



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 29

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2001


ISSUE 3

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Phil Kyle*

At this time of year, the days are getting a little bit longer, the keyword being little, too little! Thoughts of warmer climates tend to dominate our thoughts, and it doesn't take us too long before we envision nesting birds and the arrival of migratory birds. It is at this point that it's important to know that January 21st is the pagan holiday that celebrates the end of the depths of winter and the gradual warming trend towards spring! It's called St. Anne's Eve exactly like the one the poet Keats wrote about!

Another great thing about the depths of winter, if there's anything, is that birds become very set in their ways. They become creatures of habit. Often you'll see the exact same bird at the exact same location a week later, examples being the Eurasian Wigeon at Mill Pond in Marstons Mills, the Harlequin Ducks at Nauset Beach or the Pintail Ducks at the Mill Pond that separates the villages of Cummaquid and Yarmouthport.

So, there are a few advantages to birding at this time of year, but remember stay warm at all costs! 

## BALD EAGLE STAMP PROGRAM

**DID YOU KNOW ...** that the commemorative postage stamps that you bring to Bessie Tirrel at each meeting go to the Raptor Center in Florida where they are re-sold? Proceeds have allowed the Center to rehabilitate 200 eagles, as well as hawks and owls, since 1979.

## NEW BIRD STUDIES ON CAPE BIRDS

I run the Wing Island Bird Banding Station at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History which opened Sept. 30. I banded 902 birds in the first eleven days!


I am doing a study on what avian species on the Cape play a role in being reservoirs for the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. Some birds are hosts to the deer tick. Another study is on the role birds may play in the newly introduced tick species, the Lone Star Tick. This tick is a southern species, and has not been found

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

## L♥VE IS IN THE AIR

Ducks do it with head and tail shakes, grunts and whistles. Gulls do it by grass pulling; kestrels by steep dives. Other species bob heads, drum loudly on a resonating surface, spread their tails, flick or clap their wings. These seemingly not-so-arduous actions are how many male birds display their devotion to a nearby female. While spring may still seem a distant happening, in the next couple of months, many of our birds will begin the courting ceremonies that will lead to mating and the creation of a new brood of birds.


Not all courtship conduct involves bodily displays. Many males indicate their interest in a member of the opposite sex by presenting her with a choice morsel of food as in a berry or piece of meat. Could this be how our custom started of a courting male presenting a flowers or candy to the female of his choice?

To learn more about all types of bird behavior, including courtship, mating and nesting, you cannot do better than to consult Donald and Lillian Stokes's two Nature Guides to Bird Behavior. 

## *Sue Finnegan, Wing Island Bird Bander*

on the cape until this past year. I am looking to see if these ticks are being brought to the cape by migrating songbirds.

A third study I am doing is on ageing and sexing Pine Siskins according to their outer rectrices (tail feathers). I would appreciate it if any of the club members would contact me if they have Pine Siskins at their feeders and would allow me to band them.

Contact Sue through the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster, MA 02631 or email her: SFinn8688@aol.com 

## FIELD TRIPS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2001

Stauffer Miller

### January

Sunday, January 14: 9 a.m. Falmouth. Meet at the Locust Street parking area of the bike path. Leaders: Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.


Monday, January 15: 9 a.m. Harwich: Muddy Creek and nearby hotspots. Meet at Stop & Shop in E. Harwich at intersection Rtes 137 and 39. Leaders: Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey. 398-9484

Saturday, January 20: 9 a.m. Meet at Dunkin Donuts, Rte 151 and Ninigret Ave., Mashpee, 1.6 miles west of Mashpee rotary. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384

### February


Sunday, February 11: Falmouth, 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Locust Street parking area of the bike path. Leaders: Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408.


Monday, February 19: Harwich, 9 a.m. Meet at Hinckley's Pond Lodge, across from Pleasant Lake general store on Rte. 124. Leaders: Silverstein & Dettrey

Saturday, February 24: 9 a.m. Meet at Friendlys near rotary in Orleans. Be prepared to have lunch in P-town. Bring scope. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 362-3384 

## 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 **January 8th** James Baird, will talk about The Birds of Belize. Jim has been the Director of Conservation for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, among many other jobs for them. He has also been on the Board of Directors for The Programme for Belize, and is currently doing consulting work for the MAS. 

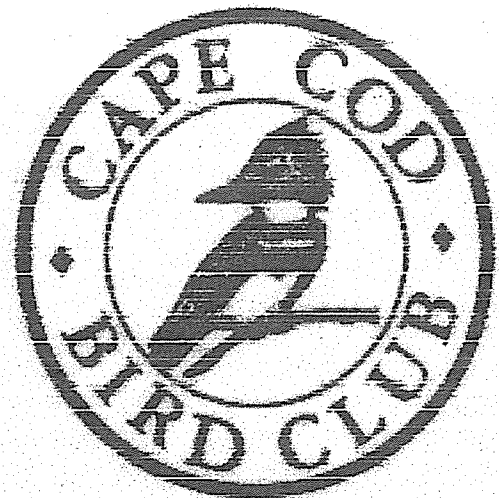
On **February 12th** Michael Tougias will discuss New England's Wild Places. He has been a guest a couple of times on Channel 5's TV show Chronicle and is the author of 10 books about the outdoors in New England. Whether it's Mt. Kineo in Maine; Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts or Connecticut's Housatonic River, you'll feel like exploring the best places in New England after listening to Michael's presentation. 

## MARCH IS MEMBERS' NIGHT!

*Barbara Stanton*

This year's Members' Night is shaping up to be another great event. There will be wonderful slide shows, poetry, music and, of course, most excellent refreshments. New this year will be door prizes and a Collectors' Table so bring in your collection of bird nests, feathers, shells or anything other items that you would like to share. Call Barbara at 432-6027 or Susan at 548-8747 to sign up as a presenter, reserve a table for your artwork, or if you would like to bring refreshments.

P.S. No auction this year, but save your items, as it will return next year! 



The club's new patch — only \$3!

November 3, 2000 – a morning birding in the wilds of Welfleet, the few spots which have escaped the burgeoning development that has overtaken most of Cape Cod.

From the cliff at Lecount Hollow Beach, we stared down upon billow after billow of wildly tossing waves. A predatory Peregrine roared out of the tall ledge below us; then rocketed out of sight. Everywhere there were gannets, gleaming white adults and dusky brown young, but that streamline plunge into the sea separates these from all the other seabirds!

A few black and white Buffleheads were ducking and swimming around. A Black-legged Kittiwake sailed by, but it failed to exhibit the behavior that makes it unique among gulls — diving from the surface, then swimming underwater! A few alcids raced between the heaving wave troughs, too quick for most of us to catch.

On the Bay side of Welfleet, at Mayo Beach, where in contrast to the wild tossing of ocean billows, the water was violet-blue and calm, dancing with little white waves. We were greeted by the high-pitched tinkling of a flock of Horned Larks which were gone as quickly as they had appeared.

Then came the tantalizing whistle of a flock of Snow Buntings that whooshed by far too fast for most

of us to catch. But the song itself has a heart-stopping quality! Parties of White-winged Scoters passed by continuously — chunky birds with white wing patches riding low in the water. Wandering through the waves were Horned and Red-necked Grebes, the black beret perched on the Horned Grebe's head; the Red-necked still sporting a rufous neck.

Even in winter plumage, the Common Loon is very special to me. I see it and I think wilderness and wish I could be in the north country listening to its wild call but am so grateful that I can thrill to its presence every winter here on Cape Cod. Eiders too are back — several rich brown, buffy females and a few males with their striking white backs and black caps.

As we slowly drove Chequesset Neck Road, we saw an coterie of prancing, rearing, plunging Greater Yellowlegs that were comically skidding through shallow tide pools. Further on we were exhilarated to come upon a little party of E. Bluebirds and Goldfinches, alive and dancing in an oak tree near High Toss Road. They hesitated, flew out, wheeled around and then zoomed back to that special tree. They seemed excited rather than agitated — much the same as we felt on that autumnal morning wandering around Welfleet amidst sunlight and hurrying birds.

## BIRDING IN BRAZIL

Jack Palmer, Falmouth

At the end of October I visited the largest wetland in the world, the Pantanal in Southwestern Brazil. It covers an area almost as large as Wyoming, and in the dry season is a savannah dented with shallow lagoons and ponds, plus patches of tropical forest. I stayed in a lodge built on stilts and sitting over the margin of a lagoon; at night I was often awakened by caiman-roaring under the floor of my room.

I saw Rhea daily; I even watched them use their Arnold Schwarzenegger-size thighs to jump, pogo-stick style, up and pull fruit off the lower branches of trees. Birding started at 6:30 each morning; stopped, or at least slowed down, when the early afternoon temperature reached 100°F. (most all birds sat with beaks open, panting much of the time); but then continued again, often into the night when we jacklighted for Potoo, Pauraque, and larger nocturnal animals. The night chorus of insect and frog songs, infused with the threaten-

ing roars of large cats and caimen, was a wondrous substitute for the nighttime paucity of animal sightings.

During my eight-day visit to the Pantanal I saw 163 species of birds — 105 of them lifers. The rarest was a Black-and-white Hawk-eagle. The most beautiful (to me) were the Hyacinth Macaws (the largest Macaw), the Plush-crested Jays, Donacobius (a very large wren), Toco Toucans, and Whistling Herons. The most outlandish were the Jabiru storks dancing. The silliest named was the Spot-backed Puffbird, whose spots are on its breast.

I also saw the bizarre giant anteater with a sticky two-foot long tongue that it can run in and out of an ant mound 150 times a minute, tapirs, monkeys, peccary, crab-eating fox, hundreds of caimen, and of course, the unavoidable lizards and geckos that shared my living quarters. There was also an anaconda and a tarantula. I also encountered piranha in the safest way...as the naming component in soup. No, they didn't taste like chicken.

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Barbara Steller  
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The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History  
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## Cape Cod Bird Club



bird club gift ideas	
CCBC Decals	\$ 1.00
CCBC Checklist	.50
Birding Cape Cod	10.00
CCBC Patches	\$3.00

CCBC Hats	\$ 15.00
Binoocular/Camera Straps	12.50
Organizer Packs	17.00

available for sale at each meeting

2003  
CAPE COD  
02631-6700  
PM

**Greetings from your editor:** Thanks to Ruth Connaughton and Jack Palmer for their interesting birding stories. 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 via email — no need to format your article, as email serves the purpose just fine. 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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