



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 29

MARCH - APRIL 2001


ISSUE 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Phil Kyle

This is it! The time of year we've been waiting for patiently.....oh so patiently! Even though there is no pronounced Spring on Cape Cod, there is definitely an increase in daylight (from Christmas 'til March 1st - 2 hours!) and Mother Nature responds with a multitude of rebirths.

Not only does the Vernal Equinox (equal length of day & night in Spring) happen in late March, but the chipmunks come out of hibernation, Wood Frogs can be heard calling in vernal pools, and the young of Fox, Gray Squirrel and River Otter are born.

In the month of April, bullfrogs emerge from their winter dormancy, Tree Swallows return, we hear Spring Peepers, and Humpback Whales return to Cape Cod waters. Later in April, raccoons and coyotes have their young. And don't forget that there are a few but very beautiful woodland wildflowers that bloom now before the leaves come out on trees and cut off their sunlight...and of course there is also the expectancy of about 300 migratory birds! 

WE LIKE MARCH

by Emily Dickinson

*We like March--his shoes are Purple.
He is new and high--
Makes he Mud for Dog and Peddler--
Makes he Forests Dry--
Knows the Adders' tongue his coming
And begets her spot--
Stands the Sun so close and mighty--
That our Minds are hot.
News is he of all the others--
Bold it were to die
With the Blue Birds buccaneering
On his British sky--*

Please read the editor's note on back page!

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ...

A greedy eagle has become a celebrity in Norway after making such a pig of itself that it was unable to take off? The bird was spotted by a passing lorry driver as it floundered in snowdrifts at the side of the road in the middle of nowhere on the west coast.

A local man equipped with a large sack was called to the scene and the eagle was rescued after a wild chase 600 metres up a mountainside.

A local ornithologist said it was not unusual for birds of prey to over-eat and find themselves grounded until the meal was properly digested. In this case, the victim had taken in two kilos, probably a dead cat.

According to its rescuer, Sigbjorn Bjorkedal, the eagle has adjusted well to domestic conditions, particularly enjoying a spell under the hairdryer. "It acted like it had just gone to the hairdresser for a perm", said Mr Bjorkedal.

The bird is expected to be ready for a return to the wild in a couple of days.

Thanks to eagle-eyed Jim Talin for this submission.

MID-CAPE CHRISTMAS COUNT

Peter Trimble

The December 26, 2000 Mid-Cape Cod CBC was conducted on a very cold day with winds between 20 and 40 mph all day. We found 122 species of birds totaling 40,612 individuals. Unusual or interesting birds included an Eared Grebe at Sandy Neck, a Rough-legged Hawk and a Snow Goose at Marstons Mills Airport, a Ruddy Turnstone at Hyannisport, 3 Purple Sandpipers (one in Dennis and 2 in W. Yarmouth), a Lesser Black-backed Gull in W. Yarmouth, a Snowy Owl on Sandy Neck, a Northern Shrike in Dennis, 3 American Pipits in Hyannisport, a Clay-colored Sparrow in W. Yarmouth, and 2 Baltimore Orioles in W. Barnstable. High counts were had for the following: Mallard 1469, Hooded Merganser 220, Common Snipe 11, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 3, Yellow-breasted Chat 4, Chipping Sparrow 7, Red-winged Blackbird 258, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 7, American Robin 20290

(Continued on page 3)

FIELD TRIPS

MARCH - APRIL 2001

Stauffer Miller

March

Saturday, March 3: 9 a.m. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the lower parking lot. Leader, Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

Monday, March 5: 9 a.m. Meet at West Dennis Beach Windsurfer's Cottage to visit areas in Dennis and Harwich. Leaders, Diane Silverstein and Michael Dettrey, 398-9484.

Thursday, March 8: 2:00 p.m. A visit to Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield for birding at dusk (read "owls"). Meet to car pool at the P and B commuter lot by McDonald's in Sagamore at 2:00 PM. We may get some pizza in Marshfield before heading back to Sagamore. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

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


Saturday, March 24th: Meet at Corporation Beach in Dennis at 9:00 AM, to bird there, followed by visit to nearby ponds. Leader, Mark Tuttle, 362-3015.

April

Monday, April 2: 9 a.m. Fort Hill, Eastham. Meet at the lower parking lot. Leader, Dick Koeppen, 430-1822.

Thursday, April 12: 7 a.m. 9:00 AM. Meet at Dunkin Donuts inside Gray Gables Market at intersection Monument Neck and Shore Roads in Bourne to walk a cranberry bog and visit a seabird lookout. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 362-3384.

Monday, April 23rd: 9:00 AM. Nickerson Park in Brewster. Meet at the parking lot on right just past entrance off Rt. 6-A to visit some ponds and trails there, then visit some spots in Orleans. Leaders, Diane Silverstein and Michael Dettrey, 398-9484.


Sunday, April 29th: Falmouth, 7:00 AM. Meet at the Locust Street parking area of the bike path. Leaders, Bob Vander Pyl and Alison Robb, 540-2408. 




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.

Member's night is Monday March 12: If you plan to show slides or have a display or for more information on the evening, contact either S. Weliky or B. Stanton.

Can you guess? The three most numerous duck species found on the Cape Cod annual waterfowl count? (Answers elsewhere in this newsletter) 

DID YOU REMEMBER: to bring your commemorative postage stamps to pass on to Bessie Tirrel at the bird club meeting? She sends them to the Raptor Center in Florida where they are re-sold. The Center has used proceeds to rehabilitate 200 eagles, as well as hawks and owls, since 1979, down to Florida, where they are resold and the proceeds go toward the Bald Eagle restoration project.

On **April 9th** our speaker will be Matt Bailey who will talk about protecting the beaches and nesting shorebirds of Massachusetts. Matt graduated in 1995 from the University of Delaware with a bachelor's degree in wildlife conservation. He has since participated in studies on Black-tailed Prairie Dogs, songbird breeding on cottonwood plantations, Northern Bobwhites, Bog Turtles, amphibian monitoring and most recently, shorebirds. He is currently the Cape Cod Coordinator for Massachusetts Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program. His other interests include camping and hiking, birdwatching, attending musical concerts and reading/writing poetry. 


Check out www.birdsource.org/cbc/ for all the information on all Christmas Bird Counts, state by state and area by area.

TRURO CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

Ginie Page


This is a young count, with records for only the past few years but receiving better coverage each season. Next year, we hope that more local birders will wish to participate in either the field or feeder sections. The count circle extends from the Marconi Site in Wellfleet to Pilgrim Lake in North Truro.

We considered ourselves to be very lucky to have mild weather after the heavy winds which swept across this sandbar for so many days that week.

Highlights were the massive numbers of alcids seen from Head of the Meadow Beach in Truro, and the long hike on Great Island Wellfleet taken by Ned and Sue Handy. 

MID-CAPE COUNT (continued)

(second highest ever), Red-tailed Hawk 27 (second highest ever), N. Cardinal 459 (second highest ever), White-throated Sparrow 342 (second highest ever). We did miss Barrow's Goldeneye which had been seen off Osterville for quite a few years, Red-breasted Nuthatch for only the second time, and American Kestrel for the 5th time in the last 8 years. We had low numbers for the following species: Pied-billed Grebe 2 (lowest ever), Northern Gannet 1 (low for recent years), Northern Pintail 1 (lowest ever), C. Eider 874 (3rd lowest ever), Great Black-backed Gull 287 (lowest ever), and Brown Creeper 1 (tied record low).

I would like to thank those who braved the tough field conditions and hope everyone is having a chance to get out and do some winter birding. 

ANNUAL CAPE COD WATERFOWL SURVEY

Blair Nikula

The 18th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 2-3, 1999. For the first time in several years, the weather preceding the count was colder than normal (-1.5°F in Boston) and there was some icing of the smaller, shallower ponds.


Over 52 observers censused 379 ponds, just one pond less than the record number. Only 24 species of waterfowl were found, one more than last year's record low. The total of 10,102 individuals, was 2321 less than last year and about 9% below average. An average of 27 birds per pond was the second lowest ever.



SPECIES RESULTS

Only one species, **Eurasian Wigeon**, was found in record high numbers, although five other species achieved their second highest totals in seventeen years. Two species were in record low numbers. **Pied-billed Grebes** totaled just 41 birds, one less than the previous low in 1989, and less than half of the survey's average. **Mute Swans** took a dive this year, with a below average 156 birds (-15%) representing a drop of almost 100 birds over the previous two years. Six Eurasian Wigeon was one more than the previous high; two were in Orleans and four in Chatham. **American Wigeon** totaled 184 birds, the second highest number ever and almost double the 17-year average.

Mallards totaled 2147 birds, down slightly from last year's record high, but still far above average. They were also found at 165 (44%) of the ponds, many more than any other species. **Green-winged Teal**, although totaling only about a third of last year's record count, were still almost twice as numerous as usual with 95 birds recorded. **Canvasbacks** continued in very low numbers, with just 61 birds, four above last year's record low. During the first five years of this survey, this handsome duck averaged almost a thousand birds per year! Reasons for this sad decline remain a mystery.

Scaup (both species combined) established yet another new low, with just 1088 birds, 58% below average. **Common Goldeneyes** totaled just 121 birds, a record low and only about half of the sixteen year average. **Hooded Mergansers** dropped slightly from last year's record high, but were still 82% above average. In 17 years, this lovely duck has gone from the tenth most common species on the survey to the fourth, with their numbers increasing by an order of magnitude! **Ruddy Duck** numbers dropped sharply from last year's record, but were still almost three times the survey average. Although found at 17 sites last year, they were at just six ponds this year. 



Answers to waterfowl count's birds: Mallards (2147), Bufflehead (1970), Black Duck (1128)



02644-1725 02

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

have not been paid
 have been paid

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

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



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	

Greetings from your editor: Thanks to Jim Talin, Ginie Page, Peter Trimble and Blair Nikula for their interesting submissions. If you have a story or information that would be of interest to our club members, send them along! 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

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

Newsletter

Editor ~ Elinor Miller, email: emiller@seepub.com
Circulation ~ Ron Ayotte

Directors

Betty Erickson Dick Slacey
Stauffer Miller Bob Vander Pyl
Nancy Reider Susan Weliky

Nominating Committee Chair
Don Scott