



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 32 – ISSUE 5

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

SUMMER 2004

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 – Sept thru May..

Deadline for next issue's articles: **August 1, 2004.**

Send articles or comments to: capekingfisher@yahoo.com

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

President's Message

Time sure flies (no birding pun intended)! As you read this, Spring Migration is underway and the birds are all around us enjoying the beautiful weather, as are we! The upcoming CCBC Summer "Recess" is a good time to let you know about several important new projects completed this year by your Board, working behind the scenes. This list doesn't even include the MAJOR projects being worked on that you already know about.

- We worked hard to produce and enact the very first CCBC Budget ... a 3 year plan to guide us down the road.
- An Inclement Weather Meeting Cancellation Policy is now in place.
- Our Website has been Improved and is consistently up-to-date.

A big THANK YOU to all who contribute their time and efforts on these projects. Ask any Board Member for details on the projects of interest to you.

At the May 2004 CCBC meeting we will be electing one new Board Member. Alan Campbell is completing his term and we thank him for his time and effort serving on the Board. We encourage all members to attend the meeting on May 10th to help shape YOUR new Leadership Team.

For now, let's all get out there and enjoy the Summer of 2004! Enjoy your birding experiences and I look forward to seeing you all in the Fall!

Dick Jurkowski



CCBC Program – May 10th – Pilgrim Heights Hawkwatch

With spring migration in full swing, this is a great time of the year to learn about hawks! Join us at the May meeting to hear **Peter Flood** talk about the **Pilgrim Heights Hawkwatch**.

The Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, in partnership with Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch and with permission from the Cape Cod National Seashore, conducts a hawk watch each year at Pilgrim Heights in Truro. Data collected is submitted to the Hawk Migration Association of North America with the goal of tracking population trends of hawks. It also provides educational opportunities to guests and visitors.

Peter's talk will not only cover some of the data that has been collected but he will also discuss the topic of Migration as well as Field Identification and the Natural History of

the hawks typically seen at Pilgrim Heights.

Peter has been part of the Pilgrim Heights Hawk Watch for the past four years. He also leads natural history trips and tours for Wellfleet Bay. A Cape Cod Bird Club member and an avid birdwatcher, Peter is currently finishing up a degree in biology at UMass Boston. Join us for a most informative and enjoyable evening !

A Note from Barbara: I can't believe that my first season as Program Chair is coming to a close. Thank you so much to all of our speakers for making it a fun and interesting year. I'm looking forward to putting a slate together for next season. If anyone has suggestions for upcoming speakers, please let me hear from you at pennstan@capecod.net.

Field Trips – May thru late summer Ginie Page, Coordinator

All are welcome to join our field trips. There is no fee and no registration, unless noted. A call or email to the leader is appreciated. Please check www.massbird.org/CCBC (often) for additional trips or changes.

May 5 - Wed - 5:30PM West Harwich Conservation Lands. Park on Bell's Neck Rd. Enjoy an evening of great birds in this very special area. Leader: Blair Nikula 432-6348

May 11 - Tues - 7AM N. Truro. Meet at Pilgrim Heights in N. Truro (off Rte.6) We will walk and look for warblers and early nesting species. A hawk watch visit may help us find some migrating and resident raptors and may even show us a distant whale! Leader: Ginie Page 508-349-6810

May 14 - Fri - 6:45AM Cummaquid. Meet at Mass Audubon's Long Pasture parking lot on Bone Hill Rd. (From 6A, turn at the Harbor Point Restaurant.) We will look for spring warblers. Leaders: Mike Dettrey and Diane Silverstein 398-9484

May 18 - Tues - 7AM Wellfleet. Meet at the Duck Harbor Beach parking lot. From Wellfleet center, follow signs to Great Island. Then turn right and go to the end of Griffin Island Rd. Duck Harbor Rd and the Herring River area provide us the opportunity to walk thru a traditional landscape once a real harbor – now brush and marsh as well as upland. We'll look for warblers, raptors, and other birds of spring. Please wear long pants & be prepared to walk about 3 miles. Leaders: Ginie Page 349-6810 and Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@verizon.net

May 21- Fri - 8AM Falmouth. Meet at the bicycle path parking area on Locust St. We will go to our favorite sites. Please register, if you can. Leader: Alison Robb 540-2408 or Nature@cape.com

May 22- Sat - 5:30AM Wompatuk State Park, Hingham. Early Birds for Early Birders. Meet either at the Sagamore Park and Ride at 5:30AM to car pool or at the Wompatuk Gate at 6:30AM. This is early, but you have to get to Wompatuk early to see all the good birds! We'll spend the morning looking for Roughed Grouse, Cuckoos, Veery, Scarlet Tanager and many warbler species. We may continue on to

other local hot spots. Exit 14 off Rte 3, right onto 228 go about 5 mi. to Free St., then 1 mi to park ent. on right. Leaders: Mary Keleher 477-1473 and Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@Verizon.net

May 25- Tues - 4PM East Sandwich. "Stauffer's Puddle" Meet at the convenience store at the intersection of Ploughed Neck Rd. and Route 6A at 4PM to go from there to the small pond at the end of Foster Rd. There should be a few shorebirds in breeding plumage, plus a few other water birds. We may go elsewhere after that. Note the unusual starting time. Leader: Stauffer Miller 362-3384 or Stauffer@seepub.com

June 3 - Thurs - 8:30AM East Sandwich Game Farm. Look for migration stragglers and summer residents. Meet at Amari's Restaurant parking lot on 6A near Sandy Neck Rd. Leader: Dick Jurkowski 428-8494

June 8 - Tues - 7:30AM South Coast Birding, Marion/Mattapoisett, morning til early afternoon. Meet at the Tedeschi's convenience store at the Bourne rotary at 7:30AM to carpool. Others will meet at 8 at Wave Restaurant on Rte 105 in Marion (off I95 at exit 20). We will retrace the CBC area and see the birds of June: Little blue, Tri colored herons, and Orchard Orioles possible etc. Return to cars by 1:30PM and perhaps check "Stauffer's Puddle" in Sandwich for a quick look-see afterwards! Leader: Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@verizon.net

June 10 - Thurs - 8AM S. Sandwich. Meet at Ryder Conservation Area on the west side of Cotuit Rd. between Early Red Circle Rd. and Harlow Rd. Look for a brown sign (a bit of Mashpee intrudes on Cotuit Rd before the road returns to Sandwich) Leader: Ellie Winslow 888-1760 or Birdierellie@aol.com

June 16 - Wed - 5PM Eastham. Meet at the lower parking lot at Fort Hill to look for the grassland birds (and others) which may have returned to the newly cut hills. There will be great views of the marshes as well. We may then go to the Marconi area to hear resident whip-poor-wills and maybe a chuck-will's-widow. Leaders: Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey 398-9484

June 23 - Wed - 10AM E. Falmouth. Looking for birds and butterflies at

BEECH FOREST WALKS

As in the past, the Club will have a Walk in the Beech Forest in Provincetown each Saturday and Sunday (and one Monday) in May.

The Beech Forest is the best spot on the Cape to see and hear spring migrant warblers and other songbirds. (To get to Beech Forest, take Rte 6 to the Race Point exit. The parking lot is on the left.) All walks begin at 8:00AM in the parking lot.

The Walks and Leaders are:

Sat - May 1 – Stauffer Miller 362-3384
Sun - May 2 – Art King 255-8919

Sat - May 8 – Mark Tuttle 362-3015
Sun - May 9 – Greg Hirth 457-4356

Sat - May 15 – Frank Caruso 477-9807
Sun - May 16 – Blair Nikula 432-6348

Sat - May 22 – Dick & Sylvia Jurkowski 428-8494
Sun - May 23 – Ginie Page 349-6810 and Jan Kelly 487-1267

Sat - May 29 – Ed Banks
Sun - May 30 – TBA

Mon - May 31 – Ruth Connaughton 432-1580 and Nancy Reider 398-8296

Crane Wildlife Management Area on Rte. 151. Just east of the Nickelodeon Theater, turn north and go to the last parking area. Please bring binoculars and wear long pants. Leader: Alison Robb 540-2408 or nature@cape.com

July 13 - Tues - 8AM E. Sandwich. "Stauffer's Puddle" See May 25. There should be a few returning shorebirds, plus terns, gulls and herons.

July 30 - Fri. South Beach, Chatham. Meet at Outermost Harbor at 9:15AM for the boat ride to South Beach. The cost will be about \$15 for the boat. It's time to look for the returning shorebirds on this long and beautiful sandbar. Be prepared to walk 4 or more miles and bring the essentials: water, hat, sun & bug protection, snacks and of course, your binocs (and scope if you have one!). Leaders: Mike and Diane 398-9484.

August 27 - Fri. South Beach, Chatham. Meet at Outermost Harbor at 8:15AM. See July 30. Leaders: Mike and Diane 398-9484.

Club Field Walks

Ron Ayotte, Secretary CCBC

NOTE: This article covers Club field walks from the end of January to the end of March 2004. We look forward to receiving feedback from the members as to format and content. Remember that the highlights are abbreviated summaries and that common species are omitted due to space limitations. Very unusual species are underlined.

January 2004: The results of this field walk were received too late to include in the last *Kingfisher*:

- 1/30 – Rhode Island; Leader, Frank Caruso; Sunny, 25F, windy; 4 participants; 60 species reported. **Highlights:** Pied-billed and Horned grebes, Great Cormorant, Brant, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser scaup, Harlequin Duck, White-winged, Black, and Surf scoter, Common Goldeneye, Hooded and Common mergansers, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Purple Sand-piper, Dunlin, Bonaparte's and Ring-billed gulls, Horned Lark, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Tree, Field, Fox and White-throated sparrows, Snow Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Purple Finch.

February 2004: There were six field walks scheduled in February 2004. Two were off-Cape, to Rhode Island and Cape Ann. The four on-Cape walks ranged from Sandwich to Provincetown. There were a total of 41 participants in the walks, and 76 species observed. The largest number of species reported on one walk was 45.

- 2/1 – Cape Ann; Leaders Ginie Page, Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey; Sunny, 13-36F; 6 participants; 45 species reported. **Highlights:** Red-throated and Common loons, Horned and Red-necked grebes, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, Gadwall, Greater Scaup, King Eider, Harlequin Duck, White-winged and Surf scoter, Common Goldeneye, Cooper's and Red-tailed hawks, Merlin, Iceland and Glaucous gull, Dovekie, Common Murre, Black Guillemot, Golden Eagle.
- 2/7 – Marstons Mills; Leaders, Dick and Sylvia Jurkowski; 32F, light rain; 9 participants; 18 species seen.

Highlights: Canada Goose, Mallard, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Red- and White-breasted nuthatches, Dark-eyed Junco.

- 2/12 – Sandy Neck/Sandwich; Leader, Ellie Winslow; 30's, sunny; 7 participants; 42 species reported. **Highlights:** Pied-billed and Horned grebes, Great Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Brant, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Surf, White-winged and Black scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Belted Kingfisher, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, White-throated Sparrow, Common Grackle (1st report of year).
- 2/15 – Falmouth; Leaders, Mary Keleher, Dan Furbish; 18F, windy; 8 participants; 45 species reported. **Highlights:** Horned Grebe, Great Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-heron, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser scaup, Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-throated Sparrow.
- 2/19 – Rhode Island; Leader, Stauffer Miller. No report.
- 2/27 – Outer Cape; Leaders, Mike Dettrey, Diane Silverstein; 32-37F, windy; 11 participants; 35 species reported. **Highlights:** Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Brant, Harlequin Duck, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Northern Harrier, Sanderling, Horned Lark.

March 2004: There were eight field walks scheduled in March 2004. Reports of only three were received by submission deadline (March 31). The three reported walks had 36 participants, and observed a total of 56 species. The largest number of species reported on any walk was 40, on March 16.

- 3/5 – Cummaquid; Leaders, Mike Dettrey and Diane Silverstein; Low 40'sF, light rain; 7 participants; 16 species reported. **Highlights:** American Woodcock (in display, the focus of

the walk), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird (first 2004 report on-Cape).

- 3/13 – Marstons Mills; Leaders, Dick and Sylvia Jurkowski; 32F, sunny, breezy; 21 participants; 28 species reported. **Highlights:** Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed hawks, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Red- and White-breasted nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco.
- 3/16 – Mid-Cape ocean and ponds; Leader, Mark Tuttle; 30F, overcast; 8 participants; 40 species reported. **Highlights:** Red-throated and Common loons, Horned and Red-necked grebes, Great and Double-crested cormorants, Great Blue Heron, Brant, Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common Merganser, Osprey (first 2004 report), Sharp-shinned Hawk, Glaucous Gull.
- 3/17 – Cummaquid; Leaders Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey; No report.*
- 3/19 – Falmouth; Leader Allison Robb; No report.*
- 3/20 – Woods Hole and Falmouth; Leader Greg Hirth; No report.*
- 3/22 – South Wellfleet; Leader Ginie Page; No report.*
- 3/25 – Cummaquid; Leader Ned Handy; No report.*

Walks with an * will be covered, if reported, in later *Kingfishers*.

Summary: September 2003 thru last report in March 2004:

There were 40 walks reported with a total participation of 371. There were 178 species observed and reported. The most frequently seen species were: American Crow (83% of walks), American Goldfinch (78%), American Robin and Herring Gull (75%), Song Sparrow (70%) and Tufted Titmouse (68%). Others frequently seen include Ring-billed Gull (65%), Great Black-backed Gull, American Black Duck, Mallard and Downy Woodpecker (63%), and Bufflehead (53%).

Ron Ayotte, Compiler

Extremes of Awe in This Birder's Eye

Jack Palmer

First, the “beautiful” end of my bird-
dom spectrum. Think of a bird only as
big as a minute. Its dark blue tail is al-
most as long as its body and is carried
straight up. Decorating the front end of
a male is a chicory blue cap, saddle, and
cheeks, with Lovely Cotinga purple
fill-ins elsewhere. The other half of his
body is mouse brown. He is noisy and
perky — described as “cheeky” by his
countrymen — and quick to scold.
This pugnacious featherweight is always
willing to fight his reflection in a shiny
hubcap in spite of never winning a
round.

So, where can one go to see this
madcap little fellow? Ten thousand five
hundred miles Southwest of Cape Cod!
Just walk the paths of Hyde Park in
the center of Sydney, Australia, and
he will be underfoot. Aussie names for
things — except for their wines — are
usually prosaic, and so it is with this
tiny well-loved bird they call a Blue
Wren. But the more creative ornitholo-
gists' union choice is glossier: Superb
Fairy-wren. These common birds come
in eight other cyanic variations, a few
even more beautiful than the Superb.
Some version of the species can be
found in most parts of that enormous
country.

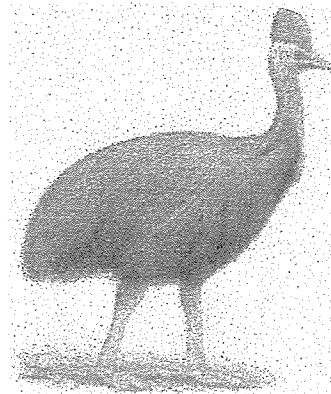
Now to the other end of my per-
sonal spectrum: *the horrible*.

This story began when I was hiking
in a rain forest in Northern Australia.
Resting against a tree trunk, I lunched
on a crocodile sandwich (the delicious
meat of this killer has the tenderness
and color of chicken breast), washed
it down with a Victoria Bitter, and then
took a quick nap.

When I awoke, I found large foot-
prints in the damp soil treading across
the small clearing. Egad, while asleep,
a dinosaur — probably a velocirap-
tor — had thundered right by me! I
immediately began stuffing things back
into my pack as I prepared to retreat,
but then my drowsy state subsided and
I realized that I was in Oz, not Jurassic
Park, and that the track was that of a
Southern Cassowary.

Feeling almost sure they were
vegetarians, I followed the tracks and
quickly caught up to the heavy-footed


instigator. It was a male bird with a tiny
young. An adult weighs close to 130
pounds and stands about five feet tall.
(It is the second largest native bird in
Australia.) It is a dweller of thick for-
ests, is flightless, and is covered with
dark shaggy, dreadlock-like feathers.
The legs are like stout fence posts
and are shielded by armor-like scales.
The feet seemed even more enormous
than the prints had suggested and are
terminated with ominous claws ...
one kick can eviscerate a human.



supreme in anyone's worst nightmare.

The monster's head and neck are
featherless exposing blue and purple
skin; red warts run down the nape and
a red double-wattle dangles down in
front. Above the yellow eyes (I was
within seven feet of the animal, but
covered behind a stout tree) is a hard
bony “casque” almost 7” tall that looks
like the keel of a tipped over sailboat.
The ear openings remind me of the side
projections on the head of Frankenstein.
In comparison, its head makes that of
our Turkey Vulture downright hand-
some. In short, this is a face only a
female Cassowary could love.

Contrasting with this monstrosity
was its young, a cute little thing with
brown stripes that looked like a walking
light bulb. I couldn't help but think that,
unaware its own fate, the youngster
must find its father's grotesque appear-
ance disgusting. So there are my choices
of extremes.

Not wanting to leave on a sour note,
I might add that the great majority of
Australian birds are attractive and al-
ways interesting. 

Seen on the 'Net' ...

TEN (Tongue in Cheek) RULES OF 'WARBLING'

1. The warbler that just flew in to the
closest branch is a Red-eyed Vireo ...
again.
2. American Redstarts and Chestnut-
sided vocally cross-train over winter.
3. “Warbler neck” occurs primarily
just before high canopy fallouts.
4. Partial looks emphasize yellow and
never include key ID characteristics.
Partial calls can always be narrowed
down within 5 species.
5. Connecticuts vocalize intensely up
to 10 seconds prior to your arrival.
6. “Camera looks” only occur when
the camera is either in the shop or
back in the parking lot 2.5 miles away.
If you remember to bring it, film is
optional.
7. Ceruleans only appear when back-
lit. If you have the rest of your life to
listen, Hooded, Connecticuts and Chats
are best identified by call.
8. The strongest fallouts occur on days
when you've listened to the weather
oracles. If you don't listen, binoculars
strategically fog during significant upper
canopy movement.
9. “It was right there!”
10. For some reason, ‘warbling’ is still
great fun anyway!

New Members – Welcome !

James & Grace Bryson – N. Quincy
Richard & Marie Budis – Chatham
Thomas Doane – W. Chatham
James (Pete) Ingram – Osterville
Suzanne Karcher – Madison, WI
William & Anita LoConte – M. Mills
Martha Rosen – Chatham
I. Maynard Simpson – Eastham

News of Interest !

Local Group Launches Land Preservation Fund Drive

CUMMAQUID -- A local neighborhood group, The Committee to Preserve Northside Open Space, has teamed with Massachusetts Audubon Society and Barnstable Land Trust to preserve open meadows on Bone Hill Road in Cummaquid, adjacent to the Mass Audubon Society's Long Pasture Sanctuary.

The property, known as Bone Hill Farm, is primarily open meadows. Numerous bird species use Bone Hill Farm for both forage and nesting purposes. Two species are of special interest:

American Woodcock and the Eastern Bluebird. The adjacent Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary is a 110-acre Mass Audubon property popular with walkers and birders as the fields are feeding ground for several species of raptors, including peregrine falcons and Cooper's hawks.

Committee President Duncan Gibson explained that many people walk the existing trails. "To be able to save land contiguous to the existing sanctuary helps preserve vital wildlife habitat and scenic vistas. Many folks indeed thought the land was already part of the sanctuary. Our goal is to ensure that it is preserved."

The group has formed a partnership with Mass Audubon and the Barnstable Land Trust to raise the \$700,000 required to protect the land from development and preserve the scenic "visual gateway" to the Sanctuary.

Many folks thought the land was already part of the sanctuary. Our goal is to ensure that it is preserved.

"We are actively looking for more participation as we accelerate our fundraising campaign, with a series of special events this spring and into the summer," said Gibson.

More information is available from the Save Bone Hill Farm campaign office – 508-362-7475.

'On Your Own Birding' May thru Summer

Hawk Watch: You will find Don Manchester at the Hawkwatch site at Pilgrim Heights in N. Truro. Stop by and check out the returning raptors any decent day until early summer.

Special Places: East Sandwich Game Farm can be good for returning migrants and breeding birds spring through early summer.

Beech Forest in Provincetown is always worth a stroll.

Bell's Neck Rd and the West Harwich Conservation Lands provide an opportunity to explore both fresh and salt water wetlands as well as the surrounding woodlands.

Whale watches are a cool way to see terrific sea birds as well as marine life in the heat and bustle of summer. Remember, our shorebirds have completed their breeding season and will return to the Cape's flats by the time the summer tourist season is in full swing.

Always check the sea and seaside brushy areas after a good storm! Something interesting may have been blown in!

Check "Birding Cape Cod" for other great places to see wildlife.



Looking for

YOUR story or article for upcoming "Kingfisher" editions. Have you taken a trip? Got something interesting to share with other readers? A birding experience? Let's hear from you. Please limit to 1-1/2 pages single-spaced. Email to Capekingfisher@yahoo.com.

Needed by Birders Exchange ...

Used, but still good, birding equipment — Binoculars, Scopes, Tripods, Field Guides for Neotropical birds or North American birds, laptop computers, and backpacks. This equipment is needed by bird conservationists,


researchers and environmental educators in Latin America and the Caribbean where working without the proper tools is an unfortunate reality. For more information, go to the Birders Exchange website at www.americanbirding.org/programs/consbex.htm or email Betty Petersen at bpetersen@aba.org.

Also looking for

Commemorative stamps of any size, air-mail or special handling stamps, unused picture postcards, and any foreign stamps. These will be used to raise money to help support the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Florida — the largest raptor rehab center in Southeastern United States. Bring these to our September 13th CCBC meeting.

Spring Feeding (Cont'd from page 7)

suit up just to fill your feeders, it makes you wonder--for a moment--why you're doing it. Summer feeder duty, by contrast, is a joy. A few handfuls of seed, some nectar refills, a bit of fruit, and a few worms--it's a piece of cake.

What's best, though, is getting to stay outside to enjoy the birds that come to the refilled feeders. No more watching through glass. These birds are right there for our watching and listening enjoyment. 

In order to see birds, it is necessary to become a part of the silence.

Robert Lynd (1879-1949) Irish Journalist

Bluebirds at Crowes Pasture

Diane Silverstein

During those last slate-gray days of winter, when the air still felt chilly, a flash of brilliant blue at Crowes Pasture signaled the pending arrival of spring. At first the rusty breast spoke 'Robin' to us but then we realized ... Eastern Bluebirds had been wintering at Crowes Pasture!

The Cape Cod Bird Club's merry band of bird surveyors has been regularly visiting Crowes Pasture in Dennis and, even when the bird species seen were few at times this winter, the spirit of conservation kept us out there on a weekly basis.

Don Scott first reported a dozen bluebirds back in December, locating them in the cleared fields. Wil Sprauve next spotted them on January 20th, counting at least 5. Michael and I spotted 6 on February 13th. The consistent sightings in the fields caused me to consider the idea of installing nest boxes at Crowes Pasture.

With this idea in mind, Michael and I met with Brian Malone of the Town of Dennis' Natural Resources Department and he was equally excited about this project. Brian helped to make things happen quickly and, out of his budget,

paid for six nest boxes that are approved by the North American Bluebird Society.

On March 26th, Brian and a representative from the Dennis Department of Public Works, which provided poles for mounting the boxes, joined Joanna Schurmann, Carolyn Kennedy, and me at Crowes Pasture to install the six boxes.

As we wrapped up the installation, we began to see bluebird activity in the area and counted approximately one dozen males and females. Then suddenly we observed a bluebird investigating one of the boxes! Within minutes, 3 males and 2 females were checking out four of the six boxes. We watched for about 15 minutes as they flew from one box to the other, perching on the rooftops or on the tops of the poles, and periodically poking into the boxes. Adding to our delight was the spotting of an Eastern Phoebe, another harbinger of spring!

On a visit to Crowes Pasture on Tuesday, March 30th, no nesting activity was revealed, but we are optimistic that our boxes will be utilized, if not this season, certainly in the future. Our

slight disappointment at not finding nesting activity quickly evaporated, however, when we spotted a pair of Fox Sparrows -- our first record of this species at Crowes Pasture!

The Cape Cod Bird Club is to be commended for taking on 2 projects at Crowes Pasture as part of our mandate to be conservation-oriented. Active volunteers from the club who have been assisting me are: Michael Dettrey, Don Scott, Wil Sprauve, Carolyn Kennedy, Dick Jurkowski and Joanna Schurmann. Crowes Pasture is truly 'one of the Cape's last great places' and we need to continue to protect it. Please add this gem to your list of 'places to experience' on the Cape and go for a walk sometime soon!

Directions to Crowes Pasture in Dennis: Take Rte 6A to intersection with Airline/School St. Turn onto School St and make the first right onto South St. Follow South St for .25 mile or so and the Quivet Neck Cemetery will be on the right; Crowes Pasture will be directly ahead of you. Park in small dirt lot on left or drive the main dirt road into Crowes Pasture.



Top 10 Reasons Spring Feeding is Great

by Bill Thompson, III
(from birdwatchersdigest.com)

You know spring has sprung when you find yourself turning away from the piles of discarded seed hulls beneath the feeders, and ignoring the fact that your flower beds need some serious attention. Still, spring is the season of promise, renewal, and some pretty neat action at the bird feeder. Below, in lilting prose and taxonomic order, are my top 10 reasons why spring bird feeding is great. Special thanks to Julie Zickefoose for her able assistance on this one (read: it was her idea).

10. Species diversity goes up as spring migrants come through. On a busy spring morning the activity at your feeders will attract other birds, perhaps including some unusual feeder visitors. At our feeders, a week of spring mornings can bring us a rose-

breasted grosbeak, fox sparrow, Savannah sparrow, eastern meadowlark, red-headed woodpecker, or yellow-rumped warbler. These are all species that we have only as sporadic feeder visitors during a few weeks in the spring.

9. Goldfinches molt into spring finery. Out with the old and in with the new! Nothing gets my spring fever working like that first early March glimpse of a male American goldfinch with a splotch of brand-new canary yellow feathers. Though all species go through a spring molting of feathers (old feathers fall out, new ones grow in), not all are as dramatically transforming as the American goldfinch's.

8. Bird song right outside the window. For those of us in wintry regions, spring brings back bird song to our ears. Backyards in warmer, sunnier regions may get lots of song throughout the year because some species actively court and breed during what we consider to be the winter months. Across

the upper two-thirds of North America some brave avian souls sing halfheartedly on sunny days all winter. As the days lengthen and warm, everybody gets into the act. Even birds that think they have a song, but don't, such as the yellow-headed or red-winged blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, or any of the woodpeckers, get into the act of spring noise making. They can't help it, they've got spring fever, too. I love waking up to the cacophony on a sunny April morning. And I'm counting the days until then.

7. Courtship behavior. Watch your feeders for fights, for flirting, for chases among rivals and potential mates, and for pair bonds to begin forming. The classic example is what's known as the cardinal kiss. A male cardinal offers a seed in its bill to a female. If she accepts, you know you've probably got a mated pair. The male will continue to offer the female food as a way to

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demonstrate his intentions to her, and perhaps to show that he's not only a caring mate, but also knows how to pick out the best sunflower seeds, thus demonstrating his "hunting" prowess.

6. Offering nesting material. Among the things that can be put out in your yard or garden for nest-building birds are dried grasses, pine needles, clean dryer lint, cotton balls, pet or human hair clippings, and very short (shorter than three inches) pieces of soft yarn. Long pieces of string, yarn, wire, or plastic should be avoided (or picked up and discarded safely if you find them) because they can tangle around bird legs and entrap nestlings or even adults.

5. Offering eggshells. Have you seen the commercials on TV that say "We all need calcium"? Birds need it, too, especially during the energy-sapping period of egg laying. A female bird converts the calcium she gets from eating eggshells right back into, you guessed it, eggshells. But this time it's shells for the eggs developing inside her, the ones she's about to deposit in her nest. Here's the eggshell recipe: Wash eggshells thor-

oughly and place in a pie pan in your oven. Bake them at about 250 degrees for 10-30 minutes. Crush them into small bits and scatter in an open spot, such as a driveway, sidewalk, deck, or platform feeder. Watch as all kinds of birds stop by for a nibble.

4. Offering fruit and nectar. Almost any kind of fruit you put out for the birds will be eaten by some species. Old standbys are oranges, grapefruits, melons, grapes, and apples. Use your imagination and see what your birds prefer. We spike the fruits onto nails driven into feeder posts and snags all around our yard. For shy species, such as orioles and tanagers, we place a few oranges around the edges of our yard near spots these birds already frequent. And don't forget the grape jelly.

3. Waiting for the first hummingbird. Perhaps you are lucky enough to live in a part of the continent where you get hummers all year long. If so, there is no first hummingbird of spring, but you may get a thrill when your summer resident species return. We go nuts waiting for our first rubythroat to show up. Our records indicate that this happens

every spring during the first weeks of April.

2. Shifting gears. Spring cleaning goes on outside as well as inside, and we welcome the shifting of gears. We move our feeders to a new spot. We clean out our giant winter seed storage bins for our more modest spring/summer ones. We get the hummer feeders ready for action. We feed less seed and more mealworms and fruit. We clean out a few juice jugs for use as nectar-storage containers in our refrigerator. We watch for the emergence of natural food sources such as dandelions, honeysuckle, and volunteer sunflowers. We wave goodbye to our winter visitors, the juncos, white-throated and white-crowned sparrows, purple finches, and black-capped chickadees, all of whom leave us to head north for the breeding season.

1. Filling your feeders in shirt-sleeves! OK, I admit that I said a few bad words while filling the feeders during the long and snowy winter we just had. When it takes you 20 minutes to

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Cut here & Return

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR !

DUES ARE DUE BY July 1, 2004

Individual \$10.00

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Please return this form and your check made out to Cape Cod Bird Club to:

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Sandwich, MA 02563

I would also like to contribute to the Cape Cod Bird Club Scholarship Fund.

Amount enclosed for the fund is \$_____.

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Editor ~ Sylvia Jurkowski email: capekingfisher@yahoo.com
Circulation ~ Ron Ayotte

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If you are interested in joining, please send a check for \$10 single membership, \$15 family membership to:

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**Dues for 2004-2005
are due July 1, 2004**
(see page 7)

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