



The Kingfisher

VOLUME 34 – ISSUE 2

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER, 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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President's Message

According to the Farmer's Almanac, the snow and cold are on the way! However, that shouldn't put a damper on your birding and related activities! I welcome the change in seasons for it means two things for me: new species to observe when I go out to bird, and a chance to provide an essential habitat for birds in our backyard.

Our 18 or so bird feeders are up and are filled with assorted seed, thistle, and suet. The heater is in the birdbath. And the brush piles are stacked in the backyard. All of this is done to provide the essentials for survival for our resident and wintering birds. But, and perhaps selfishly, it is also done to provide us with entertainment and enjoyment as we observe the feeder activity through the late fall and winter!

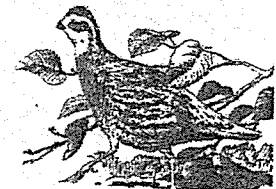
Have you pulled the Winter 2005-2006 Feeder Census form from your Sept-Oct newsletter yet? Mine is sitting on my kitchen table and, come the first weekend in November and every first weekend of the month from then until April, I will record my backyard bird sightings!

Ron Ayotte has been compiling this data for quite some time and it helps us to see trends from year to year about our backyard birds. What birds are visiting your feeders? What's been absent from your feeders? Please participate in this very important census.

Winter birding means a wide variety of waterfowl, thousands of Common Eiders, the chance to see Red-throated Loons again and, of course, the thrill of seeing those beautiful Snow Buntings. Northern owl species might once again migrate south as they did last winter and provide us birders with a life bird. And then there are the alcids! Who can resist the lure of Dovekies and razorbills!

Pull out your boots, snowshoes or cross-country skis, dress in layers to keep warm, and bring along a thermos of coffee! Head on out alone or meet up with your friends on a CCBC walk. Let's go birding!

Diana Silverstein



CCBC PROGRAM — November 14th

Nov. 14, 2005 – 7:30 PM

"All About Bluebirds & More" John Rogers

John has been involved in the conservation of Eastern Bluebirds for well over 30 years. During that time, he has maintained a trail of hundreds of bluebird nest boxes in central New York and has seen over 10,000 Eastern Bluebirds fledge from his bluebird trail.

John co-founded the New York State Bluebird Society and, in 1982, was elected a lifetime Director. He was a recipient of the North American Bluebird Society

Conservation Award in Minneapolis in 1992 and the Bluebird Conservationist Award from the Audubon Society of New York State. Currently, John monitors a bluebird trail of 350 boxes, mainly to the north of Oneida Lake, NY, extending along 50 miles of rural roads in fields, lawns, pastures, and cemeteries. For the last 25 years John has been presenting bluebird slide programs, workshops, and field trips.

In his program, John will discuss the life history and ecology of the Eastern Bluebird, nest box management, and the nesting cycle of the Eastern Bluebird – territories, court-

(Cont'd on page 2)

The Kingfisher is published bi-monthly.

Deadline for next issue's articles: **December 5th**
Send articles or comments to: capekingfisher@yahoo.com

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

PROGRAMS - NOVEMBER and DECEMBER

Cont'd from Page 1

ship, nest building, egg laying, incubation, clutch size, and raising young. He will describe the optimal habitat for Eastern Bluebirds, and the proper placement and management of nest boxes. John will also discuss other birds that nest in these nest boxes and what effect these birds have on Eastern Bluebirds. You will also learn about other predators and parasites such as red and flying squirrels, raccoons, mice, cats, wasps, and blowflies.

He will also give "quick quizzes" on bluebirds and Massachusetts' official plants and animals. Though the focus is on Eastern Bluebirds there is more. From birds to wildlife and wildflowers, anyone who appreciates nature will enjoy this program.

Dec. 12 2005 - 7:30 PM "Member's Night"

This is the program of year when the members themselves dazzle and delight the crowd. It's always fun to see what everyone has been doing in their birding ventures as they share favorite slides and photographs with everyone. Please see the notice at the bottom of this page for submitting your slides. We'll be trying something new this year to make things go smoother and we think it will be an exciting and fun evening.

There will be a Silent Auction for books, feeders, and other 'birdy' things. Door prizes and surprises. Baked goods for sale (for holiday eating and treating) and, of course, fresh cookies for munching at the meeting. See you there!

Cape Cod Bird Club Members' Night Goes Digital

Thanks to club member, Peter Bono, members will be able to show their bird & nature photos digitally at this year's Members' Night, December 12th.


For members interested in showing images, a list of instructions on how to participate follows. The number of slides per member will depend on the number of participants.

Contact Mary Keleher or Peter Bono ASAP if you intend to participate, even if you are not yet prepared to email the zip file containing your images. That way we'll have an idea of how many presenters we will have.

1. Send up to 10 digital images in jpg format in a zip file attachment to Peter Bono (pbono@prba.com).
2. Crop (if necessary) and resize the original camera image to 1024 x 768 resolution.
3. Name each file as follows: "XXX_YYYYYYY.jpg" where XXX are your initials and YYYYYYY is the species name. Use underscore character (_) for spaces in the bird's name. For example, PRB_Black-fronted_Piping-guan.jpg.
4. Send your images by November 30th to allow Peter enough time to put the whole slide show together.
5. For Technical questions, call Peter at 508-375-942. For Logistical questions, call Mary at 508-477-1473.

- *****
NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME

 Judy Askew - Cotuit
 David Brown - Woods Hole
 Judith Bruce - South Orleans
 Susan & Elliott Carr - Brewster
 Sidney Chapman - Osterville
 March DuPont - Mashpee
 Jean & George Ferguson - Centerville
 Fernando Fernandez - Centerville
 Diana Hanford - Yarmouth Port
 Jeanine Holmes - Mashpee
 Sonya Howland - Taunton
 Christine Hunter - Woods Hole
 Mary Lou Kaufman - Roslindale
 Bernadette & Ken Krieser - South
 Yarmouth
 Kathleen Lennox - Orleans
 Ed Ruckle, New York City
 Tim Ruckle - Chico, CA
 Pat Sarantis - Harwich
 Kelly Sattman - Cooper City, FL
 Susan Spilman - Brewster
 Anne Vogel - N. Falmouth



**BIRDING
Cape Cod**

CAPE COD BIRD CLUB &
MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Do you have your copy?
Only \$15.95
Great for holiday 'gifting'
Visit our merchandise table!**

FIELD TRIPS - NOVEMBER and DECEMBER

Dan Furbish, Coordinator

All are welcome to join our field trips which are FREE. NEW BIRDERS ARE 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 additions or changes.

NOVEMBER 2005

Nov 5 - Sat Leader's Choice - South of Boston. All Day. Call or email leader for details and meeting place. Glenn d'Entremont, Stoughton (781) 344-5857 gdentremont@juno.com

Nov 12 - Sat 7:30AM: Upper Cape Duck Bonanza. All Day. We'll explore several upper Cape hotspots to find over 20 species of ducks! Meet at Dunkin Donuts over the bridge in Sagamore, first exit out of rotary. We'll stop for lunch at Zoe's in Mashpee. Leaders: Mary Keleher 508-477-1473, Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@verizon.net

Nov 13 - Sun 8:30AM: Mid Cape waterfowl and late fall specialties. Meet at Corporation Beach in Dennis to visit several ocean and lake overlooks. Leader: Mark Tuttle 508-362-3015

Nov 15 - Tues - 8:30AM; Wellfleet to P'Town. Meet at the Wellfleet Town Pier (from Rte 6 at the light, follow signs for the harbor). We'll search out the wintering waterfowl and scour the seas for alcids. If we're lucky, a rarity or two may be wintering in the bushes! Leader: Ginie Page 349-6810 or vgpage@juno.com

Nov 19 - Sat 9AM - Yarmouth and Dennis Ponds Plus! Meet at West Dennis Beach (in the parking lot near the main entrance) to carpool. Plan on a few hours of birding the local hotspots for wintering waterfowl and sea ducks. We'll start at W. Dennis Beach and the Sound and then work our way around to the ponds & Bay of Yarmouth and Dennis. Rain Cancels! Mike and Diane at 508-398-9484 or email: birder526@aol.com.

Nov 27 - Sun 7:30AM: Upper Cape Straddle. Meet at Christy's Convenience store on Rte 6A across from Ploughed Neck Road. We'll bird the E. Sandwich Game Farm, the marshes of Barnstable, the south side of the Cape Cod canal for white winged gulls and other hi-lites, Then we'll go over the canal and bird Scussett Beach and the jetty for seabirds and sea ducks. Last year it was a very successful trip. Rain Cancels! Leader: Dan Furbish (781) 837-4975 or Barn.Owl@verizon.net

DECEMBER 2005

Dec 3rd & 4th is the Cape Cod Waterfowl Census. A sign-up sheet will also be at the November CCBC meeting. For details & more info, check massbird.org/CCBC or call Mike Dettrey 508-398-9484.

Dec 3 - Sat 1:30PM: Marshfield, MA Mass Audubon's Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield. We'll meet at 1:30PM in the Sagamore Friendly's parking lot on the "other" side of the bridge. Don't miss this one! Dan Furbish, resident caretaker of DWWS, will walk the trails with us looking for birds in the afternoon and then we'll wait at Fox Hill for Long Eared and Short Eared Owls to begin their evening hunting flights. We should be able to see some good raptors in the afternoon. Wear quiet clothing, both silent and subtly-colored. Consider that we will be sitting in the late dusk, so dress for the Arctic. Leaders: Ginie Page 508-349-6810 and Dan Furbish Barn.Owl@verizon.net

Dec 11 - Sun 9AM: Birding Eastham! Meet at 9AM at Ft. Hill, lower parking lot to carpool. After we look out over the marsh from Ft. Hill, we'll visit the top spots in Eastham for winter birds including Coast Guard Beach, First Encounter Beach and lots of great ponds! Rain cancels! Mike and Diane at 508-398-9484 or email: birder526@aol.com

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Check out massbird.org/CCBC for meeting place info or any changes.

BUZZARDS BAY - Dec 17th Sat - Contact Jeremiah Trimble, 617-495-2471 Email: jtrimble@oeb.harvard.edu

CAPE COD - Dec 18th Sun - Contact Blair Nikula 508-432-6348 or email odenews@odenews.org

MID-CAPE - Dec 27th Tues - Contact Peter Trimble 508-477-3847 or email at merlin@capecod.net

TRURO - Date TBA - Contact Tom Lipsky 978-897-5429 or Ginie Page 508-349-6810

JANUARY 2006

Jan 1, 2006 Sunday - Noon - 4 PM New Year birds! Meet at the Stop & Shop parking lot entrance at Patriot Square on Rte 134 in S. Dennis. (Take Exit 9A off Route 6) Dress appropriately, party hats optional! Leader: Ed Banks, 508-430-0845, email edbanks@verizon.net

NUTHATCH

by David Wagoner

Quick, at the feeder, pausing,
Upside down, in its beak
A sunflower seed held tight
To glance by chestnut, dust-blue,
White, an eye-streak
Gone in a blurred ripple
Straight to the cedar branch
To the trunk to a crevice
In bark and putting it
In there, quick, with the others,
Then arrowing straight back
For just one more all morning.

Meet the Altacal Audubon Society

by Diane Silverstein

The Cape Cod Bird Club has a developed a 'sister society' relationship with the Altacal Audubon Society out of Chico, CA!

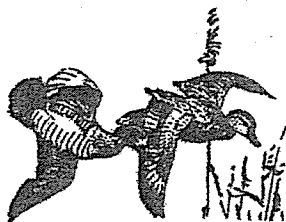
After a few recent conversations with Tim Ruckle, on the Board of the Altacal Audubon Society, we decided it would be of great interest and fun to share some of our bird sightings and news from the eastern seaboard with the Altacal organization on the west coast, and vice versa. Look for their articles in each issue of The Kingfisher and I will be submitting articles to them for their newsletter!

The Altacal Audubon Society is located at the northern end of the Sacramento Valley in an agricultural/rural area. They host an annual Snow Goose Festival in January and founded the Chico Creek Nature Center.

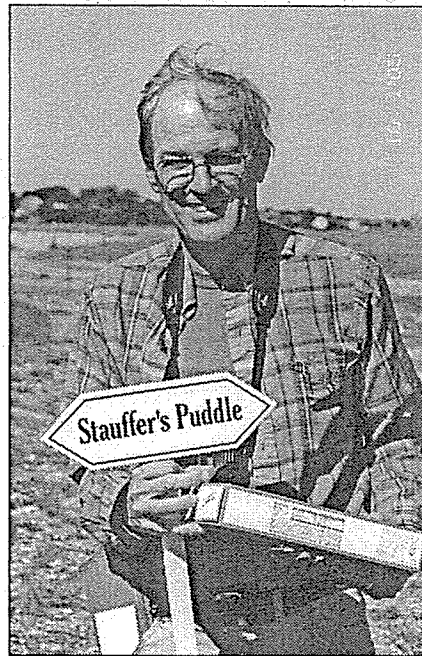
The society counts approximately 700 members. Visit their website at <http://www.altacal.org> — soon to be undergoing improvements.


The Altacal Audubon Society reports some interesting sightings recently, including an Emperor Goose and 4 hybrid Branta X Anser geese (probable parental stock: Branta hutchinsii X Anser albifrons) at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. These birds were mixed in with 100 +/- Greater White-fronted Geese. A rare sighting of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in a Chico, CA backyard was reported as well. (Coincidentally, one or two had been seen locally in Chatham in late September!) Their local birds such as the Acorn Woodpecker and Yellow-billed Magpie would certainly be special sightings for us here on Cape Cod!

Stay tuned for more sightings out of Chico, CA!



Stauffer's Namesake



For the past few years, Stauffer Miller has been taking birders to one of his favorite spots. In Sandwich and fairly remote, it's a place that, when the tide level is just right (not too shallow and not too deep), you'll see shore birds of all types. Listed in our club walks as Stauffer's Puddle, Ellie Miller decided it was time to make it 'official.' She had a sign made up and, on Stauffer's recent birthday, Ellie asked him to take her to his birding spot. Imagine his surprise to find other club members there. During a rousing "Happy Birthday," Ellie presented Stauffer with a sign to mark the spot! 



LOOKING FOR YOUR STORY ...

Have you had a birding experience you'd like to share? A far-away trip, a Cape experience, or maybe just a great backyard bird story! What got you started 'watching birds'? What is THE bird sighting that made a difference in your birding experience? Tell us your story! Send to: Capekingfisher@yahoo.com.

Duxbury Owls S. Fenwick

Last Feb. 27th was an unseasonably warm day so my friend and I decided to hike out on Duxbury Beach to do some birding. Surprisingly, winter can be a very nice time to be out on the beach road. Only a few S.U.V.'s roll by and the atmosphere is pleasantly serene. It's a nice departure from the crowds of summer and a perfect spot to connect with the quiet beauty of nature.

The dunes are clothed in neutral tones of beige and white. Very soothing to the eyes and mind. The farther out you walk, the farther you are transported from the hectic pace of modern life. At last you can truly focus on the various species of winter birds in the area. Because the beach is forsaken at this time of year, it has the feel of the Arctic Tundra. Maybe that's why the Snowy Owl has been residing here. It feels like home.

We spotted a Snowy along the road and, to our amazement, he was not at all timid. In fact, he perched atop a pole that stood right over the beach road where trucks rolled by occasionally. He was not disturbed at all and remained indifferent to traffic.

We also spotted a Short-eared Owl that day. It flew in from nowhere and looked amazingly hawk-like as it flew low over the marsh. We'd been hoping to spot one for some time. Now we had a marvelous look at him as he perched only 100 yards away. He was a rather small predator sitting before us with tiny ears erect. His nondescript plumage belied his many talents. I soon discovered the Short-eared Owl is an amazing creature.

The Short-eared Owl is one of the few owls that will hunt day or night. It also migrates. This owl is courageous and playful. While crows can mob and chase off other predators, the Short-eared will turn the tables on its assailants. Crows often become the victims when they try mobbing the Short-eared Owl. Though small, they are strong and fast and have no fears. And they shouldn't. Even the great blue heron, who thinks it is the king of the

(Continued on page 5)

Winter Bird Feeding Tips

What is the best feeder for bird feeding?

A: There is no single best feeder for bird feeding. A well-rounded feeding operation will include a platform feeder, a tube feeder, a hopper feeder, a suet feeder, and a peanut feeder. And don't forget the bird bath! (You'll need a bird bath heater for winter!)

What is the very best seed to offer to birds?

A: Black-oil sunflower seed is the most universally eaten seed at bird feeders. But there are many other seeds and foods to offer to birds. What is most popular with your birds depends on where you live and what birds are present. Ask your local bird seed provider for suggestions.

How do I keep the squirrels off my bird feeders?

A: Baffling your feeders (preventing squirrels from gaining access to the feeders) is the best way. Feeders can be strung from a thin wire, far from any object from which the squirrels can leap. String the wire with empty 35mm film canisters (lids on) which will spin and dump the squirrels off. There are many squirrel-proof feeders on the market. These may give the squirrels a small electric shock, may prevent them from reaching the seed, or may rotate or bounce to dump the squirrels off. But be forewarned. Squirrels have been

VENEZUELA IN 2007 ?

Does Venezuela in 2007 appeal to you? Club member Peter Bono is trying to organize a private birding tour of Venezuela in the Jan-Mar 2007 time frame and is looking for 6 more birders who would share the costs in this adventure. If you are seriously interested, please contact Peter at 508-375-9421 or email pbono@prba.com. Bird trip reports and photos can be viewed at <http://www.prba.com/prbpers.htm>.

Bird Watchers Digest online

known to outsmart the most ingenious of the squirrel-proof inventions.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Feed squirrels dried corn (ears or kernels), but place the corn AWAY from your bird feeders. Given the choice, squirrels will always go for the easiest food, and they LOVE corn.

What is stealing my suet?

A: Crows, cats, bears, skunks, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, weasels, dogs, coyotes, and even some hawks and owls could be responsible for the missing suet. I suggest you suspend the feeder on a wire from your eaves, a pole, or a handy tree branch. Hang it high enough so a leaping cat or dog can't reach it, but close enough for you to access for refilling. And take a few peeks during the night — you might catch your suet thief in the act!

Is bird feeding bad for birds?

A: Yes and no. Certainly some bird species (house finches, cardinals, house sparrows, starlings) have prospered from the food at bird feeders, but feeding has not had the dramatic positive effect on overall bird populations that, say, reduced water pollution has.

On the bad side of things, bird feeders, because they concentrate lots of birds, have been the source of several bad outbreaks of avian disease. At feeders, sick birds intermingle with healthy birds, and thus the disease spreads. Feeding has also helped certain non-native species thrive at the expense of native species.

What can be done about this?

Practice good feeder hygiene: Clean your feeders once a month with a bleach-water solution (one cup of bleach to two gallons of water). Feed only as much food as your birds will eat in a day.

If you see sick or dead birds at your feeder, notify your local wildlife officials, and stop feeding for a few weeks. This forces the birds to disperse and lessens the chances that any disease

Cape Birding with Blair

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER:

November is a transition month for both birds and birders. Migration for most species is just about over and many winter residents begin to arrive.

Sea ducks, gannets and kitti-wakes become abundant in Cape Cod Bay and along the ocean shore. Northerly species such as Northern Shrike begin to appear.

By December, the winter residents have settled into their usual haunts, but a few oddballs always seem to show up, so keep looking!

Stock the feeders!

Owls (Cont'd from page 4)

marshes, has fallen to the Short-eared Owl on many occasions.

Few birds can compare to them in aerial ability. Even its counterpart, the Harrier hawk (the most agile of hawks) cannot outfly it.

So I have learned that even the more commonplace and smaller birds have secrets to unfold and learn from.

May I be as bold as the Short-eared Owl!



CCBC Programs 2005-2006

Jan 9 - Don Kroodsm - "The Singing Life of Birds"

Feb 13 - Mark & Marcia Wilson - "A Canoe Journey into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge"

Mar 13 - Sue Finnegan - "Five Years of Bird Banding on Cape Cod"

Apr 10 - Joey Mason - "Keeping Company with Kestrels"

May 8 - Chris Leahy - "Do Birds Have a Future?"

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



The Cape Cod Bird Club Inc.

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

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

CCBC, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
869 Rte 6A, Brewster, MA 02631

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

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Newsletter

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