



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 31 – ISSUE 2

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER, 2002

Cape Cod Bird Club meetings are 7:30 PM the second Monday of each month at the Museum of Natural History, Rte 6A, Brewster, MA.

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The Kingfisher is published bi-monthly.

*Deadline for submissions for next issue is: Dec. 12th.
Send to: ccbc_kingfisher@hotmail.com*

Website: <http://www.massbird.org/CCBC>

President's Message

From personal experience, I've found birding truly does lead to lifelong friendships. Birding for me began in Jamestown, NY when I was in my early teens in 1950. Several classmates and I spent a lot of time birding together in the field and we pursued a series of adventures that would set a pattern for life.

Among these:

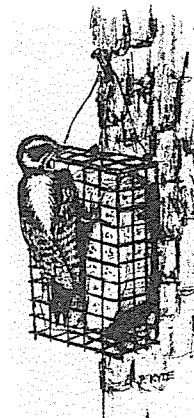
- Building suet feeders and restocking them every Saturday along an abandoned railway bed
- Weekly winter journeys around nearby Chautauqua Lake in search of Canvasback and Redhead ducks in the open waters of the lake

Little did we think that we would grow apart as we left Jamestown to embark on the next phase of our lives. Two of my closest birding buddies were brothers, Bob and Roger. Over the years I often thought of them and wondered where they were as the years rolled by. In preparation for a family reunion this past summer, I called the Roger Tory Peterson Institute for the name of a local birder who might co-lead a birding trip with

me. When I was given Bob Sundell's name, I wondered if it was the same 'Bob' I'd known from years back, or was it his son or grandson. It turned out to be my friend and we talked excitedly on the phone. Where do you start after 50 years of no contact and only memories?

We led the trip together (an emotional experience) and I have since gone birding in the Jamestown area several more times with Bob. I've even talked with Roger in Wisconsin. I'm optimistic I may find my other birding buddies from years ago! In the meantime, Bob and his wife are anxious to come to Cape Cod sometime soon — a first for them.

As for now ... I am enjoying making new birding friends here and exploring the many areas of the Cape. The Cape has no equal for year-round birding!



Dick Jurkowski

Audubon of Florida's Bald Eagle Stamp Program

This summer, Bessie Tirrell received a letter from Allan Stevenson of Audubon of Florida, which stated:

"I want to express my sincere thanks to you and to the members of the Cape Cod Bird Club, the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and to H. Donald Scott for your continued support of Audubon's Bald Eagle Stamp Program. Thanks to donations such as yours of valuable stamps and postcards, we have extra funds to supplement the budget for the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, located in Maitland, Florida, is the largest raptor rehabilitation center in the southeastern United States. Each year, more than 600 injured and orphaned hawks, eagles and owls are treated; about 50 of these are Bald Eagles. Since opening in 1981, the Center has rescued, rehabilitated and released 251 Bald Eagles back into the wild."

The letter went on to say "donated stamps and postcards are sold at auctions to collectors and manufacturers of stamp kits.

(Continued on page 3)

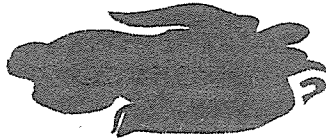
CCBC Programs for November and December

Nov. 11th - John Kricher

"Birding Alaska from the Dalton Highway" will be presented by John Kricher, a well-known and nationally-acclaimed author, tour leader, and scientist.

A graduate of Temple and Rutgers Universities, John is Professor of Biology at Wheaton College in Norton, MA, where he teaches courses in ecology and evolutionary biology.

Join us November 11th, 7:30 PM as we learn more about birding in Alaska!



Dec. 9th - Vernon Laux

"Birds of Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod"

A longtime columnist for the Vineyard Gazette, Vernon Laux will inform and entertain us with a photo and story-telling journey of 30 years of birding in our area, from Red-throated Loons spending the summer to continental North America's 'firsts' in the form of a European Cuckoo in downtown Vineyard Haven.

Vernon writes 3 articles weekly for the Gazette, including Bird News, All Outdoors, and Butterfly Beat. He also wrote the book, "Bird News - Vagrants and Visitors On A Peculiar Island."

A tour guide, as well as a 'jack-of-all-trades, master of none' (as he describes himself), Vernon is a frequent contributor to the New York Times Science section and his work has appeared in a number of birding journals and magazines.

KINGFISHER'S CONQUEST

by Ellie Winslow

Recently, while out doing yard work, I heard (and then saw) a female Kingfisher near my fish pond. This 14' pond has had comets and 2 beautiful kois for several years. The kois were about 8" long and chubby. Realizing that I hadn't seen one koi yesterday, I fed the fish and then saw that both kois were gone!

The Kingfisher just rattled and cackled at me and flew away.

Within a week, all comets were also gone. Twenty-five fish between 4" and 8" — gone. Just the babies are left. (The babies are about 1-1/2 inches long.)

I checked with the Mass State Fish Hatchery which is about 1/8 mile away "as the fisher flies" — to see if they had closed down their "food pantry" for birds. (They keep a net-free stocked pool for osprey, herons, and kingfishers.) I was told their pool was still open.

It seems that my colorful fish were more appealing than their dull brown trout. I can't imagine a Kingfisher swallowing an 8" chubby fish!! Can you?

New CCBC Members

Since May, the following folks have joined CCBC. Welcome!

- Virginia L Barath, Sayville, NY
- Charles W. Deaton, Orleans
- Richard & Mary Dee, Yarmouthport
- Kendall & Sally Foster, E. Dennis
- Gary & Barbara Hudson, Hyannis
- Elinor Horner, N. Falmouth
- Mike Kotarba, Hadley
- Dr. Peter Karp, Needham
- Linda Oberly, W. Barnstable
- Lee & Joan Pulis, Plymouth
- Kathy Read, Yarmouthport
- Donna Seacat, W. Barnstable
- Herb & Joanna Schurmann, Chatham
- Preston & Sheila Smith, E. Harwich
- Lucinda Wagner, Brewster

Help Wanted!

It's hard to believe but "Birding Cape Cod" published in 1990 as a joint venture between Mass Audubon Wellfleet and CCBC is beginning to show its age! Over 9,000 copies have been sold and it's still in great demand as the foremost birding guide on Cape Cod. So much so that very few copies are left!

The CCBC and Mass Audubon are teaming up to complete an updated version in the next six months, and we need your help.

We are assembling several teams to address the revisions and more

birders are needed to review the write-ups for their home area or favorite birding spots. Sections need to be reviewed and updated and a few new areas added to make it an even more effective birding companion.

Some people have already volunteered to help but more assistance is needed to complete the process in a timely fashion.

If you would like to be part of this project, please contact Diane Silverstein (email: Birder526@aol.com) or call Dick Jurkowski (508-428-8494).

Field Trips for November and December

Stauffer Miller, Coordinator

NOVEMBER

Friday – Nov. 15 – 8:30 AM

West Dennis Beach, Cape Cod Bay and other local spots. Meet at West Dennis Beach at 2nd cottage at far end (west end) of beach parking lot. Leaders: Diane Silverstein & Mike Dettrey 508-398-9484, email Birder526@aol.com.

Saturday – Nov. 16 – 8:00 AM

Waterfowl of Nauset Beach and other points in Orleans and Eastham. Meet at 8:00 AM at Friendly's in Orleans. Leader: Mark Tuttle, 508-362-3015.

Thursday – Nov. 28 – 9:00 AM

Walk in Bridge Creek Conservation area in West Barnstable, then visit

ponds in that area. Meet behind Fire House in West Barnstable at 9:00 AM. Leader: Stauffer Miller, 508-362-3384.

DECEMBER

Sat. & Sun. Dec. 7th & 8th – Annual Waterfowl count.

Call Blair Nikula at 432-6348 to sign up.

Friday – Dec. 13 – 8:30 AM

Harwich and Chatham Winter Waterfowl hot spots. Meet at 8:30 AM on Bells Neck Rd, W. Harwich. Leaders: Diane Silverstein & Mike Dettrey 398-9484, email Birder 526@aol.com.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS:

Annual Cape Cod Christmas Count – Dec. 15 – (Sunday)

Sign up with Blair Nikula at the December 9th CCBC meeting or call Blair at 432-6348..

Truro Christmas Count –

Dec. 22 (Sunday) - Contact Ginie Page at 508-349-6810 (vgpage@juno.com) or Tom Lipsky at 978-897-5429 (tlip@massed.net). All volunteers are welcome!

Annual Mid-Cape Christmas Count: - Date TBA December 9th meeting or call Peter Trimble at 508-477-3847.

(Eagle Stamp Program – Cont'd from page 1)

Items not sold (the more common stamps) are returned and given to local elementary schools for art projects so all are put to good use. With the proceeds from your stamp and postcard donations, the Center is able to purchase extra supplies and treats (above and beyond its usual budget) for all the birds in its care."

What is Acceptable?

The following items, in no particular order, are the most useful to the program. (Both canceled and uncanceled items are accepted.)

- Unused postcards
- Any foreign stamps
- Any size commemoratives, air-mail or special handling stamps
- Any State or Federal hunting & fishing licenses stamps
- Stamps affixed to envelopes but not canceled
- S&H green stamps or other trading stamps

- any small-size stamps except the current single-letter rate

Only undamaged stamps can be sold. No metered stamps or stamps with heavily smeared cancels.

Cut the stamps from the envelope but don't cut off the perforations! Leave at least 1/4" around the stamp to avoid damaging the stamp. Exceptions: with the commemorative envelopes, First Day issues and old (pre1960) envelopes, send the entire envelope with the stamp attached as the envelope may also have significant value.

For the past several years, Bessie Tirrell has been faithfully collecting and mailing the Club's submissions. Thanks, Bessie, for a job well done.

Now, let's all start saving those stamps and postcards!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
 ★ Don't miss the next issue of ★
 ★ The Kingfisher! Make sure ★
 ★ your membership is up-to- ★
 ★ date. ★
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

(Winter Birding – Cont'd from page 5)

is always the possibility of getting cold. If you're joining a group, there is that uncomfortable feeling you get when you meet people for the first time and, heaven forbid, they might know more than you. The pluses far outweigh the negatives, however, and being a retired high school teacher, you know I'm going to respond with sayings like: Nothing ventured nothing gained; Learn from someone who knows more than you and, most importantly, Attitude is everything!

So birding in the off-season DOES exist! Changing your birding behavior is a start. It usually involves taking a risk but it definitely will be well worth it!

DECEMBER AUCTION:

An autographed copy of Stokes 'Beginner Guide to Bird Feeding', Elliot Porter's "Birds of North America", three books on Australian birds — "Australian Bush Birds in Colour," "Australian Birds in Colour," and "Birds of Australia by Michael Morcombe. All these and MORE at the December auction. Proceeds go to the Binocular Exchange Program at the Manomet Bird Observatory.

What's Around

Ron Ayotte

This article on birds seen on Cape Cod is based on personal observations, supplemented by information from the Rare Bird Alerts (RBAs) of MassAudubon. It roughly follows the outline of Birding Cape Cod, published by the Club and MassAudubon. I have compressed some of the observations made on South Beach (Chatham) in the interest of saving space. I give the date of rarities in parentheses. Very common birds are omitted.

Early August 2002 (Aug. 6 and 12) - South Beach, Chatham: Wilson's Storm-petrel, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Osprey, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated and Piping plovers, American Oystercatcher, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Willet, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated, Least and White-rumped sandpipers, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Parasitic Jaeger (8/6 & 8/12), Laughing, Ring-billed, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Gull-billed (8/6), Roseate, Common, Forster's and Least terns, Barn and Tree swallows.

MassAudubon: Marbled Godwit, Red-necked Stint (8/1), Western and Spotted sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope, Royal and Black terns, Black Skimmer, Bald Eagle (Harwich).

August 28, 2002: North Monomoy NWR: Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, American Black Duck, Common Eider, Northern Harrier, Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated, Least and White-rumped sandpipers, Dunlin, Laughing and Ring-billed gulls, Roseate, Common and Least terns, Tree, Barn and Northern Rough-winged swallows, Savannah and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed sparrows.

MassAudubon: Pied-billed Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail (all ducks on South Monomoy), Curlew and Upland sandpipers, Killdeer, American Avocet, Hudsonian and Marbled godwits, Bonaparte's Gull.

Early September 2002 (Sep. 3 and 14), South Beach, Chatham: Common Loon, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Greater Shearwater, Snowy Egret, White-winged Scoter, Northern Harrier, Black-bellied, Semipalmated and Piping plovers, American Oystercatcher, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Willet, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Semipalmated, Western, Least, and White-rumped sandpipers, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Laughing, Ring-billed and Lesser Black-backed gulls, Elegant (9/3), Roseate, Common, Forster's and Black terns, Tree and Barn swallows, Savannah Sparrow.

MassAudubon: Magnificent Frigatebird (!! Chatham Light); Cory's Shearwater, Sabine's Gull, Marbled and Hudsonian godwits, Mourning and Nashville warblers, Orchard Oriole.

September 8, 2002, Coast Guard Beach, Eastham: Great Blue Heron, Great and Snowy egrets, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated, Western and White-rumped sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope, Ring-billed Gull, Common Tern, Belted Kingfisher, Tree and Barn swallows, Common Raven (!), Cedar Waxwing, Song and Savannah sparrows.

September 9, 2002: Morris Island, Chatham: Common Loon, Snowy Egret, White-winged Scoter, Osprey,

Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Black-bellied Plover, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing and Ring-billed gulls, Common and Forster's terns, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Tree and Barn swallows, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-headed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Eastern Towhee.

Late September 2002: No personal observations; I was off-Cape.

MassAudubon: Black-bellied, Semipalmated and Piping plovers, American Golden-plover, American Oystercatcher, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Willet, Whimbrel, Hudsonian and Marbled godwits, Short-billed and Long-billed dowitchers, Western, Pectoral and Stilt sandpipers, Bonaparte's and Lesser Black-backed gulls, Forster's and Black terns, Wilson's Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Rufous Hummingbird, American Redstart, Connecticut, Blackpoll, Yellow, Palm, and Black-throated Blue warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Warbling and Red-eyed vireos, Common nighthawk.

Just in time for the Holidays!

BIRD CLUB Gift Ideas
(on sale at meetings)

CCBC Decals	\$1.00
CCBC Checklist	.50
CCBC Patches	3.00
Book: Birding Cape Cod	10.00
Binoc/Camera Straps	12.50
CCBC Knit Hats	Reduced 10.00
Organizer Packs	17.00
<u>New</u> CCBC Caps	15.00

The Rewards of Winter Birding

Phil Kyle

Most people think that birdwatching is over at this time of year. After Labor Day the end of Birding comes with the end of summer and warm weather. Winter and Birding are two ideas that just don't seem to go together. However, this is not true!

Most migrants DO fly south but there are the Accidentals and the year-rounders. Not to mention the birds that migrate from the west and arrive on the east coast and can only be seen on Cape Cod at this time of the year.

The year round birds can be attracted to different kinds of feeders you put up in your back yard and the arrival or migration east of many water birds, mostly from northwestern Canada, is a pleasant addition to birding at this time of year.

Accidentals are birds that have flown off course or lost their urge to migrate, like Towhees, Catbirds, Pine Warblers. Or maybe they are irruptive species like the Snowy Owl, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Redpoll and are spending some time on Cape Cod. There's no telling where or when they'll turn up but being forewarned is being forearmed!

I caught the birding bug in the off-season when I observed many birds at my feeders in the early 70's. Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Cardinals, Chickadees, Tufted Titmice and even Mockingbirds made this dismal season one to actually enjoy. I was amazed I could get a close look at wildlife as they fed on the food I offered.

Eventually I got two tube feeders -- one for thistle seed, the other for the black oil sunflower seed. I made a BIG platform feeder, which I put about two feet off the ground on two small saw horses. I also put up a suet feeder, hanging high on a tree branch. I installed a one-way mirrored in-the-kitchen-window feeder and I placed a small platform feeder outside a kitchen window. Basically I was giving birds a plethora of choices! I also shoveled the snow off the ground around my large platform feeder so Mourning Doves, White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows even

White-crowned Sparrows would have a place to feed. I spread cracked corn and some black oil sunflower seed on the ground. On the small platform feeder by my kitchen window, I put out raisins for the Song Sparrows and Cardinals to take. Occasionally when I'm feeling affluent, I put out peanut hearts for the Carolina Wrens! The black oil tube feeder attracts Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-breasted Nuthatches, Chickadees, Tufted Titmice and Cardinals. The Thistle tube feeder mainly attracts Goldfinches and House Finches. The Suet feeder attracts woodpeckers — Flickers, Hairy and Downy and the occasional Crow is not unusual. Suet or animal fat is pure energy and it is easier for the birds to find it at the suet feeder than on a deer carcass! I usually covered the big platform feeder with black-oil sunflower seed which the doves and sparrows liked.

The bird behavior I witness at my feeders is more than entertaining. Chickadees and Nuthatches each take a turn grabbing a seed from the feeder and then they leave but House Finches and Goldfinches all arrive at once to dine. Once a Crow came right into the kitchen via the window feeder.

Some of the most amazing bird behavior I've observed was at my window feeders. I was sitting at my computer by the kitchen window which overlooked the birdfeeders. Occasionally I'd look up to catch a glimpse of the activity outside. Suddenly, every single bird hurriedly disappeared. I wasn't sure what it was that startled them all. Then I saw it. A hawk had landed on the suet feeder that was hanging off a tree limb. I hesitated to move ... even blink, because I was afraid I'd scare it away before I identified it. I quickly pulled my Hawk Field Guide out of a kitchen drawer and, according to the book, it was an immature Cooper's Hawk known to raise havoc around bird feeders. The most amazing thing happened next. When the hawk finally knew I was watching, it flew right at me! Most hawks are gone as soon as they see any humans so this was very strange behavior!

Watching the feeders was great as far as passive birding was concerned but I knew there was more active birdwatching available to me at this time of year. I took my window-scope out with me on the cold clear days, and drove to assorted harbors or unfrozen ponds with good overlooks. There, I saw Loons, Scaup, Eider, Buffleheads, Redhead Ducks, Canvasbacks, Bonaparte's Gulls, Great Cormorants, Red-breasted Mergansers, Ring-Necked Ducks, even Wood Ducks. At beaches with my regular telescope mount, I would see Long-tailed Ducks, Red-throated Loons, Horned Grebes, White-winged Scoters and even the accidental Yellowlegs. Most of the diving ducks came from the northwestern part of Canada. They flew to Cape Cod and the Islands because it's balmy here and there's plenty of food.

Feeding birds in your backyard is sort of a personal strategy. Everyone does it their own way but looking at winter waterfowl and water birds definitely requires a scope, windless clear days, and warm clothing.

There are many places you can go on the Cape to see such bird sightings. One way is to attend the Monday AM Birding with the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History (8-11 AM) or by going on the free field trips the Cape Cod Bird Club sponsors.

You can also check out Red River Beach in Harwich, West Dennis Beach, Harding's Beach in Chatham, Herring Pond and Great Pond in Eastham, Corporation Beach in Dennis, Wellfleet Harbor, and First Encounter Beach in Eastham. Perhaps even driving so far as to stop at MacMillan Wharf in Provincetown.

The most important thing about winter birding is one's attitude. It seems like a simple thing to control but most everyone opts for the armchair variety of birdwatching. There are too many excuses when one thinks about other ways to see birds in the wintertime. Of course, there

(Continued on page 3)



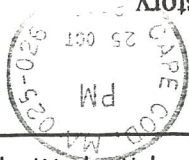
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Frank Caruso and Barbara Steller
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Your dues for 2002-2003

Have NOT been paid

Have been paid



Cape Cod Bird Club
The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
PO Box 1710, Brewster, MA 02631



A special thank you to everyone who submitted articles, poetry, and artwork for this newsletter. Cut-off date for next newsletter submissions is December 12th! Also, check website & newspapers for bird walks which may have been added.



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**

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|-------------------|----------------|
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Newsletter

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