

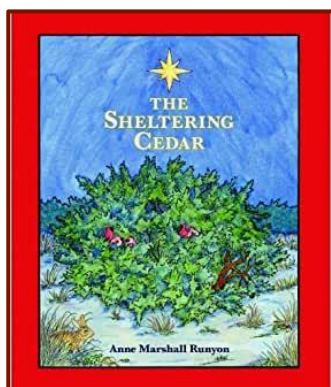
SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

JOIN US!

- **November – December:**
Gallery of Trees
continues
- **December 31:** *Anchor Drop* at Shell Point,
sponsored by Bring Back
the Lights

Sound Reading Material For You & Your Child



The Sheltering Cedar

by Anne Marshall Runyon

A sturdy tree shelters small animals during a storm on Christmas Eve, allowing peace and joy to reign as the tempest clears. Filled with beautiful illustrations of birds, animals, water, and sky, this book is an illuminating and delightful gift of nature.

Grade Level: K-1
Pages: 32

“Wade’s Shore Christmas Trees”

By Joel Hancock

(excerpt from original publishing in ©The Mailboat Christmas 1990)

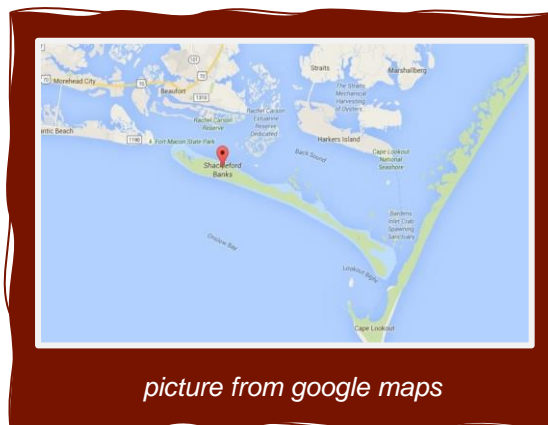
Among the most happy and lasting memories of my youth are those of the brisk December afternoons when my father would take my brother Teff and me to Shackleford Banks in search of Christmas trees. We would head to Wade’s Shore, at the west end of the Banks, and the last place on Shackleford where cedars still could be found in abundance. Daddy had gotten the family’s Christmas tree from there since before any of us could remember and there was no reason to go somewhere else. In retrospect, a Wade’s Shore tree was pretty much a family tradition.

We would anchor our skiff far enough from the shore to make sure that the outgoing tide couldn’t leave us high and dry. Then Daddy would take me and Teff on his back, together at the same time, as he waded to dry land. Carrying only a big-toothed saw and a hatchet, he would lead us through the first row of the tree line into the thickest part of the woods. Once there it would take only a few minutes for Daddy to pick out what was going to decorate our living room for the next two weeks or more.

Just to make sure that Mama wouldn’t be disappointed with his selection, Daddy usually cut a couple of extra trees. The others could be shared with any of several families in our neighborhood after Mama had exercised her preference. We would haul the trees through the woods and over the sand hills back to the shore. Daddy then would take turns delivering the trees, and finally Teff and me, to the skiff for the trip back home.

Although fall northwesterers blew squarely in our faces as we crossed Back Sound, the trip home seemed to last but a few minutes. Almost before we knew it, we were back at our landing, running towards home, and inviting Mama to come to the shore and inspect our harvest.

Sometime that same evening our home would radiate with the smell of fresh cedar as Mama and my sisters began the trimming. My sister, Ella Dee, would make special concoction from Fab detergent that rendered a garnishing of “snow” to several of the higher branches. A few ceramic bulbs, two strings of lights, and a big star to adorn the top where all that were needed to finish off the highlight of our Holiday decoration....



Coming to Terms with Winter

Winter is here, so it's time to remember that even though wildlife isn't as visible around us there are still many interesting things happening in our own back yards! Here's a little reminder of what nature is up to during this beautiful time of year.

Dormancy

This is something many folks often refer to it as the first sign of the changing seasons. When we see leaves of the trees changing color and piling on the ground, we mentally begin preparing for winter's arrival. In the summer, trees produce food in the form of glucose through photosynthesis. This process takes place in the leaves, and in fact is the leaves' main function. As temperatures drop and there is less sunlight, trees lose their leaves because it requires too much energy to keep them. With less energy going into leaf maintenance, the tree can slow down its growth and metabolism, too. Trees remain dormant until warmer temperatures and longer days return in the spring.

Migration

In our area, everyone notices this seasonal movement of animals, especially waterfowl. Migration is the seasonal movement of animals from one region to another. Animals migrate to reach breeding grounds or to avoid brutal weather. These can be great distances, like Canadian geese flying here from their native land, or small trips, like earthworms traveling just below the frost line. Seals like harp and harbor seals make the Outer Banks their home in the winter. They love cold to cool inshore waters and like to hangout near rocks, but it isn't unusual to see one on sandbars and areas of sand soaking up the sun. You can sometimes see seals on the beaches of the Outer Banks from Oregon Inlet all the way up to Corolla.



photo from coastalreview.org

Hibernation

This term gets used a lot when we talk about what animals do in winter, but in our area, hibernation is not as easy as it seems. One of our few hibernators is the black bear. This means they sleep deeply and are nearly impossible to wake up. However, the process is very different from what is considered "normal" hibernation exhibited by rodents and bats. Bears can remain stationary for longer periods than rodents without feeding or eliminating waste. Amazingly, bears exit their winter dens strong and healthy after long periods of inactivity. Many other animals who are referred to as hibernators, are more like "long winter nappers." Bears, skunks, raccoons and opossums do slow their breathing and their body temperatures drop a few degrees, but they are easily woken up and will often come out and snack on warmer winter days.



photo from ncwildlife.org

Brumation

This natural process is very similar to hibernation, but only applies to reptiles and amphibians. During brumation animals are not asleep, but rather in a state of dormancy. Most reptiles and amphibians burrow underground, as is the case for many frogs. Some also den up together. Locally, Eastern box turtles will return to the same brumation site each year, performing a little migration of their own! Their dig site might start as a shallow indentation under pine needles, but as temperatures drop, they may dig as far as a foot underground!



photo from ncwildlife.org