



New Hampshire AUDUBON

November - December, 1993

Volume 29, No. 6

Umbagog Eagle Nest Gone!

Biologists Blame "Juvenile Delinquent" Eaglets!

Back in early August, when two young Bald Eagles first took wing from their Lake Umbagog nest, ASNH biologists monitoring New Hampshire's only known breeding eagle pair assumed that this successful nesting was drawing to an uneventful and predictable close. What actually took place over the next few weeks was far from uneventful, took observers by surprise and led to an extensive search for clues to answer the question of "Who swiped the nest?"

The adult eagle pair, which has nested in a 75-foot tall white pine near the junction of the Androscoggin and Magalloway rivers each year since 1989, produced two offspring in 1993. The chicks, referred to as "D-7" and "D-8" because of the coded inscriptions on their leg bands, first flew from the nest on August 3 and August 5, respectively. Their age at fledging (86-88 days) and relatively large size suggested that both eaglets were females. Everything proceeded normally in the two weeks following fledging as the youngsters improved their flight skills, began to practice a bit of independent hunting and continued to favor the nest tree for perching and resting.

Participants in an Appalachian Mountain Club canoe trip on Umbagog on August 20 were the first to contact ASNH with the surprising report that a portion of the eagle nest appeared somehow to have fallen out of the tree. By the following week, several concerned individuals had called Audubon House reporting that on their visits to Leonard Pond the nest was entirely gone!

Indeed, when biologists from ASNH and the US Fish and Wildlife Service visited the site on August 28, we found both eaglets perched atop

the tree on the forked branches where the nest had once rested. The adult pair was present, perching in their favorite snag tree. All seemed normal . . . except that there was no longer any trace of a nest in the tree!

A careful search of the grassy area below the tree yielded little information; no mass of sticks resembling a fallen nest could be found, only a few scattered branches. Speculation began to arise as to the fate of the nest. Was there a wind storm which tossed the nest out of the tree? Did a bold Osprey pair pirate away the sticks? Could human vandalism have possibly been involved? Wildlife biologists depend on careful observations on which to base their interpretation of animal behavior, but in this case, there seemed to be no witnesses and no clues to help us reconstruct what had occurred.

Finally, in early September, information from several separate observers began to shed some light on this mystery. Steve Breeser of the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge reported seeing an unidentified immature eagle carrying a stick towards an Osprey nest located five miles away from Leonard Pond. Could this be one of the Leonard Pond youngsters? Then Loon Preservation Committee seasonal

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photo: Susan MacLeod

Chairman Dean Bensley presents the Tudor Richards Award to Edwina Czajkowski at the 79th Annual Meeting on September 19 in Enfield.

Tudor Richards Award Given To Edwina Czajkowski

The Tudor Richards Award is given annually to recognize a person who has worked tirelessly and effectively to an extraordinary degree on behalf of conservation in New Hampshire. This year's recipient is Edwina Czajkowski.

After graduating from Connecticut College, Edwina worked at the National Audubon Center in Greenwich. She came to New Hampshire in 1964, settled in Hillsborough, and soon was running Concord Public Library's Bookmobile, where she practiced some of her imaginative ideas to reach children. During these years, she was a leader in Concord's paper-recycling efforts, and was a hard-working member of the Hillsborough Conservation Commission.

In 1973, as part of the Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust's "New Hampshire Tomorrow" program, Project SEE (School Environmental Education) was started, with Edwina as its director. It was run by ASNH for the benefit of the Concord School District. It wasn't long before the Concord

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(Edwina Czajkowski . . . continued from front page)

School District recognized what a jewel it had been given, and took over the Project.

Over the last twenty years Edwina, with her imagination, energy and ability, and her passionate belief in the natural environment and in children, has made Project SEE into an extraordinary and unique program which integrates all the curriculum in nine Concord schools. "Edwina", said a teacher, "never says no to a project that has anything to do with teaching about the environment."

Down the road from Audubon House, on Clinton Street, is the White Farm, a cluster of farm buildings, a cottage, broad fields, apple orchards and woods. Edwina spearheaded the effort to save this farm from development and to use it for her environmental education classes.

Around 1986, the Concord School District changed Project SEE from a program emphasizing environmental education to a program responsible for coordinating the entire science curriculum for grades K-6. Its mission was to awaken in children the joy, excitement and intellectual power of science, to teach children to think critically, identify scientifically related problems and search for solutions.

Edwina's children learn that science is a unique way of asking and answering questions. They learn the difference between scientific evidence and unsubstantiated opinion. They learn how all life is interrelated and that they too are part and caretakers of the earth.

What children love and remember is the way they learn their science. Take hawk migration for instance. Every September fourth graders climb a mountain to watch hawks. They study hawk biology and count migrating hawks from the rooftops and playground of their schools in Concord. Their records have contributed to ASNH's knowledge about hawk migration over New Hampshire. Before the hawks arrive, the children learn how to handle real binoculars and identify hawks by practicing with toiletpaper tubes painted black and held together with rubber bands. They lie down on their backs and look through the "binoculars" at cut-out silhouettes of hawks dangling in the air over their heads. They learn flight

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Julie Lange Peyton

patterns with music — do you know that accipiter hawks flap and glide to Beethoven's Fifth? Da-da-da-dahhhhh.

While fourth graders count hawks, first graders visit apple orchards, fifth graders harvest herbs in White Farm's herb garden. Second graders learn to understand beavers by trying to build a dam to stop water flowing from a hose, and soon find out just how hard it is to stop flowing water. Ninth graders help at Hazardous Waste Pickup Day, and third graders study astronomy.

Edwina's kids know why wetlands and river systems matter, and why milk

comes from cows via green grass, clean air, and sunlight, and not from supermarket cartons.

Audubon's Carol Foss told me, "Over the years Edwina has provided significant inspiration and encouragement to local young people interested in environmental careers, including myself."

From teacher and counselor, Barbara Humm: "Edwina has probably had the greatest single effect on me of any professional I have know in my thirty years working the schools."

And finally, Julie Lange Peyton, Edwina's first intern, said: "The year I spent working for Edwina was the most incredible year of my life. Edwina is a genius, and also a humble, generous person with very high standards. Passionate about how she wants people to feel about the natural environment, she wants them to have a personal relationship with nature."

She has lifted thousands of people's eyes to the sky, and has inspired the same awareness and curiosity for trees and cows and sheep and pond life. Her gift to thousands of children is that they'll never see a hawk again — and say 'it's just a hawk.' They'll stop and watch it. They'll feel the weather change and the stirring within them, and they'll look to the skies."

Betsy Janeway

Northwoods Education Project Update

Core teachers from the four Northwoods Education Project schools met for a successful four day training institute at NH Technical College in Berlin on August 3 - 6. The four schools are Lancaster Elementary School, Rochester Middle School, South Meadow School (Peterborough), and Lafayette Regional School (Franconia). This was the first of three teacher training institutes scheduled prior to the implementation of the project in the spring of '94.

The teachers worked long and hard, meeting with representatives from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Soil Conservation Service, local and regional North Country planners, Lake Umbagog Wildlife Refuge, foresters from the James River Corp., private foresters, and of course ASNH staff. In addition to the active information sessions and field trips, teachers also had a chance to work with a variety of resources and begin planning together. The field trip

highlight was a visit to an active logging operation on James River property, and a chance to compare and contrast the different forestry perspectives of private and industrial timber operations.

While we still have a lot of ground to cover and planning to complete, the project is off to a great start! The teachers are enthusiastic, energized, and have already started some activities for the beginning of the school year to help their partner school students get to know each other better.

The next institute is scheduled for November 4 - 6, and will be held at AMC's Pinkham Notch Lodge. We anticipate another productive and high-energy workshop. While details are still a bit sketchy at this point, we're hoping to fit in a tour of the James River pulp mill, meet with folks from the Mt. Washington Observatory, and have plenty of time to scheme and develop the project curricula.

Scott Fitzpatrick