



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 27

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ISSUE 1

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Don Scott*

Birding on Cape Cod offers a wide variety of year round venues. In the spring, especially in May, Provincetown's Beech Forest provides the opportunity to see a wide variety of beautiful warblers as well as colorful tanagers, orioles, and other migrants. Fall and winter bring thousands of waterfowl to the Cape's 300+ fresh water ponds as well as to our various salt water inlets, bays, and marshes. Raptors? Try Pilgrim Heights in the spring and fall. Pelagics? Sandy Neck and First Encounter Beach after a nor'easter will surely satisfy that urge. And shorebird sightings are available from May into October on virtually all of our wonderful beaches.

But the Cape's premier birding location, in my view, is the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge. These barrier

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*"...my favorites are the godwits"*

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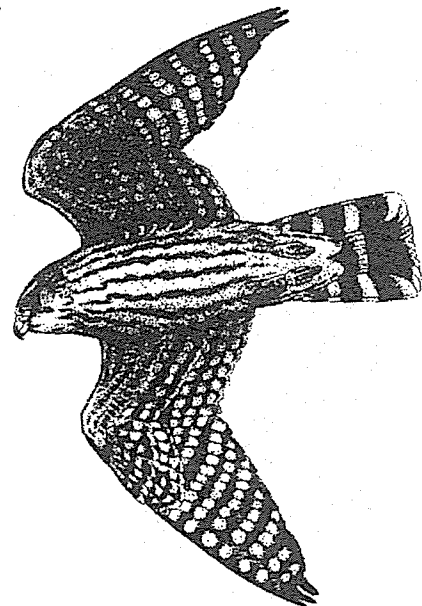
islands, bleak and windswept, offer the determined birder the opportunity to explore a wilderness area, something hard to perceive in our crowded summer season. Starting in May, and peaking in August, both North and South Monomoy host thousands of migrating shorebirds, who use these areas to rest and refuel during their long journeys to and from their Arctic breeding grounds. Though almost all species are easily seen, my favorites are the godwits. The Hudsonian, and its larger, spectacular cousin, the Marbled, are most commonly seen on the North Monomoy flats as well as on nearby South Beach. South Monomoy hosts a large nesting colony which features Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets and a few Glossy Ibis. Oystercatchers and Willets are common nesters on both islands, while Common Terns, Piping Plovers, the elusive Roseate Tern, and Black Skimmers have resumed nesting on the north end of South Monomoy.

South Monomoy, with its restored lighthouse keeper's cottage and tower, is most intriguing. A quiet hour on the deck of the cottage will likely reveal great sightings of Northern Harriers, Mute Swans, White-tailed Deer, a variety of waterfowl, and in the fall, many warblers in the surrounding shrubs and trees.

If you do not have access to a boat, both the Museum of Natural History and Mass Audubon have regularly scheduled trips to these exquisite islands. Do not miss the chance to visit this spectacular birder's paradise.

## LUDLOW GRISCOM AWARD

Blair Nikula of Harwich was the first recipient of the Bird Club's Ludlow Griscom Award, which was presented at the Club's May meeting at the Museum of Natural History. The award honors outstanding contributions to the world of birding, and it is named after Ludlow Griscom who was labeled "the dean of Birdwatchers" by Roger Tory Peterson. Griscom, had a connection to Cape Cod, having purchased a home on Sears Point in Chatham in 1936. He called Monomoy Island his favorite birding spot.



Blair Nikula's accomplishments include monitoring Cape Cod bird populations on North Monomoy Island, only as well as conducting Cape Cod breeding bird surveys, Beech Forest migrant bird surveys, and Cape Cod waterfowl surveys. Since 1974, Blair has been the most long-standing volunteer for the Manomet Bird Observatory, counting birds at 10 Cape Cod sites every 10 days in areas such as Wellfleet, Eastham, Orleans, Nauset, Chatham, and Monomoy. These efforts have provided 800 counts for the record books.

Blair was the seventh President of the Cape Cod Bird Club. He compiled the checklist of Cape Cod birds in 1985 which has become a standard reference for local birders. He was a prime mover and contributor to the book, *Birding Cape Cod*. He has also led bird watching trips around the world, as well as bird walks here on Cape Cod. He is a member of Mass Audubon's Record Committee, regional editor of National Audubon's Field Notes for New England, and is author of numerous articles in *Birding*, *Birding Eastern Massachusetts* and *Bird Observer*. Blair is also an accomplished bird photographer.

Jim Talin

To the eye, everything looked great my first morning in Vermont on a Saturday early this June. We had rented a white cabin under a mulberry tree, on an old farm where hayfields sloped gently down to a lowland along the Battenkill where hundreds of acres of yellow flag irises bloomed. Behind fences beside a red barn, two goats came out to greet me, tails wagging, their steps leaving a trail in the dew soaked grass. In the background Mount Equinox rose with steep green inclines into the blue Vermont sky. It looked like a scene from a different time. Yet a hundred years ago the crown of Mt. Equinox would have been different. It would have been covered by the creamy white blossoms of chestnut trees, by a layer of white that has been likened to a late snow or the foaming crest of a wave. But that was before a Chinese fungus killed off the American Chestnut trees that were once called the kings of the northern forest.

The chestnut came to mind because of something I had read in the *Boston Globe* this spring. A new pest has arrived from the orient, and it is killing all the maple trees in two townships on Long Island. Senator Leahy from Vermont had money appropriated this year to study the problem. The Japanese government urged him to share his findings because they have been unable to prevent the death of their maple trees. It seemed hard to me to imagine Vermont without maple trees, but that is what I did that day before an early morning walk. I knew that the fungus that destroyed the chestnuts was found in a few trees in New York City in 1904, and by 1950 the chestnut was virtually eliminated from American forests. Won't the maple be next?

On my walk, it was easy to forget such concerns. Some things still work right in nature. Three species of swallows flew at eye level over the fields. A chorus of red wings sang their cranky song. A Bobolink's liquid song flowed

from the fields, an oriole whistled in a huge maple tree, and among the irises, I could see a Wood Duck and a Common Merganser. A Woodcock called from somewhere among the sea of yellow blossoms too. And just down the road, a Wood Thrush sang in a strip of trees beside a garage.

But there was more to come. We were in Vermont on our annual pilgrimage to hear the thrushes sing in the deep forests, so later that morning we set out to hike in a wilderness area. We had to drive one of those rutted dirt roads that are closed in the winter, up a few thousand feet, miles from any houses, while a stream rushed down beside us as we drove. Here and there a person fishing for trout worked the pools of the stream. When we arrived at the trailhead, we were thankful we had brought our three-season overcoats. As we put them on, a truck with two fishermen pulled up near us, and they unloaded a canoe that they portaged to a small lake in the wilderness area. We got talking. I asked what they were fishing for. Trout was the answer from one man. "State stocks the pond every year, and we come up here for three or so weeks," he said. "Just catch 'em and throw 'em back," he added. "Why?" I asked. "Too much mercury in the lake. People can't eat them. They die in three weeks up here anyway, no way they could live in these ponds, so we just fish for them before the otter get 'em." "Mercury?" I asked. Yeah, he said. "It's from Midwest power plants. Can't do anything about it. That's why the Canadians hate us," he added. "We're doin' the same thing to their lakes. Trout in the steam are okay though. Sweet tasting. You can eat almost them bones and all they're so tender. Where are the bugs?" I asked. I hadn't seen a black fly, mosquito, dragon fly or butterfly since I had arrived. "Weather's screwy," he replied. "Two weekends ago, it was in the '90's, and they were all over you, couldn't get away from them. Then last week we were up here and it started to snow. Must have killed them all off."

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## Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.

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...

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

## Summary of the Breeding Bird Census

*Stauffer Miller*

About 20 stalwart souls conducted the Cape Cod Breeding Bird Census on June 13. I say stalwart because of the disagreeable weather of that day. The day started out windy and rainy, and this prevented owling and other early morning birding. Light rain continued till about 9 o'clock and the remainder of the morning had overcast skies and light winds (in fact, there was terrible flooding on this day in the Boston area). With all this in mind, the count recorded 89 species, which didn't seem too bad, all things considered. The average is about 100 species. I can't discuss trends because even though I'm the compiler, I still don't have the data of the earlier counts.

Some of the highlights of the count follow. George Martin's area, Yarmouthport and Dennis, had the only cuckoo, a Black-billed, near Cheyenne Road in Yarmouthport. Tom Noonan and Jim Talin, in the West Dennis sector, had the only Black-crowned Night Herons, Horned Larks, and Savannah Sparrows of the count. Peter Trimble turned up an Upland Sandpiper at the Barnstable Municipal Airport. The only Ruby-throated Hummingbird of the count was at Muriel Thomas' house near Centerville, and this was in Blair Nikula's sector. Those who were with me in the West Barnstable sector got to go out on Sandy Neck with a ranger. Our best bird was out there, a Red Knot

For those who put up with the unpleasant weather, my thanks. I hope more of you can participate next June. The weather can only improve.

## BIRD MAN

*New Scientist, 21 March 1998*

Here is another apocryphal story sent to us over the Internet by a friend who got it from a friend who... etc. It concerns a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who went to the Harvard football ground every day for an entire summer wearing a black and white striped shirt. He would walk up and down the pitch for ten to fifteen minutes throwing birdseed all around him, blow a whistle and then walk off the field. At the end of the summer, the Harvard football team played its first home match to a packed crowd. When the referee walked on in his black and white strip and blew his whistle, hundreds of birds descended on the field and the game had to be delayed for half an hour while they were removed. The student, so the story goes, wrote his thesis on this, and graduated.

*Jim Talin*

If humans could fly like birds, some of us would chose to soar like eagles, or pierce the air like peregrines, or maneuver like terns, or hover like hummingbirds. And some of us would be tempted to soar like Turkey Vultures, lazily riding thermals without ever flapping, gracefully soaring for hours seemingly without effort on a tilted six foot long wingspan. Tempted that is only if we could only overlook their eating habits. Turkey Vultures have been called all kinds of dirty names, and most have to do with their diet.

They have many nasty habits, and chief among them is their cuisine. They have been called nature's sanitary engineers or nature's ghastly gourmets. They eat carrion, whether it be fresh or putrid, whether it be roadkill or diseased. For some reason, Turkey Vultures can eat animals that have died of diseases without catching those diseases or infecting themselves. And if that isn't bad enough, vultures defend their nests by regurgitating that same carrion. They also excrete on themselves, for unknown reasons, but perhaps to cool their legs or to kill bacteria with the ammonia in their excrement. And to add insult to injury, they have no syrinx, so they cannot sing. Rather they weakly hiss or grunt. They make up for their lack of song, however, with a keen sense of smell.

Yet, they have their virtues. Turkey Vultures are monogamous. Both parents share the incubation of eggs. But, their nesting is much like their eating, in that they use whatever is at hand, laying eggs "on ground or ledges of rocks, in caves, hollow logs and stumps or hollow stubs, in deserted cabins or in old hogpens." (Forbush) "Pairing is often preceded by group 'dance' in which numbers gather on ground in open area, where each hops (with wings trailing) toward its neighbor, which in turn hops toward a third vulture." (John Terres, *N. A. Birds*) At night vultures roost together in numbers, and they are slow to get started in the morning, as they wait for the thermals and also spread their wings out to warm up before flight. Sometimes they roost on the tops of chimneys for the same reason, as the heated air rising from furnaces warms them.

Still for all their shortcomings, seeing a Turkey Vulture soar over the dunes on Cape Cod, or in a valley between mountains in Vermont, is a great sight. "No other American bird is so generally celebrated for its perfect conquest of the aerial currents. It seems to sail and soar gracefully without effort and to gain altitude even in windless air with few motions of its widespread pinions, which carry it up as if by magic. It seems to materialize the flight of the dreamer who imagines that he floats through the air by the mere effort of his will." (Forbush)

**Art King's Laws of Bird Watching**

**Law # 1 If you can see it, it is a Chickadee.**

A bird flies into a bush. What is it? Put your glasses up. If it's a Chickadee, you'll see it. If it is a rare or unusual bird, you will not see it.

**Law #2 If you put your glasses on a bird, it will fly.**

You are searching for a bird in a tree. You finally find it, and raise your glasses. Immediately upon coming into view, the bird will fly.

**Law # 3 The bird always goes to the back of the tree.**

No matter what side of a tree you approach from, any bird in the tree knows the backside, and retreats to it.

**Law # 4 Whenever you arrive at the scene of a good bird sighting, the report always is: "It just flew."**

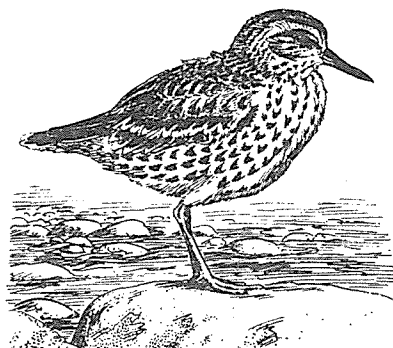
**Law #5 Whenever you have tired arms, a good bird will hop out into full view.**

After you have been searching for a long time with upraised binoculars, your shoulders ache, your arms can hold your glasses no longer, and drop from sheer fatigue; that's when the bird hops into full view.

**Law #6 You should have been here yesterday.**

"Yesterday that tree had fifteen warblers in it." Or: "Yesterday a Goshawk chased a Black-backed Woodpecker around that oak." etc. "You should have been here!"

**Law #7 If you carry your binoculars with you nine days out of ten, on the tenth day you'll see a good bird.**



*Susan Roney Drennan,  
Vice President for Ornithology,  
National Audubon Society*

If anyone ever needed more proof that people love cats, consider that the longest-running show in Broadway history, based on T.S. Eliot's poems in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, with music by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, is none other than *Cats*. Now in its second decade on Broadway, it has grossed over \$2.2 billion and been seen by 47 million people worldwide.

People have been captivated by the beauty and nature of cats for about the last 4,000 years, since the first cats were domesticated in Egypt. They were introduced to Europe about 2,000 years ago and came to North America when Europeans colonized this continent. In America, the domesticated cat is the most numerous pet, numbering about 60 million, according to U.S. Census data. In fact, nearly 30% of households have them. Careful estimates place free-ranging, feral cats at about 40 million. The combined total of 100 million cats nationwide is astonishing. Each of those animals must eat. Feral cats eat predominantly birds, rodents, and small mammals. Domesticated cats, even when fed regularly by their owners, retain their motivation to hunt. These cats also prey on the same animals that feral cats do. It is easy to see why the question of cats is a growing subject of controversy around the country.

At the most recent meeting of the National Audubon Society Board of Directors, the cat issue was addressed both as a policy matter and because some Audubon chapters have become involved in the issue in their local communities. After lengthy discussion, the Board voted to adopt a resolution regarding the cat issue. It took the following salient and science-based points into consideration before passing the resolution: Feral and free-ranging cats kill millions of native birds and other small animals annually; Birds constitute approximately 20%-30% of the prey of feral and free-ranging domestic cats; The American Ornithologists' Union, American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc., and the Cooper Ornithological Society have concluded that feral, homeless, lost, abandoned, or free-ranging domestic cats are proven to have serious negative impacts on bird populations, and have contributed to the decline of many bird species. Worldwide, cats may have been involved in the extinction of more bird species than any other cause, except habitat destruction; Feral cat colony management programs known by the acronym TTVNR (Trapped, Tested, Vaccinated, Neutered, Released) are not effective solutions to the problem. In fact, these cat colonies are usually fed by very well-meaning cat welfare groups.

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The unnatural colonies form around food sources and grow to the limits of the food supply. Feeding these strays does not prevent them from hunting; it only maintains high densities of cats that dramatically increase predation on and competition with native wildlife populations;

\*Free-roaming cats are likely to come in contact with rabid wild animals and thus spread the disease to people. They pose a risk to the general public through transmission of other diseases like toxoplasmosis, feline leukemia, distemper, and roundworm.

The resolution approved by the Board states that the Society will convey these science-based conclusions to Audubon chapters so that they will be in a position to work constructively on this issue, if they wish. Audubon will also work with scientific, conservation, and animal welfare communities to educate the public about the dangers that feral and free-roaming cats pose to birds and other native wildlife. It will also work on this issue with federal wildlife agencies, public health organizations, and legislative bodies as it decides are appropriate. The Society advocates responsible ownership of all pets. If you are a cat owner and would like a list of suggestions as to how to minimize their impact on wildlife, please see: For More Info, Susan Roney Drennan, Vice President for Ornithology, National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; email [sdrennan@audubon.org](mailto:sdrennan@audubon.org), or the citizen education page on Audubon's web site at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cat/>.

*Editor's note*

The American Bird Conservancy has launched a citizen education and action campaign to end the massive and unnecessary loss of birds and other wildlife to predation by domestic cats. Cats kill not only birds that frequent our backyards, such as the Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, and Song Sparrow, but also WatchList species such as the Snowy Plover, Wood Thrush, and Black-throated Blue Warbler, and endangered species such as the Least Tern and Piping Plover. Not only are birds and other wildlife at risk, but cats who roam free often lead short and painful lives, living on average less than 5 years, indoor cats often live to 17 or more years of age.

The American Bird Conservancy has prepared informative educational materials on the impact of cats on birds, including documentation on cat predation, health hazards, and other dangers associated with free-roaming cats, legislative solutions, and practical advice on how to convert an outdoor cat into a contented indoor pet.

*For more information:*

**Cats Indoors!**

**The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats**

American Bird Conservancy

1250 24th Street, NW, Suite 400 Washington, DC 20037

phone: (202) 778-9666, email: [abc@abcbirds.org](mailto:abc@abcbirds.org)

**Q. Do birds have a sense of smell?**

**A. Yes, and though it is highly variable from species to species, research is leading to a higher estimation of birds' smelling abilities.**

According to "Ornithology," by Dr. Frank B. Gill, among orders of birds, the relation of the size of the brain's olfactory bulb to its cerebrum determines a bird's sensitivity to odors. The bulb is generally small, but it is well developed in some birds, and as a result, some bird species can use smell better than others. Especially among them are birds that fly and hunt by night, which with other species can smell well enough to detect certain odors, and can smell just a trace of a substance that might lead to food. For example, bacon fat poured on the surface of the ocean attracted Black-footed Albatrosses from more than 18 miles away. Turkey vultures have been used to detect leaks in a 42-mile long oil pipeline; when ethyl mercaptan, which smells like rotting meat, was piped through, the Turkey Vultures gathered at the leak. Other vultures with less developed senses of smell use Turkey Vultures with their good sense of smell as guides to rotting food.

But scientists also now suspect that most bird species can use smell in daily activities, and individual species have been found to have high sensitivities adapted to specific needs like mating (finding a female in season by detecting gland secretions), feeding (finding carrion or worms), or even finding their nesting burrows. (Thanks to the NY Times.)

**Q. Why don't birds that perch on electrical wires get electrocuted?**

**A. To be electrocuted, a bird would have to be touching an electrical wire and a grounding point, such as the top of a telephone pole or the ground at the same time. As long as the bird touches only the wire, it is safe. In addition, many wires are now insulated and pose no danger to birds at all.**

But birds can be electrocuted in some circumstances. Large birds of prey, golden eagles for instance, have a large wing span and can sometimes get caught between a wire and a grounding point, for instance when they touch the wires with their wings as they settle onto a perch on top of a pole. For this reason, in many areas, the spacing between the wires and the tops of poles has been increased. (Thanks to the Boston Globe.)

## A MURMURATION OF STARLINGS

A list of terms used to describe groups of animals follows. According to the Oxford Concise English Dictionary, many of the names "belong to 15th-century lists of 'proper terms', notably those found in the Book of Saint Albans which is attributed to Dame Juliana Barnes (1486). Many of these are fanciful or humorous terms which probably never had any real currency, but they have been taken up by Joseph Strutt in *Sports and Pastimes of England* (1801) and by other antiquarian writers."

a flock, flight, parcel, pod, fleet or dissimulation of small birds  
a covert of coots  
a herd of cranes or of curlew  
a murder of crows  
a trip of dotterel  
a flight, dole or piteousness of doves  
a raft, bunch, or paddling of ducks on water  
a team of wild ducks in flight  
a fling of dunlins  
a charm or chirm of finches  
a gaggle of geese  
a skein, team or wedge of geese (in the air)  
a pack or covey of grouse  
a seige of herons  
a cast of hawks let fly  
a desert of lapwing  
an exaltation or bevy of larks  
a tiding of magpies  
a sord or sute (=suit) of mallard  
a richesse of martens  
a watch of nightingales  
a covey of partridges  
a muster of peacocks  
a rookery of penguins  
a head or nye of pheasants  
a kit of pigeons flying together  
a stand, wing or congregation of plovers  
a rush or flight of pochards  
a bevy or drift of quail  
an unkindness of ravens  
a parliament or building of rooks  
a hill of ruffs  
a dopping of sheldrake  
a wisp or walk of snipe  
a host of sparrows  
a murmuration of starlings  
a flight of swallows  
a game or herd of swans  
a wedge of swans in flight  
a spring of teal

a bunch or knob of waterfowl  
a company or trip or plump of wildfowl  
a knob of wildfowl (when less than 30)  
a fall of woodcock  
a herd of wrens

**Some of the terms used to describe other animals, people and professions are humorous:**

a shrewdness of apes  
a blush of boys  
a clowder or glaring of cats  
a drunkship of cobblers  
a hastiness of cooks  
a stalk of foresters  
an observance of hermits  
a kindle of kittens  
a leap of leopards  
a faith of merchants  
a superfluity of nuns  
a malapertness (impertinence) of pedlars  
a pity of prisoners

### UPDATE

**Updates on House Finch Conjunctivitis from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Web Page**  
House Finches with severe conjunctivitis were first observed in suburban Washington D.C. in January 1994. Using a large network of volunteers in eastern North America, researchers were able to track the prevalence of the disease month by month between November 1994 and March 1997. They found a very rapid spread of the conjunctivitis epidemic through the eastern House Finch population. The epidemic first expanded mainly North, probably carried along by House Finches on their return migration, then towards the SE, and later West. By March 1997 conjunctivitis had been reported from most of the eastern range of the House Finch. The prevalence of the disease seemed to fluctuate seasonally, with increases in the fall, probably as a result of dispersing juveniles. House Finch numbers decreased throughout winter in areas with cold winters and high conjunctivitis prevalence, suggesting significant mortality associated with the disease.

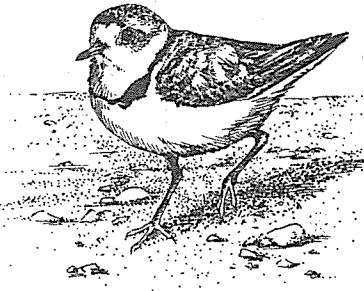
Observations also identified potential risk factors associated with conjunctivitis in house finches. Over two years, 778 volunteers provided 7224 monthly observations by questionnaire at residential bird feeding sites in eight states of the eastern USA. House finches were 14 to 72 times as likely to be observed with conjunctivitis than four other passerines. Year, season, platform, hopper and tube type feeders were associated with conjunctivitis in house finches. Platform feeders may have been protective against conjunctivitis.

## PROGRAMS & MEETINGS

*Phil Kyle*

On Monday evening, **September 14, 1998**, at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Karen Von den Deale will present a program entitled *Wild Babes of Summer*. Karen is the founder and director of WILD CARE in Brewster. She will talk about her work raising orphaned and injured birds which is the major summer project of her organization. She, her licensed rehabilitators, and hundreds of volunteers care for song birds, shore birds, even juvenile pelagic birds. Since 1994, WILD CARE had dealt with over 7000 wildlings.

On Monday evening, **October 12**, at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Brad Blodgett of Massachusetts Wildlife, formerly known as the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, will present a program entitled *Penikese Island Wildlife Sanctuary*. This program will include a brief history of Penikese and an up to the minute report on the current tern restoration project. Brad Blodgett has been Massachusetts State Ornithologist since 1977. He also served as a naturalist for Mass Audubon in the 60's.



## FIELD TRIPS

*Stauffer Miller*

I am the new coordinator of field trips for the bird club. Kathy McGinley, after an admirable two-year stretch in this capacity, has stepped down. She did a great job.

Please don't hesitate to lead a field trip. If you know of a good place to walk that has a few birds, lead a trip there. Don't worry if you don't know the birds; for the most part, members of the Cape Cod Bird Club are pretty forgiving. Just contact me and I'll set it up. I'm now scheduling field trips for November and December. If you'd like to do one for that time period, contact me by the end of September. I'd like to compile a master list of all the birds seen on all the field trips for 1998-99. I'll report on that in the newsletter. How many species can we find? over 200? Hope to hear from you and/or see you in the field.

## WALKS & FIELD TRIPS

*Stauffer Miller*

### September

Thursday, September 3rd. Meet at Coast Guard Beach parking lot, Eastham, at 8:30 AM. We'll look for migrating birds in Nauset Marsh on a rising tide. Co-leaders: Kathy and Rives McGinley, 255-4740.

Tuesday, September 8th. Meet at west end of West Dennis Beach parking lot at 9:00 AM. We'll look for shorebirds there, then land birds at West Harwich. Co-leaders: Ruth Connaughton, 432-1580, and Nancy Reider, 398-8296.

Sunday, September 13th. Meet at Falmouth Town Forest (inside first gate, north of DPW on Gifford Street) at 7:00 AM. A good time and place for migrating fall land birds. Leader: Bob Vander Pyl, 457-0864.

Saturday, September 19th, Morris Island. Meet at the Monomoy NWR headquarters parking lot at 9:00 AM. Tom Noonan, 385-3193, and Jim Talin, 896-7169.

Sunday, September 27th. Meet at the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary at 4:30 PM for an evening walk there. Leader, Bob Prescott, 349-2615.

### October

Friday, October 2nd. Morris Island, Chatham. Meet at the Monomoy NWR headquarters parking lot at 8:00 AM. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher a possibility. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Saturday, October 3rd. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the lower parking lot at Fort Hill at 9:00 AM. Leader, Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

Saturday, October 10th. Meet at 8:00 AM at the South Cape Beach parking lot in Mashpee. Golden Plover is a possibility. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Sunday, October 11th. Meet at Falmouth Town Forest (inside first gate, north of DPW, on Gifford Street) at 8:00 AM. Leader, Bob Vander Pyl, 457-0864.

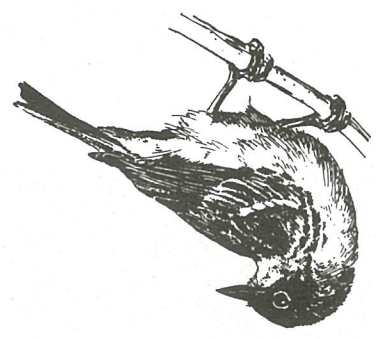
Sunday, October 18th. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the east parking lot at Fort Hill at 10:00 AM. Optimal tide and date for a Yellow Rail search. Bring boots. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Saturday, October 31st. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary at 3:00 PM for a Halloween evening walk there. We'll see what can be scared up. Leader, Bob Prescott, 349-2615.



02644-1725 02

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Barbara Steller  
Frank Caruso



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



# DON'T LEAVE IT TO NATURE

*Jim Talin*

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That day thrushes were silent. We heard only one phrase of a Swainson's Thrushes song on our whole walk. We had better luck the next day at Merck Forest where it was warmer and all the thrushes were singing. I couldn't help but think as we marched down trails marked like roadways that perhaps we would be better off if we just stopped in a meadow to watch bees in raspberry blossoms, while a Chestnut-sided sang in a thicket nearby and in the distance a Hermit Thrush's song echoed among the trees. Or if we just stopped and spent an hour on a mountain's shoulder where ferns covered the forest floor and Scarlet Tanagers flew about and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks sang.

Down the road from where we stayed stands the house of one of the original Green Mountains boys. I tried to imagine what his reaction would be if he returned to see Vermont and how it has changed. Hopefully, he would be as angry as he was at the

British. We humans are deadly predators. We don't just kill almost every species on the planet for food, but we destroy habitats too. Our fingerprint is everywhere, in the dead pond water 2500 feet up in the Green Mountains, in the Amazon, in the Antarctic, transforming nature itself. Can we just shrug and say let nature take care of itself, when we have diverted, dammed, and rechanneled its course? I don't think so. The American Chestnut is an example why. Determined to save this tree, breeders in Virginia took a resistant Chinese chestnut and crossed it with the most resistant surviving American trees. After generations of crosses and back crosses, a new tree has emerged which is 15/16ths American Chestnut, and 1/16 Chinese Chestnut with all of its resistance. This new tree will be ready for the market in 10 years. And perhaps, some day, a hundred years from now, the summit of Mount Equinox chestnut trees will bloom in the spring again, and people will be thankful.