

Audubon chapter organizing

By **BENJAMIN ENGEL**
Shoreline Bureau Chief

Sunshine still hadn't broken through the clouds Thursday morning as Carl Harvey made his way onto the Marsh Trail of the Baldwin Middle School's Outdoor Education Center in Guilford.

But it was still a pleasant walk for the director of the center, who knows well the trails in the 46-acre wooded preserve adjacent to the school.

"For me, it's a retreat," he said, bending over to remove a tree branch that had fallen across the path. "I come out here and I enjoy working with people. I enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience of the outdoors. I enjoy sharing a sense of understanding and appreciation with them. This is the best way to do it."

The center, off Long Hill Road, is an old sheep farm that contains hardwood forest, marsh, ponds, streams and a border along the West River. Harvey has counted "a good 40

species of birds" there. Now, the center is about to become home to a new chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Harvey has been working for a month and a half with Dan Cinotti, science program chairman of the Guilford schools, to establish the chapter.

Tentatively called Connecticut Coastal Audubon Society, the chapter will serve East Haven, Branford, Guilford and Madison. Harvey and Cinotti are seeking out potential officers and have announced an organizational meeting for 7:30 p.m. Jan. 14 in Room 23 of Baldwin school.

"Dan Cinotti was the one who actually approached me with the idea a month and a half ago," Harvey said.

"There is no Audubon chapter, or anything like that, around here now that serves this area," though the organization has chapters elsewhere in Southern Connecticut, Harvey said. "We will be the host site, so to speak."

The chapter will afford local members of the National Audubon

Society a variety of activities and permit local use of a portion of the national dues. Harvey said there are 70 to 80 members of the National Audubon Society in the four towns.

"We're trying to provide activities for people who belong to the national organization and do not have a chapter to affiliate with," Harvey said. Another goal is to expand membership, he said.

Among the planned activities are lectures, field trips, special-interest programs and publication of a newsletter. Another possibility is participation in the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas bird count, one of the organization's best-known activities. Harvey and Cinotti are hoping to organize a local bird count this year.

Harvey, a science teacher at the middle school since 1970 and director of the outdoor center since its 1973 opening, said the National Audubon Society is more than an organization of bird watchers. The group has put out position papers on public issues such as clean air and water, energy, use of public lands and wildlife.



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staff photo by BENJAMIN ENGEL

Carl Harvey and Helen Downing of Abraham Baldwin Middle School are helping organize a shoreline chapter of the National Audubon Society. The chapter's home base would be the Outdoor Education Center at Baldwin School.