE 2:00	22	23 NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES: HERPING IN RHODE ISLAND ●	24	25	26	27 STAR WALK 7:30
BIRD WALK 9AM 28 FUR, TEETH & TAILS - SMALL MAMMALS 2:00	<u>MARCH</u> 1	2	3	4	5	SESSION #2 NATURE CLUB LEARNING & ADVENTURE BEGINS
BIRD WALK 9AM 7 WINTER TREES 2:00	8	9	10	11	12	13
BIRD WALK 9AM 14 MEETING OF ALL SANCTUARY GARDENERS 2:00	15	16	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY ①	18	19	20 VERNAL EQUINOX * FIRST DAY OF SPRING



NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY
Third Beach Road
Middletown, Rhode Island



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