



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 29

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2000

ISSUE 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE


Phil Kyle

As another birding season winds down, most people are inclined to hang-up their binoculars and think about warmer days gone by. You can do much birdwatching, though, without field glasses, especially at this time of year. When observing birds is done by watching the bird feeder.

Feeding birds in winter and watching the ones that arrive is how I originally got hooked on birding. I was amazed that I could attract wildlife to my feeders and just look out my kitchen window at it! Whether it was hand feeding birds in the depths of winter or simply seeing these "survivors" on a daily basis, it was great! Actually, I attracted more than birds. Red and gray squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, chipmunks and even the rare unwelcome R-A-T would sometimes arrive.

My assortment of feeders is visited by the expected birds. The suet feeder, hanging high to avoid unwanted mammals, regularly attracts Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and Flickers. Once, it also brought in a first-year Cooper's Hawk. The two large tube feeders, one for black-oil sunflower seed, which has Chickadees, Blue Jays, Cardinals, Song Sparrows and Carolina Wrens as regulars, and the other for thistle seed mainly has Goldfinch and House Finch as diners but early on attracted Pine Siskins and most recently Redpolls.


The in-the-kitchen-window-feeder, which has a trap door in it at the top so you can fill it from inside, draws in the usual suspects along with Pine Warblers, Mockingbirds and Vesper Sparrows. Even a young American Crow squeezed in to get some food! In the early years it was host to Evening Grosbeaks. But the biggest attraction for the majority of birds has been the big platform feeder. It is on two small saw horses about eighteen inches off the ground, upon which I have seen Quail, Pheasant, as well as Song, White-throated, Fox and White-Crowned Sparrows, along with the errant Rufous-sided Towhee.

On the many indoor days this winter when it's too cold or too windy to enjoy being outdoors, remember you can see a wide variety of birds right from your chair by the window. 

NOVEMBER

No warmth; no cheerfulness; no healthful ease
No comfortable feel in any member
No shade; no shine; no butterflies; no bees
No fruit; no flowers; no leaves No birds.
November

TWO NEW PROJECTS NEED YOUR INPUT

1. The bird club's Board agreed that we should publish a birding brochure aimed at visitors to the Cape with brief information about where to go in the different seasons and what one would expect to see at each location. This brochure would be placed at visitor centers both on and off Cape. Anyone who'd like to share in the contents and design of this brochure, please call your editor at 362-3384.
2. This is a bigger undertaking in collaboration with the CC Museum of Natural History to put on a nature festival, tentatively named "Celebrating Our Piece of the Earth," that would have as its central theme the importance of identifying and removing alien plants (phragmites, purple loosestrife) and other threats to our native wildlife. The format would include speakers and other types of programs that would address the problems and present methods of amelioration. The current plan is to utilize many rooms at the museum, each of which would have its own focus: birds, plants, mammals. Each room would be set up with an identification quiz with prizes for the highest scorers. Once again, your editor welcomes any and all ideas on how to make this a really great event. 

COMING!!! Bird Club pins and patches. They may be available at the December meeting.

November

Monday, November 6: West Dennis Beach and Area. Meet at West Dennis Beach parking lot at 9:00 AM. Leaders: Diane Silverstein and Michael Dettrey, 398-9484.

Thursday, November 9: Gulls and Seabirds of Wellfleet/Provincetown. Meet and Carpool at Friendly's near Rotary in Orleans at 9:00 AM. Scope helpful. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Sunday, November 12: Falmouth, 9:00 AM. Meet at the Locust Street Parking Area of the Bike Path. Leaders: Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.

Thursday, November 16: 9:00 AM. Waterfowl of Dennis and Nearby Areas. Meet at Corporation Beach, Dennis. Leader, Mark Tuttle, 362-3015.

Saturday, November 18th: 9:00 AM. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the Lower Parking Lot. Leader: Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

December

Thursday, December 7: 9:00 AM. Meet at the Corner Cafe in Pocasset at intersection of Shore and Barlow's Landing Roads to visit a variety of habitats. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Saturday, December 9: 9:00 AM. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the Lower Parking Lot. Leader: Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

Sunday, December 10: Falmouth, 9:00 AM. Meet at the Locust Street Parking Area of the Bike Path. Leaders, Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.

FIELD TRIP WRAPUP: A group from the club journeyed to Freeport, Maine, on October 14-15 to visit a Saw-whet Owl banding site in backyard of biologists Judy and Steve Walker. We went on two net-runs with the Walkers and watched 4 owls be banded and released. On the return, we found several Black Guillemots at Biddeford, Maine. We saw 52 species for the weekend, had a great time, and I plan to offer the trip this same time next October.

**SPECIAL DATES:**

Annual waterfowl count: Saturday and Sunday, **December 2 and 3.** Sign up with Blair Nikula at the November meeting or call 432-6348


Annual Cape Cod Christmas Count, December 17
Sign up with Blair Nikula at the December meeting or call 432-6348.


Annual Mid-Cape Christmas Count
Date TBA at December club meeting or call Peter Trimble, 477-3897

**BIRD CLUB MEETINGS**

All meetings, unless otherwise indicated, are held the second Monday of each month, September through May, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster.



On **November 13**, Roger Everett will present a slide program, "The Birds of the Truro Chicken Farm." Roger has been a "serious" photographer since 1972. His photographs have appeared in "Birder's World," "American Birds" and Cape Cod Life." *Wading and Shorebirds* and *Favorite Songbirds* are books containing collections of his photographs. Roger holds a Star rating in pictorial slides as a member of the Photographic Society of America. Roger is a past president of the CCBC and an entertaining speaker. 

On **December 11**, another local favorite, Bob Prescott, will give a slide presentation on "The Birds and Beaches of the Western Hemisphere." Bob, the director of the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, received his degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) and has studied such diverse topics as whale strandings, seal distribution around Cape Cod and most recently the Eastern Box Turtle. Bob has also served as the coordinator for the Northeast Sea Turtle  Stranding Network.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO BIRD FEEDING OR JUST WANT TO IMPROVE ON YOUR OLD METHODS, HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

From Bird Watcher's Digest:


- Offer a variety of seeds and food in appropriate feeders (sunflower seed in tube, hopper, or platform feeders, thistle in tube feeders, peanuts in peanut feeders, suet in suet cages, and mixed seed on platform feeders or scattered on dry ground).
- Don't offer so-called wild bird mixes in tube feeders. These are better fed on platforms or out of hopper feeders. Birds that prefer sunflower seed will just empty the feeder to get at the sunflower seeds.
- Make a brushpile near your feeder to make sparrows, towhees, and other shy birds feel more at home, but be sure it won't harbor roaming cats.
- Add natural features to your feeding station, such as branches to perch on, to make birds feel more at ease.
- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every few weeks, oftener in summer or rainy periods. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.

(continued on Page 5)


MIRACLE MEAL RECIPE

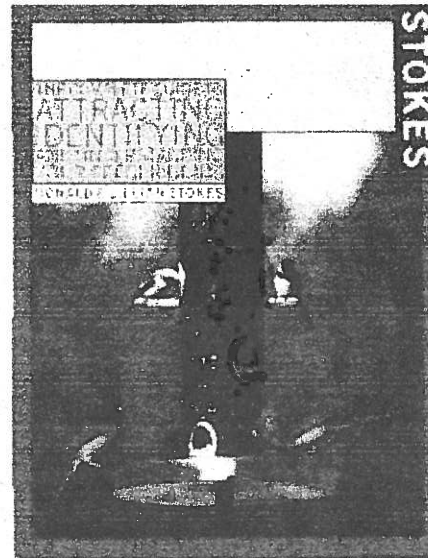
If you should be so fortunate to have bluebirds wintering in your yard, or should some show up early in the spring, the following recipe is something they will gladly eat. You can offer it as you would suet for other birds, but for bluebirds you'll need to spread it on the ground. Use this especially after a late and heavy snow. Many birds will appreciate it.


- 1 cup peanut butter or 2 cups peanut hearts/bits
- 3 cups yellow corn meal
- 1 cup lard (no substitutions)
- 1 cup white flour.

Bring lard to room temperature or melt it before blending with other ingredients. If you have bluebirds and a bluebird house, you can place this meal inside the house! Store in refrigerator. 

From Aelred D. Geis, Director of Research Wild Bird Centers of America:

1. Use the seed most attractive to the birds you want to feed. Oil sunflower seed is often the best
2. Put feeders where you can easily see them.
3. Make sure all feeding ports and feeding areas are kept clear of debris so birds have easy access to food.
4. Have a shrub or other perching area near feeders to increase bird visits and visibility.
5. Since most birds that eat millet are ground feeders, present your millet either on a platform feeder or directly on the ground.
6. Use Bird Cakes to attract woodpeckers and wintering warblers. 



Here's a really useful book for anyone who feeds birds. Written by Lilian and Donald Stokes, those same folks who've written a great field guide and hand out loads of helpful hints on television, this book is chock full of interesting information. Get one for yourself and one for a friend! 

TRY THIS: Give your seed feeders (especially thistle and tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed. *Bird Watcher's Digest*



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

(Based on sightings reported by members or seen on Club-sponsored field trips)

Common Eider (Barbara Stanton), Indigo Bunting, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow (Ron Ayotte); Screech Owl, Red Phase (Bessie Tirrell), Common Loon, Red-throated Loon (John Redford) *Harwich*

Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Baltimore Oriole, Clay-colored Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow (Phil Kyle, Ron Ayotte, Nancy Reider), Ring-necked Pheasant (Roger Everett), Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow (Diane Silverstein) *Truro*

Bonaparte's Gull (Eric Levy) *Brewster*

Snow Geese (Bob Vander Pyl) *Wellfleet*

Black Guillemot, White-winged Scoter, Red-throated Loon, Black Tern (Sue Thompson) *Orleans*

Red-eyed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Harrier, Common and Black terns (Jim Talin), Wilson's Phalarope (Joyce Leary, Pat Lynch), Philadelphia Vireo (Sally Clifton), Short-billed Dowitcher (Pat Lynch) *Chatham*

White-eyed Vireo (Mark Tuttle); Peregrine Falcon (Nancy Reider, Ruth Connaughton), Horned Lark (Diane Silverstein) *Dennis*

Forster's Tern, Black Tern (Sally Clifton), Peregrine Falcon (Stauffer Miller), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Greg Hirt) *Barnstable*

Black-necked Stilt, Tricolor and Little Blue herons (Phil Kyle), Baird's and Stilt sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitcher, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Parasitic Jaeger (Barbara Murphy) *S. Monomoy*

Tree Swallow (1000+) (Bob Vander Pyl) *Falmouth*


Greater and Sooty shearwater, Northern Gannet (Ned Handy) *Stellwagen*

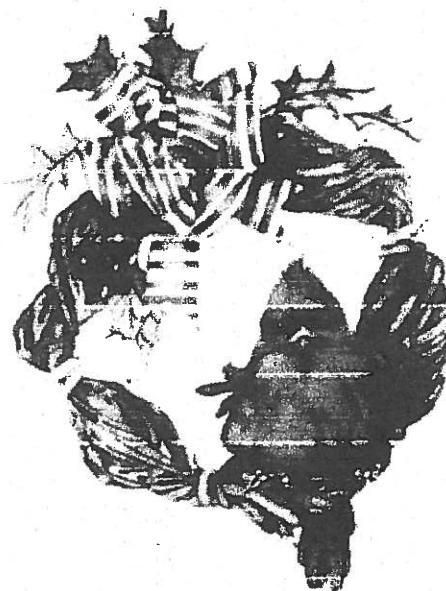
Clay-colored Sparrow (Phil Kyle, Ron Ayotte) *Sandwich*

(FEEDING TIPS continued from page 4)

- Don't allow large amounts of seed to become wet, as on platform feeders. Instead, when it's wet outside, feed primarily from covered feeders that will keep seed dry, or put out only a handful of seed at a time on platforms.
- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, halt your feeding for a few weeks to allow the healthy birds to disperse. This lessens the possibility of disease transmission. Remove and discard in the trash any dead birds. Report the sick birds to your local wildlife officials, many of whom monitor wildlife health.
- In hot weather, use rendered suet or heat-resilient suet blocks that are available commercially to avoid suet that is rancid and unhealthy for birds.
- Though birds may not be entirely dependent on your feeder, it's best not to leave them totally without food if you plan to be away from home in mid-winter. Purchase an oversized feeder with a large seed capacity, or ask a willing neighbor to continue feeding your birds.

Excerpted from : http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwd/articles/bwd99/sept_oct99/bird_feeding.html

Another helpful site is The National Bird Feeding Society (<http://www.birdfeeding.org/>). Join the Society and start reading 'The Bird's Eye reView, a bi-monthly newsletter filled with tips, tactics and tales. You also receive the Basics of Backyard Bird Feeding, your guide to bird feeding, and much more. 



Cape Cod Bird Club

FEEDER CENSUS REPORT 1998-99 & 1999-2000

compiled and reported by Jim Talin

1998-99 Birds/Feeder/Month		1999-2000 Birds/Feeder/Month		1980-1998 Median Birds/Feeder/Month	
Goldfinch	8.63	Goldfinch	6.43	Mourning Dove	6.64
Mourning Dove	5.93	Starling	5.91	Chickadee	5.24
Robin	5.59	Mourning Dove	5.34	House Finch	5.06
B C Chickadee	4.41	B C Chickadee	5.12	Goldfinch	4.26
House Finch	4.35	House Finch	4.10	House Sparrow	4.08
House Sparrow	3.44	House Sparrow	3.48	Blue Jay	3.97
Blue Jay	3.36	Tufted Titmouse	3.25	Starling	3.47
Cardinal	3.10	Crow	3.23	Grackle	2.36
Crow	2.57	Blue Jay	3.15	Crow	2.21
White-throated Sparrow	2.41	Cardinal	2.64	Cardinal	2.12
Tufted Titmouse	2.08	Junco	2.26	Junco	1.90
Starling	1.97	Robin	2.20	Tufted Titmouse	1.84
Downy Woodpecker	1.67	Downy Woodpecker	1.85	Bobwhite	1.61
Song Sparrow	1.47	White-breasted Nuthatch	1.63	Red-winged Blackbird	1.52
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1.26	Grackle	1.63	Downy Woodpecker	1.50
Grackle	1.24	White-throated Sparrow	1.63	Robin	1.18
Red-winged Blackbird	1.19	Song Sparrow	1.40	Song Sparrow	1.03
White-breasted Nuthatch	0.95	Red-winged Blackbird	1.19	White-throated Sparrow	1.03
Carolina Wren	0.79	Bobwhite	1.09	W B Nuthatch	0.93
Flicker	0.71	Pine Siskin	0.87	Flicker	0.53
Hairy Woodpecker	0.57	Carolina Wren	0.74	R B Nuthatch	0.35
Bobwhite	0.39	Cowbird	0.73	Cowbird	0.35
Cowbird	0.35	Yellow-rumped Warber	0.70	Mockingbird	0.24
Red-bellied Woodpecker	0.27	Red-breasted Nuthatchq	0.59	Tree Sparrow	0.22
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0.24	Flicker	0.57	Carolina Wren	0.19
Mockingbird	0.20	Mockingbird	0.35	Brown Creeper	0.11
Pine Warbler	0.18	Red-bellied Woodpecker	0.29	Purple Finch.	0.06
Red-breasted Nuthatch	0.17	Cedar Waxwing	0.22	Evening Grosbeak	0.03
Cedar Waxwing	0.15	Tree Sparrow	0.22	Pine Siskin	0.02
Bluebird	0.10	Brown Creeper	0.18		

The lists above show the last two years of the feeder census next to the 20 year median for the census. Averages and medians don't tell us the whole story because some birds flock in large numbers and others are solitary, so that in the 2000 census, Starlings finished second in terms of numbers, but they were seen in flocks of 17.4 birds, as opposed to Sharp-shinned Hawks which were seen in groups of 1.1 birds. 1999 was the year of the

Robin on Cape Cod, their numbers increasing from their median of 1.18 to 5.59 birds per month. 2000 was the comeback year for the Bobwhites, which were seen in low numbers of 0.39 birds in 1999 and increased to 1.09 birds in 2000 with 23 sightings over the census period. The 20 year median for Bobwhites is 1.61 birds per month. 2000 was also a year when Northern birds were seen more frequently, including Siskins, Redpolls and Crossbills.

FEEDER CENSUS REPORT 1998-99 & 1999-2000

Page 2

% of Feeders 1998-99		% of Feeders 1999-2000	
BC Chickadee	95%	B C Chickadee	100%
Goldfinch	91%	Goldfinch	91%
Tufted Titmouse	86%	Tufted Titmouse	90%
Downy Woodpecker	85%	Blue Jay	83%
Blue Jay	81%	Downy Woodpecker	81%
Mourning Dove	79%	Mourning Dove	80%
House Finch	77%	W B Nuthatch	80%
Cardinal	74%	Cardinal	73%
W B Nuthatch	63%	House Finch	71%
Crow	61%	Crow	68%
Song Sparrow	57%	Song Sparrow	55%
White-throated Sparrow	56%	Carolina Wren	51%
Carolina Wren	51%	Robin	46%
Robin	51%	Junco	46%
Junco	44%	Flicker	37%
Hairy Woodpecker	43%	R B Nuthatch	36%
Flicker	43%	House Sparrow	36%
Yellow-rumped Warbler	35%	White-throated Sparrow	35%
House Sparrow	35%	Starling	34%
Starling	23%	Hairy Woodpecker	32%
Grackle	23%	Yellow-rumped Warbler	27%
Red-winged Blackbird	19%	Mockingbird	24%
Sharp-shinned Hawk	17%	Red-winged Blackbird	21%
Mockingbird	15%	Red-bellied Woodpecker	17%
R B Nuthatch	13%	Cowbird	16%
Cowbird	11%	Bobwhite	15%
Pine Warbler	8%	Brown Creeper	15%
Buebird	6%	Sharp-shinned Hawk	15%
Cedar Waxwing	5%	Pine Warbler	9%
Brown Creeper	5%	Rufous-sided Towhee	7%
Hermit Thrush	5%	Tree Sparrow	6%

NOTES ON THE CENSUS

In the 1999 Census, some unusual birds were seen. A Baltimore Oriole was seen by Frances Howes of Eastham, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by Bill Howe of Falmouth, a Veery by Janet Judd of Eastham, a Dickcissel at the Everetts in Brewster, and a Black-throated Blue Warbler by Mary Kirchhoff in Provincetown.

In the 2000 census, David Ludlow of Kingston saw a total of 127 Pine Siskins at his feeder, with a high of 60 in November. For the months of Dec. and Jan. Ruth Connaughton

saw a Baltimore Oriole, and Frances Howes of Eastham had 2 immature Orioles at her feeder from Nov. to Jan. A Wild Turkey was seen in Dot Oberding's yard in Wellfleet during Dec. and Feb. Ruth Burnham of Eastham saw a Purple Martin in April. A Great-horned Owl was seen in the Everett's yard in Brewster in Dec. while Martrha Taraga and Skip Little had a Screech Owl in their yard for the months of Feb-Apr. Jim Talin had a number of Red-polls in his yard throughout the winter.


BALD EAGLE STAMP PROGRAM



Bring your commemorative postage stamps to pass on to Bessie Tirrel at each meeting. She sends them down to Florida, where they are resold with the proceeds going toward the Bald Eagle

restoration project. 

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The 101st Christmas Counts for the National Audubon Society will soon be here. The aim is to spot and record the number and species of birds in a count circle. This year, as in many years past, Blair Nikula and Peter Trimble have volunteered to be in charge of the Lower Cape count and the Mid-Cape counts respectively. As someone put it so eloquently, the Christmas Count is the "canary in the coal mine" for the environment. So please volunteer your time and effort for these very worthwhile events. 

ANNUAL FEEDER COUNT

Enclosed with this issue of the newsletter is the bird club's annual feeder census form. In case you haven't participated before, please look at the form and its instructions and plan to take part this winter.



DUES ARE DUE


The mailing list will be revised very shortly. If you have not paid 2000-2001 dues by the end of the year, this may be the last newsletter you receive. We do not like to lose members, but at the same time, we do not want to have a mailing list inflated with names of those no longer interested in CCBC. So please play promptly. Check the back to see your status.


Dues are single \$10.00, family \$15.00.

Mail checks to ...

Cape Cod Bird Club
Ellie Winslow-Treasurer
24 Charles St.
Sandwich, MA 02563

BIRD SIGHTINGS WANTED

With the (lamented) "departure" of Blair Nikula as compiler of the "Sightings" section of our newsletter, the Board of Directors decided to try a new approach. Each newsletter will publish the sightings reported by Club members at the monthly meetings or seen on field trips ("walks") sponsored by the Club during the period since the last meeting. (See page 5 for this issue's sightings.) Ron Ayotte, Secretary, has agreed to compile the sightings for the newsletter. Members having any *significant* (your judgment) bird sightings for "Sightings," should forward them to him, preferably by e-mail (ayotterc@capecod.net), by snail-mail (84 Wing Blvd West, E. Sandwich, MA 02537) or by phone (508-888-2164; leave a message if no one answers.) 

DID YOU KNOW ... that you should not use grease, oil, petroleum jelly, or similar substances on your feeder poles or wires to thwart squirrels, ants, or other feeder-raiding creatures? If these substances come into contact with bird feathers they are impossible for the bird to preen or wash out. Goopy feathers can become useless for flight or insulation, thus putting the birds at risk to predators, extreme weather, and disease. Instead, use a pole-mounted baffle to thwart mammals. For ants, use an ant guard that prevents ants from reaching the feeder. 

I heard a bird sing
by Oliver Herford

I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.
A musical thing
And sweet to remember
"We are nearer to Spring
Than we were in September."
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.

DID YOU KNOW ... most songbirds have significantly more feathers in winter than at other times of the year? In cold weather they puff up their feathers for extra insulation.

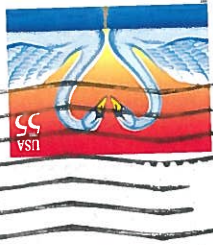
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FORESTDALE, MA 02644-1725
17 Freedom Rd
Barbara Steller
Frank Caruso

have not been paid
 have been paid

According to our records your dues for 2000-2001...

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



CCBC Decals	\$ 1.00	CCBC Hats	\$ 15.00
CCBC Checklist	.50	Binocular/Camera Straps	12.50
Birding Cape Cod	10.00	Organizer Packs	17.00

bird club gift ideas

available for sale at each meeting

CAPE COD BIRD CLUB
MA 02631
PM

Greetings from your editor: If every member would write an account of a bird observation, a bird trip, a good bird book or anything else that would interest the club's readers, what a wonderful newsletter we would have! Please send all submissions to me electronically — no need to format your article, as email serves the purpose just fine. If you don't have a computer or email of your own, your public library can help you with this task. I must have all submissions by the 15th of the month prior to the next issue (but I'll happily take them earlier!). Don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions. *Elinor Miller, emiller@seepub.com; 362-3384*



The Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.

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

Officers

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Barbara Stanton *Vice President*
Ron Ayotte *Secretary*
Ellie Winslow *Treasurer*

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