



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 32 – ISSUE 2

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER, 2003

Cape Cod Bird Club meetings are 7:30 PM the second Monday of each month, September thru May, at the Museum of Natural History, 869 Rte 6A, Brewster, MA.

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The Kingfisher is published bi-monthly.

Deadline for next issue's articles: December 8th.

Send articles or comments to: cbc_kingfisher@earthlink.net

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

President's Message

What a special birding time the past month or so has been for me. And I hope for you, too – both on Cape and off Cape.

Trips to Montezuma NWR and Chautauqua Lake in western New York state have been very rewarding.

To be honest though, the CCBC led trips have stolen the show. Our four day trip to Cape May, NJ, led by Mike and Diane, was beyond my greatest expectations. We saw so many birds and had a ton of fun in the process. All on my first ever trip to Cape May, too.

My Cape Cod trips led by fellow CCBC members have been terrific, too. Trip attendance is up and we have been rewarded with more species than ever. Thanks to Mark, Ginie, Stauffer, and others for leading us to new horizons.

These next two months will be really special on the Cape. Our winter residents will be arriving. Sea ducks and other ocean birds will be making their appearance. Hopefully some winter finches will grace our presence soon, too. And let's all get our bird feeders in full operation.

Looking forward to seeing you all at as many CCBC monthly meetings as possible. Lots of special programs and fun times coming up this year! Let's support our CCBC every chance we get!

Dick Jurkowski



CCBC PROGRAMS: NOV. 10 & DEC. 8

Birding Connecticut River Valley with Pete Westover

Join us on **November 10th** as we are led through the natural areas of the Connecticut River Valley. In his presentation, Pete Westover journeys through 40 or 50 different areas to let us know where the birds are. Along the way he will inform us of the protected status of some of these areas, which lands are threatened, which are in land trust and other state and local land conservation activity.

Pete is currently Conservation Director for the Town of Amherst. He is a published author on topics concerning land conservation, as well as, Co-editor of Bird Finding Guide to Western Massachusetts. A recipient of many awards for his work in protecting open spaces he most recently was awarded the Millicent A. Kaufman Award in 2001.

It's baaack December 8th is Members Night!

What a great time of the year to have Members Night! It will be a festive event where our members (and guests/visitors) will be able to socialize, share talents, and enjoy refreshments. Bring your checkbook and get into the giving mood with Ellie's famous auction! Buy holiday gifts for loved ones or just for yourself. There will also be plenty of CCBC merchandise available — great stocking stuffers!

Already on board to help out are Roger Everett, the Jurkowski's and Matt Bailey. So if you would like to display art work, give a short presentation, do a poetry or book reading, get in touch with Barb Stanton by calling 508-432-6027 or email her at pennstan@capecod.net. Whatever your talent, we would love to have you share!

Club Field Walks

Ron Ayotte, Secretary CCBC

NOTE: This is the first in a new series of articles in *The Kingfisher* covering the results of your Club's field walks. The format of this article is tentative, and we expect it to evolve (and, we hope, improve) over the next few issues as we get feedback from YOU, the readers. They start off by summarizing the overall results and then give the highlights of each of the trips. This issue's results cover the period from August 23 to September 24, 2003. Succeeding articles will cover about two months' worth of observations. Very common species are omitted from highlights.

There were 8 field walks between August 23 and September 24, covering Upper-, Mid and Lower-Cape areas. A total of 177 persons participated in the walks, and 95 species were observed overall. No species was seen on 100% of the walks, but several species were observed on all but one walk: Double Crested Cormorant; Great blue Heron; Greater Yellowlegs; Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed gulls; and American Goldfinch. The largest number of species seen on a walk was 39, on September 16th.

8/23 – Foster Rd, Sandwich: Leader: Stauffer Miller; Clear, 75; 9 participants; 34 species seen. Highlights: Great Egret, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup (possibly a rare Tufted Duck!), Osprey, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Black Tern, Belted Kingfisher.

8/29 – South Beach, Chatham: Leaders: Diane Silverstein, Mike Dettrey; Sunny, mid-70's; 17 participants; 32 species seen. Highlights: White-winged Scoter, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, American Oystercatcher, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Whimbrel, Marbled and Hudsonian godwits, Red Knot, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpiper(!), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (poss.), Sandwich(!), Roseate, Common, Forster's, Least, and Black terns.

9/6 – Coast Guard Beach, Eastham:

Leader: Mark Tuttle; Clear, 60's; 20 participants; 38 species seen. Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Common Eider, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Least, White-rumped and Baird's(!) sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, Belted Kingfisher, Horned Lark, Tree and Barn swallows, Carolina Wren.

9/8 – Fort Hill, Eastham:

Leader: Ginie Page; Clear; 20 participants; 30 species seen. Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Belted Kingfisher, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Carolina Wren, Yellow Warbler.

9/12 – Crowe's Pasture, E. Dennis:

Leaders: Diane Silverstein, Mike Dettrey; Sunny, 68; 15 participants; 31 species seen. Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Tern, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tree and Barn swallows, Carolina Wren, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Common Yellow-throat, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Towhee.

9/16 – Bourne, Cataumet:

Leader: Stauffer Miller; Light overcast; 20 participants; 39 species seen. Highlights: Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Laughing Gull, Forster's Tern, Belted Kingfisher, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Wilson's Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

9/23 – Sandwich Game Farm, E. Sandwich:

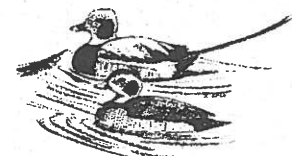
Leader: Dick Jurkowski; Mix sun/clouds, 70s; 7 participants; 25 species seen.

Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwing.

9/24 – Harwich Gardens, Bell's Neck Rd, Harwich:

Leaders: Ruth Connaughton, Nancy Reider; 70s, beautiful; 9 participants; 31 species seen. Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Greater Yellowlegs, Rubythroated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Pine, Palm and Black-and-white warblers.

Editor's Note - This new detailed reporting of recent field trips involves time and careful effort on Ron's part. Thank you, Ron, for your dedication in keeping us all better informed. Reader comments invited by email to: ccbc_kingfisher@earthlink.net.



Future Cape Cod Bird Club Programs

Jan 12, 2004: Peter Trull, "Seabirds"

Feb 9, 2004: David Spector, "How to Mis-identify a Bird"

Mar 8, 2004: Sharon Stichter, "Migration of the Ruby-throat & How to Attract Them"

April 12, 2004: Mark Lynch, "Birding Blackstone Valley"

May 10, 2004: Peter Flood, "Pilgrim Heights Hawkwatch"

Field Trips - November & December

Ginie Page, Coordinator

All are welcome to join our field trips which are free. A call or e-mail to the leader is appreciated. Please check www.massbird.org/ CCBC for additions or changes.

Nov 7-Fri-9AM-All Day. Truro and Provincetown. Meet at Friendly's near the Orleans Rotary. We will car pool and head for various points. We will probably stop for lunch at a deli in P'Town. Leader: Stauffer Miller 508-362-3384 or stauffer@seepub.com

Nov 8-Sat-8AM-All Day. Woods Hole to Sandwich. Meet at the Mobil/Dunkin Donuts, Rte 28 at Palmer Ave. near Falmouth Center. See what's wintering on the Upper Cape in ponds, shores and thickets. Leader: Greg Hirth 508-457-4356

Nov 12-Wed-9AM Harwich. Meet along Bell's Neck Rd for a great view over both salt and fresh marshes. Wintering ducks should be present along with the other specialties of the area. Perhaps we will move on to other early winter places. Leaders: Ruth Connaughton 432-1580 & Nancy Reider 398-8296

Nov 14-Fri-8:30 Harwich & Chatham. Meet at leaders' home at 62 Mild Bay Circle, Dennisport to car pool. We'll focus on Winter Waterfowl. Leaders: Mike Dettrey and Diane Silverstein 508-398-9484 or birder526@aol.com

Nov 15-Sat-8AM Mashpee. Meet at

the Honey Dew Donuts on Rte 28 at Cape Drive in Mashpee. We'll explore the birdy pockets of Mashpee and check the sea if it is promising. Leader: Mary Keleher 508-477-1473 or Maryeak@yahoo.com

Nov 18-Tues-8AM E. Sandwich Game Farm. Meet at Amari's Restaurant on 6A near Sandy Neck Rd. We'll look for winter residents. Beginning Birders welcome! Leader: Dick Jurkowski 508-428-8494

Nov 20-Thurs-8:30 AM Mid Cape. Meet at Corporation Beach in Dennis. Search for winter ducks in nearby ponds and shore areas. Leader: Mark Tuttle 508-362-3015

Dec 2-Tues-1:30PM Marshfield, MA Mass. Audubon's Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield. We'll meet at 1:30 in the Sagamore bus parking lot on the "other" side of the bridge. Don't miss this one! Dan Furbish resident caretaker of DWWS will walk the trails with us looking for birds in the afternoon and then we'll wait at Fox Hill for the Long Eared and Short Eared Owls to begin their evening hunting flights. We should be able to see some good raptors in the afternoon. Wear quiet clothing, both silent and subtly colored and consider that we will be sitting in the late dusk, so dress for the Arctic. Leaders: Ginie Page 349-6810 & Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@verizon.net

Dec 6 & 7 Sat/Sun 21st Annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey. This survey covers all of the ponds and lakes on the Cape. Call Michael Dettrey to volunteer in your favorite area. 508-398-9484

Dec 12-Fri-9AM Marston's Mills to Falmouth. Meet at the commuter lot off Rte 6 at exit 6 (Burger King etc) to car pool. Park at the far end of the big lot. We'll start at Mill Pond and work our way to Falmouth. Focus on Winter Waterfowl. Leaders: Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey 398-9484 or birder 526@aol.com

Dec 13-Sat-8:30AM Orleans. Meet at Friendly's near Orleans Rotary for a trip to Nauset Beach (seeking Harlequin Ducks) and points on Pleasant Bay. Leader: Mark Tuttle 508-362-3015.

Dec 16-Tues-8AM E. Sandwich Game Farm. Meet at Amari's Restaurant on 6A near Sandy Neck Rd. We'll look for winter residents. Beginning Birders welcome! Leader: Dick Jurkowski 508-428-8494

Volunteer for the Annual Christmas Bird Count!!

Looking for a special 'life bird' that you know others have seen on the Cape? Contact Ginie Page and she'll connect you to a field trip that will increase your chance of seeing that bird!

The Christmas Bird Count

Ginie Page

The first Christmas Bird Count was done on Christmas Day of 1900 as an alternative activity to an event called the 'side hunt' where people chose sides, then went out and shot as many birds as they could. The group that came in with the largest number of dead birds won the event.

Frank Chapman, a famed ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History, recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand this over-hunting and proposed to *count* birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them. (Check out www.Audubon.org/bird/cbc/ for more

information on this subject.)

Today, nationwide counts held between December 14 and January 5th are an attempt to find each bird possible in 15 mile diameter circles to get an idea of the numbers, species and health of the local bird populations.

The various Cape Cod counts send out volunteers to survey and enumerate each possible member of each species found. It is fun and an opportunity to bird locally with great people.

People with bird feeders are also asked to help out by counting the species and numbers of birds at the feeder.

Call your circle leader (below) if you wish to participate in this way!

Cape Christmas Counts will be announced at our December Meeting.

Cape Count Info to date:

Buzzards Bay – Date TBA – Contact Richard Harlow at 508-748-1297

Cape Cod – Date TBA – Contact Blair Nikula at 508-432-6348

Mid Cape – Date TBA – Call Peter Trimble at 508-477-3847

Truro – Mon: Dec. 22 – Contact Ginie Page at 508-349-6810 or Tom Lipsky at 978-897-5429

Bosque del Apache, New Mexico: A Birder's Heaven

John and Jane Sloane

The Snow Geese announced their presence with a clamorous gabble as we got out of our car at the visitors' center of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Reserve ("NWR") in south-central New Mexico. It was mid-December and the bright desert sun cast long, hard shadows, though it yielded little warmth as the afternoon was well along – especially so since the elevation here is over 4,500 feet. But the cry of the geese was heartwarming – and loud – enough. The lake across from the center seemed to be covered with them, and the prospect of the spectacle which awaited us spurred our progress indoors to get trail maps and pay the admission fee.

The message board hanging behind the volunteer at the counter told a tale. As of December 14, 2001, there were almost 25,000 Snow Geese (all Lessers, down from a peak of 53,000 in early December), over 36,000 assorted ducks (peak was 65,000) and more than 11,000 Sandhill Cranes. We could hardly wait to get going, and the fine exhibits in the visitors' centre would have to wait. We were advised to be at the "Flight Deck" by 4:30pm – half-an-hour before sunset – and, equipped with a trail map, we fled back to the car. Pausing to pay the \$4.00 (per car) admission fee, we used the map to identify the "Flight Deck" as a wooden observation deck by the lake on which we had seen the Snow Geese. We planned a somewhat indirect trail to get there.

There are over 14 miles of dirt trails in the Bosque, which are best travelled by car – which makes a quite adequate blind. Another 15 miles of trails, including a 1,500 ft boardwalk, can only be walked or biked, but time was short for us and we left the peripatetic pastimes for the following day.

The geese were beckoning but they would have to wait. The first avian

delight was the sight of two Bald Eagles, from a total of 21 recorded in the reserve this year (last year the count topped out at 92!), perched on a snag only a short distance away. They were totally unflustered by the presence of humans climbing gleefully from of their cars, for this sight was too breathtaking to be confined by a metal exoskeleton. This had to be enjoyed standing up and preferably with the benefit of a spotting scope. Fluster, though, certainly beset the humans; so much so in the case of the car preceding us that the driver accidentally locked himself out of his vehicle, with the engine running! We were later to discover that this reaction to the eagles is so common that the visitors' centre has an extensive collection of "jimmys" capable of unlocking almost every year and model of car known.

As we watched the eagles, a couple of Northern Harriers swooped by. We spotted a Sharp-shinned Hawk and, shortly afterward, a Red-tailed Hawk and two American Kestrels – certainly a satisfactory start to our raptor list. As we drove on, passing other wetlands, we quickly added Northern Pintail, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Canada Goose, and Mallard. There was even a Greater Roadrunner, in classic sunbathing pose, by the roadside – his supercilium a Coua blue, blending to coral pink. It was a dizzying experience, and the Snow Geese were still in prospect.

First, though, was a stop to see the Sandhill Cranes. In 1940 they were endangered and only 17 of these elegant and beautiful creatures were counted in the Refuge. Last year they numbered about 14,000, and there were many more in other reserves, like Bitter Lake NWR.

Nothing in the world sounds like a Sandhill Crane, except possibly two Sandhill Cranes, for they are mate-faithful and

rarely seen singly. Indeed they are gregarious and often in large flocks, though each is never far from its mate. Their call is a stentorian wooden rattle audible for more than a mile, and on the wing their euphonious rolling bugle – typically long and slightly descending – often announces their intention to land. Greater and Lesser Sandhills share the reserve, and the pitch of their calls is respectively higher and lower, for both adults and young. In addition, these tall, conspicuous birds have a full inventory of displays and gestures. Their mating ritual, a complex gandy-dance, is accompanied by rapid high-pitched calls from the females, echoed by lower responses from her mate. The only possible human reaction to all this is a very broad smile. It is an audital tonic.

By the time we got to the Flight Deck, there were already uncountably many Snow Geese, and, as I was able to see from close up, Ross's Geese, on the lake. About 80% of the flock are Ross's though their paltry vocalizations were completely drowned out by the Snows'. From the north and east they came, skein after skein, veiling the horizon. The setting sun painted their bodies a roseate hue, as they wheeled round, somehow finding space to land. Each addition to the flock came in sounding their harsh *whouk*, which was answered by the new and seemingly reluctant neighbours among whom they alighted. Slowly, as the number of new arrivals lessened, the sound changed to the flock chorus – a slower paced pattern of single honks in various pitches, the flutter of refolded wings and the lower pitched hur-hur grunts that seemed to tell of the contentment of a belly-full of grain.

Along with the Snow Geese came the Sandhills, arriving dutifully in pairs. No argey-bargey splash-down into the middle of the flock for them. They land sedately

Cont'd on Page 6

Birding 'Cape to Cape'

Diane Silverstein

Back in midsummer, Michael and I decided to plan a weekend birding trip to Cape May, New Jersey, one of our longtime favorite birding sites. As past New Jerseyans, we've spent many hours visiting Cape May's hotspots, whether in spring for migrant warblers and shorebirds feasting on Horseshoe Crab eggs, to fall for migrating raptors, to winter for waterfowl. It had been a few years since we were last in Cape May so we picked a late September weekend for our getaway. Then we mentioned our plans to Cynthia and Doug Franklin who had their first Cape May experience this past spring. Yes, they were interested in a return visit! Then we spoke to one or two other friends from the bird club and, before we knew it, fourteen birding friends were coming along! Dick and Sylvia Jurkowski, Ellie Winslow, Ron Ayotte, Art King, Mark Tuttle, Pete Gray, Don and Carol Scott, Ginie Page, Barbara Murphy and Jinks Keil all came along and what a great group of traveling companions they were!

Upon our departure on Friday, September 26th, the group stopped to bird in Old Lyme, CT and then continued onto Cape May. Everyone met at the observation platform in the Nature Conservancy's "The Meadows," a great spot for owls in the evening and shorebirds and waterfowl at other times. Although no owls made an appearance, it was a beautiful spot at which to start our weekend!

After a hearty Italian meal at a local spot, we headed to sleep, knowing we had an early start Saturday morning. Saturday, Sunday and Monday were filled with walks at many of Cape May's "hotspots." Time was spent birding at Higbee's Beach, Rea's Farm (known locally as The Beanery), Cape May Point State Park, The Meadows again, and on a marsh cruise aboard the Skimmer.



We were rewarded with great looks at Tricolored Heron, Little Blue Heron, Caspian Tern, and Clapper Rail on the Skimmer cruise (and the non-birders on the boat were truly entertained by the enthusiasm of our group. We definitely made birdwatchers out of them).

Monday morning at Higbee's was especially productive following a front that moved through the night before. Numerous species of warblers were spotted, including Blue-winged, Prairie, Palm, Pine, Black-throated Blue, Black and White, and N. Parula, along with American Redstart. Hundreds of Northern Flickers migrated through there and the numbers of American Kestrels were exciting too.

Throughout the weekend, we spotted Merlins and Peregrines and, at the Hawkwatch, had numerous Sharpies along with a distant Bald Eagle and Broadwinged and Red-tailed Hawk sightings. The Meadows gave us American Bittern, a juvenile Common Moorhen and waterfowl species including N. Shoveler, Gadwall, Wood Duck (a handsome male), and both Blue- and Green-winged Teal.


A highlight was an early Sunday morning

sighting of over 500 Black Skimmers on the Atlantic Ocean beach with several Royal Terns mixed in!

We loved seeing Carolina Chickadees and Boat-tailed Grackles — a nice change from our familiar northern Black-capped Chickadees and Common Grackles. Overall, the weekend presented us with more than 110 species.

Our accommodations at the Blue Amber Motel, located near the action, were very birder-friendly. We appreciated the coffee and doughnuts set out at 5 each morning! A fun visit to the Cape May Bird Observatory's Northwood Center allowed us to see the list of local sightings.

On our way home to Massachusetts, we visited the Edwin Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, more familiarly known as 'Brig (for the name of the unit, Brigantine), located outside of Atlantic City. There, we were treated to House Wren and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, along with a good diversity of shorebirds and a Peregrine.

'Cape to Cape' — we had a wonderful time and we already look forward to a return trip! 

Bosque del Apache – (Cont'd from page 4)

at the edge of the lake and walk the last 50 yards to the roost, all gravitas and decorum.

The sun was dropping quickly by now, the air chilly and the San Andres Mountains, which seem so close but are really so distant, reflecting ruby and purple. Further north they are called the Sangre de Cristo Mountains – the Blood of Christ – so vivid are the tones of haemoglobin delivered each evening, courtesy of the clean, rarefied air and the crisp low humidity.

Suddenly Chicken Lickin plays his trick. With loud harsh alarm calls, the geese are instantly on the wing. The panic spreads quickly and, in seconds, hardly a goose is left on the surface. Abruptly there are more geese than sky, each seemingly without the room to flap, each squalling and adding to the panic and the whole wheeling away in a shimmering lattice. But no sooner are they all awing than they start to land again. They seem to know that the coyotes would rather come after them in the stubble fields in daytime. Shortly, the goosery abates and they're settled again on the surface, while throughout the stoic Sandhills remained, literally, unflappable, and the *Dafila* fed undisturbed, their pintails cocked over well beyond vertical, like a gnomon on a sundial, as the last rays flicked out over the western hills. Dark comes fast. The geese and cranes were settled. Even the sleek, well-fed coyotes we'd seen earlier seemed to be down for the night. It was time to go...

Bosque del Apache (pronounced Boskay del Apache – in Spanish the name means "Woods of the Apache") was established in 1939 as a wintering ground for Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl. The Woods were formerly extensive groves of cottonwood trees and the area, which lies along the Rio Grande, used for hun-

dreds of years by Piro Indians until they abandoned it after the pueblo revolt in 1680. It contains 57,000 acres of wetlands, farmlands, shallow lakes and riparian habitat with extensive water management canals, but by no means is all of it open to the public.

We spent two more days there, adding many species, including some for the life list. The "Fly Out" of the Snow Geese with the sun's first rays (it's best to arrive about an hour before dawn) is even more spectacular than the evening "Fly In." Later, with time to spend searching the scrub and marshes, we saw Western Meadowlark, Canyon and Spotted Towhee, Rufous-crowned, White-crowned and Black-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Long-billed Dowitcher, Killdeer, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Redhead, Common Goldeneye, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great-tailed Grackle and Gambel's Quail, to name but a few. Mule deer live there too, and we saw a fine buck with a magnificent spread of antlers.

Alas, there was no sign of a Whooping Crane. Last year there was only one – a young adult. Its parent had been killed by a power line the previous spring. They were the last of a failed attempt to reintroduce cranes on the western flyway. Salvation may be just around the corner though, as the International Crane Foundation and Operation Migration have been successful in 2001 and 2002 using ultra-light planes to lead a flock of 10 and 16 captive-bred Whooping Cranes on a new, safe migration route from Necedah NWR, Wisconsin to Chassahowitzka NWR, Florida. There are now 21 Whooping Cranes freely migrating between Wisconsin and Florida. These guys deserve a Nobel Prize!

More than 370 species of birds have been recorded at the Bosque since 1940,

most seen each year, from the occasional majestic Golden Eagle to the vibrant Vermilion Flycatcher which nests behind the visitors' centre. None, however, has a more distinguished name than the Pyrrhuloxia, so I made a special detour to the scrub behind the refuge entrance sign where a sighting of this cousin of the Northern Cardinal was absolutely guaranteed. No luck! Next time, maybe. Anyone game for next year?

Facts and Tips: Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Reserve.

Nearest town: San Antonio, NM

Best town to stay: Socorro, NM

Nearest airports: Albuquerque, NM (1.5 hrs); El Paso, TX (2.5 hrs)

Best time to go: For geese and cranes, mid-November to late-Feb.

Biggest event of the Year: Festival of the Cranes held in mid-to-late November. **This year: November 18-23, 2003.** (In 1999 there were reportedly 160,000 people there. Depending on your perspective, that fact alone could be enough to cause you to either go to or avoid Bosque during that period.)

About the Authors

John and Jane Sloane live on Cape Cod, MA. They can be contacted at John@Sloane.net or Jane@Sloane.net.

On Sale at Each Meeting -
for Holiday Gifting or for
yourself ...

CCBC Decals	\$ 1.00
CCBC <i>REVISED</i> Checklist	.50
CCBC Patches	3.00
Camera/Binoc. Straps	12.50
CCBC Knit Hats	10.00
CCBC Caps	15.00
Organizer Packs	17.00

Was ist? Nein birdies?

Jack Palmer

I didn't visit Austria especially to see birds, but I did take my binocs along and wore them often enough in public to be labeled eccentric. Working eastwards across the country I asked people along the way about finding good birding spots but never got any worthwhile help. It became my impression that Austrians just weren't interested in birds, possibly because there weren't many. This may actually be the case because I found only a few species: only 30 in just over two weeks — most of them yard or park types. (I never even saw a bird pop out of a cuckoo clock.)

I'd had similar bad luck traveling in Italy a few years ago and, back then, was assured by some residents that all birds, except the pigeons in the Piazza del San Marco in Venice, had been eaten years ago!

But then I read that the marsh-and-small-lakes area in Southeastern Austria, called Sewinkel, was a shore-birder's paradise. Thus I aimed the rented Citroen in that direction. Before getting there, I made a side trip to Rust (pronounced like what birds do after a busy day).

This village is known for two things: Storks nesting on its rooftops; and its claim to being the "secret wine capitol of Austria." With this combination, I felt I couldn't lose by making a stop there.


When I combed the streets of this antique village, however, I saw not one stork or anyone drinking wine. Stopping at the tourist information office, I asked why. "Oh the storks left two days ago." I am always suspicious of tourist-agent hype and couldn't help

but suspect that the many empty house-top nests there might be made out of the same material as are the Flamingos in some Americans' front yards. But a quick check of the ornithological literature corroborated the agent's explanation: storks start their journey to Africa in late August.

Disappointed, we decided to drown our sorrow at a famous Rust wine tavern where the proprietor sells wine he has made. As we approached the establishment, we found patrons standing outside looking up at the rooftop across the street. There was a White Stork — the last one in town. I checked the bird's nest as I left town the next morning. The stork had gone south.

With great anticipation, I drove on to the Sewinkel area and began searching for the lakes pictured on my map. All had dried up. The long hot European summer that killed 13,000 French also destroyed this prime habitat. All that remained was the remnant of one little lake, now only six inches deep. There were Lapwings, Redshanks and Avocets along the shore, and Great Herons and Spoonbills out in the middle. While I stood there scanning for more birds, an apparently demented lad rode his bicycle right out into the pond and circled around the shore waters causing every bird there to fly off toward Hungary.

Still, I can close this sad story on a positive note. While climbing one day in the Alps, at 2,500 meters I encountered a small flock of Alpine Choughs (pronounced Chuf, with the ch as in chip; rhymes with buff) — a lifer for me. They ply the air currents. Choughs can hang suspended in the strong updrafts

by simply partially pulling in their wings, and can go up without flapping by just extending them. To go down, they pull them in and dive. Watching this meaningless yo-yoing made me think they might just be playing. 

SPECIAL THANKS

When I needed a special 'little symbol' to end the newsletter articles, Phil Kyle volunteered to draw me a Kingfisher silhouette to use. It was perfect! Phil's wonderful drawings also enhance the newsletter pages. Thanks, Phil, for sharing your many artistic talents!

My thanks, also, to all those folks who regularly send me articles, reports, birding travel adventures, poetry, and just everything that makes this newsletter more fun for me to put together and for YOU to read.

Your contributions are very much appreciated!

Syëvia

NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME

John & Jean Begg – Bourne
 Kay Cooper – Harwichport
 Dr. Bill Cottle – Bourne
 Al & Karen Curtis – Harwich
 Elizabeth Donaghue – Centerville
 Thomas & Ann Dorazio – Enfield, CT
 Dorothy Fleischer – Brewster
 Diane Freeman – W. Newton, MA
 John Galvani & Marge Iness – Brewster
 William & Dorte Griswold – Brewster
 David & Faith Hague – Brewster
 Stephen & Susan Helman – W. Barnstable
 Thomas & Barbara Joyce – Marstons Mills
 Jill Karpf – Bethesda, MD & Dennis
 Virginia Lewis – Yarmouthport
 Margaret Rose – Harwich
 Antonio Stephens – S. Yarmouth
 Dale & Beatrice VanWinkle – Yarmouth Port
 Lee Weller – Brewster

026644#1729

026644#1729

Frank Caruso and Barbara Steller
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale MA 02644

Have NOT been paid

Have been paid

Your dues for 2003-2004



Cape Cod Bird Club
The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
869 Rte 6A, Brewster, MA 02631



The Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.

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

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

869 Rte 6A, Brewster, MA 02631

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

Officers

Dick Jurkowski	President
Diane Silverstein	Vice President
Ron Ayotte	Secretary
Ellie Winslow	Treasurer

Directors

Ginie Page	Joanna Schurmann
Alan Campbell	Mike Dettrey
Greg Hirth	Barbara Stanton

Newsletter

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Circulation ~ Ron Ayotte

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