



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 25

SUMMER 1997

ISSUE 5

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Don Scott

I have always considered May 1 as the true start of Spring on Cape Cod. April, with its raw and unpredictable weather, is behind us. Some sturdy migrants, especially shorebirds, have made their presence known, but May heralds the official start of the Cape Cod Bird Club's regular Saturday and Sunday morning walks in the Beech Forest at Provincetown. The month-long influx of warblers and other passerines, generally peaking in mid-May, offers Cape birders their best chance to glimpse the colorful beauty of visitors passing through on the long journey from the tropics to the forests of the north. And those quick flashes of color create satisfaction for even the most skilled of bird watchers.

"some sturdy migrants, especially shorebirds, have made their presence known"

Another excellent opportunity to beat the season and view colorful birds, almost beyond imagination, is to visit Trinidad and Tobago with the Cape Cod Bird Club in 1998 (Feb. 28-Mar. 8). The CCBC, in conjunction with Caligo Tours, also sponsored this trip in 1996. Openings are still available for 1998. Trinidad and Tobago was my first concentrated birding trip to the tropics, and I found it incredibly rewarding (120+ new species) and also a great break from the Winter blues.

The world famous Asa Wright Nature Centre, located in the mountains of Trinidad, offers comfortable accommodations, scrumptious food and up-close-and-personal views of a great variety of beautiful birds such as honey-creepers, trogons, tanagers, and hummingbirds. And picture the concluding day of the Trinidad portion—sitting at dusk in the Caroni Swamp on a small boat, sipping the daily courtesy rum punch, while thousands of scarlet ibis fly overhead and roost for the night in nearby trees. It doesn't get much better than that!

In contrast, on Tobago, our headquarters, the Blue Waters Inn, is located literally yards from the ocean. Here the itinerary includes a hike in the rain forest as well as a boat trip to Little Tobago where red-billed tropic birds and brown boobies nest. None of the walks is strenuous, and all are led by highly skilled guides whose abilities to call and find birds is astounding. For anyone who yearns to experience tropical bird watching, this is the time and place. For additional information for you or non-member friends who might be interested, please feel free to get in touch with me—home phone 432-2528.

Way at the tip of Squaw Island
a pair of Canada Geese
built a nest.
She, her head erect,
saw me approaching,
had no intention of moving
off the eggs I knew were there
beneath her.
He stood between the nest in the grass
and the edge of the water.
That first day, the tide was high.
You will not cross
the strip of sand from nest to creek,
he told me.
A week later, though, I walked there,
at low tide.
Thirty feet of sand
lay between nest and water.
I thought - I'll get by this time.
Not so.
That gander stood between my way and me.
He bent his neck almost as if
to tie a knot in it,
stood his ground.
I moved to go around him
along the water's edge.
He lifted on webbed foot,
body swiveling, and came
two steps my way, deliberate,
head swinging in horizontal
figure eights.
I stopped, said, - I'm just passing by.
His bill went left to right,
eyes taking turns in shooting
warnings at me.
Another step, not ten feet between us now,
he lifts his serpentine neck, bill open,
pink showing,
hisses, rocking two paces closer,
- From the nest to the water,
even if the moon doubles the distance again,
is a line you may not cross.
I turn, retreat.
He bows, - That's right, he says,
and grooms.



Bob Pease

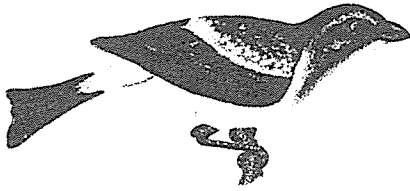
IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING RICHARD A. FORSTER 1944-1997

Peter Trimble

Richard A. Forster passed away April 1. I will remember Dick as a friend who taught me a great deal about the natural world. I would like to relate a few brief stories about this special person.

As the Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count compiler, I was very happy when Dick began participating on the annual count. I knew Dick and his birding skills would enhance the count a great deal. I couldn't wait to hear what he had found at the compilation each



year. I will always look back in wonder at the day he found a Clay-colored Sparrow, Painted Bunting, and Townsend's Warbler.

My fondest remembrances of Dick will probably be of recent trips we had taken. Whether it was to see a rare bird with Blair Nikula, Vern Laux, and Bill Loughran or on an ode trip with Blair, Jackie Sones, and Miah. I'll always remember watching as Miah and Dick talked over trip plans and identifications, and to see one of the finest naturalists sharing a love and knowledge of birds and dragonflies with Jeremiah.

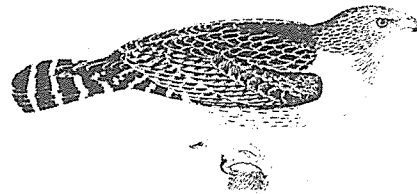
I hope your days are now filled with wild Gomphid streams, woods roads swarming with Somatochloras, and the lure of the Gyrfalcon.

Ken Hamilton

Bid, Biddie, Richard, Dick, R. A.
Birds - Butterflies - Odes - Fauna - Flora

A complete naturalist, but to me a "birder" first.

The Cape, Nahant, Marblehead, Rockport, Plum Island, Newburyport, The Berkshires and of course Mt. Auburn, Essex County and The Valley. In between birding spots (and Dunkin Donuts), we would talk about almost anything. "I can't believe the Celts



are going to lose 60 games - Hale-Bopp is spectacular - Maybe we should do Falmouth Christmas count differently." No politics.

Sometimes we would drive in silence for several miles, and one of us would say "Redtail on the left -T.V. overhead." He would often say as we passed a particular spot. "I saw my life Red-shoulder on that pole on February 12, 1958." Amazing memory and recall. I could go on forever.

Dick was a person who I had the honor and privilege to have known for so long (40 years). I am saddened that he's gone. I'll never forget him.



Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.
The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
PO BOX 1710, Brewster, MA 02631

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Don Scott ~ *President*
Jinks Keil ~ *Vice President*
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Editor ~ Jim Talin, email: talin@cape.com
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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...

CCBC, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
PO BOX 1710, Brewster, MA 02631

Jackie Sones

February - March

Grebes - Corporation Beach in Dennis is one of the best places to observe Horned and Red-necked Grebes. In late March, both species were there, with several individuals in striking breeding plumage.

Wading Birds - Individual American Bitterns were reported from Fort Hill in Eastham, the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pilgrim Lake in Truro. Various observers counted up to five Glossy Ibis near Oyster Pond in Falmouth during the last week of March.

Waterfowl - A great diversity of ducks continued to be found at the Mill Pond in Marstons Mills. In late March the West Harwich Conservation Area produced a number of species as well, including Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, and Common Merganser. American Wigeon and 1-2 Eurasian Wigeons were consistent at several locations in North Chatham. Eddie Banks counted an amazing 64 Redheads in Falmouth on February 1st.

Common Black-headed Gull - George Martin found a Common Black-headed Gull at Prince Cove in Marstons Mills on March 8th. This species was also reported by Kyle Jones at Race Point in Provincetown on March 12th.

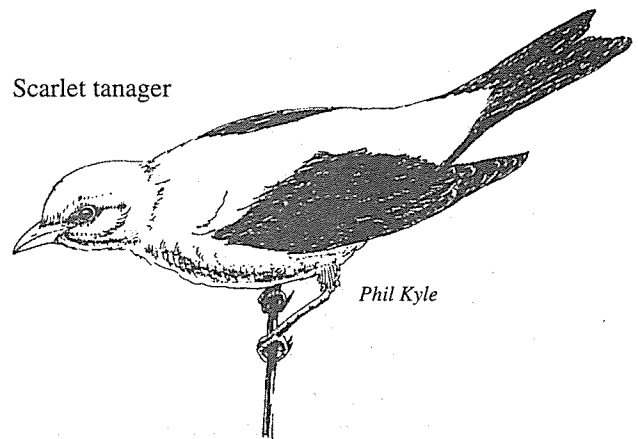
Common Murres - Unfortunately, the three Common Murres reported during early February were oiled birds. Two were found at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham, while one other was discovered in Truro.

Shorebirds - American Woodcocks were heard displaying at Fort Hill in Eastham throughout the month of March. Greater Yellowlegs and American Oystercatchers were reported during the last week of March; yellowlegs were seen at Hallett's Mill Pond in Yarmouthport (Margot Hakes), while oystercatchers were seen in Nauset Marsh in Eastham (Eddie Banks). Jinks Keil reported a Piping Plover at Craigville Beach during the last week in March.

Hawks - Reports of Turkey Vultures filtered in throughout late February and March. Of special note was George Martin's sighting of a Black Vulture on March 28th, near Route 149 in West Barnstable. Ospreys returned around mid-March; Sue Talin reported one at Chapin Beach on March 21st. Blair Nikula recorded a diversity of raptors on the Outer Cape on March 30th: Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Sharp-shinned Hawks, as well as a Turkey Vulture and a Northern Harrier. Also on March 30th, an American Kestrel was spotted near the Marconi Site in South Wellfleet. A large movement of kestrels was also noted on Plum Island on March 30th.

Snowy Owls - Ned Handy mentioned seeing two birds on Sandy Neck during early February.

Thrushes - News of second Townsend's Solitaire, located near Windstar Farm in Sandwich, came on March 5th. Billy Loughran is possibly the only person in New England to have seen two Townsend's Solitaires in New England on the same day! The Barnstable, Townsend's Solitaire was last reported on March 16th. Eastern



Scarlet tanager

Bluebirds continued to be seen across the Cape. Jim Talin observed them along Griffith Pond Road in Brewster and near Crowe's Pasture.

Bohemian Waxwings - There were two Bohemian Waxwing reports. One was seen by a Massachusetts Audubon Birding Cape Cod group at Fort Hill in Eastham on February 7th. Around the same time, Seward Highley was lucky enough to see one in his backyard in Brewster.

Northern Shrike - The most recent sightings of shrikes came from Pilgrim Lake in Truro, Morris Island in Chatham, and West Dennis Beach. The latter was seen chasing Horned Larks!

Blackbirds - The first reports of returning Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds came in during late February. Fort Hill continued to offer sightings of Eastern Meadowlarks; Dick Koeppen and the Cape Cod Bird Club reported them there on February 24th.

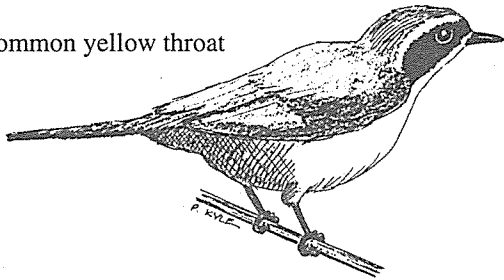
Thank you to everyone who reported sightings! To do so in the future, please contact Jackie Sones or Blair Nikula at 508-432-6348, 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA, 02646, or odenews@capecod.net.

BIRD IDENTIFICATION QUIZ

See how many of the following common and not so common birds you can identify from verbal descriptions.

1. Small, active, gray bird. 6 1/2 inches long. Prominent gray crest and blackish forehead identify this bird. Common inhabitant of deciduous woodlands, parklands and suburban areas. Song a whistled *peter, peter, peter*.

Common yellow throat



2. Small, 5 1/4 inch bird. Inhabits deciduous forests, usually seen in lower or mid-level branches. Male's black-throat, cheeks, and sides separate blue upperparts, white underparts. Female's pale eyebrow is distinct on dark face; upperparts brownish olive underparts buffy; distinctive wing spot. Song a slow series of four or five raspy notes.

3. 6 3/4 inches long. Fairly common but shy; found in coniferous or mixed woodlands or thickets. Known for a song that is a clear, serene series of flutelike notes, the similar phrases repeated at different pitches. Call a low chuck. Bobs tail. Upperparts brown-olive to gray-brown; tail always reddish; whitish eye ring conspicuous; breast buffy or white.

4. Abundant in wet habitats. 6 1/4 inches long. Black (not yellow) legs; tubular looking, straight bill. Often confused with Western Sandpiper. Lacks spotting on flanks and rufous on scapular feathers; shows only a tinge of rufous on crown and ear patch.

5. A colorful bird just 4 3/4 inches long. Common in open woodlands, scrublands, overgrown fields. Generally forages in the lower branches and brush, twitching its tail. Distinctive song, rising, buzzy, *zee* notes. Olive above, with faint chestnut streaks on back; bright yellow eyebrow, yellow eye patch below eye; bright yellow below, streaked with black on sides of neck and body.

6. A yellowish bird common in black spruce forests. 5 inches long. All plumages have yellow on face that extends to sides of neck. Short tail, yellow rump, thin bill that is slightly downcurved. Males have chestnut ear patch and tiger striped underparts. Song high *seet seet seet seet*.

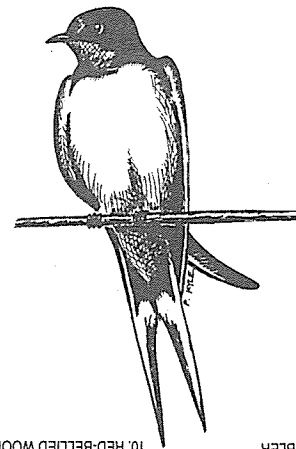
7. Slender body with long pointed wings. Adept aerialist. 5 3/4 inches long. dark, glossy blue-green above, white below. White cheek patch does not extend beyond eye. Female is duller overall. Common in any wooded habitat near water, especially where dead trees are abundant, providing nest holes. Migrates in flocks.

8. Adult male is bright yellow with black cap; 5 inches long; black wings show white bars, yellow shoulder patch, uppertail and undertail covers white; tail black and white. Song a lively series of trills, twitters, and *swee* notes.

9. A small (25 inch), dark, stocky sea goose with black head, neck and breast with whitish patch on either side of the neck. Dark gray wings. White uppertail coverts almost conceal black tail. Call a low, hoarse, *cronk*. Flies in flocks of low, ragged formations.

10. 9 1/4 inch woodpecker. Black and white barred back; white uppertail coverts; central tail feathers barred. Crown and nape red in males; females have red nape only. Reddish tinge on belly. Common in open woodlands, suburban back yards. Call a rolling *churr* or *chiv-chiv*.

Barn swallow



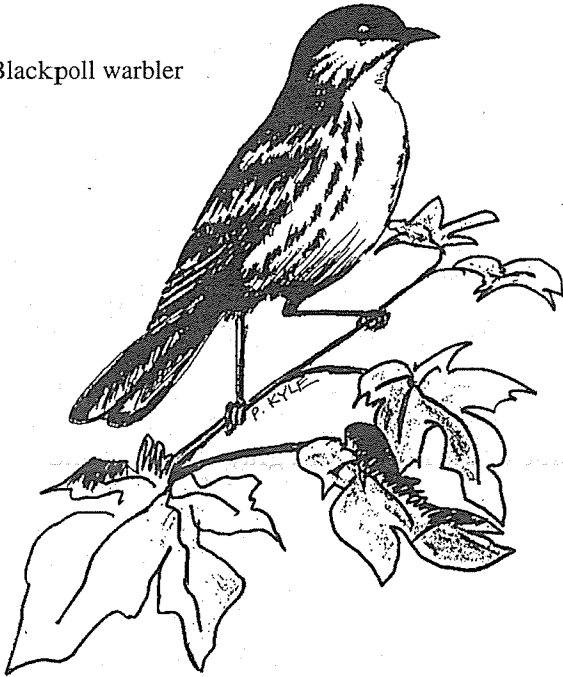
ANSWERS TO QUIZ
 1. TUFTED TITMOUSE
 2. BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER
 3. HERMIT THRUSH
 4. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER
 5. PRAIRIE WARBLER
 6. CAPE MAY WARBLER
 7. TREE SWALLOW
 8. GOLDFINCH
 9. BRANT
 10. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER

PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Ruth Connaughton

On Monday evening, **May 12th**, at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Jennifer Megyesi, a biological technician at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, working on an Avian Diversity Restoration Project, will present a program on *Avian and marine life at French Frigate Shoals*. This slide show will focus on 18 species of seabirds, and Jennifer will discuss how these animals partition resources. Also, she will contrast their life styles to the life styles of Atlantic species.

Blackpoll warbler



THANKS

Jinks Keil

I wish to thank the following people for participating in the "Wings Over the Marsh" program at the Museum of Natural History. They are: Dot Kierstead, Ruth Connaughton, Maureen Johnson, Phil Kyle, Don Scott, Mark Tuttle, Janet Silverio, Ron Hindman, Barbara Stanton, Dick Koeppen, Marge Marion, and Ellie Winslow. I am grateful to all of you for "taking a turn" and sometimes more than one.

Kathy McGinley

I wish to thank the following walk leaders for helping Bird Club members and me with their time and teachings during this last year. You all were GREAT! Frank Caruso, Ruth Connaughton, Jinks Keil, Art King, Dick Koeppen, Stauffer Miller, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Bob Prescott, Alison Robb, Jim Talin, Sue Thompson, Bessie Tirrell, Mark Tuttle, Bob Vander Pyl.

WALKS & FIELD TRIPS

Kathy McGinley

May

Wednesday May 7th. Provincetown. Beech Forest. Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 AM. Leader: Bessie Tirrell - 432-9248.

Wednesday May 7th. Harwich. Blair Nikula's Evening Walk, 5:30 PM. Meet on Bell's Neck Rd, Harwich Conservation area. Bring a picnic if you like. Leader: Blair Nikula 432-6348.

Sunday May 12th. Falmouth. 8 AM. Town Conservation area at Coonamessett. From Route 151 across from movie theater, take Ranch Rd. south. Right on Boxberry Hill Rd. to conservation area. Uplands, thickets, woodlands, pond. Alison Robb and Bob Vander Pyl. 540-2408.

Saturday June 14th. Bird Club Breeding Census. Don't miss this opportunity. Compiler: Stauffer Miller 362-3384

Friday May 30th. Mashpee. Evening Whip-poor-will search. Meet at Cephalo's Restaurant in Mashpee, Rt. 130. Rain Date May 31st. Leader: Stauffer Miller 362-3384.

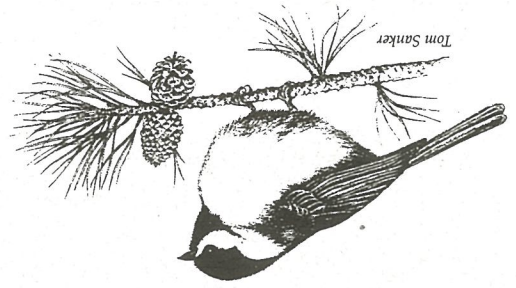
Summer Walks

Wednesday June 4th. Provincetown. Meet at the Beech Forest parking lot at 8:00 AM. Leader: Bessie Tirrell 432-9248

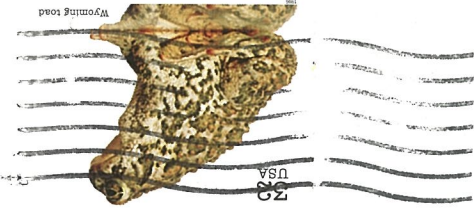
Sunday June 15th. South Cape Beech, Waquoit. 9 AM. From the Mashpee Rotary take Great Neck Rd. south 2.8 miles. Bear left onto Great Oak Rd. 2.1 miles to South Cape Beach State Park. Enter Park, go straight onto dirt road. Park in lot right, near old trailer. Bring lunch and a windbreaker. Alison Robb and Bob Vander Pyl. In cooperation with Waquoit Bay National Marine Estuarine Research Reserve. 540-2408.

Wednesday July 9th. Eastham. Meet in the lower parking lot of Fort Hill at 8:00 AM. Leader is Bessie Tirrell 432-9248.

Wednesday August 13th. Eastham. Meet at the lower parking lot at Fort Hill at 8:00 AM. Leader is Bessie Tirrell - 432-9248.



Frank Caruso
Barbara Steller
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale, MA 02644-1725



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PO BOX 1710, Brewster, MA 02631



Beech Forest Walks Warbler Watch

The following people will be at the Beech Forest parking lot in Provincetown at 8:00 AM weekends during the month of May:

- Sat May 3rd-Sue Thompson
- Sun May 4th-Tom Noonan
- Sat May 10th-Stauffer Miller
- Sun May 11th-Art King
- Sat May 17th-Frank Caruso
- Sun May 18th-George Martin
- Sat May 24th-Jim Talin
- Sun May 25th-Sue Thompson
- Sat May 31st-Blair Nikula

Officers and Directors 1997-1998

The annual meeting of the Cape Cod Bird Club occurs at the final meeting of the year in May. At that time, officers and directors for the coming year are elected by the membership.

Listed below is the proposed slate of officers for 1997-98.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| President | Don Scott |
| Vice President | Jinks Kyle |
| Secretary | Barbara Stanton |
| Treasurer | Ellie Winslow |
| Director (3 yrs) | Ron Ayotte |
| Director (3 yrs) | Marge Marion |
| Chair, Nominating Committee | Richie Hall |