

# SUMMER EVENTS

## SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Sunday, June 21

Folklore and storytelling 11:00  
Games for one and all 1:00  
Sun and Moon 3:00

## INTERDEPENDENCE DAY

Saturday, July 4

Moments in the marsh 11:00, 3:00  
The living web 1:00  
Interdependence games 12:30

## CLEAN WATER DAY

Saturday, July 25

Marsh walk 11:00, 1:00  
Marsh mini-cleanup 3:00

## COLORS OF SUMMER

Sunday, August 30

Natural dyes 10:00-3:00  
Botany walk Noon, 2:00

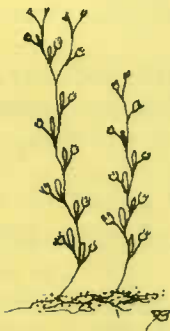
## PARK CELEBRATION

Saturday, September 12

Anniversary of Park Opening  
All day starting at 11:00

MDC's interpretive staff at Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, in cooperation with Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, presents these events at the park. Most events begin at the parking lot off Bennington Street, East Boston. All events are free and open to the public.

For more information please call MDC information at 727-5215.



*Belle Isle News*

*Newsletter of the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh*

## TROUBLE SPOTS



Lombardo's - behind Osco Drug

In contrast to the increasing beauty of Belle Isle Park and adjoining marshlands under the care of MDC staff, there is increasing abuse at other sites. One problem area, pictured above, lies behind and adjacent to Osco Drug on Saratoga Street, East Boston. Another area is along Belle Isle Inlet, where Morton Street in Winthrop meets Pleasant Park Road. The big wooden boat-cradles seen below have washed up all along the Inlet. Boat-yard owners are responsible for their removal, both morally and legally.

We cleaned up both of these area quite thoroughly over the past few years.



At Morton Street

## FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO BE WRONG

Stella was trying to learn us herons, by the side of a marsh on a warm April morning, years ago, when everything we saw was immediate and new: a tall white bird, impassive, trailing long white plumes, standing on long black legs, staring at us down a long yellow bill; and like it, but delicate, other birds that hurried erratically about, on yellow feet, on thin black legs, harrying the water with tips of thin black bills.

"Forget where they're *white*," Stella was saying. "Get where they're *black* or *yellow*: that's how you know what they are." I said they were daffodils and tulips, *white* and *yellow*, like flowers in our garden. "You don't get *black* legs on daffodils and tulips," Stella said.

She paused, aggrieved; looked down, looked wise; benignly smiled, trusting I agreed: Imagery was *idle fancy*, inimical to *fact*. Poetry *imagined*. Science *knew*.

*Rightly*, preaching from her book of birds, Stella taught us to observe detail: color of legs and feet, *size* of body and *shape* of head, *size* and *shape* and *color* of bill. Where first we saw white birds with long legs, later we saw their names and faces. Our eyes had learned new words.

*Wrongly*, alas, preaching from her book of birds, she also sought to close our eyes, implying birds read books and did what they were told: The book said a bird *didn't* come here? Then it *wouldn't* come here. The bird *wasn't* in the book? Then you didn't see it.

Cattle Egrets weren't in the book in the late 1940s, when Stella was teaching us, when experts were looking at Cattle Egrets in Florida, but weren't seeing them. I wonder if Stella would have seen them. I wonder if I would.

Stella was a bully. What would I have told her that white birds were, with *short thick yellow* legs and *short thick yellow* bills and *tawny* crowns and *tawny* chests and *tawny* backs and *blunt* faces and *squat* bodies? Would I have told her, vanilla ice cream butterscotch sundaes, *not* Snowy

Egrets? And would I have fought for my *right* to be *wrong*, asking why their thick yellow legs and thick yellow bills weren't *thin* and weren't *black*?

I don't know. But I do know that unless I imagine, I cannot know. So, in the head of a Snowy Egret, I see a snowman, and a scythe for haying in the head of a Little Blue Heron. I also know my rights to be wrong: my right to see the Little Egret, of Europe; a White Ibis, of the Georgia swamps; a Great White Heron, of the Florida Everglades; a white phase Western Reef Heron, of Senegal; a white phase Reddish Egret, of the Florida Keys.

Demanding my rights, I'm studying Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets. Closely, very closely. Join me, and forget that Stella is watching.

If you're wrong, I'll thank you for trying. If you're really wrong, I'll really thank you.

J. Barton



Sources for the table on facing page:

Cramp, editor, *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* (Vol. I), Oxford 1980.

Hancock and Elliot, *The Herons of the World*, New York 1978.

Heinzel et al., *The Birds of Britain and Europe*, London 1972.

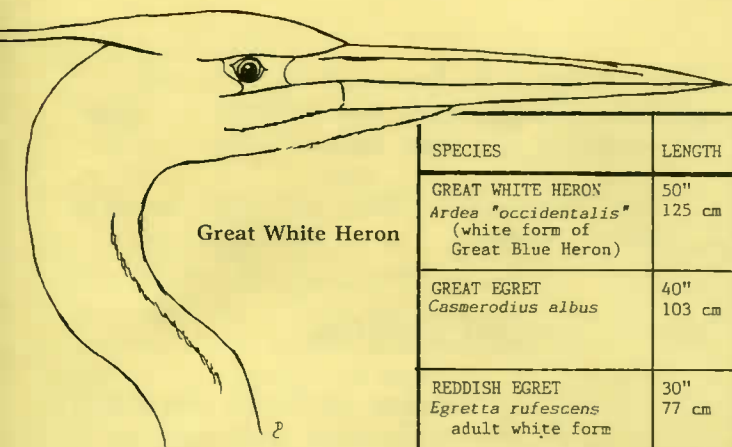
National Geographic Society, *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, Washington, D. C., 1984.

Peterson, *A Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies*, Boston 1980.

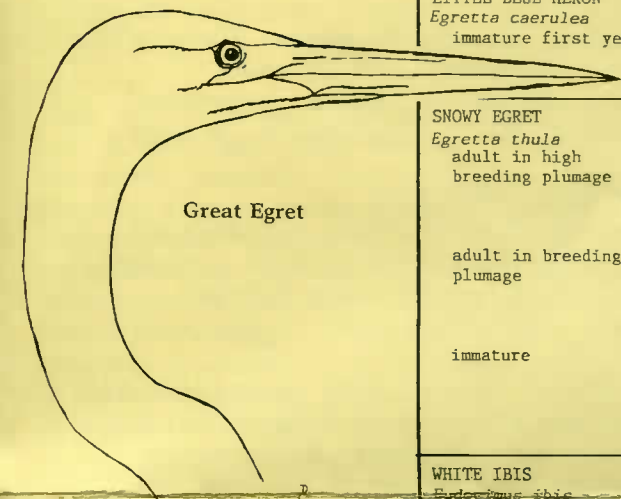
Peterson et al., *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, Boston, 1954.



## WHITE HERONS AND OTHER SUCH CREATURES



Great White Heron



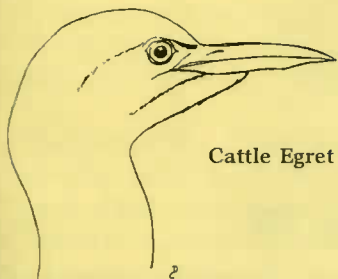
Great Egret



Snowy Egret



Little Blue Heron



Cattle Egret

SPECIES	LENGTH	BILL	LEGS	FEET	PLUMAGE	REMARKS	I SAW IT AT BELLE ISLE
GREAT WHITE HERON <i>Ardea "occidentalis"</i> (white form of Great Blue Heron)	50" 125 cm	yellow, massive from base to tip	greenish yellow	greenish yellow	white	Florida specialty, vagrant north to Pennsylvania, Maryland, Georgia.	You could be wrong!
GREAT EGRET <i>Casmerodius albus</i>	40" 103 cm	yellow, heavy, but tapers to its tip	black	black	white	Regular in summer but uncommon; walks slowly, freezes, hits quickly.	No problem.
REDDISH EGRET <i>Egretta rufescens</i> adult white form	30" 77 cm	bright pink broad base, black tip quite sharp	bluish black	bluish black	white	Uncommon along Gulf Coast and Florida Keys; spreads wings over water.	You're wrong!
LITTLE BLUE HERON <i>Egretta caerulea</i> immature first year	24" 62 cm	steel blue thick base, jet black tip quite sharp	bluish green to apple or pea green	bluish green to apple or pea green	white, may show dusky wing tips in flight	Compare bill shape, bill color and face color to separate from Snowy Egret.	Look hard.
SNOWY EGRET <i>Egretta thula</i> adult in high breeding plumage	24" 62 cm	jet black thin base jet black sharp tip	jet black	bright yellow "golden slippers"	white	Black bill set off sharply by red face; on Little Egret, by orange.	Yes, you did.
adult in breeding plumage	24" 62 cm	jet black	jet black	bright yellow	white	Black bill set off sharply by yellow face; very unlike young Little Blue.	Yes.
immature	24" 62 cm	black, sometimes mottled	dark foreleg, yellowish hindleg	yellowish sometimes greenish	white	Leg color suggests young Little Blue. Compare bill and face color, bill shape.	Yes.
WHITE IBIS <i>Eudicampus ibis</i> adult in breeding plumage	23" 60 cm	scarlet, curved strongly downward	scarlet	scarlet	white; in flight jet black wing tips	Seen recently in Massachusetts; No Man's Land '84, Marshfield '86.	You could be right.
first spring plumage	23" 60 cm	red	reddish	reddish	white; in flight jet black wing tips	Beware mottled plumage which can camouflage shape.	Demand your rights!
LITTLE EGRET (Native to Old World) <i>Egretta garzetta</i> adult white phase, in high breeding plumage	22" 56 cm	black	black	orange	white; overall very like Snowy	Face differs from Snowy; see above. Seen Newfoundland and West Indies.	You could be very wrong.
adult white phase in breeding plumage	22" 56 cm	black	black	yellow	white	Black bill, green-grey face; compare sharp contrast with yellow on Snowy.	Same here.
immature	22" 56 cm	brown	black	gray green	white	Bare skin on face lead grey.	Same here.
WESTERN REEF HERON <i>Egretta gularis</i> adult white form from West Africa	22" 56 cm	brown or yellow, quite heavy, like Great Egret	black	yellow	white	Far more numerous dark form summered Nantucket 1985; Many people wrong.	You could be wrong too.
CATTLE EGRET <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> adult in breeding plumage	20" 51 cm	orange red, short	orange red, short	dark	white, buff crown, back and breast	Short bill and big jowls make head shape distinctive. Compare Snowy.	Prefers fields but keep mind and eyes open, always.
adult in nonbreeding plumage	20" 51 cm	yellow short	yellow short	yellow	white, may have buff forehead	By comparison, jowls of Great White are slight.	You could, going to stables and farms in Ipswich.
immature	20"	yellow	dark	dark	white	Can pass for Snowy in fall.	Check head shape to be sure.

## ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

M. R. Montgomery was the featured speaker at our March 8 Annual Meeting. He is a columnist for the Boston Globe, and writes frequently on natural history issues. In a brief talk, which he subsequently ran as a Globe column on March 9, he praised groups like Friends of Belle Isle who organize neighbors and friends around the preservation of what are essentially "back-yard" nature reserves.

Members who attended the meeting had the opportunity to elect new officers and board members for the year. The whole event was, as usual, capped by refreshments and a social hour.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 1987

President	John Kilmartin
Vice President	Conal Foley
Secretary	Tim Driscoll
Treasurer	Ann Lindsey
Members-at-large	Helen Brosnahan Jack Dangora Ellen Koretz Mary Mitchell
Committee Chairs:	
Membership	Rose Corrado
Outdoors	Dave Desmond
Publications	Soheil Zende

## WINTHROP BUILDING MORATORIUM

People in Winthrop have again clearly expressed their desire for a livable town: they voted 142 to 20 at Town Meeting on May 1 to continue the Building Moratorium for another year. During this period the letter and the spirit of this regulation can be honored to great advantage.

The letter of the Moratorium limits the issuance of building permits, preventing any significant increase in population density, traffic congestion, municipal burdens, and environmental degradation. The spirit of the Moratorium calls on town officials, boards and committees to use this breathing time to revise zoning regulations and take other initiatives to protect the future of Winthrop. This should include protection of marshlands near Pico Beach and along Belle Isle Inlet.

## BIRDFINDER

### *A Song of Eagles*

As they who soar draw close  
to those who but wish to fly,  
there comes an awakening  
of the spirit within,  
that perceives the flow  
of life  
from the ground  
to a point beyond reach,  
to the safe harbor of the nest.  
How often do we, sitting under a tree,  
give thought to the path of the bird,  
reaching from its perch  
to the outermost limits  
of the heavens?  
Dreaming to travel the invisible road  
that birds know so well.  
They travel through space and time,  
retaining in their memories all that,  
above and below,  
beyond and behind,  
abounds in life:  
A sunbeam, a dew drop, some rain,  
and a flower,  
Signs of the Power  
that flows through their veins.  
Nor do they wander in vain  
in search of the Source,  
for they know, as they fly,  
the proof of the Source  
lies within,  
no distant corner of the heavens,  
whether sparrow,  
or tern,  
or eagle.

Opus 22, No. 1  
Leo E. Rogers, Jr.





## TRANSPLANTED

But in the mud and scum of things  
There alway, alway something sings.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is said that there are some five thousand kinds of flowering plants in northeastern United States. This formidable figure, to be sure, includes trees and shrubs, grasses and sedges and rushes, as well as the herbaceous flowering plants that are "wild flowers" to most of us. But even if we subtract the woody, grassy, and sedgy flowering plants, we are still faced with some 3000 different wild flowers in this part of the country.

This article concerns only three: chicory, butter-and-eggs, and meadow pink, or 0.1% of the total number. This is not because these are the only flowers found at Belle Isle (I couldn't even guess at the true number), but because in my meanderings at Belle Isle, I was particularly seduced by their beauty and I was fortunate enough to capture them with the correct exposure of my micro lens. The best place to see them is on the hill in the middle of Belle Isle Park after mid-June.



Chicory

Chicory is a member of the daisy family. This family consists of goldenrods, asters and sunflowers, to name a few, and is easily the largest family of wild flowers in this country

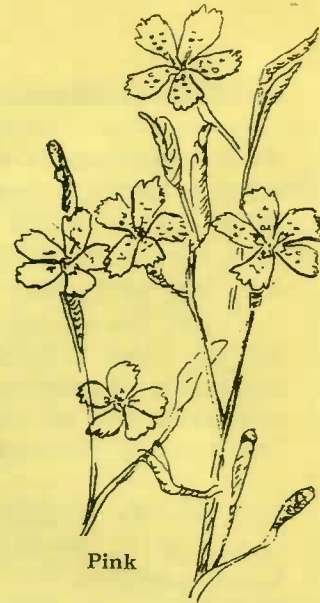
and in the temperate zone worldwide. In this respect it has no rivals except the orchids, which are mostly found in the tropics.

Blue sailor, *Chicorium intybus*, is a native of Europe but is now a common roadside weed in North America. It flowers from June to October. Its root furnishes a flavoring for coffee esteemed in France and other countries. Another genus, cultivated as endive or escarole, has curly ragged leaves which are used in salads.

A beautiful stretch of Blue sailors can be noted in late summer on the Bennington Street median where it passes over the MBTA tracks.

Meadow pink, *Dianthus deltoides*, is a member of the pink family. One characteristic of the pink family is the disposition of flowers in a "cyme," its inflorescence.

The central stem of the plant ends in a flower, two flowers spring from the stem below it, two more flowers spring in the same way from each of their stems and so on. A sort of candelabrum is formed. This is known as a "cyme."



Pink

The carnations and sweet William of our gardens and hothouses are species of *Dianthus*, as are a number of species grown in rock gardens. We have no native pinks in the eastern United States, but several from the Old World are found in dry fields and on roadsides from May to August.

Butter-and-eggs, bread and cheese, chopped eggs and bread and butter are common names that refer to *Linaria vulgaris*, a member of the snapdragon family. This is not an economically important family, although it includes foxglove (*Digitalis*) from which a valuable drug used as a heart stimulant is obtained.

Butter  
and  
eggs



Butter-and-eggs are yellow and orange, and in May through October can be seen on roadsides and in fields, gardens and wasteland practically throughout North America. It is a bad weed once it is established in a garden, spreading underground.

It is a common weed in America, where it probably came from Europe . . .

As if some little Arctic flower,  
Upon the polar hem,  
Went wandering down the latitudes  
Until it puzzled came  
To continents of summer,  
To firmaments of sun,  
To strange, bright crowds of flowers,  
And birds of foreign tongue! . . .

Emily Dickinson

Evan Gellar

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

The interpretive staff at Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, in cooperation with volunteers from Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, have scheduled the following field trips. Please meet in the parking lot of the Reservation off Bennington Street, East Boston (half-way between Suffolk Downs and Beachmont MBTA Stations). All field trips start at 1 PM.

Saturday, June 13 (BOUNDARY HIKE)  
Saturday, June 20 (SALTY ROOTS)  
Saturday, June 27 (SPACE INVADERS!)  
Sunday, July 12 (WHO'S EATING WHO?)  
Saturday, July 18 (BELLE ISLE BOUNTY)  
Saturday, July 25 (SHOREBIRDS)  
Saturday, August 1 (SEASONS OF A SALT MARSH: SUMMER)  
Saturday, August 8 (SHOREBIRDS)  
Sunday, August 9 (LIFE DOWN UNDER)  
Saturday, August 15 (BELLE ISLE MARSH: 10,000 B.C.)  
Sunday, August 23 (BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES)  
Saturday, September 20  
Sunday, September 26

Field trips are free and open to the public. Please call the following trip leaders for further information.

Lisa Vernegard (MDC) 727-5215 or 5350  
David Desmond 324-7527

## PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

At our Annual Meeting in March the winners of our 1986 Photo Contest were announced:

### FIRST PLACE:

Richard Savage, Beachmont (people)  
Larry Monuteaux, EB (birds)  
Kevin Kilmartin, Winthrop (youth)  
Susan Kimball, Somerville (B & W)

### HONORABLE MENTION:

Ron Vecchia, Winthrop (landscape)  
Kathleen Savage, Beachmont (people)  
Jane Cumming, Winthrop (birds)  
Paul J. Roy, Winthrop (landscape)

First Place winners will be awarded gift certificates from Hunt Drug of Malden, New England's most unusual camera store.

## RENEW TODAY

Those of you who did not come to our Annual Meeting in March have a chance to renew your membership now. Please mail back the enclosed renewal form in the return envelope as soon as possible.

Printing and mailing this newsletter, as well as all other activities of Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, is financed by membership dues and donations from generous members. Membership dues are as follows:  
Individual: \$3; Family: \$5; Seniors and Youth (under 16): \$1.

If you are not a member, please join today. Any amount you can contribute above and beyond membership dues will be highly appreciated.

This newsletter is produced by Tim Driscoll, Esther Fich, and Soheil Zende. Heads of herons by Denise Cabral. Plant sketches by John Chaltas.

## Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

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