



Cape Cod Bird Club

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ISSUE 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard D. Hall

There's an old lawyer's maxim which says you should never ask a question to which you don't already know the answer. At the Club's December meeting I ignored that sage advice when I polled those in attendance about their thoughts on the 7:45 pm starting time of the meetings.

Over the past several years, I've heard murmurings of dissatisfaction that meetings often don't end until sometime after 9:15 or 9:30. If members stay for refreshments, some folks don't get home until 10:30 pm or later. This is a long day by anyone's standard. Well, you can't please everyone, I reasoned, and thought little more about it. In truth, I had other reservations as well. When I first became President two and a half years ago, I discovered how resistant some members of the Club can be to change of any sort. The first task I set for myself was to beef-up the membership and the treasury. There was virtually no money to pay adequately for speakers, for instance. Surely everyone would applaud such non-controversial goals. Boy, was I wrong. There was immediate criticism that I was steering the Club in the wrong direction, undermining the founder's purpose and sullyng the Club's image by aggressively seeking new members. Suddenly, I found myself scrambling for cover.

Well, the furor died down, and my critics and I reached an amicable rapprochement. But the lesson was learned: Tread lightly, Richard, you know not what you do. (Future presidents: beware.) As I near the end of my term, tampering with a meeting time which has been a tradition for twenty-four consecutive years is a battle this president surely doesn't need. So, in a moment of carelessness at our last meeting, I asked the nearly one-hundred people in attendance a question to which I didn't know the answer: Should we keep the 7:45 pm starting time, or make it earlier? By a two-to-one margin, the answer was to start earlier. (Let the record show that one brave dissenter voted to start later!) In politics, this is called a landslide. "Vox populi. The people have spoken." A spirited discussion followed the vote and only reinforced the showing of hands. Club officers and directors ignore this message at their own peril. Clearly, we must get a better sense of the membership' desires, tradition notwithstanding.

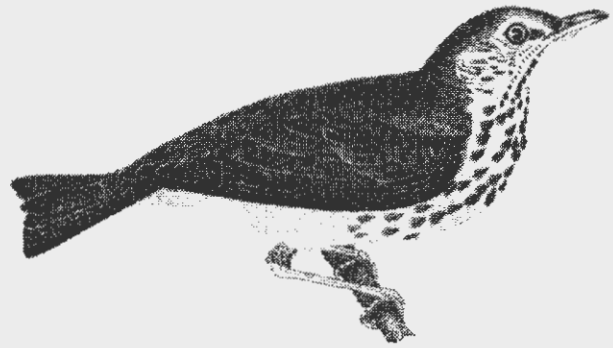
Each of us needs to think carefully about how best to proceed. A consensus solution would be best if achievable. Do we start 15 minutes earlier? Or a lot earlier? We shouldn't forget that a third of those in attendance like the status quo. We are filling the auditorium nearly every

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THE HERMIT THRUSH

Jim Talin

A Hermit Thrush in the fall or winter does not look any different from a Hermit Thrush in the summer. But seeing one here on Cape Cod in fall or winter is like seeing a famous singer on the streets between performances. You feel the thrill of recognition and remembrance, but who would suspect that in the summer this dull brown ground-feeding bird is capable of the most beautiful song in North America?



We encountered a hermit thrush on a spring-like January day last winter at Fort Hill. At home crocuses were flowering, and along the south facing houses on Route 6A in Brewster, daffodils and irises had broken ground. As we left the boardwalk at Fort Hill, we heard the distinctive "chuck...chuck...chuck" call of the Hermit Thrush coming from a tangle of vines and shrubs. We were searching in vain for a sight of the thrush when up it popped and perched on a limb just fifteen feet from us, pumping its tail and calling "chuck...chuck...chuck."

The Hermit Thrush is a member of a worldwide family of birds that includes the Old World song thrush and the nightingale (in French the rossignol), as well as the New World bluebirds, the American Robin, the Wood, Swainson's, Gray-cheeked Thrushes, and the Veery. It is a family that contains some of the finest singers of all the birds of the world. The Hermit Thrush has been called the American Nightingale. It is under seven inches long. Its breast is spotted with faint wedge shaped dots, its back is olive brown, and it has a distinctive reddish brown tail that it tilts up and down as it roosts. Here on Cape Cod we see other members of the thrush family in migration, but only the Robin, Wood Thrush and Hermit Thrush stay for any period of time. Hermit Thrushes are known as reclusive birds of the far Northern woods, and you have to travel far to hear them sing their summer song. If you can't make the trip north, Hermit Thrushes can also be found at the higher elevations of some Southern New England mountains. On Mount Monadnock, you begin to hear them at the tree line.

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EDITORIAL

Jim Talin

The Goldfinches' Garden

Last spring I faced a simple gardening choice between having flowers or a lawn, and I dug up my lawn. But that is not a problem because I dislike lawns. When I was a kid and my family lived on an idyllic farm of 26 acres in upstate New York, I had to mow an acre and a half of lawns every week, three seasons of the year. It didn't matter if the lawns (fields really) didn't need mowing. It had to be done once a week. Period. No questions asked. It seemed like a tremendous waste of time and energy to me then, even if it probably did strengthen my fantasy life, and the passage of thirty years has not changed my mind about mowing lawns. As an adult, I have found that here on Cape Cod if you set your mower on the highest level and mow three times a year, your lawn looks great. It never browns, never needs water, and doesn't look any worse than those that are trimmed and blown dry every week.

But then this last spring I noticed that some of the wild flowers that I had planted in the flower gardens had spread onto the lawn. Sure enough in among the grass, up sprang black-eyed susans, daisies, lupines, columbines, sweet william and others. And I thought, well, if they want to grow here, why should I stop them? So I removed the grass that was getting in their way, and the flowers took over. My yard (no longer the lawn) looked just like a picture of an English cottage garden all summer long. Three hummingbirds visited each flower every day, while finches and other birds feasted on the sunflowers. When the fall came and the flowers had gone to seed, I wanted to put the garden to bed, to go to the beach and load up with seaweed, but I didn't know what to do with the seeds on all the dead plants. I had visions of myself as a sort of Johnny Appleseed strewing wildflower seeds around the neighborhood. As I was deciding though, the birds took over. One Saturday when I returned from errands, I noticed some goldfinches eating the seeds of the plants left standing; and the more I

looked, the more birds I saw. I counted a total of 38 goldfinches. Mixed in were 15 juncos and a couple of house finches. So I left the plant stalks standing, and by mid-December they were stripped of seeds. I don't know how good the goldfinch digestive tract is, but I figure that next year, here and there, I should be seeing a spread of wildflowers around the neighborhood.

LETTERS

To The Editor,

Help! I've got this Downy Woodpecker drilling holes in the trim of my house. What can I do short of buying a .22 and shooting it? And what do I do about all these holes in my expensive trim?

"Mac"

Brewster, MA

Dear "Mac",

Your woodpecker is probably engaged in some sort of territorial struggle that will fade over the winter but will likely return in the spring. There are many things you can do to deter it. Numerous people have had this problem, and many solutions have been tried. They include hanging plastic snakes or mounting fake owls like NASA did to deter a Red-bellied Woodpecker from drilling holes in the shuttle. You can also hang out tin plates or Christmas tree foil that blow and bang in the wind, but then your house may end up looking like a Christmas decoration. Apparently, all of these hanging items, including owls, cease to work after a period of time. The thing that I have heard of that may solve your problem permanently is to mix red peppers or cayenne pepper in your paint when you repaint the house. Apparently hot peppers leave a bad taste in woodpeckers' mouths. They're not into Mexican food. About your expensive trim, try going to the Mid-Cape Center where they sell drill bits for drilling out plugs and holes in doors for door knobs. These drill bits not only drill out large sized holes, but they also create a plug that is the same size as the hole. Figure out what size you holes are, then drill out the woodpecker's hole. (You don't have to use a plug drill bit for this.) Then use your plug drill bit to create a piece of wood the same size as the hole you have just drilled, and plug it. Good luck.

The Editor



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The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
PO BOX 1710, Brewster, MA 02631

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The Cape Cod Bird Club

is an organization whose members are interested in the protection and conservation of the bird life and natural resources of Cape Cod.

If you are interested in joining,
please send a check for \$10 single membership,
\$15 family membership to
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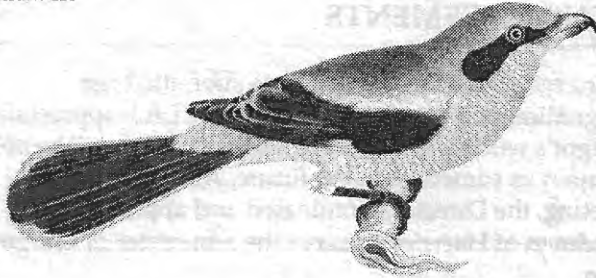
BIRD SIGHTINGS

Jackie Sones

October and November 1995

Seabirds. Too bad there wasn't a good northeast storm this fall, for there seemed to be quite a few seabirds around. One of the best days was October 22nd, when Blair Nikula recorded the following from First Encounter Beach in Eastham: 20 Northern Fulmars, 8 Cory's Shearwaters, 20 Greater Shearwaters, 3 Sooty Shearwaters, 2 Manx Shearwaters, 120 unidentified shearwaters, 1 Leach's Storm-Petrel, 1 phalarope, 10 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 7 jaegers, and 1000+ Northern Gannets. On November 8th, Jackie Sones observed 12 shearwaters, 4 jaegers, 1 skua, 150+ Black-legged Kittiwakes, and 1000+ Northern Gannets.

Ducks and Geese. Snow Geese were reported from three locations this fall: two near Corn Hill in Truro; a small flock near Ryder's Cove in Chatham; and a large flock of over 50 in Falmouth. Eurasian Wigeon were observed in Chatham



Port (2 males) and Marstons Mills/Barnstable (1 male) during November, by Jackie Sones and Carl Bergfors, respectively. Four Harlequin Ducks were seen off Corporation Beach in Dennis on November 5th by Mark Tuttle.

Common Moorhen. One late individual was spotted on South Monomoy Island in Chatham on November 25th by Jeremiah Trimble.

Gulls. Two Little Gulls were seen: one at First Encounter Beach in Eastham on October 22nd by Blair Nikula, and one in Wellfleet Harbor on November 23rd by George Martin. Both individuals were in first winter plumage. Five Lesser Black-backed Gulls were observed: two adults on North Monomoy on October 8th (Blair Nikula and Dick Forster); two adults on South Monomoy on October 9th (Blair Nikula); and one at Chapin Beach in Dennis on October 4th (Ken Hamilton).

Peregrine Falcons. Early October was excellent for Peregrine sightings, including counts of 4+ on South Beach in Chatham on October 8th (Blair Nikula and Dick Forster) and 3+ on South Monomoy Island on October 9th (Blair Nikula and Jackie Sones). Peregrine sightings were also reported from Nauset Marsh in Eastham (Rich Hall).

Cuckoos. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was reported from Osterville on November 4th by Tom Noonan and

Kathleen Casey. During a bird club walk led by Bessie Tirrell on November 5th a Black-billed Cuckoo was spotted at Fort Hill in Eastham.

Owls. Two Short-eared Owls were observed near Hatches Harbor in Provincetown on November 23rd by George Martin. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported: one at Outermost Harbor in Chatham on September 29th and one in Truro on October 29th by Roger Beatty.

Rufous Hummingbird. First seen in late October at Windstar Farm, what was presumed to be the same bird came to a feeder in Forestdale for at least a week in mid-November. It was caught and identified by Mark Kasprzyk and Trevor Lloyd-Evans of the Manomet Observatory for Conservation Sciences.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Kathy McGinley reported a few individuals visiting bird feeders in South Orleans throughout November. One individual seen on South Monomoy Island on October 9th was the first known record for Red-bellied Woodpecker on Monomoy!

Northern Shrikes. This was a great year for seeing Northern Shrikes. Adults and immatures were regularly reported from Falmouth to Provincetown throughout November. Although it is difficult to say how many individuals were seen, it is possible there were 12 or more.

Sparrows. A Harris' Sparrow was found at the Provincetown Airport parking lot on October 14th by Blair Nikula. This bird, only the 2nd Cape Cod record in recent years, stayed around until at least October 22nd. Two Lark Sparrows were reported: one in Wellfleet on October 21st by George Martin and one in Provincetown on October 15th by Bob Stymeist. One Grasshopper Sparrow was spotted at the Provincetown Airport on October 14th by Jackie Sones.

Blackbirds. Art King reported 6 Eastern Meadowlarks from the Stop & Shop parking lot in Orleans on November 25th. A high count of 50 Rusty Blackbirds came in from the Beech Forest in Provincetown on October 14th. The Swifts reported a Northern Oriole coming to their feeder in Eastham during early November.

Finches. Two Red Crossbills were found near the lighthouse on South Monomoy Island in Chatham on November 25th by Blair Nikula and the Trimbles. Several people reported Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins at their feeders during the November meeting.

Thanks to everyone who submitted reports. Please call Jackie or Blair at 508-432-6348 with future sightings!

JUST HOW MANY SAW-WHETS ARE OUT THERE?

Jackie Sones

I was listening to the Cape May Bird Alert. The voice at the end of the phone reported, "Katy Duffy banded over 600 owls this season, the majority of which were Northern Saw-whet Owls." I wondered if my ears had heard the number correctly. Six hundred? I hung up and called again. Yes, 600 owls, mostly Northern Saw-Whet Owls, with smaller numbers of Common Barn-owls and Long-eared Owls.

Wow! Had those owls passed by Cape Cod? Did we miss them? I soon found out that Norm Smith (of the Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Snowy Owl fame) banded 17 saw-whets in one night (November 28) at the Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield. Interestingly, Norm used tape recordings to lure the birds into mist nets, but none of the owls called back.

Next came the news of 275 saw-whets banded near Chincoteague. I began to wonder, would books tell more? Paul Kerlinger, author of the new book *How Birds Migrate*, briefly mentions that owl migration at Cape May typically begins in late September, continues into mid-December, and peaks in the first third of November. Barn-owls come through first, followed by saw-whets and long-eareds. In barn-owls, adults precede immatures, while in the other two species, immatures precede adults. Observers using night scopes count the most owls during the two or three hours after sunset. However, banders catch the most owls during the four hours before sunrise. Hmmphh!

Kerlinger recently wrote an article about owl migration for *Wild Bird*. He tells of banding in Duluth, Minnesota, where Dave Evans caught 100 saw-whets in one night. There is also a story about one saw-whet captured at Cape May that was originally banded in Wisconsin, 1300 miles away.

Dick Veit and Wayne Petersen published some interesting anecdotes in their book, *Birds of Massachusetts*. On April 10, 1958, Crompton observed a saw-whet drop into the water near the Nantucket Lightship. (Herring Gulls proceeded to attack and eat this bird.) At Jeffrey's Ledge (off the north shore of Massachusetts), on October 20 and 21, 1965, three saw-whets landed on a ship. The authors also mention that saw-whet migration in Massachusetts peaks during the last week of October.

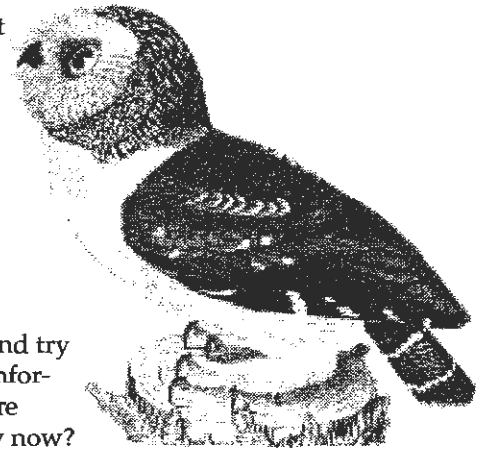
In *Birds of the Cape Cod National Seashore* Wallace Bailey mentions two saw-whet invasions: one in 1959-1960 and another in 1965-1966. In the first, four saw-whets were brought in to the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary after having been hit by automobiles.

On Wednesday, December 6, 1995, I received a phone call from a man in Truro who had found a small owl on the grill of his friend's truck. His wife brought it in the next

day. Sure enough it was a saw-whet.

On Saturday, December 9, 1995, Peter Trull stopped by and reported he had picked up two road-killed saw-whets.

Lately, I lie in bed and try to bring all of this information together. Are there owls flying by now? Will they stop here to rest or hunt? If so, where? How could we find them? I keep wondering, just how many saw-whets are out there?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board member Margot Fitsch has submitted her resignation due to a family illness. The Club appreciates Margot's willingness to serve and hopes she will be able to rejoin us sometime in the future. At the December meeting, the Directors nominated and approved Ron Hindman of Harwich to serve the remainder of Margot's term.

The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History is planning a combined birding and archeology trip to Belize in June of 1996. This trip will be led by Dr Leslie Shaw, an archeologist for the Univ. of Texas, and by a member of the museum staff. Participants will be staying at the renowned Chan Chic Jungle Lodge. Birding highlights will include trips to The Rio Bravo Conservation Area, and Crooked Tree Sanctuary. Cost will be approximately \$1700 including air fare. Call Fred Dunford at the Museum for additional information.

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THE HERMIT THRUSH

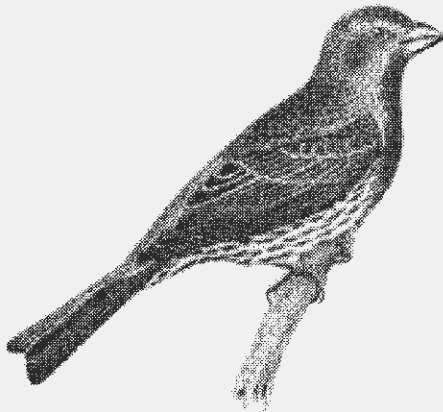
Jim Talin

All the members of the thrush family are renowned for their songs which have a haunting, echoing sound that results from the ability of their syrinx to sound two notes at once. The song of the Hermit thrush starts with a flute-like note that sets the pitch and is followed by "ethereal, bell-like tones, ascending and descending in no fixed order, rising until reaching dizzying vocal heights with notes fading away in a silvery tinkle". (John Teres, *Birds*) Each time the bird sings it varies the pitch of its song. It is a sound that seems to transform the northern woods into a stately cathedral of sound. In *Wake Robin*, John Burroughs described his experience of this song. "

HOUSE FINCH EPIDEMIC

Jim Talin

I was birding with Dick Forster in East Orleans during a Christmas bird count when he observed that "the first flock of House Finches seen in Massachusetts was spotted here during a Christmas bird count in 1964." It is hard to believe that in such a short time the House Finch could become one of the most common feeder birds on Cape Cod. Yet the House Finch's rise in numbers is about to reverse. A disease is spreading among them, and in some parts of the East, their populations have crashed.



The House Finch is not native to the East. It originally occurred only west of the Rockies. In the 1940's, in the East, House Finches were illegally sold as caged birds, valued

for their cheery song, but when Federal agents raided some bird stores on Long Island, dealers avoided arrest by letting the evidence loose. First the finches nested on Long Island, but they rapidly spread everywhere. Today the eastern population has expanded far enough west to join up with the original western birds. The new disease seems to affect only House Finches and leaves other common birds untouched. The disease is called House Finch conjunctivitis. Its symptoms are a swelling and oozing of the eyes which then crust over, leaving the bird blind and subject to predation or starvation. It does not do any good to rehabilitate a sick bird. Even if the bird looks healthy, it still carries the disease and can spread it to other uninfected House Finches.

The effect of this disease on House Finch populations is unknown. Dr. Kenneth Rosenberg of the Cornell Feeder Watch was quoted in the NY Times as saying that there was a "noticeable drop in House Finch numbers almost everywhere last winter, but we need to see whether the trend continues." Few researchers expect this disease to eliminate or even greatly effect the survival of the species. Because there are so many House Finches, enough immune birds would survive to rebuild the House Finch population quickly. Indeed, this disease is only being followed because House Finches are so common at feeders. "Usually, when large numbers of small passerine birds die from a disease outbreak, we never know of it." Dr. George Kollias of Cornell was quoted as saying in the NY Times.

BIRD PUNS AND RIDDLES

(Groaning Permitted)

For answers turn to page 6.

What bird...

is a little league outfielder
is an elderly lady
is a harvester of grain
is a coward from the plains
is a regal angler
is what you're doin' when you're climbin'
is a corner
is a sad letter
is a church official
is crazy
is a pennant
is all tied up
is part of a stove
is a member of the royal family
is a kitchen utensil
is heavenly humor
is a battleship
is a highway sprinter
is a conversation
is fast
sees with precious metal
had a husband named Charles William
must precede gastric digestion
murders a game animal
cuts H₂O
is a dunce
is a famous magician
is like an old time movie
is a Russian census
is an unweaned kid
is a country
is a nocturnal windstorm
is a rock mover
is a forest rooster
is covered by a tarpaulin
is a donkey game
is an invoice for silverware
is a royal tantrum
is a wilted relative
is a Russian preschool program

A RECORD YEAR FOR DUCKS

Jim Talin

This fall, a number of Midwestern airports had to halt operations temporarily as a record migration of ducks and geese created havoc on radar screens. 83 million ducks, representing an increase of 12 million over last year and 24 million over 1993, migrated south in what is called a "grand passage" over the plains of the Midwest. Not only did more ducks breed in the Northern plains due to the heavy rains that filled the small ponds where the ducks nest, but an early cold spell caused them to leave in one mass, rather than in waves of migration. Biologists say this year's migration is evidence that the duck populations in the Northern prairies have recovered from the lows of the 1980's, but ironically, this success is threatened by legislation in Washington.

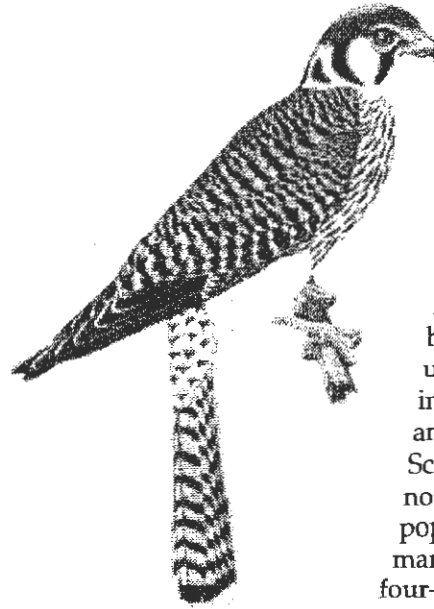
Over the last decade, an effort has been made to restore dwindling duck populations. The main vehicle inducing this change has been the use of Federal legislation to change patterns of farming that endanger breeding ducks and the habitat that supports them. Dabbling ducks that feed in shallow water build their nests on dry uplands at the water's edge. Diving ducks make nests on floating vegetation. Farmers had been plowing land at the margins of ponds and had been draining many ponds to convert wetlands to farm use. In 1985, The Conservation Reserve Program, part of the Farm Security Act, paid farmers to allow land at the edge of ponds to revert to grassland. This program is credited with restoring 36 million acres of nesting habitat. The government also offered incentives to stop farmers from draining ponds, and a third bill, called the Swampbuster program, punished farmers who converted wetlands to crop land. Ducks responded by increasing in numbers so that populations are nearing the averages of the 1970's.

The bad news is that all of these programs are under attack in the Republican controlled US House and Senate. Money from these programs is being redirected to other uses, with the Conservation Reserve Program being halved in size. The number of acres to be restored is being reduced from 36 million to 25 million. The size of ponds being protected would be redefined, so that no ponds smaller than an acre would qualify for Swampbuster protection. Most ponds in the prairies are smaller than an acre. Biologists estimate that these changes will reduce duck migrations by a half, would wipe out the gains of the last few years, and would be a major setback for ducks and prairie ecosystems. It is ironic that in an effort to "make government work", programs that accomplish what they set out to do are being cut or dismantled. These programs do not represent a failure of government, but rather show its success in dealing with important issues. Involvement of the national government is also necessary in order to address problems that are regional and international in nature. People concerned about birds and the environment, regardless of their political affiliation, should voice concern about the effect of these changes on North American ducks and waterfowl.

HAWK VISION

Because kestrels, as they hover above open land, can see in the ultraviolet light range, they are apparently able to spot the paths of voles and other small mammals and swoop on their prey, according to a Finnish study published in Science magazine. Hovering hawks can see these trails because voles, like other mammals such as mice, dogs and wolves, mark their trails and territory

with urine or feces. The waste material is not only tagged with the odor of their species but also marks their highways because it absorbs ultraviolet light.



Many raptors, such as falcons and kestrels, are believed to have ultraviolet vision which, in treeless regions, is believed to be an aid to hunting. In Scandinavia and other northern regions the populations of small mammals often oscillate in four-year cycles between overabundance and crashes.

In a crash it becomes hard for raptors, such as kestrels and snowy owls, to find their prey. If, however, they can see a highway map of their prey's movements, they can rapidly scout large areas. This is particularly true in the spring, before grass has begun to hide the runways. The authors of this study in Science magazine wrote, "We have provided the first experimental evidence, to our knowledge, of a wild raptor using vole trail marks to select hunting patches and potential nest sites." Other small mammals, such as mice, are known to produce urine that fluoresces in blue light.

Bird Pun & Riddle Answers

from Page 4

least flycatcher, oldsquaw, thrasher, prairie chicken, kingfisher, puffin, tern, bluejay, cardinal, loon, bunting, knot, ovenbird, kingbird, dipper, godwit, frigatebird, roadrunner, chat, swift, goldeneye, Chuck Will's widow, swallow, killdeer, shearwater, dodo, merlin, flicker, redpoll, goatsucker, turkey, nightingale, turnstone, woodcock, canvasback, pintail, spoonbill, king rail, limpkin, redstart

PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Ruth Connaughton

On Monday evening, **January 8**, at 7:45 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, William (Bill) Strahle will present a slide show entitled "*The Zoo That Is Kenya*." In August 1994, Mr. Strahle spent two weeks in Kenya as part of a photographic safari. The schedule was highly flexible, allowing a photographic event "to develop in front of the lens." Mr. Strahle has been a member of the Cape Cod Bird Club for over 10 years and has participated in several field trips within the USA.

On Monday evening, **February 12**, at 7:45 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Dr. Jonathan L. Atwood, a conservation biologist at Manomet Observatory for Conservation Sciences, will present a program entitled "*The California Gnatcatcher Controversy*." Since 1990, as a result of technical expertise on the gnatcatchers, he has been intimately involved in attempts to apply basic principles of conservation biology to land-use planning decisions in southern California. Described by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt as a "breathtaking experiment" in how to resolve conflicts between endangered species protection and economic pressures, these efforts are the work which Dr. Atwood will describe for the audience on February 12.

FEEDER CENSUS FORMS

A few of the last newsletters were sent without a feeder census included. If you did not receive a census form and would like to get one, please write Jim Talin, 15 Shady Lane, Brewster, MA 02631, or call him at 896-7169. Remember that you don't need the form to keep track of the birds in your yard, so don't let its lack stop you from being a part of the survey.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

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meeting. Whom, and how many do we lose if we begin sooner? Would we attract other, non-attending members if we started earlier? Are there structural changes that would make our meetings shorter? Is the problem with length or the lateness? If we are going to make it earlier, we need to decide by April in order to schedule next year's programs. In the meantime, I pledge to do the following: Start the monthly meetings promptly at 7:45 pm. Limit the Club business to 20 minutes. Introduce the speaker by 8:05 pm. And end the formal part of the meeting by 9:00 pm. Let's discuss this further at our next meeting. Please feel free to let me or other Board members know how you feel, pro or con. My telephone number is 945-4882.

FIELD TRIPS

Jinks Keil

January

Monday January 1st: Start with Art! Eastham, Fort Hill. Meet in the lower parking lot at 9:00 am. Art King 255-8919. Start your 1996 list out right.

Sunday January 14th: Walk to Pochet Island. 1:30 pm. Stauffer Miller, 362-3384. The walk is shorter than you would think, and it is designed to see Short-eared Owls.

Monday January 15th: Falmouth. Meet at Locust Street head of the bike path. 9:00 am. Alison Robb, 540-2408. View some of Falmouth's best birding spots.

Wednesday January 24th: Saquatucket Harbor to Chatham. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor across from Thompson's Farm Market on Route 28. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248. Check out the winter birds on Nantucket Sound.

February

Sunday February 4th: Eastham, Fort Hill. Meet in the lower parking lot at 9:00 am. Art King 255-8919.

Friday February 9th: Yarmouthport Area. Meet at the Yarmouthport playground on Route 6A. 9:00 am. Mark Tuttle 362-3015.

Monday February 12th. Falmouth. Meet at Locust Street head of the bike path. 9:00 am. Alison Robb, 540-2408.

Wednesday February 21st. Saquatucket Harbor to Chatham. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor across from Thompson's Farm Market on Route 28. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

Starting **January 11th** on the
World Wide Web,
you will be able to access
Elinor Miller's bird column
As The Crow Flies
as it appears in the Cape Cod Times.
The address is Sage@CMS.NET.

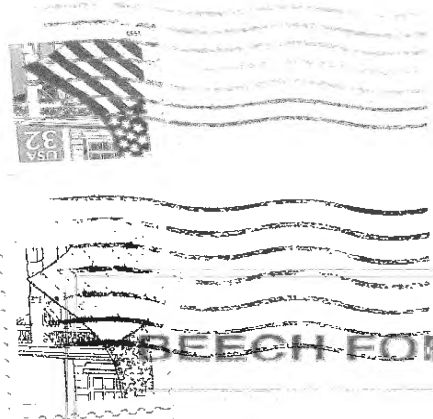
Frank Carnuso
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BEECH FOREST ACCESS CLOSED

Race Point Road in Provincetown is undergoing complete reconstruction from Route 6 to the Airport. Construction began in late November and is scheduled to be completed on May 29, 1996. A winter of severe weather could delay completion well into June or later. During this period there will be no vehicular traffic allowed on the road and no automobiles allowed into the Beech Forest parking lot. Although Beech Forest itself will be open, anyone wishing to bird it during Spring migration will have to find alternative parking, and walk or bicycle in. Such distances could easily be a mile or more.

Speaking with Claude Phipps of the Seashore National Park, Richard Hall, the Club President, has expressed the Club's concern that

this situation is highly undesirable and would make birding very difficult or impossible for many members. Mr. Phipps, who has administrative oversight for the highway contract, expressed a desire to find a workable solution to the problem. Access is further complicated because the parking lot itself is being used as the equipment staging area for the job. What impact this might have on migrating birds has to be of equal, or even greater concern. A number of alternatives were discussed, and Richard Hall has agreed to make a site visit in January with Seashore Park staff to discuss solutions. The newsletter will keep members updated as developments unfold.