

# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST



## The Birds of Nockum Hill

(Reprinted from BLCT Newsletter March 1992)

BLCT Board Member and ornithologist Steven Reinert has completed a study, "Inventory of Birds at Nockum Hill, Barrington, Rhode Island." The study was conducted to further document the biological values of Nockum Hill, which is being considered for wildlife refuge status by the Open Space Subcommittee for the state-mandated Comprehensive Plan.

Assisting Steve was local bird expert Janet Bryan. Together they performed a census of birds during the 1990 breeding season. The most common nesting bird was the Song Sparrow, followed by the Gray Catbird, American Robin, and Common Yellowthroat. In all, 25 species were documented as nesters at the site, including Ring-necked Pheasant, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, and Northern Bobwhite. Unfortunately the Belted Kingfisher pair that successfully nested on the exposed south slope in 1989 was absent during 1990. Bird densities were highest in the forest and shrub habitats of the point: Red-winged Blackbirds and Sharp-tailed Sparrows were the only nesting species detected on the salt marsh.

An historical review of birds occurring at Nockum Hill revealed sightings of 85 species. That list included such noteworthy visitors as Screech and Great Horned Owls, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, White-eyed Vireos, Bobolinks, and Seaside Sparrows.

The author remarked that as a wildlife refuge, management plans could be put into effect, which would further enhance the area's value for birds. For example, the transformation of the agricultural fields to a grassland community could provide potential nesting habitat for such special-interest species as the Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird, and Meadowlark. Additionally, the report revealed that species documented as breeding birds in the nearby Hundred Acre Cove marshes, such as Seaside Sparrows and Clapper Rails, could not be ruled out as future nesters at Nockum Hill.

The Trust is working closely with the Open Space Subcommittee towards initiation of the wildlife refuge land-use designation. Its establishment could help areas like Nockum Hill retain their natural values for generations to come.

**Update from 1992:** In 1994, the town designated the Nockum Hill property as a wildlife refuge and entered into a management agreement with the BLCT. Given that conservation zoning provides only limited protection into the future, in 2005 the BLCT proposed that the town consider granting a conservation easement. With important support from The Nature Conservancy and the state, the Town of Barrington and the BLCT finalized the agreement that same year.

### Upcoming Events

Micro-habitat Walk at Johannis Farm –  
Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am

WINGMASTERS at Annual Meeting in library –  
Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm

Mushroom Walk at PIC-WIL Nature Preserve –  
Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>



Visit the Barrington Land Conservation Trust online at [www.BLCT.org](http://www.BLCT.org) and on Facebook



**Thank you and congratulations to one of  
Barrington's newest Eagle Scouts,  
Owen Jackson!**

Owen Jackson, a scout from Troop 4, built an osprey nest platform for his Eagle Scout project. One of the requirements was to complete a service project that benefits the community. Owen contacted the Land Trust for project ideas and member Helen Tjader informed him about the osprey nest project in the salt marsh off of Bourne Lane. Owen organized a group of friends and scouts to assist him with the work and install the foundation and platform.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has a program that monitors the osprey nests in the area. It has been notified about the platform location and will monitor the osprey platform this spring.



**A Word from Teddy Kurkoski**



My experience with the Barrington Land Conservation Trust and the Barrington Garden Club have been truly fantastic. I have worked with Blakely Szosz and Helen Tjader in coordinating an effort to clean up some debris and invasive plants in Osamequin Park off of the Wampanoag Trail. Their knowledge of the surrounding environment has allowed me to better understand wilderness protection and how much of an impact humans can have on the ecosystems around us.

As a Boy Scout in Troop 4 Barrington, I have come to know how careless some people can be with improper waste management (such as littering), and I have worked before on projects regarding garbage removal. Blakely and Helen have given me more insight into the role we humans play. However, over time, people have imported plants into America that threaten to disrupt the natural balance of many ecosystems. The Land Trust and Garden Club have shown me that it is our job to protect and maintain the nature around us. By removing parasitic vines and dead trees, we are able to ensure that plants will have a better chance of survival. Barrington is lucky to have such passionate and knowledgeable environmental agents! Helen and Blakely, along with the rest of the groups' members, do some really amazing work around here!

**Thank You  
Barrington Department of Public Works!**

In late April, the Barrington DPW used a backhoe/front-end loader to clear the embankment above the parking area in the Rayner Refuge at Nockum Hill to remove the stumps and brush and open the sandy area for nesting.

Frank (the driver) did a superb job of preparing the area. Thank you to Alan Corvi (Director of DPW) for planning and overseeing the project.

Volunteers will finish off the grading and raking in the coming month.



**Thank you** to Charlie Brown who helped Pete McCalmont with the removal of several large trees that had fallen across trails at Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve. His assistance was essential – and appreciated!



**WINGMASTERS at BLCT Annual Meeting**

Please join us on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM in the Barrington Public Library Auditorium for the Annual Meeting. There will be a brief business meeting followed by a presentation at 7:30PM by Wingmasters.

Wingmasters is a partnership of two people dedicated to increasing public understanding and appreciation of North American birds of prey. They are licensed raptor rehabilitators who care for injured birds of prey. Most of the birds are rehabilitated and released back into the wild while some are permanently handicapped and cannot be released. Wingmasters uses these nonreleasable raptors to conduct educational programs at schools, libraries and museums throughout New England. Bring your entire family. We promise it will be an evening you will not soon forget!

**SAVE THE DATE!!  
HUNDRED ACRE COVE PADDLE  
– September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

As part of Rhode Island Land Trust Days, BLCT and East Bay Rowing are planning a morning paddle around Hundred Acre Cove. We will learn about the cove's ecology while enjoying a beautiful paddle around one of Barrington's prettiest waterways. Check the BLCT website for more information as the date gets closer.

**WANTED: WALKING STEWARDS FOR NOCKUM HILL**

The manager of the Doug Rayner Wildlife Refuge at Nockum Hill is looking for volunteers to be "walking stewards" of the property during the fall, winter and spring seasons. Nockum Hill is well monitored during the summer months because of the Terrapin Project and the dozens of terrapin volunteers who regularly walk the property. Because of the size of the refuge (83 acres), we would love to have more eyes roaming the property during the off-seasons to make sure that it is being properly utilized. If you would like to volunteer to walk the property on a semi-regular basis, please contact us at [info@blct.org](mailto:info@blct.org). Thank you!!!

### Clip-out Membership Form

### Board of Directors

Make Check Payable To:  
 Barrington Land Conservation Trust  
 Mail To: PO Box 324  
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Membership Categories

Life Member	\$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd like to volunteer
Benefactor	\$500		
Conservator	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd like information
Patron	\$100		on donating stock
Sponsor	\$50		
Family/Friend	\$35		
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