

# Notes and Niches

News of Menunkatuck    jan/feb 1984

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VOLUME 3    NUMBER 1

## EAGLE PROTECTION

The Wildlife Committee has been asked to alert Menunkatuck members to the problem of Bald Eagle disturbance in their Connecticut wintering grounds.

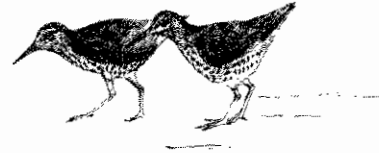
Last year, Connecticut had a winter population of about 60 birds, about 90% of whom winter along the lower Connecticut River and the Newtown-Southbury section of the Housatonic. This concentration greatly increases their vulnerability to human disturbance during a difficult period in their life cycle. Food is in short supply, and young birds have a high mortality rate. Eagles conserve their energy by reducing activity or perching for long periods. During days of extreme cold or unfavorable hunting conditions, human disturbance can mean the difference between a healthy eagle or another mortality.

Surveys of our major wintering areas, done by experts in the field, recommend minimum human disturbance and stronger enforcement of existing regulations.

Critical winter habitat will be posted with "Operation Eagle" signs. The signs will clearly show minimum distances from each site. CT Fish and Wildlife Reg. PA 83-191 which was adopted this year adds disturbance, molestation and harassment to other protective regulations and the Bald Eagle Act. Enforcement of these regulations will be carried out by both State and Federal law enforcement personnel.

Members are asked to report incidents to Connecticut DEP (Hartford 566-3333) or to E. Stuart Mitchell of HAWKS in Portland, CT, (342-2990 office, or 342-2672 home). The guideline is "intentional activity which spooks a bird from a perch or food and activity or presence in an area which disrupts normal activity of birds in a critical habitat area".

The Bald Eagle Study Group, HAWKS, and others are working closely with the Connecticut Wildlife Bureau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Northeast Utilities and other landowners to protect and preserve the critical winter habitat areas used by our wintering Bald Eagle population.



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## PROGRAM update...

PLEASE NOTE change from original schedule.....

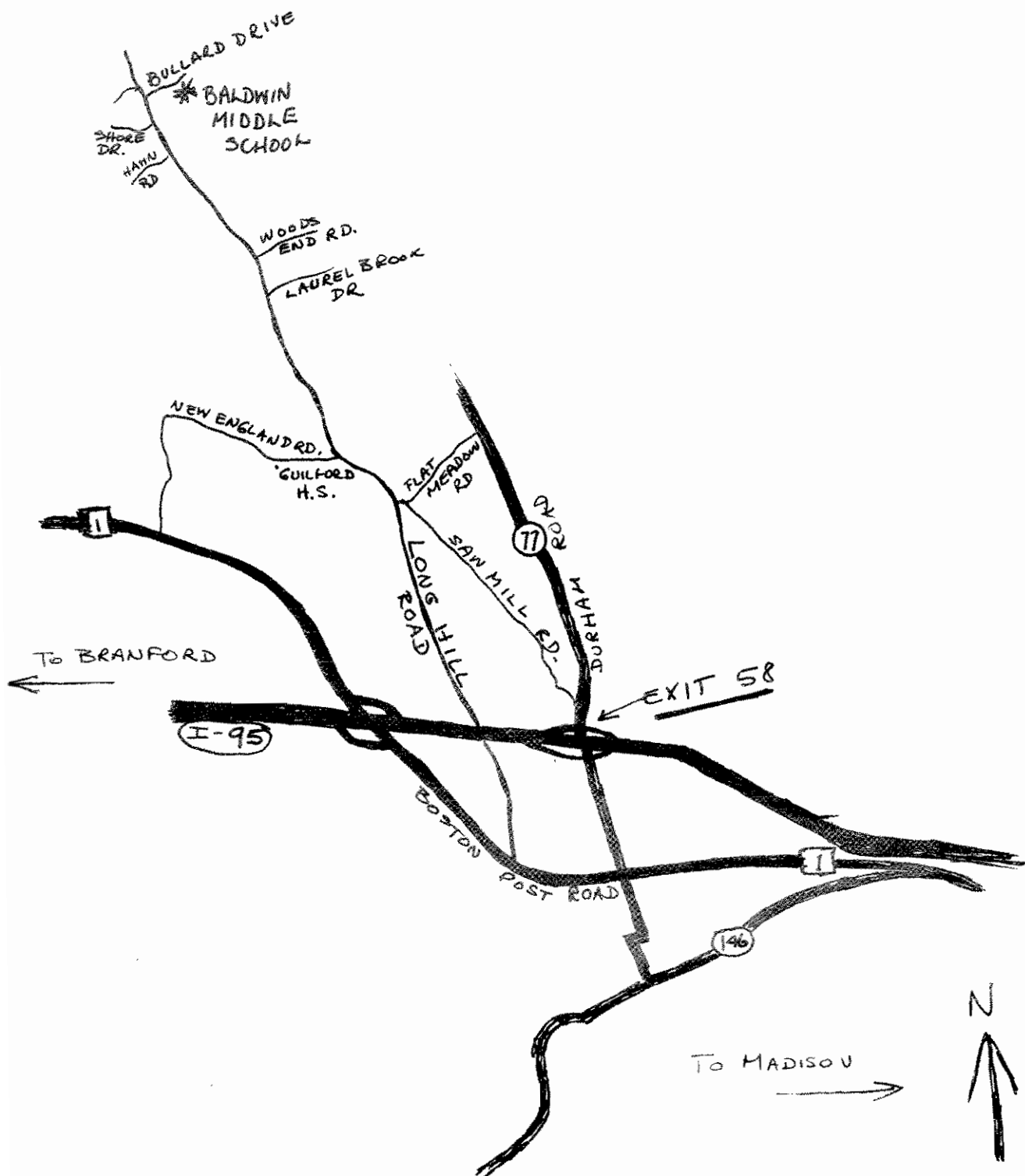
February 7.....Clay Taylor and George Zepko

"BARN OWLS IN CONNECTICUT"

March 6.....Francois Vuilleumier, Curator of Birds at  
the American Museum of Natural History

"A SCIENTIST LOOKS AT THE DIFFERENCE...  
BIRD LIFE IN THE ARCTIC VERSUS THE HIGH ANDES"

All meetings are at 8 PM at the BALDWIN MIDDLE SCHOOL on Bullard Drive, off Long Hill Road, Guilford, and are on the FIRST TUESDAY of each month



## Rare Plants and Old Books

The first slide presented by W. Kent Olson at our November 1 meeting brought forth a flood of memories. The slide of *Arethusa bulbosa* is a rare treat. This plant is listed in Rare and Endangered Species of Connecticut and Their Habitats by Joseph J. Dowhan and Robert J. Craig. I had seen this plant growing and knew its history in the North Guilford and North Madison area.

This beautiful and rare plant was first found by members of my family on May 23, 1933 in North Madison. It blossomed in our North Guilford meadow on May 26, 1934 and again on May 25, 1935. It was found again on July 4, 1934, June 3, 1935, June 1, 1936, and June 8, 1937 in still another location.

On January 18, 1937 the bulb was started in the house and blossomed February 9, 1937. I believe this plant went to the New York Flower Show with my grandparents and helped them win a bronze medal for their display.

Other years it was found were in 1940, 1949, and 1953. The meadow and bog have changed; our meadow has grown in with shrubs and trees. Perhaps the Cranberries and *Arethusa* could no longer compete with the changes nature produces with time, especially now that cows no longer graze the wet meadow. How do I know these specific dates from the past? Notations in my grandmother's plant book, which she had given me.

I love the old books, especially those which provide an occasional written message. Perhaps it's because I feel privileged to be able to read the thoughts and personal records of strangers who no longer seem strangers because of these records.

My grandmother was a teacher and so am I. She loved birds and wild plants and so do I. She knew the unusual sites and shared their habits and stories with me. So many children do not have grandparents to share these things with them, nor do they have parents who are interested in these things, yet most children love learning about nature. How can we start the fire that burns in us for the love of nature within them? Can we afford not to share these joys with our young people?

One way might be to collect some old books and share them with children. I have two books I would gladly share and recommend you be on the lookout for in bookstores. These are children's books but may be enjoyed by people of any age who find delight in learning about nature.

One is Woodland Tales by Ernest Thompson Seton, printed in 1925 by Doubleday, Page and Co.; the other, my favorite, is Flowers and Their Travels by Frances Margaret Fox, printed in 1936 by Bobbs-Merrill. The first book states in its preface:

These Mother Carey Tales were written for children of all ages who have not outgrown the delight of a fairy tale... All are not fairy tales. Other chapters set forth things to see, things to do, things to go to, things to know, things to remember... It is hoped that these chapters will show how easy and alluring and how good a thing it is. While they are meant for children six years and upward, it is assumed that Mother (or Father) will be active as a leader;

The 14th annual INSTITUTE OF DESERT ECOLOGY, sponsored by the Tucson Audubon Society, will take place on April 27, 28, 29 & 30, 1984. On this final weekend in April, 60 participants and 6 knowledgeable and enthusiastic instructors will spend 3 full days in field studies of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and aquatic ecology and geology of the SONORAN DESERT. An optional 4th day will offer extended field trips including the perennial pools in Romero Canyon adjacent to the 1984 Institute site at Catalina State Park. The spectacular north face of the Santa Catalina Mountains forms the backdrop for this 5500 acre desert park located just north of Tucson at an elevation of approximately 2600 feet. The desert washes, canyons and bajadas of the park are the habitat of a wide array of desert plants and wildlife. The resident bird list of the park contains nearly 100 species. The Institute offers the natural environment of a mesquite bosque with saguaro-paloverde desert terrain on one side and the towering peaks of Pusch Wilderness Area with its bighorn sheep habitat on the other. Participants must furnish their own sleeping accommodations in the form of tents or personal mobile camping units. Meals for all participants will be provided on site by an experienced caterer. The registration fee includes all meals and camping fees during the Institute and is \$170 for the three day program and \$195 for 4 days. One unit of college credit is available from the University of Arizona for an additional fee. The Institute is open to all adults 18 and over and Audubon membership is not required. Registration is limited to 60 people on a first-come basis and when registration is filled, usually by early March, a waiting list is maintained to cover cancellations. For BROCHURE write: Desert Ecology Institute, Tucson Audubon Society, 30-A North Tucson Boulevard, Tucson, Arizona 85716 or phone (602) 745-2721.

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The NEW HAVEN BIRD CLUB meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 7:30 PM, with a Field Trip on the following Saturday. The evening meetings are usually held at the Peabody Museum. For information on specific programs, etc., call: Mrs. George Letis, 467-7505, or Mrs. Fred Sibley, 453-9345.

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#### TV Special

Don't forget to watch the special presentation of The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut Critical Areas Program on Guilford Community Access Channel. The program features David Warren, Director of the Connecticut Critical Areas Program, interviewed by Virginia Corbiere, President of Menunkatuck Audubon. It will be shown on Thursday, January 26 at 8 PM, and again on Monday, February 20 at 8 PM.

therefore it is addressed first of all to the parent whom throughout we shall call the "Guide".

The second book tells about the travels of plants and the people who have helped spread them throughout the world. Our Connecticut is included in this book. May I quote from the section devoted to our state:

"Speaking of old shoes, we have in our country one of the strangest stories ever told. It is given to us by our famous American botanist, Doctor Fernald. It seems that curious weeds once began springing up in a river valley of Connecticut. Those who first discovered them did not know what they were, for they were unlike anything ever seen in the valley. But the botanist, of course, quickly named the strangers, ancestors and all. That is what botanists are for; it is their business to know the names of all the flowers in the world.

For a long time though, no one could explain how the plants from every continent and important island suddenly began growing and blossoming side by side near Waterbury in Connecticut.

At last the mystery was solved. There was a factory in the valley that had bought shipments of old rubber shoes from Europe, Asia, Africa and wherever such old rubbers were for sale. The workers in the factory had torn the shoes apart, and had melted the rubber for uses of their own. The cast off raggedy linings of the old shoes were thrown away. The managers of the factory may have intended to have a bonfire of these worn old linings that had walked the highways of the nations. If so, they were too late, because in the spring rains, when the Naugatuck River was so filled with water that the valley was flooded, away floated the seeds of the wildling strangers from far distant parts.

They rejoiced in the storm that had helped them escape from the great rubbish pile, and straight way settled down in rich earth, to live happily in Connecticut. The flowers that soon unfolded their native colors in the sunshine of America must have gazed at their new neighbors in surprise for they were not only strangers in our land, but they were strangers to one another."

Books like these are a delight to young and old alike. Be on the lookout for them, and others like them. "Books are keys to wisdom's treasure, Books are paths that upward lead, Books are gates to lands of pleasure, Books are friends, Come let us read."

Joanne K. Starr

HELP is needed on a once-a-month basis to distribute meeting posters in Branford and Madison. If you can spend approximately one hour a month distributing posters please call Bill Cullen, 453-5699 evenings or 288 8463 days.

### BOEC Field Trip

A FIELD TRIP to LAKE MENUNKATUCK is planned for January 21. It is sponsored by the BALDWIN OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER and will be led by Gerry Axelrod. If there is snow, the trip is planned as a CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TOUR. Lacking snow, it will be a guided Nature Walk. There will be a fee of \$2 for BOEC members and \$3 for non-members. Call 457-0692 or 457-0222 for registration and details. Starting time will be 1:30 PM.

### bulletin board

Menunkatuck Audubon Society has two custom-made Purple Martin Houses for sale at \$125 each (our cost). Beautifully made, 24 apartment, fully painted and ready to erect. Wildlife Committee reserves right to approve site. Commercially prepared houses cost more and are generally inferior. For further info call David O. Hill, Chairman, Wildlife Committee: 453 9334.

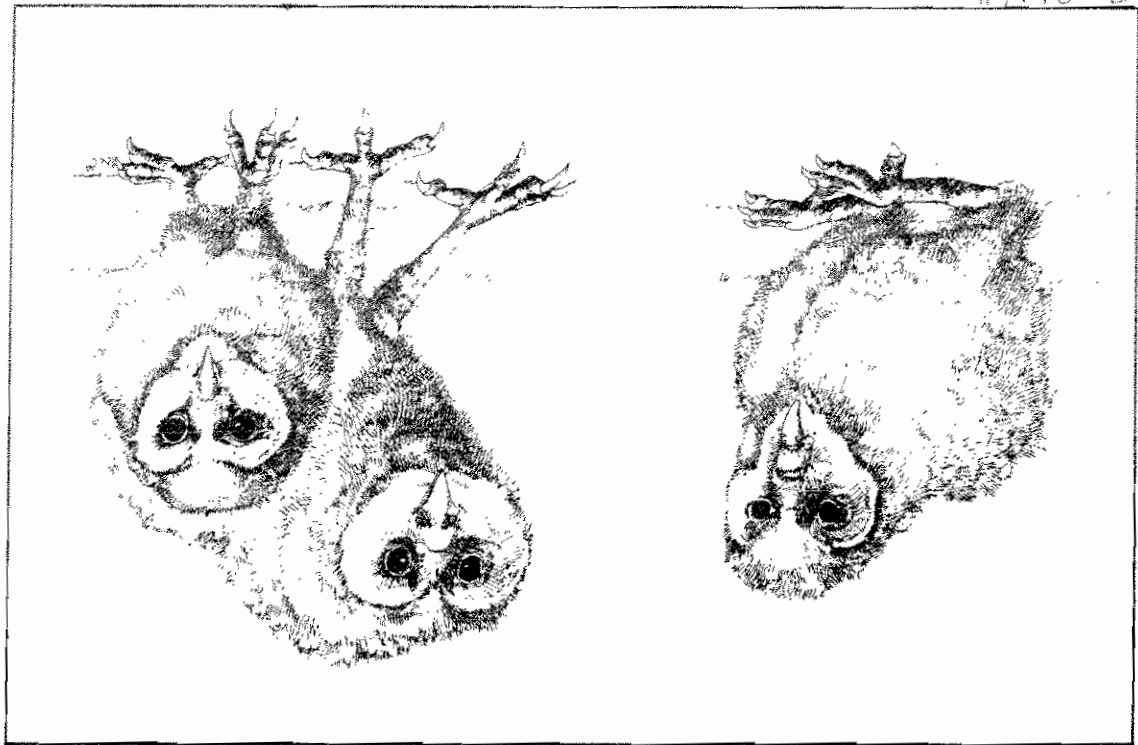
Also for sale: Bluebird boxes @ \$10 each from Menunkatuck, call as above.

For Sale: David Hill is selling the following (personal):  
Bausch & Lomb 9x35 binoculars, like new \$200  
Call 453-9334

MENUNKATUCK MEMBERS please note...

If there is sufficient interest, this column will be a regular feature, available to members wishing to buy or sell wildlife-related items. Please send pertinent information to the EDITOR.

From Old Nestlings



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