

OUTDOORS



The Hour

Fledgling season

Special wildlife moments can occur in the least likely of places.

The back parking lot of *The Hour* is an expanse of asphalt bordered by apartment complexes on two sides, the building on one side and a small patch of woods on the other side. Not exactly a haven for wildlife, but moments happen from time to time.

Often I'll see hawks or vultures soaring high in the sky. Occasionally I'll look up at the right time to see a small flock of mallards flying to the next pond. In the winter, the massive crow flyover takes place directly overhead. Lately a dozen or so chimney swifts have graced our air-space.

Early last week I was treated to another type of wildlife experience. As I headed to my car I heard a constant noise that sounded natural, not a leaf blower or airplane in the distance.

A week or two ago I had noticed a large hole in one of



CHRIS BOSAK
For the Birds

the dying ash trees that separate the lot from an apartment complex. I thought at the time a woodpecker must have been responsible but didn't see any signs of life as I gandered upward to the hole.

When I heard the noise, however, I immediately turned my attention to that ash tree. I still couldn't see anything, but it was clear the noise was coming from the hole. Knowing it had to be a family of woodpeckers, I made it a point to keep my eyes on the tree.

During lunch earlier this week I was finally rewarded with the sight of a young woodpecker poking its head out of the tree, telling its parents to hurry back with some food.

After a few minutes of watching, a male hairy woodpecker flew onto the tree a few feet below the hole. A quick movement upward and the male was



Photo by CHRIS BOSAK

A male hairy woodpecker visits its brood in an ash tree in Norwalk.

rewarding its vocal little one with a treat of some sort or another. As quickly as it arrived, the adult woodpecker disappeared to find more food for its hungry brood.

The constant noise continued for a few days and then stopped abruptly. Hopefully it means the young ones fledged happy and healthy. The young birds were fairly large already, so I'm confident in that scenario.

I've also seen plenty of nesting and rearing activity around my property. Robins are still gathering nesting material (perhaps for a second brood), house wrens are

chattering and young cardinals are following around their parents. Also, ducks and geese are leading their youngsters around the locals ponds and rivers. They'll grow up quickly, I'm sure.

These types of sightings will continue for the next several weeks. Feel free to drop me a line to tell me what's going on in your yard.

For the Birds runs Thursdays in The Hour. Chris Bosak may be reached at bozclark@earthlink.net or via his website at www.birdsofnewengland.com

Norwalk's east end hot spot for fishing

Rick Mola at Fisherman's World told of the best fishing of the year and getting better. While the inland fishing scene is still a major factor in the sports fishing community, the saltwater side has fairly exploded over the past couple of weeks and much of the good stuff this week is happening at Norwalk's east end.

Striped bass headline this week's report with lots of big fish making the scales. Biggest striper of the week was caught aboard Bruce Scalfani's boat but we're not sure who caught it. It scaled a bit over 40 pounds and was caught at buoy 28C on fresh bunker. John Taranto Jr. a member of Norwalk Police Department's Marine Division, brought in a 36-poundunker this week.

Dave Smith leads the list for the Westport Striped Bass Club with a 19-pound linesider he took from shore. Glenn Katz took a 30-pound bass on a popper along with a bunch of smaller bass he released. He and Ken Murrow also jigged up a bunch to 28-pounds.

Enormous schools of bunker practically pave the waters from Captain's Island in Greenwich, east to Cockenoe Island and bass and blues can be found under almost every swarm of baitfish. Ray Cook recorded 15 striped bass to 30-pounds using fresh bunker and diamond jigging.

Fluke are also getting anglers excited. Buoy #26 south of Goose Island in 20 to 30 feet of water has been a productive area as has the same water depths south of Copp's Island. Biggest fluke of the week weighed in at 8 pounds, 9 ounces and was caught by 15-year-old Hal Hyatt Jr. who was fishing with his dad. They caught and released another dozen flaties, most of keeper size.

Best freshwater catch of the week goes to John Iannoto who works at the store and who has been catching walleye all week in the Saugatuck River. Apparently lots of walleye washed down from the reservoir during high water periods and are now showing up in some of the deeper holes all along the river.

Saltwater report
Striped bass fishing over this past week yielded some nice cows weighing in the mid to upper forties! Memorial Day is usually the time when large linesiders appear in LIS as the spring migration really kicks in. Striper spots include the major reefs and rip areas such as the Watch Hill area, The Race, Bartlett Reef, Plum Gut, Long Sand Shoal, Southwest Reef, Sixmile Reef, the reefs off Branford, Stratford Shoal/Middle



DICK ALLEY
Fishing Plus

Ground, Penfield Reef, Norwalk Islands, Cable and Anchor Reef, and The Cows off Stamford. Live lining eels has proven to be the ticket for trophy sized stripers.

Schoolie action is better during the early morning hours in the Pawcatuck

River, Mystic River, Thames River, lower Connecticut River from the Essex down to the breakwaters, Sandy Point (New Haven Harbor), Housatonic River (Derby Dam and from Devon to Milford Point).

Bluefish fishing is fair to good depending on the location. Millstone Power Station discharge has been consistent. Other areas include The Race, Plum Gut, Long Sand Shoal, Sandy Point (New Haven Harbor), Penfield Reef, and the Norwalk Islands. Most bluefish are in the 18- to 24-inch range.

Summer flounder (fluke) fishing is not bad with a few slabs being taken in the Stonington area, Great and Little Peconic Bays and the north shore of Long Island including Horton Point, Herod Point, off Port Jefferson, and Eatons Neck. Other spots include the south side of Fishers Island, the "Bloody Grounds" off Niantic, White Sands Beach, Long Sand Shoal, Falkner Island area, and off the New Haven breakwaters.

Trout fishing
DEP's spring stocking program wrapped up last week, but with nearly 700,000 catchable-size trout stocked during the spring season, there are still plenty of trout waiting for anglers throughout Connecticut. Some success is being found using worms, and corn/mealworm combinations. A number of major insect hatches are getting started.

Good reports came last week from the West Branch Farmington River, Farmington River (25-inch rainbow), Housatonic River, Fenton River (good action on wild trout), Norwalk River, Quinebaug River, Shetucket River (24-inch rainbow), Salmon River, Mill River, Willimantic River, Naugatuck River, Natchaug River, Shetucket River, Norwalk River, Cogenchaug River, Mt. Hope River and the Saugatuck River TMA.

Late May into mid June can be big fish time, with many of the season's bigger trout being captured. Trout fishing remains generally good with best reports from Candlewood Lake (lots of action on fish up to 18 inches) and Squantz Pond.

While the month of June is a time of good trout fishing, more sweet water anglers turn their attention to bass and panfish of the warm-water variety

A changing of the nautical guard

When the Norwalk Sea Scout Ship 6 was founded in 1957 by local sailor Leonard Jacob, the then all-boy troop sailed on a variety of small boats. Star-class racing, ice boating, and Boston Whalers were just a few of the eclectic fleet upon which they learned the rules of the navigational road.

Shortly into the program, Skipper Jacobs acquired the sailboat Tangerine (named after its unique color), marking the Sea Scouts official transition from small boats to big boats.

When Jacobs became ill in 1980, family member Chris

Elsberry was there to take over the helm. Elsberry continued in that capacity until 1982, when accomplished sailor Bill Austin stepped in. Austin's tenure in Norwalk would ultimately last an unprecedented 23 years.

Under Austin's tutelage, the Sea Scout program continued to grow and gain valuable cruising and racing experience. In 1995, Austin received an unexpected donation from Pat Clark of a 1982 custom Cook 40 racing sloop. The boat, christened Celebration (painted a unique shade of green), was designed by local naval architect Bill Cook and built by Goetz Custom Boat Builders of Bristol, Rhode Island. She quickly became the now co-ed Ship 6's main training vessel.

"It has been one of the great honors of my life to see Celebration become a vessel that has educated and inspired young sailors," said former owner Clark. "Celebration was, and is, a difficult boat to sail well, and the crews of Ship 6 have brought enormous dedication to learning the ropes. And brought home the gold to prove it. Sailing has always been a passion; I sincerely hope that Ship 6 continues to provide other sailors with the opportunity to develop



Contributed photo

Sea Scouts mark the renaming of their boat, Celebration II, at Norwalk Cove Marina.

that passion — a lifelong affair."

Well, that she did. Celebration earned quite the racing pedigree in a short amount of time with the Scouts, having successfully participated in many Northeast racing events. Included on the impressive list are Block Island Race Week and the Vineyard Race, the latter actually producing a first-place trophy in their division.

When Austin decided to step down from his position as Skipper of the Ship 6 Sea Scout program in 2006, a young sailor by the name of Kai Horan boldly accepted the challenge as the next leader of the troop. Currently in her fourth season with the Norwalk branch of the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Horan recently announced yet another changing of the nautical guard.

"Ship 6 is once again gearing up for a great season," Horan said. "And this year we will be sailing a new racing boat. Renamed at a ceremony held at Norwalk Cove Marina last weekend,

Celebration II (sporting a red hull this time) will be the group's primary sailing vessel beginning this sailing season."

Celebration II, a Tripp 37 designed by world-renowned naval architect Bill Tripp and built in 1987 by Holby Marine, was a generous gift from Patrick Keane.

"We are thrilled to have received the Tripp 37 on donation," Horan said. "We have been working hard on getting this terrific vessel in ship shape and are excited to shove off and learn the boat."

The Norwalk Sea Scouts, which is chartered by the Norwalk Sail and Power Squadron, has big plans this season. "Lots of sailing, racing, and overnight trips are in the future for this boat and Ship 6," Horan said.

Tangerine, green, or red, the Sea Scouts certainly know how to make the most out of their time on the water.

For more information about Ship 6 please visit www.norwalkship6.org.

Karen Jewell's Water Views column runs Thursdays in The Hour.

How heel spur syndrome starts and how it develops

A reader of this column has asked about how we get the heel spur syndrome.

Heel spur syndrome is one of the more common and potentially devastating injuries an athlete can have. The heel bone (calcaneus) is a thick, rectangular bone. At the bottom of the calcaneus is a heel pad to cushion the heel with the ground. There is also a ligament that runs longitudinally along the arch from the heel to the toes. This is called the plantar fascia, and it elevates, or supports the arch. The plantar fascia is a tough, fibrous

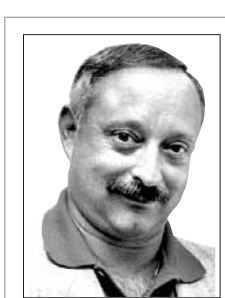
band composed of three slips. The middle slip is the thickest, followed by thinner medial and lateral slips, which are the thickest at the heel region and become thinner at the metatarsal toe joints.

The spur formation is usually a shelf of bone, the entire width of the heel bone. It is formed by the continuous tearing away of the lining of the heel bone by the pull of the strong plantar fascia due to abnormal pronation of the foot during heel contact, mid-stance and the toe-off phase of gait.

As the tearing effect occurs, a

layer of new bone or calcium deposit forms, which eventually thickens and forms a heel spur. It is located at the insertion of the plantar fascia at the bottom of the heel bone. This bony prominence penetrates into the surrounding tissue as an irritant and can cause heel bursitis.

A heel spur manifests itself as a deep tenderness on the bottom of the heel. The pain may radiate into the sole



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Running Doctor

of the foot. Actually, the pain is not due to the spur itself, but rather to the fibrous bursae or sac that surrounds the spur. In its early stages, the heel spur syndrome has a characteristic pain cycle of greater soreness in the morning or after sitting for a long period of time. It becomes less painful after walking or jogging.

Depending on the severity of

the deformity, pain may be present at rest or only after vigorous exercise. There may also be local swelling. The pain is usually tolerated. After a few weeks a dull, aching pattern occurs.

Columnist Robert Weiss, a sports podiatrist, was a member of the Medical Advisory Committee of the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Trials and has a practice in Darien, The Foot & Ankle Institute of Darien. His column runs every other Thursday in The Hour. For more information, visit his website at www.therunningdoctor.net