

VOLUME NO. 9 ISSUE 2

## The Norman Bird Flyer

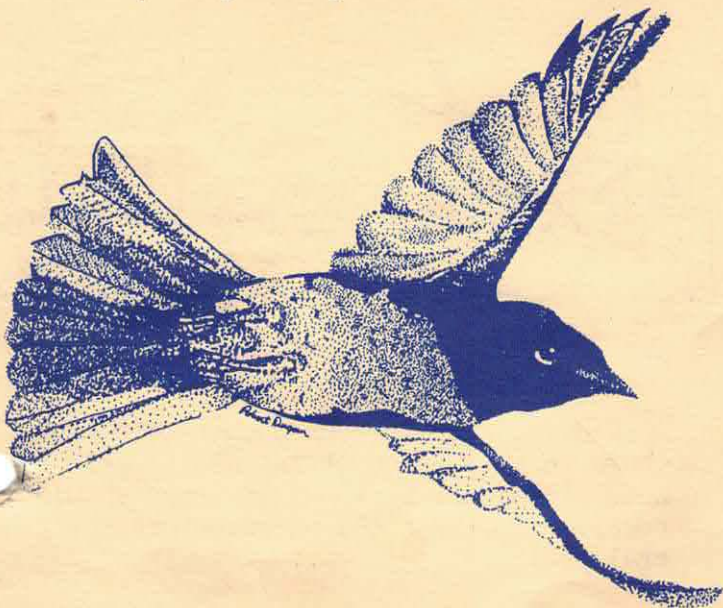
A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

### "Little Torch"

Spring 1988

The middle of April through the end of May is a very exciting time for birdwatching at the Sanctuary. It is the time when most of our migrant songbirds return from their tropical winter grounds to set up territories, court, nest and hopefully raise a brood of young. Although the Sanctuary is not along a major warbler migration route, a good number of them can be spotted in our woods during the few weeks when the leaves are new.

One of the more elusive warblers that will return to our woods is the colorful American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*). This bird is named for the bright red-orange patches on its wings and tail, which it will fan out during territorial display, courtship or as it leads a would-be predator away from the nest. In Cuba it is called Candelita, meaning "little torch". During the winter months, it is said, redstarts gather there in such numbers they brighten up the dark rainforest.



In early May, the males are the first to arrive and immediately begin to set-up their territories. Their display is a short, horizontal, semicircular flight made with stiffened wings and out-spread tail followed by low repeated "quit quit" notes when the birds return to their perches. After the females arrive a week or so later, the same performance is used for courtship.

The female redstart will choose a spot anywhere from four to twenty feet off the ground in the thick brush at the edge of the forest, and builds a nest by herself. When it is finished in two or three days, the small three inch bowl-shaped structure is made up of grasses, milkweed fibers, rootlets and spider webs. If by chance a cowbird lays an egg in her nest before her own are laid, she will often build a new floor over the foreign egg to prevent it from incubating.

Entirely insectivorous, the redstart is constantly on the move while feeding- dashing back and forth after flying insects or gleaning eggs and larvae from tree trunks and leaves. Its diet includes many harmful insects such as mosquitos, midges, black-flies and gypsy moths.

The summer breeding range of the American Redstart extends across the North American continent from Newfoundland to British Columbia. For the winter, the population congregates in a much smaller area that extends from Central Mexico and the West Indies down to Brazil and Northern Peru, where they are joined by many other migrating species with which they must compete for space and food resources.



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Summer and Winter range  
of the American Redstart

They inhabit the canopy of the well developed rainforest as well as the dry scrubby areas. There, they continue to be highly territorial. Banding records from a Dartmouth College study in Jamaica showed that sixty seven percent of the birds banded there returned to the exact sites the following year. Those results showed not only a high survivorship between migrations but that the birds are also extremely loyal to a specific site.

Site loyalty such as this may show how critical small sections of habitat are in that region. Tropical forests are being cleared for agriculture at a rate of one to two percent annually- or greater. Once an area is cleared, the displaced birds may not be able to move into the surrounding forest which is already saturated with many other species. Once the tropical habitat is gone, a migratory species such as the redstart will also be gone, regardless of how much breeding habitat remains to the north.

Lawrence Taft

Sources:

Bent,

Life Histories of N. American Wood Warblers.

Rappole, et al,

Neartic Avian Migrants in the Neotropics.

Dr. Richard Holmes,

Dartmouth College Biology Department.

## Tree Swallow Report

Last year we began a pilot Tree Swallow conservation project with the placement of 40 nesting boxes mounted on poles in the open fields of the Sanctuary. The boxes were erected to encourage the propagation of Tree Swallows by making up for the lack of natural cavities that otherwise would be found in an older more developed woodland. They were donated by NBS Advisory Committee member Barbie Sturtevant.

Throughout the Spring and early summer, our visitors enjoyed a close-up look at Tree Swallow behavior including courtship, territorial display, nest building and feeding of young. Chickadees, Wrens and Sparrows also took advantage of a few of the homes.

This year we hope to continue the Conservation 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 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 issues of the Flyer.

Volunteer, Ray Rogers is pre-cutting the wood, and we will have the kits (with assembly directions) available at the office. The fee to adopt a swallow family is \$15.00 to cover the cost of the wood, 8 foot pole and mounting clamps.



## NBS Nature Day Camps

Did you receive your Summer Camp brochure in this issue of the NBS Flyer? If not, please let us know. Members should receive it three (3) weeks before the general public.



# Children's Programs

## Spring Vacation Week

April 18-22 9:30 - 12:30 Mon - Fri

Find out how we celebrate Spring Vacation at the Sanctuary! We'll explore the trails looking for new signs of life, play outdoor games, learn nature songs, and bring home crafts made from materials found in nature. Each day will be a new natural theme. A mid-morning snack will be provided. Spring week is for children in grades K-4.

Fee: \$32.00 (\$28.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

### Afternoon Nature Walks during Vacation Week

Wednesday, April 20 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

For children in grades K-2

Take a hike with us to discover the amazing colors of spring, learn how to call the birds nearby, and explore the forest on a scavenger hunt.

For children in grades 3-5

On this hike we'll climb to Hanging Rock, learn about its geology, and if there is time and energy, explore the other two ridges as well.

Fee: per child per walk \$3.00  
(\$2.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

## Nature Club

Saturday mornings 9:30 - 12:30

As the Sanctuary awakens from its winter nap, children can discover the variety of Spring changes taking place during these Saturday morning programs. Each week, children in grades K-4 can explore nature themes through outdoor games, crafts, songs, and hikes. We'll provide a mid-morning snack.

April 30: Frogs, Toads and Salamanders  
May 7: Beginning to Garden  
May 14: Wonderful Water  
May 21: Interesting Insects

Fee: \$32.00 (\$28.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

## Explorers Club

Wednesday afternoons 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

This program is for curious explorers and lovers of nature in grades 5-7, who would like to learn more about the natural world. We'll learn about topics related to our local area while encouraging individual interests as budding naturalists. With enough interest, we will continue this program through the Spring season on a volunteer basis.

Limited to eight.

April 27: Puddingstone and the Ridges

May 4: The Marine Environment

May 11: Bird Watching- Part 1

May 18: Bird Watching- Part 2

(Participants will make a nesting box to be a part of NBS's Tree Swallow Project)

Fee: \$14.00 (\$12.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.



## Preschoolers with Parents Nature Hour

Wednesday afternoons 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

The season of Spring brings warmer days to explore nature with your preschooler. Join us during these four weeks as we peek at the subtle changes taking place in the natural world. This is an introduction to nature for both Preschooler (ages 3-5) and one Parent.

April 27: Rabbits are Mammals  
May 4: The Soil Beneath Us  
May 11: The Seashore  
May 18: Fruits, Shoots, and Sprouts

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

Pre-registration is required



Bird Watching for Beginners

Three Wednesday Evening Workshops  
 April 27, May 4, and May 11.  
 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. followed by Sunday  
 morning Birdwalks 8:00 a.m. (Optional)

Ever thought that "someday" you would get around to learning to identify the birds in our area? Then this mini-series is for you! Held during the peak of the Spring migration, this course will help you enjoy birds more. You will learn how to identify birds using a guide and learn some of their songs as well. Each evening lecture will be followed by a Sunday morning birdwalk. Instructor: Larry Taft

Fee: \$20.00 (\$15.00 NBS Members)  
 Pre-registration is required

Landscaping for Wildlife

Sunday, May 22 1-3 pm

Develop a landscape plan for your yard designed to attract and provide for native birds and wildlife while looking beautiful throughout the seasons. Sean Conway, professional landscaper and former NBS caretaker will teach how to identify plants and shrubs that are beneficial to wildlife, how to select those appropriate for your site, and how to plan an overall landscaping theme. Handouts will be provided.

Fee: \$10.00 (\$8.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

The Geology of the Sanctuary's Ridges

Saturday, April 30. 2-4 p.m.

Have you ever wondered how the NBS's three ridges were formed? Our local geology is unique in North America. Take an informal walk with Naturalist Hap Morgan to learn about the exciting geological processes that helped form this beautiful landscape. Sturdy shoes are a must!

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

Pre-registration is required.

Rock Climbing Workshop

Saturday, June 4 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Learn the basic rock climbing knots, the communication system used by the climber and the belayer, the safe use of rock climbing equipment, then challenge yourself as you scale one of the Sanctuary's ledges. (Participants must be at least 16 years old.)

Fee: \$12.00 (\$8.00 NBS members)

Pre-registration is required.

Hunt River Canoe Trip

(For Adults)

Sunday, June 12 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

The Hunt River flood plain in North-Kingstown, R.I. was designated a significant natural area in 1971. It is owned and managed by the R.I. Audubon Society. We'll observe this freshwater wetland by canoe, identifying birds and aquatic life along the way. No previous canoeing experience is necessary but swimming ability is a must!

Limit: 10 people

Trip Leader: Larry Taft NBS Director.

Fee: \$20.00 (\$15.00 NBS Members)

Pre-registration is required



# Programs

## Whale Watch and Lecture

Tuesday, June 7 7:00 p.m. (Lecture)

Saturday, June 11 8:30 a.m. (all day trip)

Join us for a lecture and slide show on the fascinating whales of the Northeast. Anne Garnett, Director of Development for Save the Bay, and former Marine Mammal expedition leader, will introduce participants to the Humpback, Minke, Finback, Blue, and Right whales during this one hour Slide-lecture.

For those who'll be joining us on the Whale Watch, Anne will prepare us for our voyage aboard the Dolphin, operating out of Provincetown, Ma. She'll discuss behaviors to look for and identifying features of each species.

Our carpools will leave the Sanctuary parking lot on Saturday morning to gather again in Provincetown prior to the 1:15 boarding time. (driving time: approx. 3 hours). During the four hour boat trip, we'll spot whales on their northern feeding grounds and identify sea birds as well. A naturalist from the Center for Coastal Studies will be on board. The boat will return to port at 5:30 p.m.

Participants should dress appropriately for the weather and bring a bag lunch (or plan on eating out in Provincetown). Binoculars, cameras, and field guides are recommended. The trip will be cancelled if the weather is strongly inclement, and the fee for the trip will be refunded. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Fee: \$25.00 Adult Whale Watch and Lecture  
\$18.00 Children  
\$21.00 (Adult NBS members)  
\$16.00 (Children NBS members)  
\$ 7.00 Lecture only  
\$ 4.00 (NBS Members)

Pre-registration is required.



## Sheep Shearing Demonstration

Saturday, May 28 10:30 am

Join David Huntley, Veteran Sheep farmer and 4H Exhibitor as he demonstrates his hand shearing techniques on the Sanctuary's two yearlings and rids them of their woolly coats in time for the warmer months. (Our sheep don't know of this plan yet so don't tell them!)

No registration required.

## Medicinal Herb Walk:

### An Introduction to Wildcrafting

Friday, June 24 7:00 p.m.

Herbs have been a part of traditional folk medicine since the beginning of time. Naturalist and Herbalist, Hap Morgan will lead an herb identification walk around the fields and woodland edges of the Sanctuary, teaching how to identify wild herbs that can be used for simple home remedies. Registration for the four part class "Herbs and Natural Healing" will take place after the walk, for those interested.

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

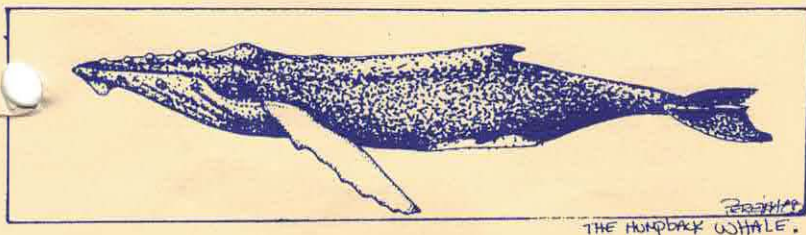
Pre-registration is required.

Star Gazing Enjoy a guided tour through the heavens with Bill O'Connell as your guide. Bring binoculars. Call to confirm date.

April 14	(cloud Date: April 15)	8:00 p.m.
May 12	(Cloud Date: May 12)	8:00 p.m.
June 16	(Cloud Date: June 17)	8:00 p.m.
July 14	(Cloud Date: July 15)	8:00 p.m.

Bird Walks Sunday mornings 8:00 a.m.

No pre-registration is required



THE HUMBACK WHALE.



NBS NATURAL  
QUESTIONS &  
ANSWERS



Dear Henny Penny,

Last Spring, a woodpecker used to peck at my family's woodstove chimney all day for about four weeks. It drove my Mom and I crazy! If it should happen again this year, what can we do to discourage it? Why did it pick my house?

A Family with a Spring Headache

Dear Kind Spring Headache Family,

Spring is indeed the season for mating. So, Birds of the male persuasion must strut their stuff to attract a female. Whether it be "Cock-a doodle-doo" (I happen to favor this call), or a "Rat-a-tat-tat", your Mr. Woodpecker's call, each and every bird makes its own mating "music". The Woodpecker, having quite an unmusical calling voice, chose your chimney as an instrument of sorts, to declare your house and yard as his territory. The metal of the chimney allows his tapping to resonate louder than if he was tapping on wood. To female woodpeckers, this is attractive. To other male woodpeckers, it means "Stay Away".

My suggestion would be to remove the chimney (if feasible) or at least cover it with netting until his territorial instincts calm down, or he chooses another place to reign.

Many woodpeckers drum on the sides of houses for a more serious reason than to declare territory. On Aquidneck Island, our local woodpeckers are wood-boring insect eaters. They may be after insects or insect larvae in the wooden siding of your house. If there is a problem of this type, it will be costly and time consuming to repair. The insects often enter plywood siding in gaps left during construction. Prevention is the key- sealing holes with a caulking gun. Otherwise, offer the woodpeckers an alternative food source- suet, and enjoy the beauty of these curious fellows.

Happy (Noisy) Spring!

Henny Penny

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Junior Assistant Teacher Naturalists (JATNS)

JATNS will be needed to assist Teacher-Naturalists supervising children in our Nature Day Camp. Applicants should be at least 13 years old, have an interest in natural history, and in working with children, and be willing to commit to one month and two days of training during the summer of 1988. Stipend. For a complete job description and application, contact NBS.

Youth Conservation Program

The Youth Conservation program participants will work with a supervisor on trail maintenance and wildlife conservation projects. Applicants should be at least 13 years old, have an interest in the natural world, and be able to perform vigorous outdoor work. Stipend. For a complete job description and application, contact NBS.

## Sponsor A Child

Many members have expressed an interest in last year's camp sponsor program. Twenty four children from lower income families were sponsored by your generosity. These children participated in both Nature Day Camp (Grades K-4) and Summer Challenge (grades 5-7).

This year, again, Child & Family Services, Martin Luther King Center, Jamestown School, and Gaudet Middle School will work with us to locate and transport needy children for a week of Summer Camp fun!

If you wish to be a sponsor, please send a check for the member's fee for one or more summer camp programs (see brochure) to the Norman Bird Sanctuary Summer Camp Sponsor Fund.





# Volunteer Corner

- Do you have a few hours to spare every week, or maybe every once in a while? Or, are you interested in helping us start and continue a long term project at the Sanctuary? Please let us know! We need you.

- The following jobs are available through the Spring and Summer months, with various time commitments recommended. (We provide training, if necessary).

- Saturday Animal Caretaker:  
( at least 15 years old)
  - Afternoons, 2 hours for Saturdays during the Summer months.
- Weeders and Waterers:  
for the Sanctuary's Perrenial, Herb, and Annual Gardens.
  - 1-3 hours per wk, any days.
- Trail Workers and Stone Wall Repairers:
  - 2-4 hours per wk, any days.

## Litter Patrolers:

- 2 hrs per week, especially after weekends.
- Summer Newsletter Mailing Crew:
  - 3 hrs. One weekday morning in late June.
- Chairpeople for Harvest Fair 1988:
  - approximately 2 hrs per week April - October \*\*

\*\* - We need some of you great Harvest Fair volunteers to make a stronger commitment to the Sanctuary than working only on the days of the Fair... .. Needed are Chairpeople who will be in charge of one aspect of our Fair, (Food, Clean-Up, Set-Up, Adult Games, etc.), report at monthly Harvest Fair meetings, and help to organize a network of volunteers to make this event a success. Talk a friend into Co-Chairing with you, if you prefer not to do it alone! And if you have never volunteered at this event before, why not immerse yourself in it at once and get to know us!

\*\*\*\*\*

- Birds and Breakfast - May 15, 1988

- If you would like to volunteer 1-2 hours during the morning at B&B greeting visitors, flipping pancakes, or serving coffee etc., call Lisa.
- Also we're needing people to donate baked goods: 1-2 dozen muffins, a coffee cake, or quick bread. Call Lisa if you are able to bake.

This winter, we were helped by a few of you with public programs and animal care.

Thanks You to:

- Bill O'Connell, Ann Truslow-Mackintosh, Julie Morris, Barbara Christian and Sharon Culberson of Hill Top Gardens, Trevor Lloyd Evans at Manomet Bird Observatory, Kim Boiani, Charles Donald, Erika King, and Jen Reed.



## Donations

The following individuals and businesses have donated items to benefit our resident Animals, the Trailside Museum, the NBS Flyer, and/or our Educational programs.

- Mrs. Richard Jacobs
- Adele's Pet Emporium
- John and Alex O'Donnell
- Bart's Carpets
- Dr. Patricia Ader
- Moss Music
- Prof. Robert Barry and the SMU Illustration Students
- NBS members who have been generous to our feathered/furred friends with stale bread and cereal (keep them coming!)

... Thank You !



## MEMBERS...

Are you still a current N.B.S. member? Your yearly membership is good for one year from the date you first joined. The mailing label on each newsletter now shows your membership expiration date, (which should be the same as your card). If you have renewed in recent weeks the label may not be correct, or be predated. Please excuse us while we catch up and make corrections.

The Norman Bird Sanctuary ANNUAL MEETING will be held on Tuesday, May 10th at 4:00 pm. NBS members are invited to attend. Please call ahead to let us know if you plan to attend.



### Membership Survey

To those of you who have returned a completed member survey, we thank you. There are still some of you who have not responded. Please, if you have not yet completed one, do so, and return it to us. It will help us a great deal. We will print the results in the summer newsletter.

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY  
Third Beach Road  
Middletown, Rhode Island



## Summer Housing Needed

If you have a room, cottage, or an apartment in need of one, two, three, four, or five (!) warm, nature-loving Teacher-Naturalists for the summer months, please contact NBS as soon as possible.

### Special Days

Friday, April 22: Earth Day  
Pay tribute to the earth!

Friday, April 29: Arbor Day  
Plant a tree or adopt one!

Sunday, May 8: Mother's Day

Sunday, June 19: Father's Day.

Moms and Dads admitted free  
to NBS on their respective days.

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~~. ~~Tom Gutzmer~~ ~~Tim Moore~~ - Ray Rogers.

Director: Lawrence Taft

Education Coordinator: Lisa Pritchard

Teacher/ Naturalist - Caretaker: Hap Morgan

Secretary: Jean Ballantine

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