



# Cape Cod Bird Club

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SUMMER 2000

ISSUE 5

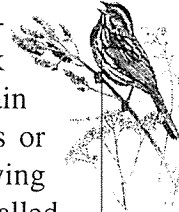
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Phil Kyle*

At this time of year things change dramatically. They've always changed. From the bleak leafless environments where some of us entertain ourselves by identifying some unknown tracks or maybe trying to figure what some migrating diving sea ducks are. The off-season, as it is very often called, is equated with losses. The birds migrate and leave, almost all the insects die, trees lose their leaves and it's cold. Very cold. It is a time of reflection for most.


Then comes Spring !!! The rejuvenating season. The renewal of the natural world. Buds open up on trees, flowers blossom, animals wake up from a long season's nap and finally the BIRDS RETURN!!!! Not only do they come back but most of them vocalize ( i.e. sing ).

These songbirds influence our mood, our attitude. Like the poets Milton, Keats and Shelley who were definitely affected, there is a transference of songs from the avian world to our emotions; songs affect how we feel. Anthropomorphizing does occur! As Lang Elliott, author of *Music of the Birds* says, "Scientific knowledge is important but primarily as a springboard from which to leap into the domain of feeling."



Birds vocalize not to amuse or entertain us but to set up boundaries, attract mates and to scare away potential suitors. In other words, the first function of song is to say, "This is my territory, my yard." Secondly, song functions to find a bird a mate, even strengthening the pair bond if mating has already occurred. Unfortunately people think that birds sing to entertain the listeners. — that the birds are singing for humans. But song signals the beginning of the bird breeding season!

We can make some inferences about how birds sing. The more rapidly a bird repeats itself, the more urgently it's seeking a mate. Possibly he could be motivated by an ensuing territorial encounter. Believe it or not, there is a lot of scientific knowledge that the male's singing also stimulates ovarian development and eventual egg laying. AMAZING!!!!

So whether it's a robin or a Black-throated Green Warbler getting your attention, singing is predictable at this time of year. And even though it affects our mood positively, remember the birds are mainly singing to ADVERTISE their own AGENDA. 

## Get well ...

Charlotte Smith, one of the founders of the CCBC and recipient of last year's Ludlow Griscom award, is at the Greenery Rehabilitation Center, 89 Lewis Bay Road, Hyannis 02601. Surely, she would appreciate getting cards from members of the club.

## Many thanks to ...


Bessie Tirrell for her faithful dedication to helping the Cape Cod Bird Club with its regular meetings. She has opened up the museum, overseen the setting up of tables and whatever else we have needed for our meetings and then has been responsible for the closing up of the building after the meetings.

*Please read the editor's note on back page!*

## ANNUAL BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

*Stauffer Miller*

The annual breeding bird census sponsored by the bird club will be June 10. An important area of the census is Sandy Neck. However, last year, because of unfavorable tides and lack of a vehicle with 4-wheel drive, nobody got to Sandy Neck and the birds there went uncounted.

In an attempt to remedy the situation, this year counters will go to the tip of Sandy Neck from Barnstable Harbor on the afternoon of the 10th in the boat *Beachbound*. There is still room in the boat for 4 birders and those 4 will go cost-free. The first 4 people to call me at 362-3384 will get out to Sandy Neck for an afternoon of bird censusing on the 10th. I'm looking forward to having your help on the count. 

## MAY & JUNE WALKS AND OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

Stauffer Miller

### May

Wednesday, May 10: 5:30 p.m. Harwich. Blair's evening walk. Meet on Bell's Neck Road, Harwich Conservation Area. Bring a picnic if you like. Blair Nikula, 432-6348.

Saturday, May 13: **North American Migration Count.** Be part of a nationwide bird count done by county. Call me if you can count birds in some portion, large or small, of Barnstable County. Stauffer Miller, compiler, 362-3384.

Sunday, May 14: 8 a.m. Falmouth, 7:00 a.m. Meet at the Locust Street parking area of the bike path. Leaders: Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.

### June

Saturday, June 10th: **Breeding Bird Census** of Mid-Cape area. We count the birds in 6 sectors in towns of Barnstable and Yarmouth. We need help. Also, this is fun (in most years!). We gather at my house at 12:30 to picnic and tally what we've seen. Call or see me to sign up. Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Sunday, June 11: Falmouth, 7:00 a.m. Meet at the Locust Street parking area of the bike path. Leaders: Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.

**As in the past, the club will have a walk at the Beech Forest in Provincetown each Saturday and Sunday in May. The Beech Forest is the best spot on the Cape to see and hear spring migrant warblers and other songbirds. In addition, this year three mid-week walks have been scheduled.**

**All walks, with one exception, begin at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. The walks and their leaders are:**

Saturday	May 6th	Jim Talin
Sunday	May 7th	Blair Nikula
Tuesday	May 9th	Ruth Connaughton, Nancy Reider
Saturday	May 13th	Frank Caruso
Sunday	May 14th	Sue Thompson
Thursday	May 18th	Stauffer Miller


(Note: this walk begins at 7:30 a.m.)

Saturday	May 20th	Betty Erickson, Joyce Leary, Joan McGuire
Sunday	May 21st	Don Scott
Tuesday	May 23rd	Stauffer Miller
Saturday	May 27th	Susan Weliky
Sunday	May 28th	George Martin

### OFF-CAPE TRIP TO MAINE

Stauffer Miller


The January-February issue of the bird club newsletter mentioned a field trip to Freeport, Maine, to visit a Saw-whet Owl banding station. The date for this is on Saturday and Sunday, October 14 and 15. The plan is to leave the Cape in the morning, travel to Freeport, check into a motel and have time to shop at LL Bean and the other outlet stores. After dark we'll visit the netting and banding site and return home Sunday.

Seven people are already signed on for this trip, and I am limiting participation to 12 people, with 4 persons per car. Therefore, the final 5 people will be taken on a first call/first serve basis. I am completing the planning of this trip now as I want to make the motel reservation in June before all the "leaf peepers" claim the rooms. If you want to go, please call me at 362-3384. 

### BIRD CLUB MEETING

**On Monday May 8th,** 7:30 p.m. at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, David Small, president of the Athol Bird and Nature Club will present his slide talk on Birds, Butterflies and Beyond. David is also the Vice-Chairman of the Massachusetts Association of Professional Foresters and the Regional Coordinator for Watershed Maintenance for the M.D.C.

The Secretary reminds all members that the **annual election of new members to your Board of Directors** will be held during the meeting on Monday, May 8. We will elect two members of the Board to terms that will expire in 2003. All members are urged to attend and cast their votes.

This year's **Ludlow Griscom Award** goes to...???... On Monday, May 8th, this year's 3rd Annual Ludlow Griscom Award will be presented to...??...Come to the meeting to find out! 



After a few weeks of real winter, warmer than normal weather returned from mid-February through March resulting in many very early arrivals. Ospreys, Eastern Phoebes, Tree Swallows, and others showed up 2-3 weeks early.

Three **Snow Geese** were at Hallet's Mill Pond in Yarmouthport on 12 February, and a blue morph was in West Harwich from 1-4 March. A male **King Eider** was spotted among a flock of scoters off Marconi Beach in Wellfleet on 13 February. As many as 20 Harlequin Ducks were off Nauset Beach, a record high count for Cape Cod, and two were in Sandwich on 27 February. Two male **Barrow's Goldeneyes** continued to be seen off Surf Drive in Falmouth.

A **Black Vulture** was seen over Route 149 in Marstons Mills on 3 February and another, or the same, was spotted in both Provincetown and Truro on 18 March and in Eastham a few days later. Two immature Bald Eagles spent some time in Cotuit in mid-February. A rare and very early **Swallow-tailed Kite** was over the Hyannis airport on 27 March, followed by a **Mississippi Kite** over an Eastham backyard on 29 March, the latter perhaps a record early date for the state!


A **Common Black-headed Gull** was at Salt Pond in Falmouth on 25 March. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found in Brewster and Provincetown in March, and a **Thayer's Gull** was at Hatches Harbor in Provincetown on 14 March. A **Mew Gull** was at Paine's Creek Beach in Brewster on 25 March.

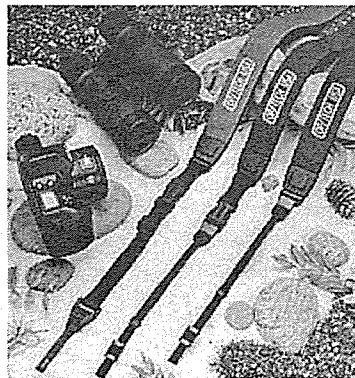
Single **Dovekies** were off Race Point in Provincetown on 5 & 13 February, and Common Murres were in Chatham on 12 February and at Race Point on 13 & 26 February. Over 1500 alcids, most or all Razorbills, were counted flying past Provincetown on 13 February, and hundreds of alcids were seen moving north past Coast Guard Beach in Truro on 13 & 25 March.

A **Snowy Owl** was in E. Sandwich on 24 March, while Short-eared Owls were near Sagamore Beach in Sandwich on 18 February, at Highland Light in Truro on 13 February, and at Pilgrim Lake in Truro on 4 March. Northern Saw-whet Owls were heard calling in Nickerson State Park in Brewster, Wiley Park in Eastham, South Sunken Meadow in Eastham, and near

Hawknest Pond in Harwich.

As many as 80 Bohemian Waxwings were present in the Chequesset Neck area of Wellfleet in late February, and 50+ were in Provincetown on 23 March. A **Western Tanager** visited a feeder in E. Orleans through at least 20 February, and a very early Indigo Bunting was seen briefly in Brewster on 9 March.

Two **White-winged Crossbills** were in Wellfleet on 14 February, while **Red Crossbill** reports included 20 in Wellfleet on 16 February, eight in Truro on 18 February, 15+ in Chatham on 26 February, and one in Orleans in mid-March. **Common Redpolls** visited several feeders throughout the period, with as many as 30 at one feeder in South Wellfleet. A single Pine Siskin visited a Harwich feeder on 4 February. 



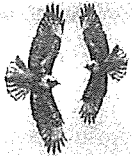
Our CCBC "store" now has a new item: Binocular / camera straps in four colors with the bird club's name on them. They're a great price at \$12.50. They'll be available at the May meeting, so outfit yourself properly for the spring birding season! 

**bird club gift ideas**




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

*The above items are for sale at each meeting.*




**Editor's Book Review** *Red-Tails in Love: A wildlife Drama in Central Park* by Marie Winn. Pantheon Books, NY. Through multiple chapters that include a great deal of general bird information,


as well as specifics of Central Park's hot birding spots, this lovely book weaves the story of America's first Red-tailed Hawks to nest in a city. As Marie Winn unfolds the cliff-hanging story of Pale Male and his various loves, she imparts a lively account of the highly active birding scene that embraces many of New York City's active birders. 

### 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 and the proceeds go toward the Bald Eagle restoration project. 

**DID YOU KNOW...** that the more than \$150 realized from our Members Night auction went to support the activities at the Thornton Burgess Society in Sandwich?

Would you like to have a birdhouse made in the image of your own home? If so, check out <http://www.nhmade.com/KnottyNuthatch/index.htm>, write [knbirdco@worldpath.net](mailto:knbirdco@worldpath.net) or PO Box 60 Moultonborough, NH · 03254 · (603) 476-5374. All they need to create your custom birdhouse are clear photos of the subject. 

### Nocturnal Bird by Lord Highlander

I heard a night-bird crying;  
It was not a song I heard.  
It seemed to be upon the wing,  
And called and cried, but did not sing  
A strange and nocturnal thing,  
That has no lovely word to speak,  
That cannot find, tho it may seek,  
It wanders crying to and fro,  
Yet has not anywhere to go.

## STORY OF THE BIRD NEST

One day a man whose mind was open to the teaching of the powers wandered on the prairie. As he walked, his eyes upon the ground, he spied a bird's nest hidden in the grass, and arrested his feet just in time to prevent stepping on it. He paused to look at the little nest tucked away so snug and warm, and noted that it held six eggs and that a peeping sound came from some of them. While he watched, one moved and soon a tiny bill pushed through the shell, uttering a shrill cry. At once the parent birds answered and he looked up to see where they were. They were not far off; they were flying about in search of food, chirping the while to each other and now and then calling to the little one in the nest.

The homely scene stirred the heart and the thought of the man as he stood there under the clear sky, glancing upward toward the old birds and then down to the helpless young in the nest at his feet. As he looked he thought of his people, who were so often careless and thoughtless of their children's needs, and his mind brooded over the matter. After many days he desired to see the nest again. So he went to the place where he had found it, and there it was as safe as when he had left it. But a change had taken place. It was now full to overflowing with little birds, who were stretching their wings, balancing on their little legs and making ready to fly, while the parents with encouraging calls were coaxing the fledglings to venture forth.

"Ah!" said the man, "if my people would only learn of the birds, and, like them, care for their young and provide for their future, homes would be full and happy, and our tribe be strong and prosperous.


When this man became a priest, he told the story of the bird's nest and sang its song; and so it has come down to us from the days of our fathers.

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL MEMBERS' NIGHT

Barbara Stanton


Thank you all for making Members Night such a fun time. The slide presenters were as good as they get, the artwork a visual pleasure and the refreshments delicious. Thank you Jon Shaw for addressing CCBC regarding upcoming legislation. Thanks to Julie O'Neil and Stauffer Miller for sharing their slides with us. Thanks to Joyce Leary for her slide presentation and display of photographs. Kudos again this year to Phil for his slides and vocalizations. Thanks to Matt Bailey for a wonderful poetry reading. Thank you Susan Weliky and Ellie Winslow for your dazzling display of bird photographs.

Thanks also to all those who contributed to the Silent Auction: Janet Evans, Sue Thompson, Margot Fitch, Don Scott, Ellie Miller, Janet & Arkie Silverio, Julie O'Neil, Phil Kyle, Art King. Oh, yes, thank you Blair Nikula for your help with the slide projector at Members Night and all of our meetings! If there is anyone I have forgotten to mention please let me know; there were so many wonderful donations of items that came in so quickly I may not have kept track as well as I could have. Last, but not least, thank you Betty for coordinating all who baked for the evening. As usual, the cookies were great!

P.S. Thanks to my son, Kane, for all his help! 

## CCBC ENDORSES TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

Ron Ayotte

During the Members' Night meeting on March 13, 2000, Jon Shaw, a volunteer with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, gave a presentation on "Teaming With Wildlife," a national campaign to "keep our common species common" and to nurture a new generation of wildlife stewards by securing funding for state-level non-game wildlife conservation, conservation education, and wildlife-related recreation opportunities. This campaign has already attracted a number of supporters in Massachusetts, including Manomet Observatory and Mass. Audubon. Following the talk, a "sense of the members" vote was taken as to whether CCBC should endorse this initiative. There was no dissent. Accordingly, your Board of Directors has taken action to add our endorsement. 

## BIRD SONG MNEMONICS & PHONETICS

Technically, mnemonics are gimmicks we use to remember songs and calls, while phonetics are actually what the bird is saying. For example, pewees say "pewee" and Phoebes say "phoebe" so those are phonetics. Barred owls say "who cooks for you," but not really. That's a mnemonic. I think that we all use the two interchangeably. Of course, all of this takes a great deal of imagination and creativity, but that's the fun of it, right?

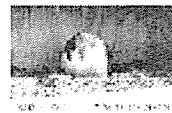
### HOW MANY OF THESE MNEMONICS CAN YOU MATCH WITH THE CORRECT BIRD?\*

- |                                |                                            |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Tufted Titmouse             | a. "look-up, over-here, see-me, up-here"   |
| 2. Black-Throated Blue Warbler | b. "yank yank"                             |
| 3. Chestnut-Sided Warbler      | c. "cheerup, cheerily, cheerily"           |
| 4. White-Breasted Nuthatch     | d. "pee-oo-wee"                            |
| 5. Carolina Wren               | e. "sweet sweet sweet, I'm so sweet"       |
| 6. American Robin              | f. "I am lazeee"                           |
| 7. Red-eyed Vireo              | g. "peter, peter, peter"                   |
| 8. Eastern Wood Pewee          | h. "wheezy, wheezy, wheezy"                |
| 9. Black-and-White Warbler     | i. "teakettle, teakettle, teakettle, tea"  |
| 10. Yellow Warbler             | j. "pleased, pleased, pleased to meet'cha" |

For more on bird songs, check out:  
<http://www.math.sunysb.edu/~tony/birds/> and  
<http://www.math.sunysb.edu/~tony/birds/>

\* answers elsewhere in the newsletter

## BE A VOYEUR! CHECK OUT THESE LIVE CAMS



Watch nesting Peregrine Falcons at <http://www.nspco.com/nspbird.htm> and at [www.kodak.com/go/birdcam1](http://www.kodak.com/go/birdcam1).

Keep tabs on a family of kestrels at <http://kestrelbox.com> in Arizona.

Follow the progress of two bald eagles in Tennessee at <http://www.eaglewatch.com/liveeaglecam.htm>.

More eagles are at: [www.NV.com/eagles/eagles/htm](http://www.NV.com/eagles/eagles/htm). These are on an island in Massachusetts on the Connecticut River.

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answers to mnemonic bird songs:

1-g; 2-f; 3-j; 4-b; 5-i; 6-c; 7-a; 8-d; 9-h; 10-e

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



**From your editor:** I want to thank Ron Ayotte, Blair Nikula, Stauffer Miller and Barbara Stanton for their special contributions to this issue. Contributors like these help make my job much easier and also make the newsletter enjoyable reading. Over this summer, I hope every member will write an account of a bird observation, a bird trip, a good bird book or anything else that would interest the club's readers. I also welcome your suggestions on themes for each of the newsletter issues (Sept-Oct, Nov-Dec, Jan-Feb, Mar-Apr, Summer). However, I ask that all submissions be sent 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. All submissions must be in my hands by the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. 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:

Cape Cod Bird Club  
P. O. Box 1710, Brewster, MA 02631

**Officers**

- Phil Kyle *President*
- Barbara Stanton *Vice President*
- Ron Ayotte *Secretary*
- Ellie Winslow *Treasurer*

**Newsletter**

Editor ~ Elinor Miller (emiller@seepub.com)  
Circulation ~ Ron Ayotte

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- Marge Marion
- Stauffer Miller
- Dick Stacey
- Bob Vander Pyl
- Susan Weliky

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Don Scott