MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY
c/o SHORELINE OUTDOOR
EDUCATION CENTER
730 COUNTY ROAD
GUILFORD, CT 06437

*** Welcome to all new members! ***

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TREASURER	-	CHARLES HOFRICHTER	664-1611

JULY 1988

RARE BIRD ALERT TAPES

Information on what has been recently sighted in our area.

Phone 254-3665

MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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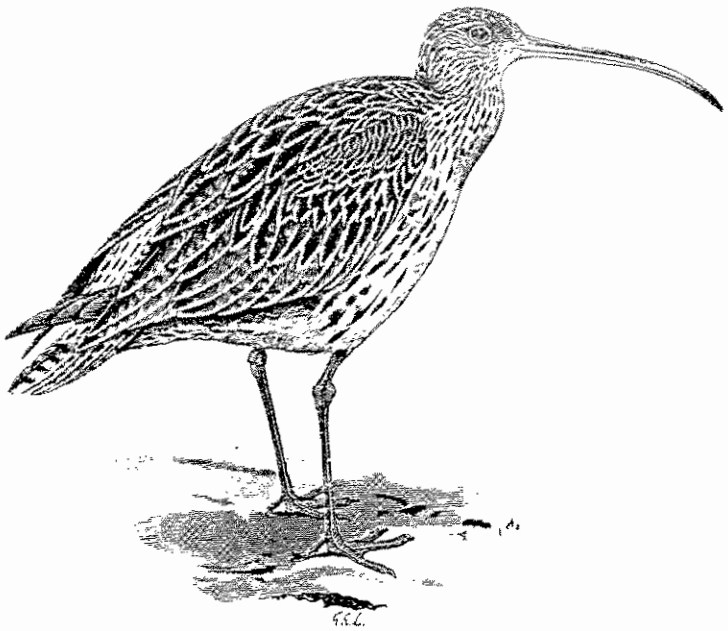

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING CHAIRPERSONS.

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David Tesin Darlene Musco Program	669-4260
Louise Diamond Membership	453-6837
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Diane King - Guilford
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James Balano - Branford
Carol Morris - East Haven
Dori Sosensky - East Haven
Town Representatives

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Sanguinarine, an extract from the Bloodroot Plant (a common spring-flowering plant in Connecticut), could be the most important discovery for dental care since fluoride, according to October's *American Health*. The substance interferes with bacteria's ability to convert carbohydrates into plaque, a gum-eating acid. It also blocks the enzymes that destroy gum tissue.

Bloodroot,
Sanguinaria canadensis

A Colorado laboratory is marketing a mouthwash containing sanguinarine under the name Viadent. Periodontists, impressed by tests showing the mouthwash inhibits plaque accumulation for up to four hours, are already advising patients to use the mouthwash. Unlike chemical-based anti-plaque treatments, the sanguinarine rinse does not stain teeth. ---pwr

Source: The Nature Conservancy

SUMMERTIME PLANET AND STAR GAZING

Saturn, now at its brightest, is low in the southern sky during the summer evenings in the constellation of Sagittarius, the Archer. Some of the Archer's stars can be visualized as a Teapot (see diagram). Golden Saturn then lies above the Teapot. Saturn's rings may be viewed with very steady binoculars. When Galileo got his first look at the rings through a telescope, he thought the planet had ears!

Mars looms ever brighter as it makes its closest approach to Earth in September. The Red Planet rises in the east around midnight and just an hour after dark by the end of July. At sunrise, Mars is high in the south.

Jupiter is in the constellation of Taurus, the Bull, and comes up two hours after Mars. By sunrise, it is well up in the southeast. In July, Jupiter passes within five degrees south of a tiny dipper shaped cluster, the Pleiades.

Before daybreak, Venus rises in the east, about an hour after Jupiter. Venus attains its greatest brilliancy as the "morning star" on July 19. In the early morning sky, Jupiter is to the upper right of Venus.

The brilliant stars of summer, Vega, Deneb and Altair, together form a right triangle overhead in the evening sky. This "Summer Triangle" provides an excellent guide to other nighttime objects in the sky. Vega is the brightest, a brilliant blue-white star, of the constellation of Lyra, the Lyre. This string instrument was invented by Hermes and given to Orpheus by his half brother Apollo. Orpheus had such a talent for the lyre that Zeus placed the instrument among the stars.

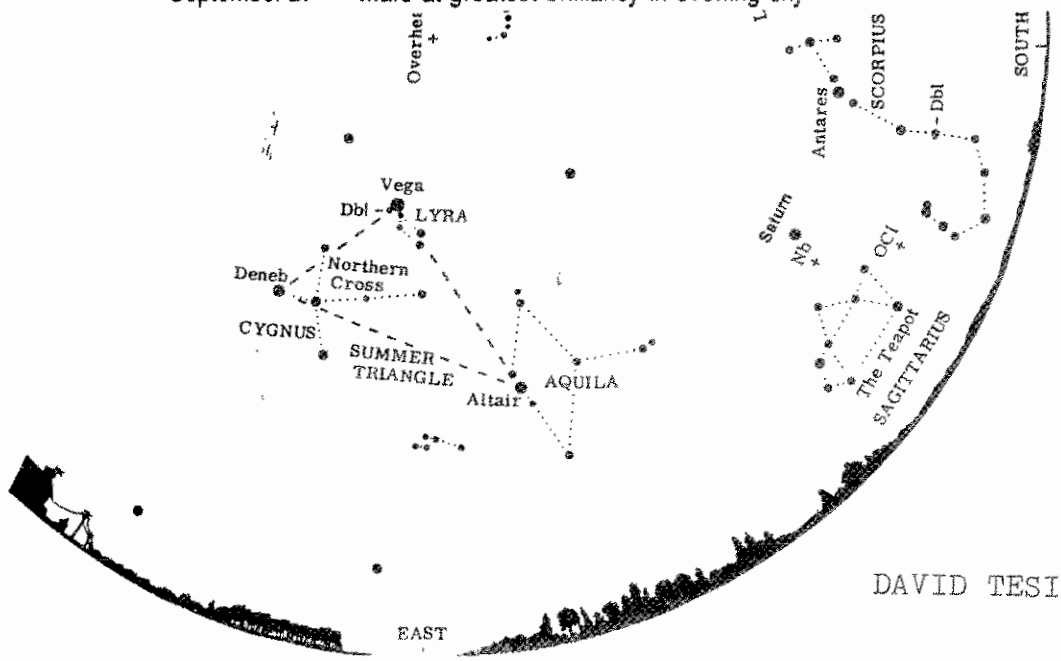
At another corner of the Summer Triangle lies Deneb, part of the constellation of Cygnus, the Swan. The tail of the swan is marked by Deneb and its head by Albireo. Swans feature in many legends including the legend of Orpheus, who was transformed into a swan and placed next to his lyre (Lyra). The swan is best known among Christians as the Northern Cross. During Christmas, the cross stands upright in the evening on the northwest horizon.

Albireo, seen with very steady binoculars, is an interesting double star, one yellow, the other greenish blue.

Altair of the constellation Aquila, the Eagle, forms the last corner of the triangle. In mythology, Aquila often carried Zeus's thunder bolts. Altair is flanked by two fainter stars, whose Persian names describe this constellation as a falcon.

The center of our galaxy lies in Sagittarius. During the summer, we can see the Milky Way as a pale band of diffuse light overhead from the northern to southern horizon. To the west of Sagittarius lies Scorpius the Scorpion, whose sting killed Orion the Hunter. It is one of the few constellations that actually resembles the figure its name suggests. The heart of Scorpius is reddish Antares, whose name means "rival of Mars". A great contrast in the nighttime sky is reddish Antares and nearby golden Saturn.

July 19	Venus attains greatest brilliancy as morning star
July 29	Full moon
August 8-10	Venus-moon pairings in east before dawn
August 13	Perseid meteor showers, peak after midnight
August 27	Full moon
September 25	Harvest moon
September 27	Mars at greatest brilliancy in evening sky



GETTING TO KNOW WHALES

Further information on whales, as well as on dolphins, seals and sea turtles, can be obtained through the Marine Mammal Stranding Network, a consortium of scientific institutions along the Eastern Seaboard that organizes rescues and coordinates the distribution of specimens for research. The network is represented in Connecticut by the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, directed by Neil Overstrom, at the Mystic Marinelife Aquarium, Mystic, CT 06355 (536-9631).

The Mystic aquarium, which has long delighted visitors with its shows of live beluga whales and dolphins, is raising $3 million to establish a Whale Study Center, believed to be the first facility of its kind in the world. In addition to research laboratories and seminar rooms, the center will include special pools in which the public will be able to see rescued whales, dolphins and seals undergoing rehabilitation.

To help support whale research, Maine's College of the Atlantic offers a novel "Adopt A Whale" program. For $25—$50 for a mother and calf—participants receive an 8-by-12-inch color photograph of a particular finback whale observed off the coast, usually named after some identifying characteristic ("Scar-lip O'Hara," "Humpy," "Dent"). Included are a computer printout of your adopted whale's sightings, a twice-yearly newsletter and background information on the finback, which, at an average 65 feet and 60 tons, is next to the blue whale the largest animal in the world. For information, write or call for the Finback Catalogue, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, ME 04609 (207-288-5644).

Source: Connecticut Magazine April 1988

LONG ISLAND SOUND:

This is a guide to help YOU participate in the renewal of Long Island Sound. It is provided as a public service, so that we can all enjoy a cleaner, healthier Sound.

Five million people live within fifteen miles of Long Island Sound's shoreline. If you are one of them you depend on its 1300 square miles for boating (200,000 boats are registered Sound-wide), swimming, nourishment and commerce from fish and shellfish, washing away household and industrial wastes, and providing transportation of fuel to your home. But our beaches are being closed, the fish and lobster are dying, and the natural beauty is being despoiled by floating debris.

Two-thirds of our major commercial fish species depend on bodies of water like the Sound for nursery or spawning grounds. When we dam rivers and fill in wetlands and marshes, we destroy these habitats and block the movement of fish in their efforts to enter spawning grounds. In addition, dredging for marinas and other facilities reintroduces into the water toxic wastes that had once been buried in the sediments, with the result that marine life becomes exposed to harmful chemicals.

Until 8,000 years ago, the Sound was a fresh water lake. When sea water rose from the melting of glaciers, the sea entered the Sound, making it an **estuary** (where fresh and salt water mix).

Ever since then the Sound has provided a habitat for a large number of species of fish, birds and animals. Almost 400 species of birds have been sighted along the Connecticut shore. Mussels, oysters, and barnacles live on the sea floor. Of great commercial importance to Connecticut and New York are the American lobster, hard shell clams, welks, and the blue crab, a $3.5 million industry in New York in 1983.

In the 1600's the Sound had much more abundant life. Haddock could be scooped from the water by the bucket. Lobsters that had washed ashore were used as fertilizer. Before World War II, the Sound produced 3,000,000 bushels of oysters annually, but the 1970 production was only 16,000 bushels, a decline caused by overharvesting and pollution.

The Sound Today

Much that we do in our daily life--in our bathrooms, kitchens, and yards--connects us to the Sound. Our sewage (after treatment) goes directly into the water. This infuses the Sound with human waste and pollutants. Since human waste is composed of nutrients (not toxic materials), these "over-fertilize" the Sound and create algae. When the algae die, they deplete the oxygen level in the water, causing fish and shellfish to suffocate.

We also throw out household products which contain chemicals that come back to haunt us. In the water, these chemicals can cause fin rot, blisters, and cancer in fish. Commercial fishing of striped bass is currently banned because of the concentration of pollutants in this species, and much of our coast has been closed to shellfishing for the same reason.

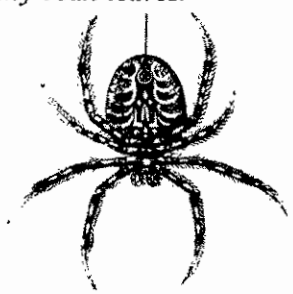
In 1984 Congress established the National Estuary Program of the Clean Water Act to study and protect coastal environments. In 1985 the Environmental Protection Agency began spending a million dollars a year to fund the Long Island Sound Study. By 1990 the Study will try to assess the harm caused by human activity and recommend ways of restoring and preserving the Sound's fragile ecosystem.

This material has been produced by Wainwright House under a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, provided through the efforts of State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and Assemblyman Ronald Tocci. Wainwright House is an educational conference center overlooking Long Island Sound in Rye, New York.

Anything been bugging you lately?

by
Kenneth A. Welch
Assistant Scientist
and
Carol R. Lemmon
Agricultural Technician
Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

What looks like soot and crawls?
Why are maggots on my ceiling?
What is making holes in my lawn?
Why are large black flies clustered inside my living room window?
Why is my cabbage wilting?
What is eating my bean leaves?



THESE ARE A FEW of the five to six thousand questions Connecticut citizens pose about insect-related matters to the Entomology Department each year. Questions come by telephone, in person, or by letter. Contrary to common belief, we do not have all the answers yet, nor have we heard all the possible questions.

The telephone rings up to 50 times a day during the busy season. Visitors enter bearing boxes, branches, bags, and bottles containing all kinds of critters. Our mail, consisting of letters and packages, can be a challenge. Questions may be written on anything from a corporate letterhead to a piece of torn paper bag. The specimens we find inside can be alive or dead, and range from whole to pepper-sized postage-machine shattered pieces. They are often disguised between pieces of sticky tape, in vacuum samples, or embedded in strands of cotton.

We have seen dead birds, snakes and turtles, slugs, a scorpion, head lice, three square feet of turf, tree limbs, small shrubs, imaginative pieces of lint, and a live black widow spider.

We often identify familiar specimens with a quick glance. Other times identification of rare insects may require several hours to several weeks, even with the aid of our insect reference collection, identification keys, scientific journals, entomology texts, and a dissecting microscope.

MANY QUESTIONS ARE SEASONAL and can be predicted. For example, the eastern subterranean termite and the black carpenter ant swarm in late winter or early spring. Therefore, a call in February, March, or April concerning swarming insects is probably about one or the other. The clover mite, also active in the early spring, looks like crawling soot.

Insects on the ceiling, which are often mistaken for maggots, are predictably Indian meal moth larvae. They crawl upward and across ceilings seeking shelter to form cocoons after they have completed feeding.

Other answers may be predictable, but the causes may vary. Moles and voles, grub-digging skunks and nut-burying squirrels, insect-feeding birds, and emerging Japanese beetle adults all leave holes in lawns.

The presence of some insects implies a secondary problem. Past experience has taught us that large flies inside a living room window are a species of blue bottle fly. Since their larvae feed on carrion, our immediate assumption is that a dead animal is nearby. A fireplace often harbors a bird or small mammal which has fallen down the chimney and died.

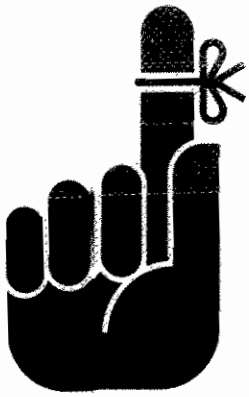
OTHER QUESTIONS may not be due to natural causes. For example: "Crickets" with short chirps at regular intervals commonly turn out to be smoke detectors signaling weak batteries.

The answers that seem to create the greatest distress: *It's a tick or It's a termite.* Ticks cause justifiable concern because they transmit Lyme disease, which recently became a reportable disease in the state. The presence of termites causes concern because of anticipation of the cost of control and repair. Fortunately, we can assure people that although the problem may need attention, there is no need for panic. To a lesser degree, avid gardeners are upset to learn their cabbage has wilted due to root maggot feeding or their beans have been skeletonized by the Mexican bean beetle.

The questions, in addition to allowing us to inform citizens about things that concern them, help our research because they may bring new pests to our attention. For example, a resident of West Haven was curious about a series of small, white, cotton-ball-like puffs lining the underside of branches of a hemlock tree. The branch she held brought to our attention that the hemlock woolly adelgid, a serious pest of hemlock, had entered Connecticut. Its ravages were reported in *Frontiers of Plant Science*, Spring, 1987.

We always wonder what question the next visitor, caller, or letter-writer will ask us. ■

(This article was reprinted from Frontiers of Plant Science, *the newsletter of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Post Office Box 1108, New Haven, CT 06504. Readers with questions on insects are invited to write in or phone 789-7214. Ed.)*



Don't Forget!

Watch these Audubon Specials Sundays at 8PM on PBS. Check local listings.

July 17	July 24	July 31	August 7	August 14
WHALES! Narrated by Johnny Carson	MESSAGES FROM THE BIRDS Narrated by Martin Sheen	GALAPAGOS: MY FRAGILE WORLD Narrated by Cliff Robertson	COMMON GROUND: FARMING AND WILDLIFE Narrated by Dennis Weaver	DUCKS UNDER SIEGE Narrated by John Heard

Activists Are Tough On Issues!

Audubon Activists are TOUGH BIRDS! They read the **Audubon Activist** bimonthly newsjournal to stay on top of crucial environmental issues. They get **Action Alerts** from Audubon's Washington, D.C., office when an issue needs their immediate help. They write to their congressmen and congresswomen to promote the conservationists' cause. They call the **Audubon Hotline** for up-to-the-minute news. They eat their vegetables.

Become one of the TOUGH BIRDS today! Join the growing Activist Network. Write for a free sample copy and order form: *Audubon Activist*, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

"In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks."

–John Muir

Commercial Fishing Nets Drown Thousands of Seabirds

When the public learned in the late 1960s that thousands of porpoises were being drowned in tuna seines, the reaction was strong enough to force passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. According to an article in the Winter 1987 issue of *American Birds*, there should be a similar outpouring of concern for seabirds.

In western Greenland, salmon gill-nets may have taken 200,000 thick-billed murres a year in the 1970s. Off the Aleutian Islands, driftnets up to 20 miles long drown an estimated 75,000 to 250,000 seabirds annually. Observers aboard fishing vessels counted 21 species commonly found dead in the nets, including auklets, puffins, shearwaters, and ruddy ducks.

Conservationists are pressing the Department of Commerce to regulate U.S. and foreign fishing fleets under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or other laws, but so far neither the agency nor the courts has done much to alleviate the problem. California agencies, by contrast, moved to protect seabirds in the Gulf of the Farallons, where murres have declined drastically due to gill-net fishing.

A bill Congress passed last year requires foreign fishing vessels operating in U.S. waters to allow onboard observers, and sets up a system to track abandoned driftnets, which can go on killing for years. Conservationists were disappointed that a provision to set a seabird protection zone around the western Aleutian Islands was dropped from the final legislation.

For a copy of *American Birds* containing the article on the effects of gill-net fishing on seabirds, send $5 to *American Birds*, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. ❑

CONNECTICUT WALK BOOK — 15th Edition is a complete guide to more than 500 miles of the Blue-Blazed Trail System. It contains descriptive information about the trails, points of historical and geological interest, and scenic views. The descriptions and 35 maps in the 15th Edition are updated and revised to show trail locations at date of publication. Added are the new trails in Kettletown State Park, the Lillinonah and Zoar Trails in southwestern Connecticut, and the extension of the West Woods Trails in Guilford. $15.00 per copy.

Make checks or money orders payable to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and mail to 16 Meriden Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.