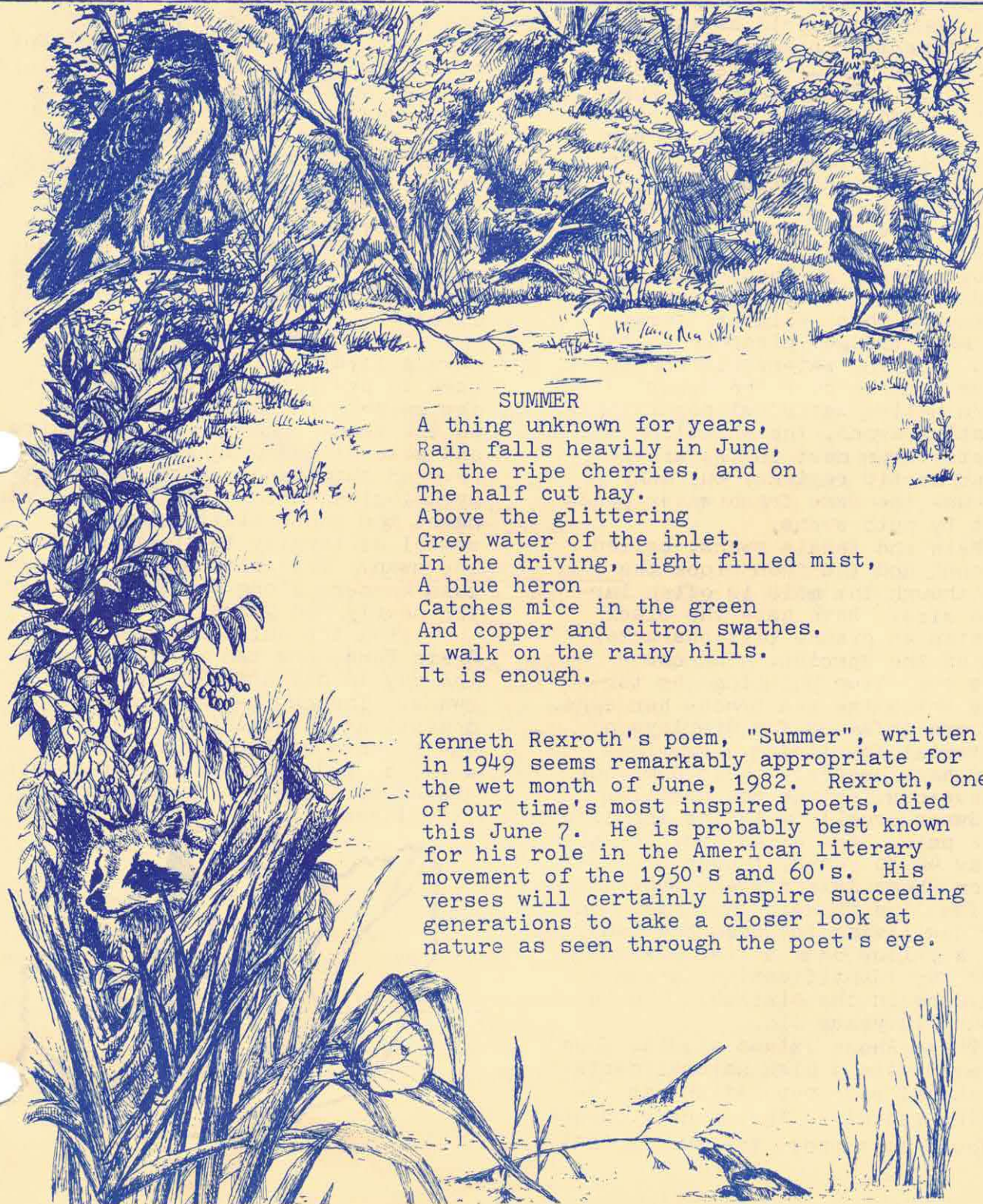




# The Norman Bird Flyer

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY, THIRD BEACH ROAD, MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02840 PHONE 401-846-2577 \*



## SUMMER

A thing unknown for years,  
Rain falls heavily in June,  
On the ripe cherries, and on  
The half cut hay.  
Above the glittering  
Grey water of the inlet,  
In the driving, light filled mist,  
A blue heron  
Catches mice in the green  
And copper and citron swatches.  
I walk on the rainy hills.  
It is enough.

Kenneth Rexroth's poem, "Summer", written in 1949 seems remarkably appropriate for the wet month of June, 1982. Rexroth, one of our time's most inspired poets, died this June 7. He is probably best known for his role in the American literary movement of the 1950's and 60's. His verses will certainly inspire succeeding generations to take a closer look at nature as seen through the poet's eye.



# SWANS

One of the high points of every spring is the day that swans return to Gray Craig Pond. Our swans arrive flying low over the Second Beach Dunes with their long outstretched necks undulating to the beat of powerful wings. The wingbeats themselves create a whistling song that carries over the fresh marsh to the quiet cattailed corner of the pond they claim as their own.

All nesting swans along the Eastern Seaboard are mute swans, Cygnus olor. Mute swans are Eurasian birds which were first introduced to the United States as park and zoo birds. Many escaped when their Long Island enclosures were destroyed during the 1938 hurricane and they have now successfully adapted to the wild. The first successful nesting in Rhode Island occurred in 1951.

Though these wild or "feral" swans have brought pleasure to the general public, waterfowl experts express concern over the swans' effect on native waterfowl populations. Our native swans, the whistling and trumpeter swan nest in the arctic and sub-arctic regions, but many ducks use the same fresh water ponds sought by mute swans.

Male and female swans, called the "cob" and the "pen" look the same, though the male is often larger in size. Both have the black knob atop an orange bill characteristic of the species. The cob spends more time policing the territory while the pen broods her eggs. Swans are infamous for displays of territorial fanaticism. Previous researchers describe their demeanor as ferocious, savage and hostile.

Swans usually mate for the life of the pair. Age expectancy is as high as 40-50 years, though studies done on Rhode Island swans showed that few live to half that age. One swan, now living in Green End Pond, wears a yellow neck collar placed on her for identification during a study done in the sixties. She is at least 16 years old.

These Rhode Island studies found that even with a high natural mortality the RI swan population was increasing rapidly. Though no evidence was found to support the theory that

swans compete with other waterfowl for food, or that swans were disrupting food supplies, the swans' fierce territorial behavior was thought to have the effect of driving native waterfowl from fresh pond nesting sites. Salt and brackish ponds do not present a significant problem because they are not used heavily for nesting by native species of waterfowl.

The mute swans of Rhode Island are not truly migratory and are therefore managed by the Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife. Management plans were devised to protect both feral swan and native populations. Management currently consists of yearly censusing and population control methods. Egg shaking and egg pricking have proven to be the most effective means of control accepted by Rhode Island's environmental community. Hunting swans is illegal.

Mute swans, though not native, have a loyal following, and it is easy to understand why. There are few animals in nature as graceful as the swan. Many previous cultures, and some of the present day, have revered swans and created elaborate mythologies around them. The Greeks named the constellation Cygnus, symbol of loyalty to friends, after the swan. The British have employed swan keepers along the Thames River for nearly 700 years.

From the outlook above Gray Craig Pond, one can watch in detail the day to day activities of the swans. Though they may be semi-domesticated, watching them gives one a sense of the basic patterns of survival and environmental response shared by all avian forms and all life forms.





## ART FAIR

We are looking forward with excitement to our second annual art fair... "A Flock of Artists", to be held in the barn. It will be open for viewing Saturday, June 26 through Monday, July 5, from 9 to 5. Approximately twenty five well known area artists will exhibit, and this year, all the pictures will be offered for sale.

On Friday, June 25, we will hold a members' preview and opening festivities. There will be a cash bar and all those wonderful canapés for which the Bird Sanctuary is so renowned. Several pictures will be raffled. You will receive an invitation, but in the meanwhile, mark your calendar June 25-6:00-8:30, and plan to come and bring your visitors and friends.

We hope that some of the estimated 700,000 visitors to Newport for the Tall Ships will use a piece of free time to visit the Sanctuary and the Flock of Artists exhibit.

See you there!

## UPDATE

Thanks to your help, our first annual Birds and Breakfast was able to net over \$1000 for improvements on our animal care facility! 180 people took advantage of a lull in the downpour to enjoy a guided bird walk and homecooked breakfast, and many who were unable to attend sent contributions. Thank you!

While interviews for a museum consultant continue, a new kitchen has been installed and the Sanctuary Store has officially opened. Eventually the Sanctuary will have guide books, hand lenses, cards, bird seed, and feeders for sale year round. Interim museum displays are in progress and will go up after this year's Art Fair.

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

## SPONSOR A CHILD

Many members have expressed interest in last year's camp sponsor program. Camp sponsors help bring children to Sanctuary summer camp who couldn't otherwise afford to go. Last year four sponsored children loved Nature Day Camp and gained tremendously from the experience. This year Newport Child and Family Services will work with us to locate and transport children.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please fill in the form below and send to NBS. Sponsors pay member camp rate. All contributions are tax deductible.

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number of Children \_\_\_\_\_

(\$25 per child per week)

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please notify me of my sponsored child's progress.





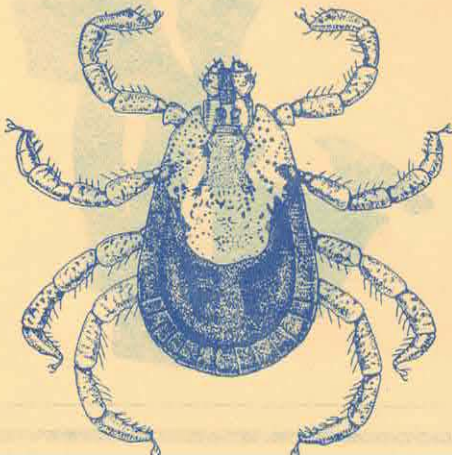
# TICKS

Ticks, as flat and hard as tacks, and tougher than steel rivets. Does anyone out there like them? Despite their unpopularity, especially to those with pets or children, ticks have some remarkable capabilities, and a life cycle worth regarding.

Next time you find a tick on your pant cuff or bare calf, resist the universal impulse to dispose of it and take a closer look. Ticks have four pairs of legs and an unsegmented body which puts them in the class Arachnida, along with scorpions and spiders.

Flat, reddish, and slow moving, the tick is equipped with tiny barbed hooks at the end of each leg. These serve as clinging tools, pitons for scaling the hosts, which include every living, moving animal from the tiniest mouse to the largest horse. Scientists think the tick can sense the presence of certain amino acids in a host organism from a relatively long distance. Surveys have shown that ticks actually migrate toward trailside areas where there is more traffic of host species.

Ticks go through three life stages. The egg laid in the grass, hatches into a seed tick. The seed tick must eat a blood meal, usually from a mouse or other ground dwelling rodent, before it can shed and enter into its nymphal stage. The 8-legged nymph finds a new host and rides for 3-10 days before dropping off and shedding into the adult form. Adults ride for one or two more weeks, time enough to eat once more and mate. The male's life is over then. He drops off and dies. The female, "fat as a



pea and large as a nickel," lays her eggs before dying.

This whole cycle might take several months or even several years to complete. Ticks can wait up to 2 years between each of their feasts.

Ticks are hosts to several organisms which cause sickness in humans. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Rickettsiae are carried by ticks, but it is estimated that less than 1% of all ticks are carrying these diseases at any one time.

For control of ticks, Robert Kaldenbach offers the following advice: "Cut the lawn close, practice good rodent control, and lower your expectations. Ticks have been, are, and will be among us."

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

Are you looking for ways to channel your creative and physical energies this summer, or those of your child? How about spending a few hours one morning a week at the Bird Sanctuary?

### ADULT VOLUNTEERS

The Sanctuary is looking for receptionists to staff the office on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. Duties include greeting visitors, selling T-shirts and other items from the Sanctuary Store, and answering the telephone. This may be especially convenient if you have a child in summer camp. Please call the Sanctuary if interested.

### YOUNG TEENS 12-16

We are looking for 20 young volunteers who would like to spend two mornings a week working at the Sanctuary. Part of each morning will be spent caring for our animals and the rest will be spent on special outdoor work projects. Adult staff will supervise volunteers.


An orientation and training session is planned for Thursday, July 1 at 10:00 AM. All prospective volunteers should contact the Sanctuary before June 28.

### THANK-YOU!

Volunteer pot-luck dinner and contra dance! All past, present, and future Sanctuary volunteers welcome! Details on Events page.



## Norman Bird Sanctuary Events



A FLOCK OF ARTISTS This year's art fair and sale will feature works of natural history art by 25 local artists, and will run from June 26 - July 5. Sanctuary members are invited to opening festivities and a previewing June 25 from 6:00 to 8:30.

BIRD WALKS Join us for a leisurely stroll each Sunday morning at 8:00 AM. Beginning and expert birdwatchers alike are welcomed as we take advantage of the cool air to enjoy these lovely creatures.

HERB WALKS Naturalist and herbalist Hap Morgan will lead a walk every other Sunday this summer, pointing out various wild plants as they come in and discussing their medicinal and culinary uses.

STAR WALKS We'll explore the summer stars, concentrating on constellations and the myths behind them. Bring a blanket to sit on and binoculars if you have them. In case of clouds, we'll have an indoor star presentation.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON PROGRAMS Watch for our summer program supplement which will cover this series of natural history programs in detail. Programs will include Sam Bartlett's Nature Songs for Children, and a tour of Native American sites in the Sanctuary.

EVENING NATURE WALKS A guided stroll through the Sanctuary on a peaceful summer evening. Birds, trees, flowers, clouds.

VOLUNTEERS' POT-LUCK DINNER AND CONTRA DANCE On Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, the Sanctuary will hold a pot-luck dinner and contra dance for all past Sanctuary volunteers and members who would like to volunteer in the coming year. The dinner and dancing will take place in the orchard, if the weather permits. Judging from last year, this promises to be a delicious time! This year's new addition to the pot-luck is an old New England contra dance. These dances are done in lines and are easy to learn and a whole kettle of fun. Children are welcomed. The pot-luck will start at 6:00, followed by contra dancing at 8:00. Please call 846-2577 to get a food assignment.

MEDICINAL USE OF PLANTS Hap Morgan will present his four part course (back by popular demand!) The course covers general principals of herbal medicines, plant identification and harvesting, herbal preparations, and herbs for family use. Cost: Members \$10, Non-members \$15. Call 846-2577 to register.

RHODE ISLAND FARMS PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBIT Linda Lapin's interpretive photo essay looks at the current state of Rhode Island farm land through personal glimpses into the lives of its farms and farmers. It will be on display at the Sanctuary for September and October. Members are invited to an opening the evening of September 3.



# What's Happening at the Bird Sanctuary?

<b>JUNE</b> BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00	20 NEW MOON	21 WILD STRAWBERRIES RIPEN	22 STAR WALK	23	24 FLOCK OF ARTISTS OPENING 6:00 - 8:30	25 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	26
BIRD WALK 8:00 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	27 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00 FIRST QUARTER	28 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	29 MEDICINAL USE OF HERBS #1 7:00 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	30 JULY	1 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	2 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	3 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00
BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00 PROGRAM 2:30 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	4 NATURE DAY CAMP SUMMER CHALLENGE SESSION #1 FLOCK OF ARTISTS 9:00 - 5:00	5 TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE 2:30 am FULL MOON	6 MEDICINAL USE OF HERBS #2 7:00	7 EVENING NATURE WALK 7:00	8	9 VOLUNTEER POT LUCK SUPPER & CONTRA DANCE 6:00 PM	10
BIRD WALK 8:00 PROGRAM 2:30	11 NATURE DAY CAMP SESSION #2	12 LAST QUARTER	13 MEDICINAL USE OF HERBS #3 7:00	14	15	16	17
BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00 PROGRAM 2:30	18 NATURE DAY CAMP SESSION #3	19 NEW MOON	20 MEDICINAL USE OF HERBS #4 7:00	21 STAR WALK	22	23	24
BIRD WALK 8:00 PROGRAM 2:30	25 FIRST QUARTER	26	27	28	29	30 FALL CROP BROCCOLI PLANTS IN THE GROUND	31
<b>AUGUST</b> BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00 PROGRAM 2:30	1 NATURE DAY CAMP SESSION #4 SUMMER CHALLENGE SESSION #2	2	3	4 FULL MOON	5 EVENING NATURE WALK 7:00	6	7
BIRD WALK 8:00 PROGRAM 2:30	8 NATURE DAY CAMP SESSION #5	9	10	11 LAST QUARTER	12	13	14
BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00 PROGRAM 2:30	15	16	17 NEW MOON	18 STAR WALK	19 TREE SWALLOWS GATHERING FOR FLIGHT SOUTH	20	21
BIRD WALK 8:00 PROGRAM 2:30	22 NATURE DAY CAMP SESSION #6	23	24	25 FIRST QUARTER	26	27 GOLDEN ROD TIME	28
BIRD WALK 8:00 HERB WALK 1:00 PROGRAM 2:30	29	30	31 <b>SEPTEMBER</b>	1	2 RHODE ISLAND FARM'S PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBIT OPENING 6:00 - 8:00 FULL MOON	3 RHODE ISLAND FARM'S PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBIT RUNS SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER	4
BIRD WALK 8:00 PROGRAM 2:30	5	6 WATCH FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!	7	8	9	10 LAST QUARTER	11
BIRD WALK HERB WALK	12	13	14 STAR WALK	15	16	17 ROSH HASHANAH	18
					NEW MOON		

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