

Hi! During the cold snap before Christmas puddles became crystal pools, catching every leaf, twig and seed in frozen loveliness, and calling attention once again to nature's favourite colour combination--grey and brown. The waterfall at Maple Swamp was enclosed in a sleeve of ice, with water zipping merrily along inside. Downstream froth rolled up into huge pillows. Dew drops, surprised by the cold, hung on brambles like moonstones against an ashes-of-roses sky. (The brambles themselves were the colour of blueberry pie juice mixed with vanilla ice cream!). With the snow a flock of meadowlarks (walky birds) searched the banks of brooks for insects while robins (hoppy birds) bounced along the banks seeking worms. They all look fat in the cold--they fluff up their downy linings to make insulation for themselves. Later in January came more snow and with it cross-country skiers on the open fields. Little ones had what to them must have seemed miles-long rides down the slopes with nice parents to pull them back up. In such weather birds have a hard time eating to stay warm. There wasn't much fruit for them, so humans to the rescue! Feeders filled right up with snow during the storms. The best thing to do is to stamp out a landing pad for the seeds and bits of fruit, and scatter them across the snow. Old bread especially stale corn and brown breads are welcomed by hungry birds. A can of inexpensive dog food gets pecked up a snow bank and down the other side until there is nothing left to peck. With the ice storm that followed, seeds bounced nicely on the ice, while mocking birds and pheasants took to the trees after what little fruit a wet spring had provided. Underneath all the snow and ice, thousands of mice tunnelled after their hordes of seeds, completely safe from predators. Happy mice. Hungry predators! Most of our starving or injured predators are brought to us at this season. There are several recuperating in The Barn.

The Audubon Bird Count was postponed until Dec.22 as it poured on the scheduled day. The species count at the Sanctuary was 46. The rarest bird seen was a magnificent Frigate or Man Of War bird. Usually seen in Fla. or La. it has a wing spread of $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet. If you see a flock of gulls, one with a deeply divided tail, wings that look humpy and that outflies all the others, you are not seeing a huge gull! Monk parrots weathered the intense cold and have been sighted at several feeders near the Sanctuary.

The two Canada geese that have been on Nanaquaket Pond-near Sin and Flesh Brook in Portsmouth--have been killed. Hunters chose Christmas morning for the murders. If you are among those who fed them daily, know that the rest of us, who only observed them in what seemed safe waters, mourn with you over the senseless deaths inflicted on your pets.

The field on the east side of Third Beach Road has 4 varieties of pussy willows growing in it. Because it was a mild winter--up to a point--many are showing fuzz. Members, with permission from Fearless Leader may, with clippers, cut themselves some pussies for their homes. Not to decorate a hotel lobby, please, but enough to update your poinsettias. That field has no name. It is being called "Willow Wallow" which in our New England mouths becomes "Willer Walleh"!

People in Portsmouth complain that they have no chick-a-dees at their feeders. If you've cleared away underbrush near your home, you have cleared away the cover small birds require as a protection from shrikes and sparrow hawks who feed on small creatures.

On New Year's Eve the astronauts said "Happy New Year" to each other 16 times as they crossed the International Date Line every 93 minutes, until finally it was 1974 everywhere. On that day, a few hours ahead of a huge snow storm to hit others--not us--the largest skein of wild geese ever seen flew over NBS beating the storm from the north.

If you are stubborn about using the poor burning wood of elm, do peel off the bark where the tree is felled. Don't cart it home and spread Dutch Elm Disease. It is carried by beetles that burrow under the bark. Best to peel it off and burn it right there. That will help localize the virus the beetles carry. You will need a permit to burn.

With children going to school now before light, parents should remember that it is always coldest before dawn and dress the lil' angels accordingly. Also remember that man-made fibers offer no warmth at all. They are excellent wind breakers. The best inexpensive insulation is newspaper! A prudent mother who cannot afford woollens will belt newspapers fore and aft under the top coat. And do put something white or a reflector on the top coat. Drivers may not see your infant in the dark. And then relax--there are more child molesters out and about in the afternoon than there are before sun up!

We read that our Bay may be clean by 1990. Narragansett Bay is one of the world's most beautiful. Jacques Cousteau has explored it and he says that it is of the utmost importance for the fish industry because of the wetlands and marshes that feed into it, carrying as they do, the food stuffs that small fishes eat.

Twenty times every 300 yrs. the Sun, Earth and Moon come into the same longitudinal plane. The sun exerts some pull on the tides even as the moon does. When this happens there are extremely high & low tides. Usually it causes flooding along the coasts. When there are the combinations of the planets, high tides and coastal storms, things can be very serious. It was such a condition (off shore storms, on shore winds plus Sun-Earth-Moon position) in March 1962 when 40 people died and \$500 million damages were done along our coast from L.I. to S.C. The Sun-Moon-Earth pull was felt Jan. 8th & Feb. 7th 1974.

The first Earth Day was celebrated April 22, 1970. Prior to that 66 oil refineries had closed. One can not blame conservationists for that, or for the oil shortage! Maybe it is better not to seek a scapegoat, but to get on with the job of seeking new, clean and inexpensive energy. One reads of the world of hydrogen energy and the potentials of the Lasser beam, while one hears only about coal, shale and oil! This is not the first oil shortage our country has endured. During the Civil War, the South seized all the whaling ships and the lights of the divided nation came from candles--unless one could afford \$2.25 a gal. for the precious oil. (Unoriginal pun--\$2.25 bought a whale of a lot more then than it does now.)

The Comet Kohoutek was a disappointment. But our Kohouteks are not! They are our mini-bantams, Mr. & Mrs. Kohoutek. Mr. Kohoutek disappeared for several days while visions of predators eating him filled us with apprehension. But he re-appeared astiny and handsome as ever. He and his bride make a beautiful pair.

There's wood chopping going on at the Sanct. The thermostat in the Ed Shed is down. No attempt is being made to heat the Museum. Because of the cold most of our regular boarders are visiting other classrooms, museums and private houses until Spring. Left with us are those who don't mind the cold--Hooter, the Kohouteks (in a shed) the ailing predators and Wisteria Mood under her warming light bulb. Do not worry if you never see Hooter eating. She is a night eater and is fed as the Sanct. closes.

On June 20 the 3rd largest Conference on the Law of the Sea will convene under UN auspices in Venezuela. It will be a very important conference. Among the items on the agenda will be the excessive killing of fish, legal limits and ocean pollution. We all know of the electronic devises used to locate fish and of the nets that are more like sieves than nets. Did you know that the present

3 mile limit is based on the distance a 17th Century canon could fire? A 12 mile limit seems to be in the offing, but that will raise many questions as to neutral zones for coastal shipping, off-shore oil wells etc. Great apprehension is felt as the emerging nations will not allow the USA to sit in on some 48 committees! Our scientists have fear that the oceans will become polluted. If they are to be filled, mined, dredged and filled with wastes, they may die. As they provide most of the oxygen that we breathe, it is rather important that they be allowed to function as they have in the past.

Nuclear power plants and killing fish by the millions and fish eggs by the billions! Fish eggs that float are being hurled into hot water and they can not endure a temperature over 82 F. Intake valves will have to be fixed so that they will not suck fish up when cool water is needed. Hot water to be discharged will have to be internally cooled before being spilled outside of the power plants. Does anyone know what the power plants will do with the atomic ash?

Our Dept. of the Interior plans to deduce drastically the number of animals to be imported. That is good news as the deaths of these creatures in transit is horrible. Oriental finches, imports from Japan, land with 99% of them dead. For every Quatamala Quetzal bird that arrives alive, 50 die.

Many creatures have neither the means nor the inclination to go south in the winter. They enter a state of suspended animation of hibernation. Some of them sleep lightly, wake often, eat and go back to sleep. Among them are skunks, squirrels and bear. Others, like woodchucks, sleep very deeply. Their body temps. drop to 37 degrees! To live even when so deeply asleep, requires some energy, so such creatures store up fat to tide them over. Even insects! Some bears eat nothing in winter even tho' their cubs are born then. Mourning Cloak butterflies find crevasses to hibernate in & emerge as the first butterflies of spring. Toads and snakes and bats find pleasing places that offer them shelter during the cold, and they too come out when the warming sun tells them that all in the outside world is well.

Two more movies have been made that use animals cruelly. They are "Kid Blue" and "The Deadly Trackers". The new breed of movie makers does not invite the humane societies to come on to the sets to observe the making of films that use animals. There are no laws that force them to do so. There should be such laws.

The conservationists in Thailand are distressed that their rare animals are facing extinction. Lizards, pythons and spotted deer are hunted for their skins. The horns of the deer are sold to the Chinese who value them for their medicinal properties. They bring \$150.00 per horn. Baby tapirs sell to zoos for \$500.00--more than the price of a baby elephant. Myna birds exported from Thailand last year topped the 100,000 mark.

The slow down in driving speeds has lowered the number of deaths on our highways. The total number of people killed on the roads since cars were invented is 1.8 million. That is larger than the numbers of soldiers killed in all our wars put together. Yet we do not see people turning from cars because of that, do we? Highway deaths are just as senseless as wars. Connecticut was the first state to pass a speeding law in 1901. It was 12 miles an hour within the cities and 15 outside. Anyone frightening a horse was subject to a fine of \$200.00 plus 30 days in jail. In recent times everything that has to do with cars is represented by a word conveying force or violence from the tiger in the tank! to the very names of the cars--Thunder Birds, Cougars, Le Sabres, etc. Only lately we have cars with gentler names--Colts, Dusters, Vegas. And gasoline is where you find it--no signs anywhere. And it is all to the good. Where were we going in such a hurry and with such violence? Isn't it nicer to go more slowly and see some of the things we missed as we sped by before?

Of all the animals only man has learned to laugh. We should all practice this acquired art more often or we will lose the ability. One of the best things for a person to laugh at is one's self.

COMING EVENTS

OWL WALK:

On Feb. 17th we are having a guest come to call owls. He has had great successes in the past so let's hope he will be successful at the Sanct. We will leave the Ed Shed at 8:00 PM. Bring flashlights and bring friends. Cocoa will be served in the Ed Shed following.

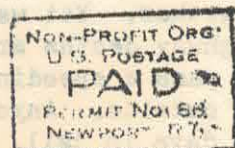
NUPTIAL FLIGHTS OF THE WOODCOCK:

Guided walk march 15th at DUSK. For a more accurate time, call the Sanct. at 846-2577 a day or so before the walk. Members and friends feel free to come any evening between March 15th and May 1st. If a guide is desired, call and make an appointment.

Saturday afternoons...anyone interested in helping clean up the Sanctuary? We have lots to be done---Trail maintenance and development

Wood cutting
Cage cleaning
Museum work, displays
Etc.

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