

POISONOUS PLANTS

The Sanctuary has reached its full summer flush of green. Many trails are like tunnels through green walls of vegetation. A white blossom here hanging out of the wall at eye level, purple berries brush the hand, and, at the feet, bright mushrooms poke out of the grass. Little hands belonging to curious minds like to pick all things and put them in their mouths, so here is a list of some common plants nature never intended for human consumption. Most green plants, remember, are absolutely harmless and even good to eat. Some, though, need to be watched for. As a rule of thumb, no leaf, seed, berry, or flower should be eaten unless you are absolutely sure of its identity.

Around the vegetable garden (and often in it), grow a group of plants we call "weeds." In this group, there are several dangerous look-alikes. Poison hemlock and fool's parsley, with their umbels of flowers, look much like queen anne's lace. Eating either of these can lead to shortness of breath, loss of muscle control, and shaking and, in the most severe cases, suffocation.

Another plant to watch for has small yellow-centered violet flowers. Common nightshade is a member of the tomato family, Solanaceae, which includes garden vegetables like pepper, eggplant, potato, and field edge jimson weed (purple thornapple). This family as a whole should be regarded with caution. Although the fruits of potato, tomato, and pepper are good eating, the leaves contain the toxin solanine, a gastrointestinal tract irritant, and malfactor of the nervous system. Others in the family contain atropine, a toxin that supposedly causes an unquenchable thirst. Deadly nightshade contains belladonna, which can effect an increase in the heartbeat and pupil dilation. Its small, shiny blue berries look like miniature eggplants. So learn to recognize some of the less commonly known members of this group, and keep toddlers

Summer, 1984

away from potato and tomato leaves.

Out in the fields and in the woods, learn to recognize the three shiny leaves of poison ivy. Its leaves have a smooth though sometimes wavy edge. Its berries are white (second rule of thumb: "eat not white berries") and, in the woodlands, it can climb the trunks of trees in search of sunlight. Pokeweed, on the edges of sunny fields, comes out in July and August. Its bright purple berries can cause stomach upset. The roots are the most poisonous part of the plant, though.

Down in the swamp, there is false hellebore or Indian poke. On first glance, it looks like the edible skunk cabbage, which is often growing right next to it. Its straight, veined leaves give it away as

CONT



Fool's
Parsley

Poisonous Plants, cont.

Indian Poke. Indian Poke eating results in extreme stomach upset, hallucinations, and coma in severe cases.

Some trees have toxic elements. Horse chestnut, a common shade tree, and black locust, which grows wild in isolated groves across the island, are both toxic. Horse chestnut seeds affect the nervous system. Black locust pods and seeds can cause dullness, depression, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Several common hedge plantings, some exotic which have gone wild here, are good candidates to avoid. Privet, boxwood, and pieris can all cause severe stomach cramping and vomiting. Japanese yew, with its gooey olive-like red fruit is toxic. Its berries, loved by racoons, can cause difficulty with breathing and could stop the heart. Wisteria seeds, which make fun rattles in their dried pods and are flung out when the twisting pods finally burst apart, are highly toxic.

While we have stressed the negative effects of several plants in this brief article, it should be noted that chemical compounds in plant roots, leaves, and flowers enhance our lives in hundreds of ways by providing medicines (for example, digitalis) perfumes, vitamins, a variety of flavorings, teas, not to mention all the foods we eat. In the past four years, the Sanctuary has had only one instance of questionable poisoning: pokeberries. The Sanctuary staff called "Mr. Yuck" - The R.I. Poison Control Center hotline, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 401-277-5727. No problems arose.

You can get a Mr. Yuck sticker for your phone by sending a self-addressed, stamped

envelope to R.I. Poison Center, R.I. Hospital, 593 Eddy Street, Providence, R.I. 02902, along with \$1.50 to help defray the cost of the poison control center.

Enjoy the outdoors this summer and, if you get a chance, learn to recognize some of the plants nature never intended for human consumption, as well as those she did!



Common
Nightshade

The Norman Bird Sanctuary
583 Third Beach Road
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.

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: Louis Lorillard, RI Hospital Trust National Bar
Advisory Committee: Norman Hall - Chair, Patty Vaillancourt, Happy Van Beuren, George Warren, Barbie Sturtevant, Chris Callahan, Fran Holmes, William Horton, Ginny Laughlin, Harriet Phelps, Peter Randall, Barry J. Murphy, Charles, E. Levy, William Rogers, Ginny Purviance
Co-Directors: Deborah Clark, Timothy Traver

ANNUAL REPORT

1 April, 1983 - 31 March, 1984

It has been an exciting year at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, with land management activities and educational program participation at an all time high. In addition, generous membership support and successful fundraising made possible significant facility improvements. The 1983 budget was the highest ever, reflecting strong community support and commitment on the part of trustees and advisory committee.

The co-directors would like to extend their special thanks to all members who have participated in Sanctuary programs, volunteers, and to those who supported the refuge through their generous financial support.



Visitation

These numbers of visitors were recorded in the guest book this year:

May 1983	445	November	451
June	548	December	219
July	438	January	143
August	344	February	210
September	970	March	456
October	500	April	429

Membership

Membership this year climbed for the first time to over the 1000 mark by the end of the membership year. As usual, programs brought in a large percentage of new members, with Nature Day Camp alone bringing in 72 new members.

Our membership categories break down as follows:

	#	%
Individual	185	22
Family	556	66
Sustaining	63	8
Business	8	1
Patron	15	2
Life	7	1

Buildings & Grounds

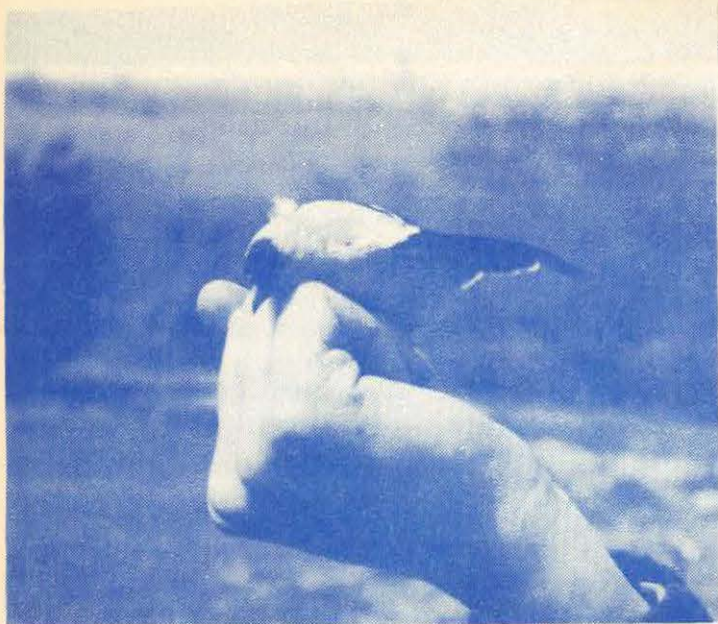
Activities on the land increased substantially this year with increases in youth participation through the Youth Conservation Project and through greater participation of scouting organizations.

A major project to rebuild Maple Swamp Pond was begun in early November, but was delayed throughout the mild and damp winter months. The pond restoration is slated for completion this summer.

Surveys were conducted this year to determine Sanctuary boundaries in the North end of the refuge. To ensure greater protection of the Sanctuary's lands and wildlife, vulnerable boundaries were posted with refuge signs, and eleven hundred feet of chain link fencing was erected along Hanging Rock Road. The posting and fencing have proven effective at both alerting people to the special status of the lands and the location of the Sanctuary entrance and at preventing people from entering "the back way." Both have increased our visibility and accessibility.

Clearing and brush burning have continued this year with a new half-acre wildlife opening cleared on the Woodcock Trail and current mowed areas expanded between the main trail to the woodlands and the Quarry Trail.





Staff prepare to release goldfinch which recovered after flying into a member's window.

With help from the Fuller Foundation and local business groups and individuals, 11 youth participated in the Youth Conservation Program. These young people kept trails, grounds, and buildings in top condition and helped maintain our wildlife and woodland areas. The supervisor of the group incorporated environmental learning into the program.

The Newport Garden Club contributed funds for wildlife plantings which were added to existing plantings on the South side of the Animal House.

Eagle Scouts have been busy working on trail improvements, habitat improvement projects, and a self-guided nature trail.

Local farmers continued to maintain and hay the Sanctuary's 30 acres of fields. These were limed in the Spring and hay was cut (1300 bales) from four areas. Corn silage was produced on the two most southerly fields across Hanging Rock Road. These fields were covered with rye grass in the Fall and this Spring planted to mixed pasture crops. They will remain fallow through next Spring, providing nesting cover for song birds and pheasant.

In return for farm crops, the farmer cut brush in the Sanctuary fields, cut the harvest fair field and has, as in the past, helped with farm equipment problems.

It has also been a busy year of facility improvement. Work on the natural history display design for the barn continued. In the library/meeting room, new carpet, tables, chairs, window blinds, and book cases brought greater comfort, neater appearance, and efficiency.

To accommodate the supplies for a growing educational program, new Ed. Shed storage cabinets were constructed. Existing shelf space was expanded, and the old storage closet was modified, giving summer staff personnel storage room and a well-organized, well-labeled storage system.

Office space, with the help of divider blinds, new phone, and tables, was expanded into the "back room," separating the kitchen area from work space.

In the Animal House, the shop area was expanded with the removal of one partition, and an animal care area was separated from workshop and storage areas with the construction of a new partition.

Personnel

The Sanctuary was able to hire a part-time secretary/receptionist to assist the co-directors with phone, reception, typing, mailings, membership, etc.

Through the strength of our in-school program and weekend youth programs, we were able to hire a part-time teacher/naturalist this year. Becky Brady, whom many of our members and member's children have gotten to know and appreciate, was our teacher this year. Becky will be moving on to a graduate program in Environmental Education this Fall. Her sensitivity to children and her dedication to environmental learning will be greatly missed here.

Ray Young continued to contribute with vigor and many overtime hours to the upkeep of the lawns and mowed trails. Ray has been a part-time maintenance worker with the Sanctuary for over five years now.

Again, Gary MacDonald's presence kept the Sanctuary running smoothly; from minor construction to trailer building, light fixture repair and sticky door fixing, Gary contributed his stamp of quality. He'll be moving back to school in the Fall for a degree in mechanical engineering.



Sanctuary Teacher/Naturalist, Becky Brady.



Nature Day Camper studies animal camouflage techniques.

Education & Programming

Education programs functioned with far greater ease and efficiency this year due to improved organization and labeled storage of program materials and to more structured program registration procedures. All programs continued to focus strictly on the natural history of the Sanctuary, but we continued to strive to find new approaches to involving people in this study area. Much effort went into long range planning, reviewing Sanctuary education policies, and formalizing program procedures.

School Programs. The Sanctuary served a total of 3,881 children through our school programs this year, which included guided walks and in-school programs, as well as our traveling library/foyer display.

Guided walks were led, primarily, by volunteer docents this year, which proved a very successful development. Docents received two mornings of training and preparation materials, and, in turn, led both Spring and Fall walks, contributing their time generously. Reports from both teachers and docents were positive, indicating that the docent program was of value to both students and docents, as well as helping the Sanctuary achieve its goals. A total of 73 guided walks served 2,581 children.

In-school programs were taught entirely by the Sanctuary teacher/naturalist, Becky Brady, and were met with high acclaim. Topics offered included: Animal Kingdom, Birds, Mammals, Hawks and Mice, and Insect Architecture. Twenty-nine programs were presented for a total of 1,300 children.

Summer Camps and Nature Club. A major success story of this year was our Nature Day Camp Program which, for the first time, was fully enrolled for the entire summer, with 60 children per week for a total of 480 camper weeks. We hope that this full enrollment indicates that people are coming to trust the Sanctuary for quality programming and to appreciate our strict focus on nature programming and environmental education.

Extended session developed into a more well-rounded program this summer, with staff discovering and keeping records of successful activities. Extended session served 136 camper weeks.

Summer Challenge continued to focus on outdoor living skills and personal challenge, but this year the natural history focus was on the shore environment, with expeditions going to Prudence Island. Summer Challenge served 108 camper weeks.

Nature Club operated on Saturday mornings throughout the Spring, Fall, and Winter, with groups averaging 10 children per session. Other program offerings for children included Spring week and Winter week vacation programs, which were both heavily enrolled, with an average of 36 children per session, and special topic programs such as "Kites and Weather" which attracted 25 children.

Lectures and Tours. The Sanctuary provided 19 private tours this year to such groups as Girl Scouts, Garden Clubs, birthday parties, and social service agencies. These tours served 236 people. Six lectures reached 145 people in such groups as Boy Scouts, Garden Clubs, and the YMCA.



Condensed Financial Statement

(Fiscal Year: 1 April 1983 - 31 March 1984)

Public Programming. This year, we continued our efforts to limit our program offerings to those that are most attractive to the public, and hence that are most effective. We cut back sharply on the numbers of general nature walks and lectures we offered, limiting these to the most popular programs: Sunday morning bird walks and monthly star walks, and to a few selected, well-advertised, special topic programs such as a mushroom walk and an owl prowl. We tried to make each of these programs a special event through use of various media, interpretive skits, and handouts.

In accordance with our observation that people are often strongly attracted to nature study through related crafts and hobbies, we increased class and workshop offerings in these areas, including such topics as wreath-making, x-country skiing, and wooden decoy carving. These changes proved very successful, especially during the winter months with high attendance and very positive feedback.

We offered 61 guided walks this year, including bird walks and programs such as a Fall foliage walk and a woodcock walk; ten indoor nature programs, including a winter nature film series; and 12 classes and workshops (a total of 21 class sessions) on such topics as watching birds, herbs and herbalism, and grain weaving. We continue to incorporate nature education into such fundraising events as the Harvest Fair, Birds and Breakfast, and the Halloween Party.

Public Relations

Sanctuary public relations efforts were aided this year by the creation of a new standing display for use at conferences and public gatherings. Made of matted photographs in a folding wooden frame, the display has drawn many comments.

The Norman Bird Flyer continued to be published quarterly, with a corresponding program brochure being distributed to local libraries and stores.

The Sanctuary received coverage in stories or photos in the Newport Daily News 11 times this year, and in the Providence Journal 4 times, including a feature article on Sunday Bird Walks and a 4-photo spread on Summer camps.

<u>Revenue:</u>	<u>31 March 1984</u>
Contributions	\$16,418.14
Membership Dues	15,054.00
Sales	693.40
Norman Trust	20,400.00
Entrance Fees	3,007.40
Education	22,654.90
Fundraising	14,243.20
Investment Income	1,734.98
Misc. Income	3.75
	<u>\$94,209.77</u>

<u>Expenses:</u>	
Staff: Part-time, salaried, summer staff, benefits	\$44,756.07
General Administrative; educational programs; committees	27,059.65
Buildings and Equipment (including capital projects and grounds)	<u>19,143.38</u>
	<u>\$90,959.10</u>

Increase/Decrease: \$ 3,250.67+

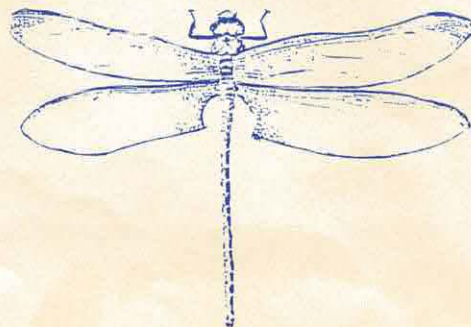
<u>Reserves:</u>	
Operating Account 83-84	\$ 3,250.67
Short-term investments	22,335.70
Accounts Payable	313.43
Norman Trust	<u>18,578.39</u>

Total \$44,078.19

Contingency Fund - 9,400.00

Total available Reserves \$31,427.52

Funds committed to Maple Swamp Pond Restoration \$32,220.00



Volunteers

Volunteers logged in an estimated 2,428 hours at the Sanctuary this year. Volunteers provided service through such organized efforts as the docent program at the St. George's School senior year project, as well as through individual help, such as typing. An estimate of volunteer hours contributed in different areas follows:

	<u># of hours</u>
Advisory Committee	321
Harvest Fair	995
Birds and Breakfast	132
Halloween Party	46
Gardening	36
Mailings	96
Art and Graphics	46
Docents	136
Animal Care	180
Trails	48
Youth Volunteers Supervision	80
St. George's School Volunteers	240
Scouts	<u>72</u>
	2428



Volunteers make apple cider at the Sanctuary's Harvest Fair.

Conclusion

The Sanctuary continues to protect its land and its wild forms in their natural state.

Over 5,000 visitors now come annually to the refuge. As the Sanctuary serves this growing number of people, the importance of a carefully administered education program which can provide a conservation perspective and teach an appreciation for nature, grows correspondingly. This has been a year of thought and planning for the growth of such a program.

Priorities for the coming year include a campaign for membership growth, the institution of a structured volunteer program, and an integrated effort between the areas of education programming and buildings and grounds to create more self-guided interpretation for Sanctuary visitors.

We look forward to your visits to the refuge in the coming year!

DELIA AND TIM

NOTES

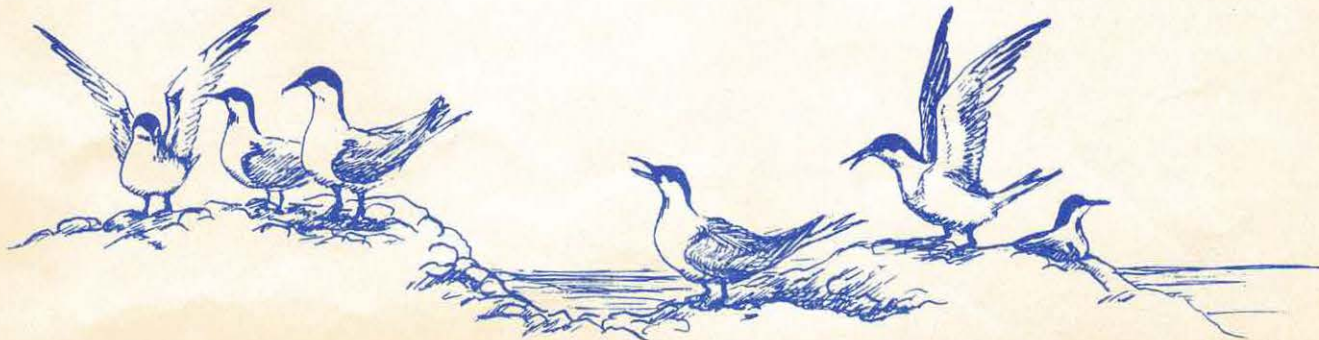
Many thanks to the trustees of the John Clark Trust who have included the Sanctuary in their college scholarships program.

Members who would like to sponsor a Nature Day Camper are invited to contribute to the campership fund. Any amount would be greatly appreciated. Contact Delia Clark.

Special thanks to contributors of magazine subscriptions. Five subscriptions were received!

WISHBONE

Does anyone have an old cash register (preferably small sized) in their garage?



BIRD WALKS

Please join us every Sunday morning at 8:00 for a guided bird walk. These hour long walks meander through various parts of the Sanctuary and are designed for all levels of "eggs"pertise. Free and open to the public.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMS



\$1.50 Non-Members
Free Members

All outdoor programs are held weather permitting. Call 846-2577 to confirm.

- July 19 Star Walk 8:30 pm
Enjoy the summer night air as you explore the stars and their legends with Delia Clark as guide. Bring a blanket and binoculars if you have them. Call to confirm, if cloudy.
- July 26 Wild Edibles 7:30 pm
Discover and taste some delicious recipes from nature's cupboards. Lee Gardner will be your guide as you search the fields and marsh, then return to the Sanctuary's kitchen for some cooking and tasting.
- August 2 How to Know the Poisonous Plants 7:00 pm
Learn about which plants to be wary of for yourself and your children. Gary MacDonald will lead this informative walk which will include poisonous plants of the wilds, the garden, and house plants.
- August 9 Full Moon Walk 8:30 pm
Experience the special life of the fields, forest, and the ridges when the moon is full. Learn to identify the calls of the screech owls and the various night insects along the path. Delia Clark will lead this walk with special effects back-up help by Sanctuary staff.
- August 16 Beachcomber's Identification Walk 7:00 pm
Learn the names and fascinating life stories of all those creatures you see on the beach. Leader Ann Garnett will point out shells, crabs, seaweeds, grasses and other shore and sea life. Tim Traver will be along to point out shore birds, which will be near the height of their southern migration at that time.
- August 23 Star Walk 8:00 pm
August means the Perseid meteor showers. Enjoy this spectacle as you learn about the stars and their legends, with Delia Clark as guide. Bring a blanket and binoculars if you have them. Call to confirm, if cloudy.



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