



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 33 – ISSUE 3

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

JANUARY – FEBRUARY, 2005

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: **February 7th**
Send articles or comments to: capekingfisher@yahoo.com

Website: <http://www.massbird.org/CCBC>
Terry Gavin, Webmaster

President's Message

As we say goodbye to 2004 and 2005 arrives, I'd like to offer a few New Year Resolutions for us all to contemplate. My goal is to see that our CCBC VITALITY is given a big boost. We're doing good now but let's do even better!

- Participate in the CCBC Feeder/Backyard Census (insert in the Nov-Dec Kingfisher'). It's easy to do but many still aren't taking the time. In April or May, mail it to us or bring to the meeting. If you miss a month, that's okay. Give us the data you have. The more forms we get back, the more useful and accurate the information we have to determine the trends of our Cape Cod birds. We need your help!

- Participate in the CCBC walks and special bird counts as often as you can.

More eyes and ears mean more sightings and lots more fun! New AND experienced birders are always welcome. New leaders are always needed, too. Take us to one of YOUR favorite spots.

- Participate at our monthly meetings by bringing a guest .. or by volunteering to bake your favorite cookies .. or share a recent bird sighting!

Thanks for your help in contributing to a great 2004. Let's all PARTICIPATE even more in 2005. Your comments and ideas are always appreciated!

I'd also like to wish you and your families a wonderful New Year!

Dick Jurkowski



CCBC PROGRAMS in January and February

Jan 10, 2005

Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls – Norman Smith

Norman Smith is a self-taught naturalist who has worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society since 1974. His current position is Director of Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Chickatawbut Hill Education Center in Milton, Massachusetts.

Norman has studied birds of prey for over 25 years, including rehabilitating the injured and successfully fostering over 600 orphaned hawk and owl chicks of various species into adoptive nests. He's held a bird-banding permit for raptor research for over 20 years. His ongoing long-term projects include trapping and banding migrating hawks and owls in the Blue Hills Reservation, banding nestling hawks and owls, and monitoring (and banding) snowy owls and other raptors wintering at Boston's Logan International Airport. He has

Feb 14, 2005

Loons: Natural History, Challenges and Success – Harry Vogel

Harry Vogel has been studying loons for over 15 years, first as a researcher and then as the Project Biologist for the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey of Bird Studies Canada. Currently he is Executive Director of the Loon Preservation Committee in Moultonborough, NH.

He is a trustee of the North American Loon Fund and co-Chair of the Northeast Loon Study Workgroup, a consortium of government and non-governmental organizations from throughout the Canadian Maritimes and the New England States working on issues affecting loons in the northeast.

A biologist by training but now largely an administrator by profession, Harry still enjoys getting out into the field.

(Cont'd on page 2)

Jan 10 Program - Cont'd from Page 1

also traveled to Alaska to study snowy owls in their native tundra habitat, and assisted Nature Science Network with two video tapes produced for the National Audubon Society, "Hawks Up Close" and "Owls Up Close." His research work has been published in the following magazines and journals: National Geographic, National Wildlife, Ranger Rick, Yankee, Massachusetts Wildlife, Bird Observer, Birding, Sanctuary, Geo, Nature, Grolier Encyclopedia, Owls of the Northern Hemisphere and Owls of the World.

His latest project, tracking snowy owl movements using radio telemetry, began in December 1999.

Since 1981, Norman Smith has spent countless days and nights, in every imaginable weather condition, observing, capturing, banding and color marking Snowy Owls at Logan International Airport. Data has been collected on roosting, hunting and behavior while on their wintering grounds. Most recently satellite transmitters have been attached to nine owls to learn more about their movements.

Come and hear what has been learned to date on this research project and how this project developed to include research on Saw-whet Owls.



Future CCBC Programs:

Mar 14: Andrew Farnsworth -

"While You Were Sleeping - The Birds We Miss at Night"

April 11: Shawn Carey - Multi-image Slide Presentations and Videos

May 9: John Kricher - "A Bird's View of Migration"

Field Trips - Jan & Feb 2005

Genie Page, Coordinator

All are welcome to join our field trips which are free. A call or e-mail to the leader is appreciated.

Also, please check www.massbird.org/CCBC for additions or changes.

Jan 6 - Thurs - 9AM Sandwich. Meet at Sandy Neck Beach parking lot. Directions: 1/4 mile west on Rte 6A after the Sandwich/Barnstable Town line. Turn North on Sandy Neck Rd and park in the upper lot. We'll look for sea birds and other specialties of winter. Leader: Ellie Winslow 508-888-1760 or birderellie@AOL.com

Jan 10 - Mon - 8:30AM Wellfleet to Provincetown. Meet at the Wellfleet Town Pier where we will scope for interesting gulls, alcids and other close-in treats. Then we'll check the ocean and harbors looking for sea birds. We may find a warm place for coffee and/or lunch. A great birdy day before hearing Norman Smith's talk about the Owls at our CCBC meeting this evening! Leader: Genie Page, vgpage@juno.com or 508-349-6810.

Jan 15 - Sat - 7:30AM Barnstable Area. Loop Beach (Cotuit) to Wequaquet Lake "soon-to-be-famous" great habitats birding tour! Meet 7:30 AM at Honey Dew Donuts on the Mashpee/Barnstable line (corner of Rte 28 and Cape Drive). We will look for common wintering birds as well as some Cape specialties such as Barrow's Goldeneye, Chat and some of the less common gulls. Leaders: Mary Keleher 477-1473 or Maryeak@yahoo.com and Dan Furbish. Barn.owl@verizon.net

Jan 19 - Wed - 9 AM Dennis & Harwich Hotspots. Meet at West Dennis Beach in the parking lot by the 2nd cabin (the windsurfers cabin). Rain cancels. Leaders: Mike Dettrey & Diane Silverstein 508-398-9484. Please call.

Jan 22 - Sat - 9AM Marstons Mills. 9 AM-Noon. Warm & cozy viewing of a variety of "Yard Birds" in a natural and enhanced habitat! View ducks on Round Pond from the property. Beginning birders ALWAYS WELCOME! 68 Liberty Lane, Marstons Mills. Leaders: Dick & Sylvia Jurkowski 508-428-8494

Feb 9 - Wed - 7:30AM Cape Ann. Meet at the Sagamore commuter lot. Cape to Cape excursion to Gloucester and Rockport for the North Shore's winter specialties. We'll visit Andrew's and Halibut Points and the Dog Bar for sea birds and explore some thickets for wintering species. Local reports will guide us in seeking the 'hot spots.' Leaders: Diane Silverstein & Michael Dettrey 508-389-9484 and Genie Page 508-349-6810 or vgpage@juno.com.

Feb 10 - Thurs - 9AM Sandwich. See Jan 6th.

Feb 11 - Fri - 8AM Rhode Island including Sachuest Wildlife Refuge and the Tiverton, RI area. Meet 8AM at Cumberland Farms, just off the Bourne Rotary. We'll probably stop for lunch at "Shiver Me Timbers" in Portsmouth RI. Leader: Stauffer Miller 508-332-3384 or Stauffer@seepub.com

Feb 14 - Mon - 8:30AM Wellfleet to P'Town. See Jan 10th. We'll pay special attention to the loons in prep for Harry Vogel's CCBC talk tonight!

Feb 23 - Wed - 9AM Marstons Mills. See Jan 22nd.

Feb 25 - Fri - 8:30AM Places off Cape. Meet at Ocean State Job Lot, Buzzards Bay (next to rotary). We'll check out Cumberland Farms fields in Middleboro, Assawompsett Pond and others in Lakeville for winter specialties. Leader: Frank Caruso 508-477-9807.

NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME

- Michael Brady - Brewster
- Lisabeth W. Chapman - Wellfleet
- Arthur Driscoll - Chatham
- Barbara Fleming - W. Barnstable
- Cindy Herlihy - Mashpee
- Linda V. Hewitt - Pembroke
- Lori Jurkowski - W. Chatham

- Bob Maddux and Judi Oliver - Mashpee
- Charles & Jane Martin - Harwich
- Sharon Riley - Eastham
- Sharon Rubinton - Mashpee
- John & Esther Splaine - Cambridge
- Larry Sweeney - Mashpee
- Richard Wheeler - Wareham

Club Field Walks

Ron Ayotte, Secretary CCBC

NOTE: This article covers Club field walks in August and September. Full statistical summaries for reported walks are available for inspection at each Club meeting. Most common species are omitted from this article in the interests of saving space. Unusual and rare species are underlined.

October 2004: There were three walks in October with a total of 36 observers and 67 spp. reported. The highest species count was 51, by Stauffer Miller in the southern part of Barn-stable, on October 10.

10/10: Marstons Mills, Cotuit; Leader Stauffer Miller; weather not reported; 12 observers; 51 spp. Wood Duck, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Am. Coot, Wilson's Snipe, E. Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Field, Savannah, Swamp and White-throated sparrows.

10/17: Mashpee River Woods; Leader Mary Keleher; 40's, windy; 13 observers; 27 spp. Wood Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Blue-headed and Red-eyed vireos, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, and Pine warblers, Am. Redstart.

10/20: East Sandwich; Leader Dick Jurkowski; 50's, windy; 11 observers; 26 spp. Pied-billed Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Bufflehead, Ruffed Grouse, Belted Kingfisher.

November 2004: Five field walks were reported in November, with a total of 52 observers participating. A total of 93 spp. were reported for the month. The highest species count was 65, by Dan Furbish on a walk straddling the Cape Cod Canal on the Upper Cape, on November 20.

11/4: Bourne, Cataumet, Monument Beach; Leader Stauffer Miller; weather not reported; 9 observers; 38 spp. reported. Turkey Vulture, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bonaparte's Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Am. Tree, Swamp and White-throated sparrows, Rusty Blackbird.

11/12: Corporation Beach, Sesuit and adjacent; Leader Mark Tuttle; overcast,


damp, 40's; 11 observers; 34 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, Horned and Red-necked grebes, N. Gannet, Brant, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Surf, White-winged and Black scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Bonaparte's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snow Bunting.

11/14: Mashpee River Woods; Leader Mary Keleher; 40's, partly cloudy; 11 observers; 35 spp. reported. Wood Duck, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers, Bonaparte's Gull, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Dark-eyed Junco, Brown-headed Cowbird.

11/20: Upper Cape, Straddling the Canal; weather not reported; 17 observers; 65 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, Pied-billed and Horned grebes, N. Gannet, Double-crested and Great cormorants, Ring-necked Duck, Surf, White-winged and Black scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Osprey, N. Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Gr. Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Bonaparte's Gull, Northern Shrike, Fish Crow, Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush, E. Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, E. Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, E. Meadowlark.

11/23: Wellfleet to Provincetown; Leader Ginie Page; warm, calm, sunny; 4 observers; 45 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, N. Gannet, Double-crested and Great cormorants, Brant, White-winged and Black scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, N. Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Laughing and Bonaparte's gulls, Forster's Tern, Large Alcid sp.,

We have now been collecting statistics on field walks for about 15 months. Over that period there have been 91 walks/events, with a total of 816 participants (an average of 8.97 participants per walk/event).

During that time a total of 240 spp. have been reported, with two rarities (Golden Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, both seen during off-Cape Club events) included. 

Poetry to Ponder ...

Where are the Sanderlings?

What right have I
to sigh,
where are all the sanderlings?
There's one stalking
the tune of the sea;
and down the curve of the beach,
a few more,
their sharp black bills searching,
working the edge of the breakers;
but where are the funny platoons,
rising into the air
in perfect harmony,
as we approach
and then, a few seconds later,
alighting somewhere
close by.
And what does this
perfectly choreographed
explosion suggest?
Their energy, everytime,
they roar into flight;
whirl and eddy,
is lessened.
Many will never
chase the sun to
the southern antipodes.
Plagues of people, us, our dogs,
Our ocean-view palaces,
Our O.R.V's
keep arriving, out of the mists,
onto their preferred habitat.
And now they're rare
and edgy
and probably
doomed.
And they cry out
For the preservation of
wilderness.

Ruth Connaughton
September 11, 2004

Where Your Stamps and Postcards Go



Update on Birds of Prey Center in Florida

In November, Bessie Tirrell received a letter from Audubon's Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Florida. Dianna Flynt, Center Supervisor, expressed appreciation for the donations of stamps and post cards from CCBC members and goes on to say: "The Audubon Bald Eagle Stamp program supports not only the medical care of sick and injured Bald Eagles, it also helps our other birds of prey patients. This has been an exceptionally busy year with over 625 raptor patients admitted so far, including 45 Bald Eagles. Florida's Bald Eagle nests and nest trees have suffered devastating damage due to this year's numerous hurricanes. As the birds return to their territories this fall, many pairs will have to find new trees/territories to nest in. This will most likely cause territorial problems; eagles are fierce fighters. The Center is anticipating more eagle patients this fall as the birds return to their territories." She also adds that, "since the Center opened in 1979, it has rescued rehabilitated and released 277 Bald Eagles back into the wild."

This fund-raising project helps offset the cost of caring for injured and non-releasable raptors at the Maitland, FL center. Collectable stamps are sorted, appraised, and sold to collectors, dealers, auction houses, and packet makers by a volunteer. 100% of the proceeds go to help the birds. Check out www.audubonofflorida.org for more information.

COLLECTABLE STAMPS include: All stamp collections; All foreign stamps; State or Federal hunting and fishing licenses stamps; All US stamps (EXCEPT single-letter rate stamps, currently \$.37, formerly \$.34); large size commemorative, airmail and special handling stamps are especially valued. Stamps can be unused or used. They should be undamaged with no heavy smeared cancel marks. **POSTCARDS** are also wanted. If you have postcards you've bought but never sent out, put them to use by bringing them to a club meeting to be sent to the Center. Thank you, members, for your help in this worthwhile project and thanks, Bessie, for all your efforts. 🐦

Member's Night – A Success

Since I'm running late with this newsletter, I can give you an update on Member's Night, Dec. 13th. First of all, Mary Keleher did a great job of organizing the events of the evening and it was a lot of fun. There were plenty of door prizes and activity. Three members gave slide presentations: Stauffer Miller showed great digiscoped pictures of birds found on his West Virginia property. (No wonder he likes to get down there now and then!) Blair Nikula showed a wonderful assortment of slides featuring birds seen at 'his end of the Cape' - dovekies, a spectacular sky filled with thousands of gannets at Provincetown's Herring Cove beach, and the unique scene of scores of tree swallows sitting on a beach. Roger Everett's slides delighted us as we saw red fox kits cavorting close-up in his backyard, as well as slides of baby skunks lured from under his neighbor's porch.

(Cont'd on page 5)

On Your Own: Wellfleet

Checking out the sea birds during these cold months need not be a miserable, freezing experience if you plan to keep that nice heated rolling bird blind around you and to do a survey of good coffee and sandwich shops along the way.

Starting at LeCount's Beach in Wellfleet (off Rte 6), enjoy the brilliant white flashes as the gannets cruise the sky and then plunge into the waves for a bit of fish. Now, get the scope out and give the surface and horizon a good look for the birds who spend the winter here because they think the climate is benevolent compared to their home territory!

You may want to check out some of the other beaches along Ocean View Drive before heading into Wellfleet Center for the first coffee stop. (The Wicked Oyster, located just after the main entrance to the town and Marina, opens early AM and features great pastries, meals and special locally-roasted coffee.)

Find a nice spot on the town pier to enjoy that good warm coffee. Especially after storms, the harbor seems to hold some very interesting species just close enough to study really well. This November and December, there have been immature gannets, a flock of bonaparte's and a black-headed gull as well as several seals, the usual ducks, loons and various alcids.

Drive around the pier looking for that special white-winged gull type and don't forget to enjoy the loons too.

Lunch! If the birds have been good, it may be time to stop for more sustenance and warmth. The Bookstore Restaurant is just beyond the pier — famous for oysters and fish, or grab one of those good sandwiches from The Box Lunch on the way back to Rte 6 at the north end of Main St.

As you head for your next great overlook, think of the wonderful winter birding we enjoy here on the windswept sandbar and stay warm!

Ginie Page



The 2003-04 Feeder Census: Some Reflections

Ron Ayotte

The notes accompanying the results of this year's Feeder Census (published in the last newsletter) are not very satisfying, abbreviated as they are due to space limitations. Here are a few more thoughts to go with them.

First, a caveat: Despite the fact that we have been collecting data for almost a quarter of a century, they are not, strictly speaking, a scientific data base; the number of observers is small (18-22 over the past few years), the sites observed shift from year to year as observers drop in and out, the sites observed tend to cluster in the eastern Mid-Cape to outer Cape, the method of collecting data has varied over time due to changing compilers, and the observation rules are hardly rigorous. That means the following observations on selected species, made by a non-statistician, have to be taken with considerable reserve. They follow the census form and use the data of birds/feeder/month. The changes are changes in observation, not necessarily changes in populations.

- 1- Northern Bobwhite: A serious decline from historic (1980-98) levels (1.6) to one-tenth that in 2003-04 (0.17). It may be a candidate for dropping next year.
- 2- Red-bellied Woodpecker: The historic record has no entry; since 1998-99 has become a good mid-level bird, rising slightly from 0.27 to this year's 0.36.
- 3- Black-capped Chickadee: Not surprisingly, the most abundant bird at the feeders. It has fluctuated, with its historic level (5.24) as the high, and 2002-03 as a low (3.44), but is up slightly (3.62) from last year
- 4- Red-breasted Nuthatch: Never in abundance, its historic level is 0.35.

It appears to fluctuate annually between 0.59 (1999-2000) and 0.17 (1998-99). This is may be due to different observers reporting, rather than changes in abundance.

- 5- Cedar Waxwing: Again, the historic record has no entry, probably due to low or sporadic observation. Its high in the last 5 years was 0.22 (1999-2000) and its low was 0.01 (2002-03). It was up a bit this year (0.11)
- 6- Yellow-rumped Warbler: This species enters the count in 1998-99 (1.26); it has fluctuated somewhat, but the median count is 0.94. A solid low to mid range bird.
- 7- American Tree Sparrow: Historically a low-abundance bird (0.22), it has virtually dropped off the chart, with none observed in 1998-99 and 2002-03, and only 0.04 this year. It has been dropped from the form.
- 8- House Finch: This species seems to be in a gradual decline from historic levels of 5.06 to around 2.48 (2002-03), with a slight rebound this year to 3.63. This decline is consistent with wider reports, e.g., in *The Living Bird*.
- 9- Pine Siskin: Very low level historically (0.02), not observed every year. Over the past 5 years, reported only in 1999-2000 (0.87) and this year (0.07), which is to be expected with this highly irruptive species.
- 10- House Sparrow: This species is in steady decline from a historic level of 4.08 to this year's 2.53
- 11- Raptors: Cooper's and Sharpshinned hawks have no historic level, but seem to be showing up more recently, though not in abundance. The highest level was 1 in 1998-99 when Sharpies were at 0.24. Both species are at about 0.6-0.7 this year.
- 11- Eastern Blue Bird: This species

appears to be on the increase. There is no historic level, and only one report in 1998-99. However, it has been reported over the past two years (0.01 and 0.33 respectively), and has been added to the list.

Ron Ayotte, Compiler

Member's Night (Cont'd from page 4)

Ellie Miller did a superb job for the book auction, the proceeds of which will go to the Birder's Exchange program. Treasurer, Ellie Winslow, reports Monday's auction brought in \$75 bringing our 2004 total to \$317. In addition to this amount, CCBC members also donated good used equipment to Birders Exchange this year.

The silent auction as well as the sale of fresh-baked goods also brought in money for our club's many projects. Thanks, Bakers! And, CCBC items, snapped up for holiday giving, brought in another \$45. Good job, Wil!

Thanks to all who came out and made Member's Night a success. We look forward to seeing you all next year — in January!

Sylvia

P.S. At the September meeting, Ruth Connaughton handed me an envelope and, after a quick look, I knew I had a 'jewel' for *The Kingfisher*. Thank you, Ruth, for your special poetry this month. Now, I'm asking YOU, the Reader, for YOUR article, poetry, trip report, birding experience ... whatever. Email me or send it in the mail. Don't be shy! We want to hear from YOU!

NOTICE

FOR NEWS ON CCBC
MEETING CANCELLATIONS
DURING BAD WEATHER.
LISTEN TO WQRC 99.9 FM

Frank Caruso and Barbara Steller
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale MA 02644



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



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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>

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Newsletter

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