



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 26

MARCH ~ APRIL 1998

ISSUE 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

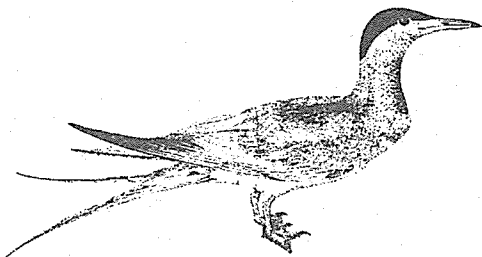
Don Scott

Contrary to what Carol and my kids might believe, I really am mellowing as I grow older. Liberals don't bother me as much as they used to - some are even good friends - and conservative friends ask me: "Do you really go out at dawn in the rain to count ducks?" I am clearly better at controlling road rage and, except for an occasional ranting at the Red Sox, no longer allow sports to drive me crazy! Gently rolling surf, long walks alone and birding with good friends rank at the top of my list of favorite things to do.

I was sure that I would never revert to my old ways. But then it happened! Recently the mail contained a note from my dear friend Doris Broderick, who regularly sends articles relating to birds and nature from the New York Times (too liberal) and the Wall Street Journal (too expensive). I relish these notes, so they are always opened first. As I started to read one particular article, my blood pressure immediately passed the danger level. The first two paragraphs read:

"In a darkened room one evening this month in Bordeaux, many of the world's most famous chefs and restaurateurs sat with napkins over their heads and faces. The crunching sounds from under the napkins was unmistakable - the guests were eating.

"Sworn to secrecy, they were chewing the skin, flesh, bones and entrails of one of France's greatest delicacies, the ortolan, a tiny songbird whose declining numbers led the French Government to forbid its sale anywhere in the country. The napkins are part of the ritual, as is the method of eating the bird: it is held by its head and devoured in a single bite."



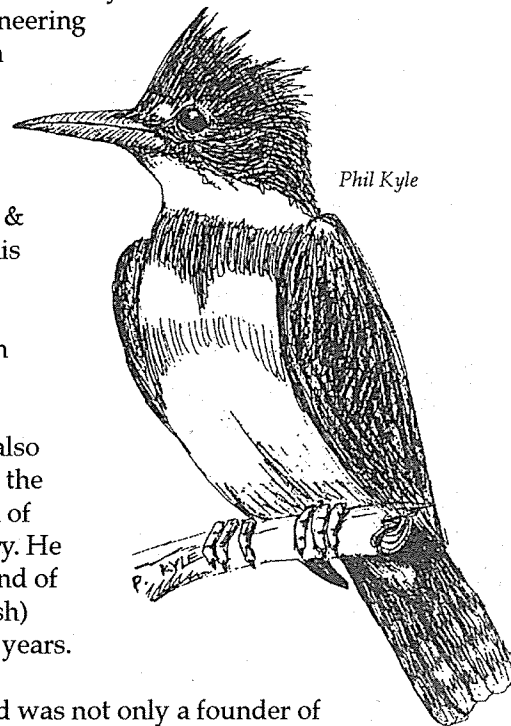
I'll spare you the details of the proper wine to drink with ortolan or the best cigar to smoke after dinner.

Just as I think we are making progress - saving the Spotted Owl, eliminating dangerous pesticides and protecting Piping Plovers and Roseate Terns - I become dumbfounded by such self-serving behavior! I guess I'll have to readjust my attitude a tiny bit in order to get angry at things that really matter!

REMEMBERING - WILSON BARRETT SCOFIELD

Charlotte Smith

Wilson Barrett Scofield, 88, died in December after a long illness. He was one of the founders of the Cape Cod Bird Club. He grew up in White Plains, New York, attended the New York University School of Engineering and became an owner of an engineering consulting firm, Edwards & Hjorth. After his retirement, he pursued his hobbies of ham radio, raising azaleas and photography, also being active in the Cape Museum of Natural History. He was the husband of Marion (English) Scofield for 57 years.



Phil Kyle

Wilson Scofield was not only a founder of the Bird Club - he was also our first Vice President and began "Sightings" as a part of every meeting. He planned our first Christmas Count and laid out the parameters of the count. It did not become an official count until Janet Alyward became chair of the count and went through the rather lengthy process of making it an official count. Wilson had not pursued that process because he felt it would not be accepted because of the proximity of other counts. During the days of the unofficial counts, we had our report sessions either at a restaurant or at the home of Bill and Marion. It was usually a covered dish supper.

In recent years, interests such as photography had taken up much of Wilson's time. But as a founder of the Club, his influence is still felt. While there are fewer and fewer of the founding members, I do feel we have laid a good foundation for the future of the Club. I feel that one of the best things was the early choice to have all decisions made by the Board, thus preventing long-winded arguments from the floor. People who enjoy contributing to a meeting get ample opportunities during "sightings."

CAPE COD LAKE AND POND WATERFOWL SURVEY

Blair Nikula

The 15th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 6-7, 1997. For the third year in a row, the weather preceding the count was colder than normal: November's temperature was about 3°(F) below average. However, December began relatively mild, and generally ice-free conditions prevailed during the survey weekend.

Forty-nine observers censused 380 pond: 23 ponds more than ever before! Every year participants somehow manage to find more and more ponds tucked away in the nooks and crannies of Cape Cod. Twenty-eight species of waterfowl were found, totaling 11,004 individuals, both very close to the 14 year average.

SPECIES RESULTS:

This year's results were remarkably unremarkable: For the first time in the survey's history, no species were found in record high or low numbers. This is somewhat to be expected: as the database grows, exceptional totals (whether high or low) should become increasingly less frequent. Among the modest highlights were the following:

Pied-Billed Grebe: Following last year's precipitous drop, the petit *Podilymbus podiceps* proved positively plentiful this year, achieving its third highest total ever.

Canada Goose: After last year's remarkable and inexplicable record low, the number of honkers rebounded somewhat this year, though the total of 618 was still the 3rd lowest ever, 19% below average.

Green-winged Teal: This species also recovered from a record low last year, reaching its 3rd highest total on the survey.

Mallard: Last year's record low was, alas, just a temporary anomaly, as this year's total of 1640 was somewhat above average.

Scaup (Both species combined): For the 5th consecutive year, scaup were found in rather depressed numbers, this year's total of 1,195 constituting the 3rd lowest in the survey's history.

Hooded Merganser: One of the treats for local birders over the past decade has been the steady increase of this popular diver on the Cape. The 866 found this year is just one shy of the record high set two years ago.

Red-breasted Merganser: The 500 found this year represents the 2nd highest total in the survey's history for this primarily saltwater duck.

Ruddy Duck: Though less than half of last year's record high, this year's 87 still represents the 2nd highest total of Ruddies over the past 14 years.

American Coot: The number of coot was down over 100 birds from last year, but nevertheless represents the 3rd highest total in the survey's history.

For the second time in 14 years, Buffleheads (1,979 birds) outnumbered all other species, followed by scaup (both species combined: 19,15 birds), Mallard (1,640), and American Black Duck (1,613). These five species combined to comprise about 63% of the overall total.

Among the more unusual species found this year were single Red-throated Loons in Barnstable and Brewster, Horned Grebes in Barnstable and Eastham, three Northern Shovelers in Barnstable, a Eurasian Wigeon in Barnstable and a Common Eider in Orleans.

TOWN RESULTS:

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns by a wide margin, with 3,679 birds or 33% of the Capewide total. The perennial battle for runner-up between Barnstable and Yarmouth was won this year by Yarmouth with 1,355 birds (12%) while Barnstable followed with 1,197 (11%). Far and away the best variety was found in Barnstable with an unprecedented 24 species, followed by Yarmouth with 18 species and Falmouth with 17 species. Wellfleet, with just 32 birds of 7 species, remained mired at the bottom of the pack.

POND RESULTS:

Salt Pond in Falmouth traditionally harbors a large flock of scaup and consequently takes top honors every year for the largest number of birds: this year 1705 individuals of 9 species included 1600 scaup. Second again this year was Swan Pond in Dennis with 365 birds (a sharp drop from last year) of 9 species. The best variety, 12 species, was found on Hinkley's Pond in Harwich, followed by Mill Pond in Yarmouth with 11 species.



Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.

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

Officers

Don Scott ~ *President*

Jinks Keil ~ *Vice President*

Barbara Stanton ~ *Secretary*

Ellie Winslow ~ *Treasurer*

Directors

Ron Ayotte ~ Ron Hindman

Phil Kyle ~ Marge Marion

Kathy McGinley ~ Janet Silverio

Newsletter

Editor ~ Jim Talin, email: talin@gis.net

Design & Prepress ~ Tom Noonan

Circulation ~ Barbara Stanton

DECEMBER 1997 - JANUARY 1998

If you'd like to report a sighting, you may do so in any of the ways listed at the end of this column. It's very helpful to include your name and phone number, the bird's name, the number of individuals, the date and location of your sighting, and any other information you've gathered!

Eared Grebe. An Eared Grebe was spotted at Sandy Neck in West Barnstable on January 19 by Bill Loughran. It was also seen by a few other observers on January 20.

Seabirds. The seabird of the season was undoubtedly the Ancient Murrelet discovered by Blair Nikula and Jeremiah Trimble at Race Point in Provincetown on January 4; unfortunately it was not relocated. This is only the second Ancient Murrelet ever seen in Massachusetts (the first was in November 1992). Up to three Common Murres were seen off Race Point in early January. George Martin reported a Thick-billed Murre in Wellfleet Harbor on January 21. Jeremiah had a great morning at First Encounter Beach on December 24: 8700+ Black-legged Kittiwakes, 5 Pomarine Jaegers, 1 Northern Fulmar, 2 Dovekies, 1 Atlantic Puffin, and 2300+ large alcids. Blair Nikula recorded a very late Sooty Shearwater at First Encounter Beach on January 17.

Ducks. King Eiders were seen at the Cape Cod Canal in Sandwich, Nauset Beach in Orleans, and Coast Guard Beach in Eastham. Mike Sylvia reported five individuals at the Canal on December 4. Peter Trimble found a male Barrow's Goldeneye near West Bay at the end of Sea View Avenue in Cotuit in late January. Blair Nikula discovered a female Barrow's Goldeneye on Lake Wequaquet during the Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count on December 30; it was last reported on January 19. One or two Harlequin Ducks spent some time at Nauset Beach during the last half of December.

Shorebirds. A Marbled Godwit spotted at Coast Guard Beach on December 21 remained there until at least January 12. Two Whimbrels were spotted at Sea Gull Beach in Yarmouth on December 10, one of which appeared to be of the European race (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*). One Whimbrel was seen at Sea Gull Beach on December 30 and continued there through at least mid-January. Also at Sea Gull Beach, Mark Kasprzyk found a Least Sandpiper in mid-December; it stayed in the area until at least January 4. Ken Hamilton reported five Purple Sandpipers at Corporation Beach in Dennis on January 2.

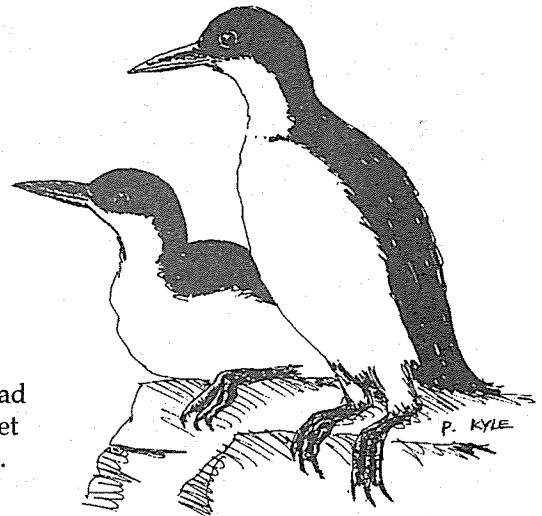
Wild Turkeys. I received at least 4 different Wild Turkey reports during late December and January. Most were from backroads in Truro and one was from Route 6 in Harwich.

Northern Shrikes. Although there haven't been too many reports of this species this winter, one was spotted near High Head in Truro on December 29 and another near Marconi Beach on January 19.

Bohemian Waxwings. This handsome species was first spotted at the Provincetown Airport on December 20. There were at least 5 reports in January: three from the Bound Brook area of Wellfleet/Truro, one from Marconi Site Road, and one from Dennis (along Route 6A near Route 134). The maximum number recorded was 21+ on January 23.

Warblers. Jim Talin found two Orange-crowned Warblers near the Orleans dump on December 24. Dennis Peacock reported two Yellow-breasted Chats in thickets along Surf Drive in Falmouth on January 12.

Sparrows and Finches. A Lark Sparrow was discovered near the Cape Cod National Seashore's headquarters building along Marconi Site Road in South Wellfleet on December 29. This bird was associated with a flock of Field Sparrows and was seen until January 9. Seaside Sparrows (maximum of 5) and sharp-tailed sparrows (maximum of 3) were seen at Fort Hill in Eastham on December 16 and January 11 (An interesting note: American Bitterns were also reported on both days). A flock of 35+ Common Redpolls was seen at LeCount's Hollow Beach in Wellfleet on December 16. Twenty-five redpolls flew by Mike Resch at Race Point on January 12.



Many thanks to everyone who contributed reports! To submit bird sightings in the future, call Jackie or Blair at 508-432-6348, send regular mail to 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA, 02646, send e-mail to odenews@capecod.net, or come to a bird club meeting and tell us about your observations!

CAPE COD CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Blair Nikula

On Sunday December 21, 1997, 38 observers traversed 439 miles of an area from Harwich to Wellfleet in search of birds. During the day, 34,756 individual birds of 123 species were spotted. Some rare or unusual birds were sighted, including 2 King Eider, 1 Sora, 10 Greater Yellowlegs, 1 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 Phoebe, 1 Rusty Blackbird, 1 Northern Oriole, and 1 Lincoln's Sparrow. Record high counts were recorded for the following species: 7 Cooper's Hawks, 1273 Sanderling, 3761 Dunlin, 7 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and 68 White-breasted Nuthatches.

Other birds were seen in greater numbers than usual, including Horned Grebes (highest since 1976), Canada Goose (highest since 1979), Hooded Merganser (2nd highest ever), Black-capped Chickadee (highest since 1977), Tufted Titmouse (3rd highest ever), Hermit Thrush (2nd highest ever), Yellow-breasted Chat (2nd highest ever), Common Redpoll (3rd highest ever), and American Goldfinch (highest since 1974).

The following birds showed decreases in numbers, including Great Cormorant (lowest since 1976), Ring-necked Duck (lowest since 1964), Am. Kestrel (tied for lowest since 1945, Herring Gull (lowest since 1945!), Mourning Dove (lowest since 1968), and Horned Lark (lowest since 1982).

MID CAPE CHRISTMAS COUNT

Peter Trimble

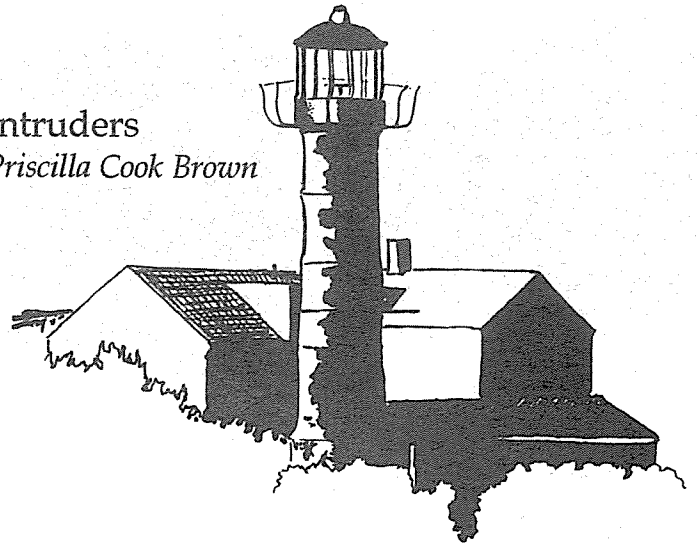
Count day, Tuesday December 30, 1997, was a bad day for birds and for birders. While temperatures officially read between 34-47°, they felt much colder. High winds, 30-40 MPH from the southwest, with gusts over 50 mph, light rain and clouds, made finding land birds difficult. Except for the ducks, most birds reacted by hunkering down for the day which was really not a bad idea. Peter Trimble did not find a Cardinal until 2:00 in the afternoon or a Mockingbird until 3:15, and he counted only 6 Song Sparrows in his area all day. In Yarmouth, at one point, we looked into a thicket in which there were 3 or 4 species of birds were visible, none of which even moved when pished at. Indeed one Bluejay just turned its head as if to say, fat chance, and then it looked away, never budging. But there is a positive side to every weather condition, so it can be said that the winds did help push tides very high, which did help in finding some marsh/shore birds.

A total of 20,508 individual birds of 110 species were seen. Rare birds that turned up during the count were an Eared Grebe, 2 Harlequin Ducks, 8 Wild Turkey, 1 Whimbrel, 1 least Sandpiper and 7 White-winged Crossbills. Birds seen in high numbers included 84 Mute Swans, 168 Gadwall, 147 American Wigeon, 752 Oldsquaw, 29 Northern Harriers, and 295 Cedar Waxwings.

POETRY

Intruders

Priscilla Cook Brown



With brightly colored back-packs,
binoculars, and bottles of water
under the hot sun we march
in a line around Powder Hole
behind a singular Canada Goose
waddling at the water's edge
and our naturalist Phil Kyle
pulling a telescope in a red wagon tediously
toward the abandoned light house.

We whisper
calls of gulls drown our sounds
We tiptoe
through marsh, wet sand, poison ivy
We bow our heads
to this 2000 acres of green ripples over canvas
inhabited by wildlife for centuries

Half-way between arctic Canada and Brazil
Monomoy is a destination for migrators
Nest area for terns and plovers
playground for Northern Harriers and falcons
hunting ground for Great Horned Owl
home for deer, Fowler's toads, coyotes and crabs

No cars, electricity, phones,
Winds drive the birds and sand
Ocean waves carry the eel grass and snails
Sun warms the ponds and dunes
On this lone island sanctuary
Where we are only passing by

Ms. Brown wrote this poem following an overnight stay at Monomoy Lighthouse. The stay was sponsored by the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

PROGRAMS & MEETINGS

Phil Kyle

On Monday evening, **March 9** at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Kathleen Anderson will present a program called *Yupiaqs and Arctic Birds*. Kathleen Anderson was the Executive Director of the Manomet Bird Observatory for 14 years; she has also served on the Boards of Directors of Mass. Audubon and of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. She has led many trips and tours, within and outside the country. Most recently she was the 1995 recipient of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Arthur Allen Award.

On Monday evening, **April 13** at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, David Clapp will present a slide show on the *Birds of East Africa*. David is a well-known tour leader who has worked for Mass. Audubon for more than 25 years. He is currently Director of the South Shore Sanctuary in Marshfield. Some of his most treasured trip memories come from his more than ten tours of East Africa, most of them with co-leader Jim Lane who has written many famous bird-finding guides.

WHERE TO REPORT BANDED BIRDS

In the article we wrote last issue about how to report banded birds, I made a mistake and received the following email correction from Wendy Manear:

The preferred method for reporting bands is the 1-800 number. We are trying to cut down on paper recoveries. 1-800-327-2263. The e-mail address is Bandreport@patuxent.nbs.gov or Wendy_Manear@usgs.gov

ITEMS FOR SALE

Marge Marion

The Club now has knitted stocking caps with our name, Cape Cod Bird Club, worked in around the band. They are navy blue with white lettering and are washable and warm.

We also have available great organizer packs that might, with ingenuity, be enough for a trip through Europe, if you only need one of everything. They are bright blue so you can find them easily and are very light with a strap to wear over the shoulder or around the waist. They have our kingfisher logo and are large enough to carry your binoculars, bird book, lunch, cell phone, computer...oops, I got carried away. But they are useful organizing not only things for your car but also your bird equipment. With pockets for everything.

We still have our standard decals and check lists.

Hats	\$15.00	Decals	\$1.00
Organizer	\$17.00	Check List	\$0.50

WALKS & FIELD TRIPS

Kathy McGinley arives@capecod.net

MARCH

Saturday March 7: Eastham, Fort Hill. Meet at the lower parking area of Fort Hill at 8:30 am. Leader: Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

Friday March 13: West Barnstable. Search for waterfowl and whatever else might be around. Meet at the Old Train Station at the railroad and Rt. 149 in West Barnstable at 8:00 am. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Friday March 20: Sandwich. Meet at Sandy Neck parking lot near ocean at 9:00 am. Leader: Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

Friday March 27: Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary. Sunset walk at Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary. Meet at Sanctuary at 5:00 pm. Leader: Bob Prescott, 349-2615.

Sunday March 29: Falmouth. Meet at Town Forest at 8:00 am, at the Gifford Street - Goodwill Park entrance. Leader: Bob Vander Pyl, 457-0864.

APRIL

Saturday April 4: Orleans. This walk is at Sea Call Farm and is in memory of Dick Forster who loved the area. Meet at the lower parking lot at 8:00 am on Tonset Road. Leader: Tish Noyes, 255-9810.

Saturday April 18: Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary. A Sunset walk at 6:00 pm on the Sanctuary property. Meet at the Visitor's Center. Leader: Bob Prescott, 349-2615.

Saturday April 25: Truro. This is a hawk and early migrant walk at Pilgrim Heights. Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 AM. Leader: Jeremiah Trimble, 432-6348.

Sunday April 26: Falmouth. Meet at the Town Forest at 6:00 am and at 8:00 am. Location is Gifford Street at the Goodwill Park entrance. Leader: Bob Vander Pyl, 457-0864.

Monday April 27: Mashpee Area. We'll check some marshes, rivers, and woodlands for whatever can be found. Meet at the Mashpee Library along Rt. 151 just west of Mashpee Rotary at 8:00 am. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

MAY

Saturday May 2: Beech Forest. Start of the warbler hunt! Meet at the Beech Forest parking lot at 8:00 am. Leader: Jim Talin, 896-7169.

Sunday May 3: Beech Forest. Warbling again at the Beech Forest in Provincetown. Meet at the parking lot at 8:00 am. Leader: Tom Noonan, 394-4588.

02644-1725 02

Printed on recycled paper
25% post consumer waste

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



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



HAWK WATCH HAWK WATCH HAWK WATCH

VOLUNTEER FOR THE CAPE COD HAWK WATCH THIS SPRING!

The Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary is looking for volunteers to count hawks one morning or afternoon per week from mid-April through mid-May. If you are interested, attend Paul Roberts' program described below. More details will be given at the end of his talk. If you are interested but cannot attend his program, call Jackie Sones at 508-349-2615. If you don't feel confident enough to count hawks yourself, but want to learn about the process, join staff from the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary at Pilgrim Heights on the dates listed below to gawk at the hawks!

THE VALUE OF WATCHING HAWKS
Saturday, March 21, 2 pm
FREE for hawk watch volunteers

Paul Roberts, president of the Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch Association, will introduce you to the natural history of hawks and the importance of conducting migration counts. This program is also a great introduction to our effort to census birds of prey found on the Outer Cape during spring. It will introduce you to the finer points of hawk watching, such as how to count hawks and how to fill out Hawk Migration Association of North America forms.

HAWK WATCHING AT PILGRIM HEIGHTS
Sundays, April 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, and 17, 9 am to Noon No registration required...just show up!
In the spring, Pilgrim Heights in Truro is one of the best places on Cape Cod to look for hawks. Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged, and Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels and Northern Harriers are all possibilities, and who can tell when a Swallow-tailed Kite might pass by! Our sightings will be recorded as part of spring counts.