

To spend time with Nancy Carol Willis of Middletown, Delaware is to feel as though you've stumbled into the Discovery Room of a natural history museum, where collectors fill window sills and bookshelves with snake skins, animal skulls, owl pellets, geodes, sea shells, and other natural curiosities.

Since childhood, Nancy has stuffed her pockets with treasures collected on forays into the beech woods across from her suburban home. Family vacations to the powder-white beaches of Siesta Key, Florida added murexes, limpets and welks to the collection. For several summers, her parents loaded the three kids, family poodle and the Sears canvas tent into the Chevy wagon and drove across country to see the national parks, stopping along the way to forage for fossils, jasper, copper and topaz.

Everything ended up in her mid-18th century home and studio, awash in sunlight and overlooking farmland, a 2,000-acre marsh, and the Delaware River. Whether asked to draw a horseshoe crab or a marsh wren nest, the specimen likely exists in a cubby hole or cookie tin. Plenty of living subjects perch in the trees or trot through the yard as well, providing ample subject matter for her nature books, educational posters and magazine articles.

When she was young, Nancy took drawing lessons from E. Jean Lanyon, who taught the classic elements of form and composition. The class applied these principles to the complexity of sketching landscapes. Another early influence was neighborhood artist and hermit, William D. White. He gave Nancy books such as *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau and Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea*, and he filled her head with tales of the Welsh stone masons and Brandywine School artists he had known.

These seeds grew into Nancy Carol Willis's love of nature, art and books. Ironically, decades passed before she decided to combine the three loves into her first children's picture book, *The Robins In Your Backyard*.

She had been working as a volunteer rehabilitator at Tri-State Bird Bird Rescue & Research in Newark Delaware. Helping to raise and care for everything from hummingbirds to bald eagles sparked her interest in native birds. One day she startled a brooding robin from her nest in a boxwood bush and began keeping a journal of bird activity around her house.

Nancy combined her observations with her rescue experience to create *The Robins In Your Backyard*, which received the Parent Council seal as outstanding from a learning perspective. The genesis for her next book, *Raccoon Moon*, came from the experience of rescuing orphaned raccoon cubs and documenting their rehabilitation and release back into the den tree in Nancy's yard.

In 1998 Nancy created Birdsong Books, a small independent publisher of natural science books that encourage children to "delight in the discovery" of the world around them.

Native Delawarean Nancy Carol Willis holds a bachelors degree in graphic and advertising design from the University of Delaware and a masters degree in business from Wilmington College in Delaware. After thirteen years employment in the graphic design industry, she left her job as Design Supervisor for The DuPont Company to pursue a career as a fine artist. She exhibited in nationally juried exhibitions and served as president of the Council of Delaware Artists from 1992-1995.

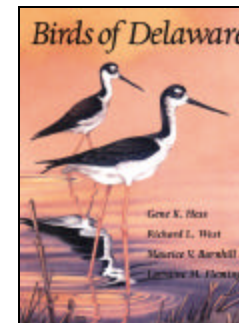
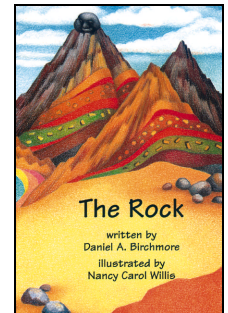
In 1987 Nancy married Larry Field. They spent their first years renovating a Colonial-era farmhouse near the Delaware River to serve as home and offices. Widowed in 2001, Nancy enjoys walks with her Border collie Cory to monitor bird nesting boxes. She also maintains a release site for rehabilitated wildlife. Her current project involves working with government agencies to increase biodiversity by re-foresting several acres of her property. She also runs a visual arts program at her church.

Selected Published Writing and Illustration

Raccoon Moon: Design, text and illustrations for a 32-page nonfiction picture book.

The Robins In Your Backyard: Design, text and illustrations for a 32-page nonfiction picture book.

The Rock: Illustrations for a 32-page fiction picture book.



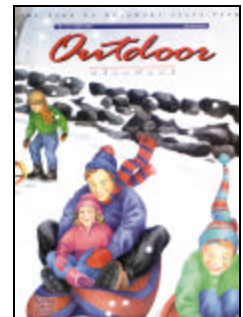
Birds of Delaware: Cover art and species illustrations for a breeding bird atlas.

Delaware Watersheds: Design, text and illustrations for a curriculum-based educational poster.

Delaware Shorebirds: Design, text and illustrations for an educational poster.

Outdoor Delaware: Magazine cover illustration.

Gordon's Pond: Illustration for a state park interpretive sign.



Kid's Page: Design, text and illustrations for Outdoor Delaware magazine.

Kindermusik Adventures: Illustrations for children's music camp.

Growing with Kindermusik: Illustrations for two 32-page picture songbooks.



Nancy's School Programs have inspired over 20,000 children

Interactive, curriculum-based programs.

Small groups that allow for personal interaction.

Up to five programs per day.

30-minute programs-K; 45-minutes grades 1 up.

Programs for Title I and children with disabilities.

Teacher/librarian workshops.

\$500/day for Delaware schools; \$600/day plus travel nationally. \$125 minimum for workshops.

The Robins In My Backyard *OR* The Raccoons In My Maple Tree

Grades K-6: One-half hour (K); 45-minutes (1 to 6)

Step-by-step look at the process of making a nonfiction picture book. Topics include: where ideas come from, researching your subject, creating a storyboard, working with a publisher, writing and editing, illustrating, printing and binding.

Nature Journals with Nancy

Grades 3-6: 45-minute outdoor sketching and writing. Multi-day residency recommended.

A field sketchbook approach to observing and recording subjects in nature. Children will use their senses to record the properties of their subjects and will use sketches to show details.

Nonfiction Doesn't Mean "No Fun!"

Grades 4 through high school: 45-minute program to multi-day residency

Using a person, place, or recent event to write a descriptive essay which will demonstrate use of sensory detail, descriptive narrative, similes and metaphors, and point-of view.

Write and Illustrate Your Own Picture Book

Grades 4 through high school: multi-day residency

Teams of writers and illustrators use storyboards to plan the content and sequence of their books. Writers edit text for readability and style. Illustrators use various techniques to design the pages.

Birdsong Books

*Natural Science Books for Children
Delight in the Discovery!*



September 2002 Raccoon Moon

Nancy Carol Willis

ISBN 0966276124 Cloth \$15.95

ISBN 0966276132 Paper \$6.95



Describes a year in the life of a raccoon family as the mother teaches her cubs to climb trees,

find food and survive predators. Includes a glossary, raccoon facts and trivia, and tips for aiding orphaned or injured cubs.

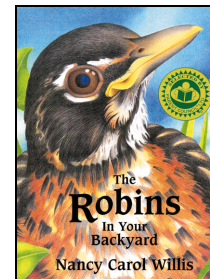
The Robins In Your Backyard

Nancy Carol Willis

ISBN 0966276108 Cloth \$15.95

ISBN 0966276116 Paper \$6.99

Awarded the Parent Council
Seal: outstanding from a
learning perspective.



Available from IPG, Ingram, Baker&Taylor, and

Birdsong Books

1322 Bayview Road, Middletown, DE 19709

Phone(302)378-7274 Fax(302)378-0339

BirdsongBooks@Delaware.net

www.BirdsongBooks.com

Nancy Carol Willis



Writer, Illustrator, Nature Lover

*"My words and pictures reflect a
personal response to nature based
on a lifetime friendship with it."*

www.BirdsongBooks.com