



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 33 – ISSUE 5

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

MAY – SUMMER, 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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Deadline for next issue's articles: **Aug. 3rd.**
Send articles or comments to: capekingfisher@yahoo.com

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

President's Message

It is simply amazing ... my time as your President is coming to an end. Where has the time gone? Seems like only yesterday I took the reins with the new Leadership Team ... but three years have come and gone! Thank you so much for your support and encouragement, as we have together talked the talk and walked the walk. It's been a wonderful experience for me that I will always cherish. I'd like to thank you also for electing such outstanding and talented Officers and Board Members along the way ... they have been special to serve with, and a joy to get to know better.

Two of the proudest accomplishments I have been pleased to observe, are to see our Membership grow by leaps and bounds (around 530 as we speak) and to have seen so many new Field Walk Leaders step up and lead wonderfully. The CCBC is alive and well!

At the May 2005 Meeting we will be electing a new Leadership Team...including a

President, Vice President and two new Board Members. I want to personally thank Diane (VP), Ginie (Walks), and Joanna (Publicity) for their outstanding service these past three years. We encourage all members to attend the May 9th meeting, and help shape the future of the CCBC.

In the meantime, let's get out there and enjoy Summer birding on The Cape ... so we all have some birding memories to share when we get back together again!

The songbirds and warblers are arriving in growing numbers. One wonderful way to enjoy early summer birding is to participate in some of the CCBC-sponsored spring walks and field trips. This Kingfisher issue is loaded with exciting opportunities! Go for it!

I look forward to seeing you all in the Fall as a CIVILIAN!!!!

Dick Jurkowski



CCBC PROGRAM – May 9th – 7:30 PM

A Bird's View of Migration – John Kricher

Join us May 9th to hear John discuss recent research on Migrants and he'll also review his own research on that topic. There will be lots of slides, especially of warblers, as well as tropical birds.

John Kricher is an author, tour leader, and professor of biology at Wheaton College, Norton, MA. A graduate of Temple (B.A.) and Rutgers Universities (Ph.D.), Dr. Kricher teaches courses in ecology, ornithology, and evolutionary biology.

John has led numerous trips to many places including Cape May, Block Island, coastal New England, Arizona, the Pacific Northwest, Belize, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, Galapagos Islands, Panama, and Trinidad. He has lectured for Linblad Tours of the Galapagos Islands, for Society Expeditions trips to Venezuela, Brazil, and Indonesia, and for Glacier Bay Cruise Lines in Alaska. He has conducted Earthwatch-sponsored research on migrant birds on their wintering grounds in

Belize and is the author of over 100 papers and articles in scientific journals, magazines, and newspapers. His most recent book is *Galapagos*, published by Smithsonian Institution Press in 2002. He is now completing an *Ecological Science*, an introductory ecology textbook to be published soon by W.W. Norton. Other books include *A Neotropical Companion*, and three ecology field guides (*Eastern Forests, Rocky Mountain and Southwestern Forests, California and Pacific Northwest Forests*) in the Peterson series. He is a Fellow in the American Ornithologists Union and is the author of the Black-and-white Warbler account and co-author of the Glossy Ibis account for the *Birds of North America*, published by the American Ornithologists Union and the Academy of Natural Sciences (Philadelphia). He has contributed accounts of thrushes and kinglets to the *Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*.

John has served as president of the Association of Field Ornithologists, president of the Wilson Ornithological Society, and president of the Nuttall Ornithological Club,

(Cont'd on page 3)

Field Walks – May – Early September, 2005

Genie Page, Coordinator

All are welcome to join our field trips which are free. **NEW BIRDERS ALWAYS WELCOME!** A call or e-mail to leader is appreciated. In case of inclement weather, check with leader!

See www.massbird.org/CCBC for additional trips and a possible pelagic bird/whale watch in June!

May 4 - Wed - 5:30PM West Harwich Conservation Lands. Park on Bell's Neck Rd. Enjoy an evening of great birds in this very special area of woodland, salt marsh, ponds and rivers. Leader: Blair Nikula 432-6348

May 6 - Fri - 7:30AM Meet at Tedeschi convenience store near Bourne Rotary to carpool to Westport River and Acoaxet, Ma and Little Compton and Sachuest, RI with a stop at Shiver-Me-Timbers sandwich shop in Portsmouth, RI. This is an unusual opportunity to see this area without (I hope!) frozen ponds and snow covered fields. Leader: Stauffer Miller 362-3384 or Stauffer@seepub.com

May 6 - Fri - 8AM Special CCBC program at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster (Rte 6A) Sue Finnegan, Certified Master Bander and manager of the Wing Island Bird Banding Station, will hold a **banding demonstration** for us. Meet at the banding lab in the Octagon Building behind and to the right of the museum. Here's your chance to see various songbirds up close, some passing through on their spring migration. Learn how birds are caught and data is collected. There is no charge for this program. We will cancel if raining.

May 16 - Mon - 9AM (RAIN DATE May 18-Wed) Carter Beal Conservation Area in Bournedale. Participate in a joint project of the Community Leadership Institute of Cape Cod, the Town of Bourne Council on Aging and the Cape Cod Bird Club, called Connecting the Elderly with Nature. All welcome! Explore this new and evolving area. Bring binoculars if you have them and wear comfortable walking shoes. Great trails and yet another Mill Pond besides! Meet in the parking lot by the Herring

Interested Hawk Watchers

are welcome to join in the Hawk Watch at Pilgrim Heights in North Truro — any day during May. The Hawk Watch is run by the Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary, the Eastern Mass Hawk Watch, along with the National Park Service. Pilgrim Heights is located on the east side of Rte 6 in N. Truro within the Cape Cod Nat'l Seashore just south of the Truro and Provincetown town line. Look for the Seashore's brown and white Pilgrim Heights sign. Park in the first parking lot and take the Small's Swamp Trail to the second overlook. You can call the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary at 508-349-2615 for more details.

Run. Take the Bourne Scenic Highway along the Cape Cod Canal. Turn right at the traffic light at bottom of the hill. Follow the road a short way and bear left. A van for seniors is also leaving the Council on Aging, 239 Main St. Buzzards Bay at 9AM. Their phone is 508-760-6164. Leaders: Dick Jurkowski 428-8494 and Greg Hirth 457-4356.

May 20 - Fri - 6:30AM Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Meet at the Sagamore Bridge park & ride lot and we will car pool. Please bring FRS radios if you have them, for the ride up. Limited participation. Leaders: Mike Dettrey and Diane Silverstein 398-9484 and Genie Page 349-6810

May 21 - Sat - 6:30AM Mashpee River Woodlands. Meet at the parking area on Quinaquisett Ave to carpool to River Rd. We will hike two miles through these beautiful woodlands looking for spring migrants. Leader: Mary Keleher 477-1473

June 2 - Thurs - 7AM North Truro. Meet at Pilgrim Heights (off Rte 6) We will walk and look for warblers and breeding birds in this beautiful area of hills and lowlands, between the bay and ocean. A hawk watch visit may find some late migrating raptors and even a long distance view of a whale! Leader: Genie Page 349-6810

June 9 - Thurs - 8AM South Side Marshes in Harwich and Chatham. Meet at Red River Beach parking lot east end. (from Rte 28 in So. Harwich, take Uncle

BEECH FOREST WALKS

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

The Beech Forest is the best spot on the Cape to see and hear spring migrants. (To get to Beech Forest, take Race Point exit off Rte 6 at the light in P'town. The parking lot is on the left.) All walks begin in the parking lot at **8:00AM** although birders may want to do a loop earlier and then re-start for the 'official trip.'

The Walks and Leaders are:

Sun-May 1 - Ed Banks 430-0845

Sat-May 7 - Dick & Sylvia Jurkowski 428-8494

Sun-May 8 - Sue Thompson 255-1451

Sat-May 14 - Frank Caruso 477-9807

Sun - May 15 - Blair Nikula 432-6348

Sat-May 21 - Greg Hirth 457-4356

Sun-May 22 - Genie Page 349-6810 and Jan Kelly 487-1267

Sat-May 28 - Mike Dettrey 398-9484

Sun-May 29 - Mike Dettrey 398-9484

Mon-May 30 - Genie Page 349-6810

Venies Rd to the beach). We'll look for birds in the marshes and be sure to see osprey in action. Then we'll go to a superb overlook near Forest Beach in S. Chatham (part of Chatham's purchase of the former MCI property!) Leader: Karen Goggins 430-4400

June 17 - Fri - 8AM East Sandwich. Stauffer's Puddle / Foster Rd pond to see what shorebirds are present. Meet at Christy's convenience store in East Sandwich. There may be some additional birding afterward. Leader: Stauffer Miller 362-3384 or Stauffer@seepub.com

June 23 - Thurs - 5PM Marconi and Fort Hill evening specialties. Meet at Friendly's in Orleans (Canal Rd off the rotary) We will caravan to Fort Hill and then Marconi to look for Vesper Sparrows and other goodies before riding

(Cont'd on page 4)

Club Field Walks

Ron Ayotte, Secretary CCBC

NOTE: This article covers Club field walks in February and March 2005. Full statistical summaries for reported walks are available for inspection at Club meetings. Common species are omitted from this article in the interests of saving space. Uncommon and rare species are underlined.

February 2005: Four field walks were reported in February 2005, with 37 observers participating. A total of 77 spp. were reported for the month. The highest species count on a single walk was 55, by Ginie Page, Diane Silverstein and Mike Dettrey, during an off-Cape Club trip to Cape Ann on February 9.

2/19: Cape Ann; Leaders Diane Silverstein, Ginie Page and Mike Dettrey; Mild; 12 observers; 55 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, Horned and Eared grebes, Great Cormorant, Gadwall, American Wigeon, King and Common eider, Harlequin Duck, Black, Surf and White-winged scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Iceland and Lesser Black-backed gulls, Thick-billed Murre, Black Guillemot.

2/11: Tiverton/Portsmouth RI; Leader Stauffer Miller; Clear, windy, 30's; 6 observers; 41 spp. reported. Common Loon, Great Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed hawks, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Black-headed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, American Tree, White-throated and White-crowned sparrows.

2/14: Wellfleet to Provincetown; Leader Ginie Page; Clear, cold; 5 observers; 28 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, Horned Grebe, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Red-tailed Hawk, Iceland Gull, Thick-billed Murre.

2/23: Marstons Mills (Backyard Birding); Leaders Dick and Sylvia Jurkowski; 30-38F, sunny; 14 observers, 23 spp. reported. Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck,

Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Red- and White-breasted nuthatch, Brown Creeper.

March 2005: Eight field walks were reported in March 2005, with 51 observers participating. A total of 81 spp. were reported for the month. The highest species count on a single walk was 52, by Stauffer Miller during an off-Cape Club trip to Westport, MA and Sachuest, RI on March 3.

3/3: Westport, MA and Sachuest, RI; Leader Stauffer Miller; Cold, clear, windy; 7 observers; 52 spp. reported. Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Harlequin Duck, Black, Surf and White-winged scoters, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Northern Harrier, Cooper's, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks, Wild Turkey, Black-headed Gull, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Field, Fox, Song and White-throated sparrows, Red-winged Blackbird.

3/12: Popponesset (Backyard Birding); Leaders Dick and Shirley Henshall; Rain and snow, 30's; 7 observers; 21 spp. reported. Common Loon, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Downy Woodpecker, Red- and White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina Wren.

3/13: Falmouth; Leader Greg Hirth; sunny, 38F; 6 observers; 49 spp. reported. Red-throated and Common loons, Horned Grebe, Double-crested and Great cormorants, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-heron, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common and Barrow's goldeneye, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, Cooper's and Red-tailed hawks, Razorbill, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle.

3/16: Long Pasture, Barnstable (Woodcock Walk); Leader, Mike Dettrey; Clear, cold; 4 observers; 20 spp. reported. American Woodcock, Downy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch.

3/17: Marstons Mills (Backyard) and Sandwich; Leader Dick Jurkowski; 44F, sunny; 1 observer; 23 spp. reported. Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Red- and White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina Wren.

3/18: Lakeville and Middleboro; Leader Frank Caruso; Fair, 28-40F; 6 observers; 41 spp. reported. Great Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, American Tree, Song, Swamp, and White-throated sparrows, Brown-headed Cowbird.

3/22: Dennis, Brewster, Yarmouthport; Leader Mark Tuttle; Sunny, mid-40's; 10 observers; 35 spp. reported. Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Brant, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Surf and White-winged scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, Lesser Black-backed Gull (poss.), Belted Kingfisher, Red-winged Blackbird.

3/26: Chatham (Backyard); Leader Marianne Harris; Sunny, windy, 40's; 10 observers; 17 spp. reported. Mute Swan, Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers, Great Black-backed Gull, Downy Woodpecker, Red- and White-breasted nuthatch.

We have now been collecting statistics on field walks for about 19 months. Over that period there have been 113 walks/events, with a total of 1016 participants (an average of 8.99 participants per walk/event). During that time a total of 245 spp. have been reported, including four rarities (Bald Eagle, on Cape; and Eared Grebe, Golden Eagle, and Pileated Woodpecker, seen during off-Cape Club events.)

John Kricher (Cont'd from page 1) and has been a member of the boards of directors of the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and the New Jersey Audubon Society. He is currently a member of the board of directors and chairs the Publications Committee of the American Birding Association.



May - Early September Walks*(Cont'd from page 2)*

the main road looking and listening for Whips and Chucks! Rain cancels. Leaders: Diane and Mike - 398-9484 or birder526@aol.com

June 28 - Tues 8AM Armstrong-Kelley Park in Osterville, just off the town center. Meet in the parking lot. Great spot for a little walking. Who knows what we might see and hear? Come on along and find out ... and discover an excellent new birding area! Coffee after at the nearby Osterville Cafe. Leader: Dick & Sylvia Jurkowski 428-8494

July 14 - Thurs 8AM Oregon Beach area in Cotuit Meet in the parking lot of CVS on Rte 28 in Marstons Mills. COME EARLY!! In search of Virginia Rails and Marsh Wrens. Coffee after at Kettle Ho in Cotuit. Leader: Dick Jurkowski 428-8494

Aug 9 - Tues 8AM Marstons Mills Airport on Rte 149. Park next to the path "entry" chain, down from the Barnstable Fairgrounds Golf Course entrance. We will walk the trails looking for summer residents, as we listen for ring-necked pheasants in the fields! Coffee after at the Mills Restaurant. Leader: Dick Jurkowski 428-8494

Sept 12 Mon 8AM Coast Guard Beach, Eastham. Shorebirds and seabirds on the marsh, views over the ocean and osprey in residence. Anything is possible! Park at the Coast Guard building. (Arrive early in case of parking problems.) Leader: Mark Tuttle 362-3015

Get ready for summer!
CCBC Merchandise on sale at
May meeting

CCBC Decals	\$ 1.00
CCBC Checklist	.50
CCBC Patches	3.00
Binoc/Camera Straps	12.50
Organizer Packs	17.00
CCBC Caps	15.00

Updated *Birding Cape Cod*
coming soon! Watch for it!

From Our Readers ...

Ted and Wendy Rose of Cataumet sent me this delightful piece ... It's an excerpt from the Sand County Almanac and written by Aldo Leopold.

The Dawn Chorus

This daily ceremony, contrary to what you might suppose, begins with the utmost decorum. Who originally laid down its protocols I do not know.

At 3:30 AM with such dignity as I can muster on a July morning, I step from my cabin door bearing in either hand my emblems of sovereignty — a coffee pot and a notebook. I seat myself on a bench, facing the white wake of the morning star. I set the pot beside me. This is the cue for the proclamations to begin.

At 3:35, the nearest field sparrow avows, in a clear tenor chant, that he holds the jack pine copse north to the riverbank and south to the old railroad track. One by one, all the other field sparrows within earshot recite their respective holdings.

South Beach, Chatham Trips for July & August

It's time to look for southbound migrating shorebirds! Meet at **Veteran's Field parking lot**. Meeting and departure times are arranged to take advantage of the tide and shorebird feeding activity. We'll carpool to Outermost Harbor for the boat to the South Beach birding area. The cost will be approximately \$15 round trip.

Bring water, snacks/food, sun protection and bug repellent. Prepare for a long beach walk in the sun. Scopes are recommended. Return is contingent on bird activity! Leaders: Michael Dettrey and/or Diane Silverstein 398-9484 or birder526@aol.com Call to let leaders know you are interested in coming.

July 30 - Sat - 8AM
Meet at **Veteran's Beach** to go to **South Beach Chatham.**

Aug 6 - Sat - 1:30PM
Meet at **Veteran's Beach**

Aug 29 - Mon - 8:30AM
Meet at **Veteran's Beach**

Before the field sparrows have quite gone the rounds, the robin in the big elm warbles loudly his claim to the crotch where the ice storm tore off a limb, and all the angleworms in the adjacent lawn.

The robin's insistent caroling awakens the oriole who now tells the world of orioles that the pendant branch of the elm belongs to him, together with all the fiber-bearing milkweed stalks nearby, all loose strings in the garden, and the exclusive right to flash like a burst of fire from one of these to another.

My watch says 3:50. The indigo bunting on the hill asserts title to the dead oak limb left by the 1936 drought and to diverse nearby bugs and bushes. He does not claim, but I think he implies, the right to out-blue all bluebirds and all spiderworts that have turned their faces to the dawn.

Next, the wren — the one who discovered the knothole in the eave of the cabin — explodes into song. Half a dozen other wrens give voice and now all is bedlam. Grosbeaks, thrashers, yellow warblers, bluebirds, vireos, towhees, cardinals — all are at it.

My solemn list of performers, in their order and time of first song, hesitates, wavers, ceases, for my ears can no longer filter out priorities. Besides, the pot is empty and the sun is about to rise. I must inspect my domain before my title runs out.

**From the CCMNH:**

DAVID ALLEN SIBLEY will be the Guest Speaker at a dinner Monday, June 27 at the Capt. Linnell House in Orleans. The dinner will also honor Sue Finnegan, CCMNH's bird bander, as the first recipient of the John Hay Fellowship Award.

More details will be coming or you can call Margi at (508) 896-4608.

Other Cape Happenings ...

HENRY DAVID THOREAU COMES ALIVE AT CCMNH

On Saturday, April 30 at 7:30 PM, the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History is pleased to present **"An Evening with Henry David Thoreau,"** the nineteenth century naturalist and author of *Walden*. Not Thoreau himself, of course, but the great American iconoclast as brought to life by actor and director, P. William Hutchinson. Tickets are now available for \$15 (\$12 members). Call (508) 896-3867, Ext. 129.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Monica Anderson – Yarmouthport
David Banner – Centerville
Barnstable Senior Center – Hyannis
Barbara W. Bilek – Brewster
Richard & Sandra Blaha – Dennis
Teresa Borrello – Harwichport
Ken & Jane Cheek – N. Eastham
Nancy Clark – Brewster
Bill & Brenda Collins – Harwich
Janice M. Collins – E. Dennis
Sandra & Robert Fife – S. Yarmouth
Barbara Holske – Mashpee
Kelly C. Jones – Dennis
Kevin Keefe – Mashpee
Robert H. Lindquist – S. Yarmouth
Matt Malin – Mashpee
Thomas J. McGrath – Brewster
Patricia & Richard Noyes – Orleans
Anne Parshall – Cotuit
Myrne Riel – Barnstable
John Riordan – Manchester, NH
David Sandell – Centerville
Mary Scanlan – Mashpee
Bob & Bev Shea – Mashpee
Jean & Ray Smith – Brewster
Jim & Nancy Stoddard – Chatham
John M. Tudor – E. Falmouth

Wow! Our club keeps growing! A little birdie told me that our President is responsible for some new members being signed up at Yard Bird events. Many of you joined as a result of Ellie Miller's interesting and informative articles in the *Cape Cod Times* and especially her Annual Weekend Backyard Bird Census. Thank you, Ellie and Dick, and Welcome to our new members!

Crowes Pasture Bluebird Trail Update

Diane Silverstein

In 2004 the CCBC, in conjunction with the Town of Dennis, Dept. of Natural Resources, installed 6 Bluebird houses at Crowes Pasture in E. Dennis. It was our first year of monitoring a bluebird trail and we had great success. Three Eastern Bluebird nests were built, with 2 fledging young and 1 failing. We also had three Tree Swallow nests (again 2 successful and 1 failing) and one successful Black-capped Chickadee nest. Not bad for our first season!

Last year, our success was due in part to the dedication of our nest box monitors: Don Scott, Carolyn Kennedy, Joanna Schurmann, and Michael Dettrey who, along with me, made regular visits to Crowes to check on the boxes and the birds' well-being.

Sue Finnegan, Master Bander and manager of the Wing Island Banding Station was able to band one brood of Eastern Bluebirds for us. We'll be on the lookout for any of these banded birds this spring.

Wild Birds Unlimited of S. Yarmouth offered us a generous discount on last year's boxes and then went above and beyond by donating four more. Additionally, a customer of mine at EMS built two boxes for us, so we will be adding six more boxes to the trail for this season. Brian Malone of Dennis DNR has been greatly supportive of this project and because of him, the trail became a reality and will grow this year.

This year, joining the aforementioned monitors will be Susan Puttonen and Wil Sprauve. Our first nest of the season has already been built, and we will be offering updates via the website and in future newsletters.

It was one of those perfect summer days – the sun was shining, a breeze was blowing, the birds were singing, and the lawn mower was broken.

*James Dent in the Charleston,
W Virginia Gazette*

BOOK REVIEW:

***Butterflies Across Cape Cod* – Reviewed by George W. Gove**

This is a guide to finding, attracting, and observing butterflies on the Cape written and illustrated by two local naturalists, Mark Mello and Tor Hansen, and published by The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

The book discusses the morphology and life histories of insects and of butterflies in particular, and then goes on to describe and illustrate with photographs the species of butterflies to be found on the Cape.

But this is the bird club news-letter ... why talk about butterflies? First, many birders are also interested in learning about butterflies. And secondly,

the book describes butterfly habitats on Cape Cod, i.e. where you can find butterflies. And where you can find butterflies, you'll usually find birds.

The authors discuss the various habitats to be found on the Cape and then describe 23 sites where you can watch butterflies as well as look for birds. These sites range from the Cape Cod Canal to Provincetown and the book lists their locations on USGS topographic maps.

Available for only \$9.95 at the CCMNH, this useful book is a real bargain! Get yourself a copy and, when the birding gets slow, check out the butterflies on the Cape!

Our Trip to Southern Yucatan, Mexico January 19-27, 2003

Stauffer Miller

This trip took place two years ago — but traveling with Ellie and Stauffer is always a treat and very informative. Thanks for sharing your trip adventures with us!!

January 19: We rode to Boston's Logan airport in a taxi from Somerville. The taxi ride now costs \$25, so we may have to investigate other airport transport services. We flew to Miami on American Airlines. On arrival, we went to the AeroMexico counter. They looked at our return tickets, and never told us there is no Merida-Miami flight on Jan 27, so believing there was, we went to American Airlines future ticketing, and booked the 3:40 PM Miami to Boston flight for the 27th. This took over an hour, as the line was very slow. We then went to the Admiral's Club for a little while, and watched some of the Tampa-Philadelphia game. The Aero Mexico flight to Merida was delayed an hour so that we arrived in Merida about 8:30. By the time we rented the car, drove in the dark into the city, and got into the hotel room, it was almost 10:00. But it felt good to be in Merida, and not somewhere else, as the travel agent we used in Barnstable never learned to call Merida anything except Madeira.

January 20: We tried to locate a few local markets, but no luck on that. We then went to a printer in Merida which prints banana stickers, and the people there were very kind, and Ellie got one especially good one for her collection. We drove south and in the small but highly confusing town of Uman, (with a lot of asking,) located the poorly marked road over to Celestun. We were then finally out in the country. Birds seemed very quiet. I was not overly impressed with Celestun. It seemed like the food there was overpriced and not very good. I looked for Zenaida Dove, but no luck.

We stayed at the Hotel Maria del Carmen, which was very basic. Nobody ever told us what a room cost, we never registered anywhere, and nobody ever tried to collect any room money from us. In the evening, we stood on the bridge over the estuary hoping to see Flamingos, but no luck. David Ba-

cab, a local birder, came by our room after dark and I talked to him about a few other birds and the dove, which he thought I had very little chance of seeing. He thought we might see flamingos from the bridge in the morning. He said the Northern Bentbill lives in mangroves around Celestun. Unfortunately, we didn't have a tape, and didn't know the song. The room was very comfortable, and we were right beside the Gulf.

January 21: I got up about 5:15 and while dressing, my glasses came apart. I went to the church, and looked for Barn Owl, but none seen. I then went back to the room and splinted my glasses with a toothpick and some duct tape. I went to the bridge in the first light of day and, to my great pleasure, saw a line of about 40 flamingos just north of the bridge, just as David Bacab had thought. This was not only Mexico bird #743 for me, but seeing it from the bridge saved us the money a boatman would have charged to take us to see them. I returned to the room and got Ellie. We could find no one from the hotel, so elected to put some money in an envelope and slid it under their door. We'll never know if we underpaid or overpaid, or if they sent the police after us.

We had forgotten to buy breakfast food, so had a breakfast of candy bars, and some food from the Aero-Mexico flight. As we drove west out of Celestun, tried a little for the bentbill, but no luck. A little further, there were a lot of swallows and several were Cave Swallows, #744 for me. How I had overlooked this bird in previous trips to the Yucatan, I certainly don't know. We took some side roads, and eventually reached the road to Campeche. We arrived at noon and checked into the Baluartes Hotel. Here I learned a new Spanish word, and that word was "optica". That's where you go to get glasses repaired. We found the optica, who did the repair at no charge. We had lunch at a sandwich place, and did some shopping for food for the next few days. We liked the layout of Campeche much better than Merida. Campeche has a wonderful malecon, or promenade by the Gulf, and the local people walk and jog there. Also, the

colonial architecture was striking. We walked to a nearby seafood restaurant, which should have had excellent shrimp, but the shrimp were not grilled at all to our liking, and also they were unpeeled. The Yucatecan cuisine includes a lime soup, which was tangy.

January 22: We left Campeche at 6:00 AM as the eastern sky was just growing rosy-pink. We ate breakfast by a mangrove-lined channel near Champoton, where we watched a Gray-necked Wood Rail forage in the mud. Just south of Champoton, the traffic was stopped. I walked forward, and saw that a large semi had jackknifed, blocking both lanes of traffic of the two-lane road between Champoton and Escarcega. The only way by was over a very steep shoulder through weeds and brush. Cars eventually began testing this, and managed to do it even though it placed the car at a very steep tilt. Eventually my turn came, and I easily drove Avis' Ford over the near-abys, and we were again on our way. In the states, I think a detour would have been set up, and nobody would have attempted to negotiate such a hazard.

We had some lunch in Escarcega, then made the 95 kilometer drive east to the turnoff to the ruins of Calakmul. Just at this intersection, but rather hidden from view, is a dirt road to the Hotel Puerta Calakmul. I had very little information on this hotel and, not knowing it really existed, we had brought camping equipment. The hotel consists of about 6 cabins constructed of sticks and mud for walls, with thatched roof, arranged in a wooded setting. We were able to get one of these cabins for the night, and I was glad not to have to look for a camping site. The cabin was 600 pesos for a night, and was really very comfortable. We rested that afternoon, as was too late in the day to drive to the ruins.

As I walked the grounds, I was very pleased to see an Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, #745. Also, as I lay on the bed in the cabin, I heard some leaves rustling, and an Ocellated Turkey walked by, #746. Some German people also staying at the cabins. We didn't talk much with them but did talk quite

(Cont'd on page 7)

Yucatan (Cont'd from page 6)

a lot to two Americans, Marv and Judy. They were from Colorado, and were sort of non-bus travelers like us. They were quite likable. We heard a Vermiculated Screech Owl call after dark.

January 23: Armed with food and water for the day and a full tank of gas, we set out for the ruins. The road to the ruins is paved but narrow because of the rank weeds and brush growing out into the roadway. We passed a checkpoint at the 30 kilometer mark, and here the gatekeeper took down your license plate number. We did not see much on the way in, although the road passes through marvelous forest, especially the last 30 kilometers. It would be wonderful to do this road when birds are a little more vocal. Finally, at about 60 kilometers, we reached a small clearing, which was the headquarters of the ruin. The headquarters consists of a small cement building and some nearby restrooms. It is primitive but adequate. The charge was 30 pesos per person. The trails to the ruins were very good, although a map (which they did not have) would have been nice. We saw a Swainson's Warbler as we walked to a treed courtyard area. I walked to the top of some of the taller monuments but could see no raptors soaring, or perched birds. There was a solid expanse of forest falling off to all sides. As we left this area we heard some rustling in the tops of some tall trees, and with persistence saw the source of this to be some Great Curassows, bird #747 for me. Shortly, we heard the chirring of some ant tanagers right beside the trail, so stopped to check it out. We immediately found a large ant swarm, and attending it some Red-throated Ant Tanagers. This was a good sign, so we sat down. Soon we perceived both Barred and Tawny-winged Woodcreepers at the swarm, as close as 7 or 8 feet from us, and practically on the ground. A few wood wrens joined the action, as did a few warblers and a Yellow-breasted Chat. After about a half hour of waiting and watching, the bird I was most hoping for, a Ruddy Woodcreeper, flew in. This was not only bird #748 for me but for both of us a near life bird, as our previous looks at it had been poor. Eventually an Ivory-billed Woodcreeper joined the activity, to complete a truly singular moment with woodcreepers. This woodcreeper grand slam was

probably the birding highlight of our trip. The birds eventually moved off into the forest, so we left. A little further on, we found a Red-capped Manakin, #749 in Mexico. So, our morning at Calakmul had been a wonderful experience. We had a picnic on our car hood, as there was no picnic table, then began driving out. In a few kilometers we came to another antswarm, and the birds at this one were highlighted by a Rose-throated Tanager and Gray-throated Chat. The ant swarms in this part of Mexico are wonderful, and you have no idea of which birds will be at the swarms. It's hard to imagine any better birding. We returned to the main highway and began to look for lodging for the night. The Chicanna Ecovillage at Xpujil was full, so we went into Xpujil and got a room at a small hotel. I went out for bananas, and found a very nice sticker on some at a fruteria. Both of us returned to this little establishment and found out the distributor for the bananas was in Chetumal.

January 24: We decided to go over to the ruins of Kohunlich, which was about 70 kilometers east of Xpujil. However, the morning was very windy, and the birding at those ruins did not seem promising, so we did not enter them. Instead, we decided to drive over to Chetumal (such is the freedom of having one's own car) and check on bananas. This did not yield much, so we returned to Xpujil and had lunch in town across from the bus stop. We then went to the Ecovillage, where we had a reservation. It is a beautiful facility but the staff seemed unfriendly. There is a water tower, and guests can climb this. I did repeatedly, but never saw any birds of interest from it. The tower is not well-placed. There is also a loop trail through low forest. There were several spadebills in the forest, but not much else of interest. About 5:00 PM a large bus pulled in and out of it came a lot of Americans with binoculars. They were an elderhostel group on a birds and ruins tour. They had a Mexican bird leader who was quite nice. His name was Damian and he lives in Rio Lagartos. He told us of a Barn Owl he had seen at the Loltun Caves near Uxmal. After dinner, a Northern Potoo came to a perch on the hotel grounds, and we saw it, along with the Elderhostel folks.

January 25: I walked the paths and searched all over the grounds for birds but came up with zilch. We then left Chicanna, went into Xpujil, made a left turn and started north on a very little used road. The road was in good shape, and the first 40 kilometers were through good forest. We encountered several nice flocks and spent a lot of time looking for a White-necked Puffbird, but no luck. North of the little town of Dbalchein, we came into a pocket of Lesser Roadrunners. We had lunch in the Hotel Los Arcos in Hopelchein, then decided to go over to Loltun Caves, in case the employees there knew of the "buhu blanco" or Barn Owl. Alas, they knew of it, but did not know the daytime roost, so striking out once more on this bird (perhaps my 5th or 6th time in Mexico) we continued on our way.

We came into Ticul and got a room for 230 pesos right on the square and right beside a big church. I studied the church from all angles, both in daylight and darkness, and found no buhu blanco. I even began asking people on the street if they ever saw such a bird. All said they saw palomas (pigeons) but none reported a big white bird. We had dinner at the hotel restaurant and Ellie had the Pollo Pibil, a Yucatecan chicken dish. Our waiter was quite friendly, and had the odd name for a Mexican of Sidney. We asked if they had any flan, and he said "no." We said we had just spent a week in Mexico, and not found flan in any restaurant, whereupon he offered to go down the street a block, buy some and bring it to us at our table. We declined his offer.

January 26. Our last full day in Mexico found us winding through Ticul on a quiet Sunday morning, then into the country and over to Uxmal. The Howell guide mentioned a pond at Uxmal which had had at some time past a Masked Duck. We found the pond but no duck. It was a beautiful morning, and I did some photographing of the Yucatan Jays and a few other birds. We walked the ruins, which are free on Sunday; on other days, the cost is \$8.00 per person. We found a fruiting tree full of Cedar Waxwings. Also, we saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. After this, we gradually made our way back to Merida, got settled in the Best Western, and turned on the Super Bowl. For the

Yucatan (Cont'd from page 7)

second straight year, I watched the game with non-English audio, as last year I watched it on Thai television. I have seen every possible aspect of the Super Bowl covered, but never anything on how many nations send a broadcast team to cover it. That would interest me. There were some rowdy Americans watching the game in the lobby of the hotel. I talked to one, and he said at one time he was one of the performers in the Tommy Bartlett water show in Wisconsin. We finished our birding with 136 species, not really trying for a big list.

January 27: Now came the day of reckoning — the day we had to go home.

We went to the airport cautious in our optimism that we would have an easy trip home. It wasn't to be. There is no direct flight Merida to Miami on Mondays. We don't know why the Aero-Mexico agents in Miami didn't tell us this. Anyway, we had to fly to Mexico City and then to Miami — certainly not the logical way of doing it. We didn't get to Miami until 5:30, then had a long wait for luggage (one piece never made it). We had to get to a phone to call a friend to tell him not to come to meet us at the airport, and had to get ourselves rebooked on the 7:25 flight — the one we had been hoping so much to avoid. The plane was jammed. As the plane pushed off, there was a loud noise and the plane stopped. The tow bar had broken so they had to get another, which took a long time. We finally left, but an hour late. The copilot kept giving updates on the Boston temperature — 18 degrees, then 13 degrees, then 8 degrees! We finally arrived and when we got down to the luggage carousel, found a mob of people surrounding it as FOUR flights had come in simultaneously at 11:30 PM! It was very cold waiting for the luggage, and then we had to go outside and stand in line for a cab in the bitter cold. We finally got to my Nissan Sentra, which to my amazement started, and we returned to Keveney Lane.

In summary, it was a very good trip and I was glad to get to the Calakmul ruins — a place I had wanted to visit for some time.



Tips for Cape Cod Birding

We all know that binoculars, field guide and scopes are wonderful things to have for birding, but here are some other 'resources' that make birding easier here on the Cape.

1) A CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF CAPE COD – This handy little resource (small enough to fit inside your favorite field guide) was updated in 2003 by Blair Nikula, one of the Cape's top birders. Besides listing 317 species seen on the Cape, you can easily see whether the bird you're observing is common, rare but recorded, or very rare. It gives nesting details as well as telling if the species has increased or decreased locally in recent years. This is a fantastic resource, yet priced so low that you'll want many to use as your checklist for each of your Special Birding Events. Use it throughout the year. This Checklist is available at our Merchandise Table at each meeting and you can also buy it at "birding stores" around the Cape.

2) MASSBIRD.ORG – You're planning a trip to the Cape or you're a new resident and want to check out new places to bird. To do this or maybe find just out 'what's being seen' on the Cape, check out Massbird.org – one of your best resources for keeping up-to-date with Cape birding. (If you don't have your own computer, visit your local library for its internet service.)

After opening the massbird.org home page, click on Bird Sightings and then go to the Archive:Virtual Birder for statewide or local day-by-day activity. Check out the links to photos of the Hottest Birds. Take the time to browse the pictures and text on the Red-footed Falcon — that wonderful surprise visitor to Martha's Vineyard that caused all the excitement last August.

It was during that time that we personally learned about the bus system handily available on the Vineyard. Since cars are discouraged,

taking an island bus made it an easy reality to see this handsome bird. Such information sharing is common among the birders at this site and so helpful to the reader.

Massbird.org is also the way to keep up-to-date on the Cape Cod Bird Club. Terry Gavin has done a wonderful job of keeping our website current. This summer, especially, check our Walks Schedule often to be aware of any changes. Make Massbird.org a 'favorite' on your computer. You're going to love using it!

3) *Birding Cape Cod* – This book has been 'under construction' for quite awhile now as it's being updated with new places to bird, new maps, and increased information.

We are expecting the NEW "Birding Cape Cod" to be available in late May or early June. For the Cape birder, this book is definitely one you will want to have. Watch the website for info on when it will be available and where. Or email us at capekingfisher@yahoo.com and we'll tell you where and how you can get a copy.

I hope these 'Resource Tips' have been helpful to you. Maybe we'll see you this summer on birding trails in Wellfleet or Falmouth or anywhere birds are found.

Enjoy your Cape Cod birding!

Sylvia

Backyard Feeder Forms –

Please bring the form with your monthly feeder info to the May meeting — or mail it to CCBC, c/o Museum of Natural History, 869 Rte 6-A, Brewster, MA 02631.

Ron Ayotte will carefully analyze the reports and will let us know the results in a future *Kingfisher*.

**At 82, No driving after Dark
(or Search for the Elusive
Woodcock)**



Soon after supper
yesterday, I did a thing
I shouldn't do. Long
Pasture is supposed to

be a place where woodcocks still
abound.

I drove there as the sun went down
and parked, got out and stood
beside the field, a swampy place
along one side, an old stone wall
along the road.

Long trailing sunset clouds were in
the sky, lit from below, rose-tinted,
pale, and underfoot the grass was wet
from rains the last few days.

Alone, I waited there, ten minutes,
more? It was a perfect place from
which this bird, ground nester,
might arise and circle, soar and fill
the air with nuptial song
unlike all others anywhere,
a whirling sound of wings and
tinging voice-prints,

circling, rising toward the fading light
high in the sky, before descending,
spent, to rest five minutes on the
ground and then begin again.

But silence greeted me, or was the
bird I'd hoped to hear just quiet
there?

And so I started walking, crossed the
field, passed by the marshy spot
where redwings nest each year,
went into woods where I have walked
a hundred times, moved slowly,
hardly making any sound.
Listening, hoping,
the path in places mucky,
light failing, old shack still there.

I went as far as that small pond the
green-backed heron loves and had to
turn around because without some
kind of boots,
I would have wrecked my shoes,
came back in darkness,
compensated by no woodcock's call,
but by a chorus far and wide, on
every side,
of peepers, tiny shrill
Spring peepers calling everywhere,

from every pool and puddle
in that place, proclaiming that,
no matter what, cold winter was
behind us now,
and Spring and Life, were back!

Robert F. Pease

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
☆☆
☆☆ **A Request to Readers ...** ☆☆
☆☆
☆☆ **In order to keep *The King-*** ☆☆
☆☆ **fisher** informative and fun to ☆☆
☆☆ **read, please let us hear from** ☆☆
☆☆ **you!** ☆☆
☆☆ **Share your latest birding trip,** ☆☆
☆☆ **your poetry, or perhaps just** ☆☆
☆☆ **a backyard birding experi-** ☆☆
☆☆ **ence that you think the rest** ☆☆
☆☆ **of us would like to hear.** ☆☆
☆☆ **E-mail your submissions to** ☆☆
☆☆ **capekingfisher@yahoo.com.** ☆☆
☆☆ **Send these anytime before** ☆☆
☆☆ **August 3rd, the deadline for** ☆☆
☆☆ **the next newsletter .. which** ☆☆
☆☆ **will be mailed prior to the** ☆☆
☆☆ **September meeting.** ☆☆
☆☆ **Have a great summer!** ☆☆
☆☆ **Sylvia** ☆☆
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Cut here and return

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR !
DUES ARE DUE BY September 1, 2005 **

Individual \$10.00
Family \$15.00

Please return this form and your check made out to Cape Cod Bird Club to:
Ellie Winslow, Treas.
CCBC
24 Charles Street
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
capekingfisher@yahoo.com
Circulation ~ Ron Ayoite

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CCBC, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
869 Rte 6A, Brewster, MA 02631
Website: <http://www.massbird.org/CCBC>

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

is an organization whose members are interested in the protection and conservation of the bird life and natural resources of Cape Cod

The Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.
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