



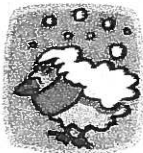
# The Kingfisher

VOLUME 34 – ISSUE 3

The Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

JANUARY – FEBRUARY, 2006

**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](mailto:capekingfisher@yahoo.com)

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

## President's Message

Am I the only one who thinks that I was just birding on South Beach and North Monomoy? Is it really possible that we are in the throes of the holiday season already? Temperatures falling!! Snow falling!! Time flies, doesn't it? Since winter is truly here, I welcome the great birding to come!

I would first like to wish each and every one of you a joyous and happy holiday season and a New Year of peace, happiness, adventure, and MANY great birds!

As we turn from 2005 to 2006, I recall some of the truly exciting birds that we've had on Cape this year. Let's see ... the Ruff at the Wellfleet Dike, the Curlew Sandpiper and Wilson's Plover on South Beach, the Magnificent Frigatebird flying over South Beach, the Townsend's Solitaires at High Head in Truro, the Tundra Swan on Pilgrim Lake in Truro, the Franklin's Gull at Wellfleet Harbor, the Painted Bunting in N. Eastham and the King Eider in Sandwich, to name some! How many did you see?

The Cape is a glorious birding locale, attracting so many awesome birds! And the Cape is filled with incredibly talented bird-watchers who find the many special birds that show up unexpectedly. Be one of those birders — don't get left out of the excitement! Join one of our walks and field trips whether you are new at birding or experienced. Get out on your own when time allows and hone those identification skills.

During the cold winter months, watch those warbler and shorebird videos to get ready for the spring and summer!

If you aren't already tuned into Massbird, you are missing a wealth of information about sightings both on and off the Cape. Check out their website at [www.massbird.org](http://www.massbird.org) for more information! And don't forget our own Club hotline! If you see a special bird, get the word out 'ASAP' so all of your fellow birders can get to see the bird!

'Tis the season to spot sea ducks, alcids and waterfowl galore! If you aren't out there, they will all pass you by!

On a conservation note, December brings the Cape Cod Waterfowl Census, coordinated by Blair Nikula with assistance by Michael Dettrey. Christmas Counts occur Cape-wide. The Club's feeder census is in process. We need all you 'Citizen Scientists' to participate in efforts to conserve bird habitat and to save bird species. The collected data is so important.

This spring we hope to resurrect the Breeding Bird census and there are opportunities for nest box monitoring and bird surveys at Crowes Pasture in Dennis and the Bank St. Bogs in Harwich.

Join these opportunities as they arise. You are needed! Besides, as many of you already know, it feels great to volunteer. Give it a try!

*Diane Silverstein*

## CCBC PROGRAMS — January – February, 2006

**Jan 9th 7:30PM – "The Singing Life of Birds" – Don Kroodsma**

"Somewhere, always, the sun is rising and somewhere, always, the birds are singing. Ten thousand species strong, their voices and styles are as diverse as they are delightful. It is mostly he who sings, but she sometimes does, too. Some sing all day, some all night. Some are pleasing to our ears and some not. How the sounds of these species differ from each other is the first step to appreciating

them, of course, but those questions quickly give way to "why" questions. Why do some learn and others not? Why do dialects occur in some species and not others? Why is it mainly he who sings? It is these and similar why questions that so intrigue us as we try to understand the individual voices that contribute to the avian chorus." (Excerpts from the preface for The Singing Life of Birds.)

Don Kroodsma will use his 30 years' experience listening to bird song to answer

*(Cont'd on page 2)*

**PROGRAMS** - *Cont'd from Page 1*

these "why" questions and many more as he discusses the singing life of birds.

Don majored in chemistry in college and discovered birds in a local Michigan marsh during his last semester. That summer he went to the University of Michigan field station in Pellston, taking beginning and advanced ornithology courses. From there, he traveled cross-country to Oregon State University for graduate school, where a singing wren in his backyard got him started on a lifelong passion for listening to birds. Currently Don is a professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts.


He has studied birdsong for more than thirty years. He was recognized as the "reigning authority on avian vocal behavior" in the citation for his 2003 Elliott Coues Award from the American Ornithologists' Union. He has edited three scholarly volumes on the field of acoustic communication among birds and authored more than one hundred articles in both scholarly journals and popular magazines such as Auk, Condor, Birder's World, Living Bird, and Natural History. More recently Don authored *The Singing Life of Birds*.

**Feb 13th - 7:30PM "Alaska Wilderness: A Canoe Journey into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" - Mark & Marcia Wilson**

In June and July of 2001, Mark and Marcia Wilson spent 19 days canoeing the Canning River on the western edge of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Floating north from a gravel airstrip in the Brooks Range, the Wilsons paddled a 17-foot folding canoe to explore 70 miles of Arctic wilderness. With stunning photos and passionate commentary drawn from this trip and 6 other visits to the Arctic, the Wilsons open a window on the Arctic summer.

In this land of 24-hour summer sun you'll see some of the mammals, birds, plants and insects that thrive in our continent's most remote wilderness, the Arctic tundra. Mark and Marcia will present their slide show of intimate views of Snowy Owls at the nest, caribou maneuvering icy river crossings and barren ground grizzly bear sign. Musk ox show themselves in rare glimpses, Peregrine Falcons, Yellow-billed Loons, waterfowl and shorebirds galore join the nesting fray. Meet lemmings, arctic hares and foxes and learn how, above the Arctic circle, light and weather, mosquitoes and lemmings, play into a

symphony of life in the remote Arctic ecosystem. A special treat will include the viewing of a live Snowy Owl.

Mark Wilson is a naturalist, wildlife photographer, photojournalist, writer and avid birder. In addition to being a full-time staff photographer at the Boston Globe, Mark's column "The Backyard Birder" appeared biweekly in the Boston Globe for 4 years. His photos have appeared in publications such as National Geographic, Yankee, Canadian Wildlife, National Wildlife, Massachusetts Audubon's Sanctuary, as well as numerous other books and exhibitions. Marcia Litchfield Wilson brings over 30 years of experience in natural history and field ornithology to her environmental education programs. As a young adult naturalist in the late 1970's and the "Voice of Audubon" at Massachusetts Audubon Society, Marcia focused on public education, conservation, and bird research. She was a seabird observer for Manomet Observatory and joined the ranks of Harvard's Nuttall Ornithological Club as its seventh female member in 1980. Mark and Marcia Wilson are a charismatic team who teach, photograph, and share their passion for the natural world. 

**A Message from John Rogers:**

If you were at the November CCBC meeting on Bluebirds, you no doubt came away very happy you had attended.

John Rogers, who presented this excellent and informative program also enjoyed the evening and sent this message to Mary Keleher. She wanted to share his email with our members.

*"Hi Mary, Thank you so much for your kind remarks about my presentation and my bluebird work. I have put a great deal of time and effort into all of this and hopefully am making some positive difference. It is always gratifying to receive positive feedback.*

*I was both pleased and surprised by the turnout. I think it was the second largest audience for one of my programs, second only to the Bluebirds Across*

*Nebraska organization - and that covered the entire state. I enjoyed meeting you and some of the members of the Cape Cod Bird Club.*

*I was very impressed by your club - your president, officers and committee chairpersons, the turnout at the meetings, frequency and variety of field trips, the website, newsletter, and outstanding programs etc. What a quality organization! I say that with all sincerity. Everyone treated me warmly and graciously, and I will have fond memories of my time with the Cape Cod Bird Club for a long time.*

*Thank you for making this possible for me."*

John Rogers

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

- James Breagy, Barnstable
- Robert & Bridget Burke, Hyannis
- Larry & Aline Folding, Harwich
- Don Froude, South Dennis
- JoAnn Mets, Orleans
- Nancy Millett, Acton
- Linda & Steve Nathanson, Brewster
- Christopher Wadsworth, Dennis

\*\*\*\*\*  
**DOES BAD WEATHER  
 HAVE YOU WONDERING?  
 FOR CCBC MEETING  
 CANCELLATION NEWS,  
 LISTEN TO WQRC 99.9  
 FM RADIO !**  
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## JAN & FEB WALKS

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! Look at [www.massbird.org/CCBC](http://www.massbird.org/CCBC) for any changes or additional trips!

### 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](mailto:edbanks@verizon.net)

**Jan 7 - Saturday (ALL DAY)**  
Joint BBC/CCBC - limited participation ALL DAY trip to Westport, MA. Contact leader Bob Stymeist for more info & specifics. Email: [rstymeist@juno.com](mailto:rstymeist@juno.com).

**Jan 7 - Sat - 8:30AM Marstons Mills.**  
8:30AM-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

**Jan 14 - Saturday - 7:15AM**  
Barnstable Area. Loop Beach (Cotuit) to Wequaquet Lake. Meet 7:15AM at Honey Dew Donuts on the Mashpee/ Barnstable line (corner of Rte 28 and Cape Drive). Past highlights have included Barrow's Goldeneye, Eurasian Wigeon, Black-headed Gull, YB Chat and Bald eagles. Leaders: Mary Keleher 477-1473 or [Maryeak@yahoo.com](mailto:Maryeak@yahoo.com) and Dan Furbish [Barn.owl@verizon.net](mailto:Barn.owl@verizon.net)

**Jan 16 - Mon 7:30AM:** Rhode Island - Meet at the Stop and Shop on Route 6A in Sandwich. Possible places to visit will include Ninigret Park, Ninigret NWR, Trustom Pond NWR, Moonstone Beach, Sachuest NWR and Beavertail Point. We'll be guided by what's been reported and how much open water exists prior to the trip. Although the focus of the trip will be winter waterfowl, we'll see a great diversity of birds

during the day. We'll probably stop for lunch in Wakefield. Leaders: Frank Caruso 508-477-9807 or email [fcarus@umext.umass.edu](mailto:fcarus@umext.umass.edu) and Dennis Wiehe, 508-833-0467 or [weehee@adelphia.net](mailto:weehee@adelphia.net).

**January 21, Sat. Noon - 3PM**  
Cape Cod Canal & Scusset Beach. Take first exit off the Sagamore rotary, past Dunkin Donuts. We'll meet at the very end of Scusset beach road, at the end canal parkinglot. Many wintering sea ducks, alcids, possible King Eider and purple sandpipers. We'll finish with hot cocoa at nearby Dunkin Donuts shop. Severe weather or heavy rain cancels. Leader: Sharla Fenwick (508-747-2014) or [Poolka1228@yahoo.com](mailto:Poolka1228@yahoo.com)

### FEBRUARY

**Feb 4 - Saturday - 2 PM - 8 PM**



**Eastham area Owl Prowl -**  
We'll start at 2PM at the lower Fort Hill parking lot, because of limited areas to park at some of the stops we'll carpool from there. We will bird First Encounter beach, area ponds and thickets, then owl areas in Eastham and Orleans. Dress warm. Trip ends at 8pm. Rain or extreme snow cancels the trip. Families are welcome; please wear quiet and warm clothing. Leader: Dan Furbish, [Barn.Owl@verizon.net](mailto:Barn.Owl@verizon.net)

**Feb 11 - Sat - 8:30AM Marstons Mills.**  
8:30AM-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 18 - Saturday - 7:15AM**  
Mashpee River Woodlands Walk. Meet 7:15AM at the main parking area on Quiniquisset Ave (from Mashpee Rotary take Rt. 28 towards Hyannis. Take first right onto Quiniquisset Ave. Parking lot is on the right.) We'll carpool to the River Road entrance and walk approximately 2 miles back to the main parking. Leader: Mary Keleher at 508-477-1473 or [maryeak@yahoo.com](mailto:maryeak@yahoo.com)

**Feb 26 - Sunday - 9AM - Outer Cape Ramble.** Leaders: Michael Detrey and Diane Silverstein. Meet at 9AM at the Friendly's in Orleans

(Canal Rd. off of 6A, just past the Orleans Rotary) to visit the locations on the Outer Cape where the action is "hot"! We'll car pool to sites from Eastham to Provincetown "leader's choice"! Call Diane and Mike at 508-398-9484 to let them know you're coming.

**Feb 27 - Monday - 8AM** Falmouth/ Woods Hole Shore and Ponds. Meet 8AM at the parking lot for the Shining Sea Bike Path on Locust St in Falmouth (which is on the North side of Locust street near the intersection with Mill Road).

### Count your Birds in America's Great Backyard Count Feb 17-20, 2006

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) returns for its ninth season Feb 17-20, 2006. The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology encourage everyone to count with a buddy! Every pair of eyes is needed and every bird counts! For more details, go to [www.bird.cornell.edu](http://www.bird.cornell.edu).

"This project has become a major source of scientific information about North American bird populations," said Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. "It is a classic example of the vital role citizens and the Internet now play in understanding our planet."

Everyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to seasoned experts. During the count, bird watchers tally up birds for as little as 15 minutes, or for as long as they like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species they see together at one time. People are encouraged to report birds from public lands and local parks, as well as from their backyards.

By participating, you help document where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds this winter.

Participants enter their numbers online at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) and can explore sightings maps, lists, and charts as the count progresses. Have a great time and good birding!



## Some Remarks on the 2004-05 Feeder Census

Ron Ayotte

As with the 2003-04 census, some amplifying remarks are in order on the results of last winter's census. Remember that these are my "take" on the results, and are not a rigorous statistical analysis of the results. (If there is a member who could apply statistical analysis to our results, I'd be glad to make the full results available to him/her!) The data cited are in the "birds/feeder observed/month" format, and the changes are changes in observations reported, not necessarily changes in population, though I suspect they reflect them.

**Northern Bobwhite:** Continued decline from historic highs (1.61 for the period 1980-98) to less than one-tenth that last winter (0.12). I suspect the increased human population on the Cape has brought a related increase in feral cats, which naturally prey on ground-nesting birds like Bobwhites.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Now seen at about 50% of feeders, this southern species continues its spread on Cape Cod. Historically not even on the chart, it has doubled its sightings since the winter of 1998-99 (0.27 to 0.56).

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Massachusetts' state bird was seen at virtually every feeder every month (99%) last winter, and in numbers increasing over the last two years (3.44, 3.62, 4.39) but still shy of its historical high (1980-98) of 5.24,

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Sightings of this beautiful little bird rise and fall, and last winter they were on the rise. Variations in sightings, quite low in 1998-99 (0.17) and 2002-03 (0.18) and high in 2003-04 (0.55) and this year (0.67) reflect the migratory nature of the bird. You could almost call the Red-breasted "irruptive".

**Cedar Waxwing:** Up earlier in the decade, they are now re-approaching historic levels (0.08 this year). They should be dropped from the list next year, and relegated to the "remarks" section.

**American Tree Sparrow:** This year's reports are very low (0.08), about one-half of the historic levels (1980-98:

0.19), and should also be "relegated" next year.

**House Finch:** These western invaders, once ubiquitous at feeders here, continue a slow decline, now at 2.93 vs. a historic level of 5.06. This decline is consistent with feeder reports in, e.g., Cornell Lab of Ornithology publications.

**House Sparrow:** Not as abundant at feeders over the past three winters as historically (4.08), the reports have been just about level since 2002-03, with this winter's reports placing them at 2.69.

**Raptors:** Reports of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are increasing, and now exceed historic levels (0.10 and 0.03 respectively) at 0.14 and 0.05. As the Cape returns to a more wooded landscape, the increase in these woodland predators could be expected.

**Eastern Bluebird:** There have been increased feeder reports of this beautiful bird over the last two years (0.33 and 0.34). I suspect this reflects the efforts of groups and individuals (such as our President, Diane Silverstein and others). I think the Eastern Bluebird should be added to next year's list.

**Most Abundant Species:** The top six are:

- American Goldfinch 899
- Black-capped Chickadee 685
- Mourning Dove 681
- European Starling 545.
- Northern Cardinal 482
- House Finch 457

**Most Frequently Seen:** The top six are:

- Black-capped Chickadee 99%
- Tufted Titmouse 92%
- American Goldfinch 88%
- Mourning Dove 88%
- Northern Cardinal 85%
- White-breasted Nuthatch 83%

**Highest Median per Feeder:** The top five are:

- American Goldfinch 6.48
- Black-capped Chickadee 4.79
- Mourning Dove 4.44
- Eastern Starling 3.96
- Northern Cardinal 3.23

Finally, three **very unusual feeder sightings** this last winter deserve recognition:

- Red-shouldered Hawk (positive ID), Janet Leigh, Cotuit
- Northern Goshawk, John Berg, W. Falmouth
- Summer Tanager, Peggy Eastman, W. Dennis.

Thanks to all who participated last year. I look forward to this year's data.

Ron Ayotte, Compiler

See Ron's complete report elsewhere in this newsletter.

Are YOU taking the time to record your birds each month? Now that you've read Ron's report, you can see that your information is important! Do take the time to look and record!

## Altacal Audubon Society

Diane Silverstein

Our "sister society," the Altacal Audubon Society in CA, sponsors the yearly **Snow Goose Festival** in Chico and Red Bluff. This year, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway takes place **January 27-29**. It's a premier birding and nature festival that draws attention to the great flocks of migrating waterfowl such as **Snow, Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese** that can be found wintering among the unique habitats of the Sacramento Valley. All weekend there are tours, workshops, and activities for children.

The Festival ends with the popular Gathering of Wings Banquet and Silent Auction at the Sierra Nevada Brewery. The keynote presentation this year will be delivered by master naturalist Walt Anderson, author of *Inland Island: The Sutter Buttes* [referred to as the world's smallest mountain range]. Walt's wildlife photography can be seen at <http://www.geolobo.com/index.html>. Snow Goose Festival info is at [www.snowgoosefestival.org](http://www.snowgoosefestival.org). Other recent

(Cont'd on page 5)

## Birding the Cape – Season by Season

Blair Nikula

### JANUARY – FEBRUARY:

For those of us (both birds and birders) not fortunate enough to be able to escape to a warmer clime, the upcoming season is very much a time of survival. Although winter birding in this area can be an uncomfortable endurance test, those willing to challenge the elements can often find much worth seeing. Indeed, severe weather and freezing tends to concentrate birds where food and or open water are present, providing birders with opportunities for unusually close views of species that, at other seasons, are mere specks out in the middle of a pond or skulking shadows in a dense tangle of briers. Spots such as Fort Hill in Eastham, Muddy Creek in Harwich and Hallet's Mill Pond in Yarmouth often have open water and birds even during the most severe weather conditions.

One of the advantages of winter birding is that many species or

individuals can become very sedentary (as do many birders) and are remarkably dependable at certain locations. In recent years, for example, Barrow's Goldeneye have been quite dependably present off the end of Sea View Avenue in Osterville and off Surf Drive in Falmouth, while a few Harlequin Ducks usually can be found just north of the Nauset Beach parking lot in Orleans.

Provincetown offers some of the most exciting birding potential – as well as the most challenging weather! Close views of a variety of sea ducks, as well as occasional Razorbills or other alcids, can often be had at McMillan Wharf. Alcids (primarily Razorbills) can also be seen along the outer beach from the Race Point parking lot to Race Point Light. Large numbers of Kittiwakes and Red-breasted Mergansers are possible here as well as at Herring Cove Beach.

At the other end of the Cape, Falmouth offers a very different (and

usually more comfortable) sort of birding. The Falmouth ponds, such as Sider's, Salt, and Coonamisset, are some of the best duck ponds in southern New England. In addition, the many berry-laden thickets harbor lingering landbirds such as catbirds, towhees, Hermit Thrushes and Carolina Wrens.

Flights of northern finches (redpolls, siskins, crossbills, and grosbeaks) are erratic and unpredictable but may liven up the winter's birding, as will the occasional Snowy Owl, Rough-legged Hawk, or Northern Shrike!



### Nest Box Trail at Crowes Pasture

Diane Silverstein

2005 was the second year that the Cape Cod Bird Club managed and monitored the Nest Box Trail at Crowes Pasture in E. Dennis. This year, my deepest thanks goes to the following volunteers who made regular trips to Crowes Pasture to record nesting activity: Carolyn Kennedy, Michael Dettrey, Don Scott, Wil Sprauve, Susan Putonen, and Joanna Schurmann. The Club's appreciation goes to the Town of Dennis and specifically to Brian Malone, Dept. of Natural Resources, for their continuing support of the trail.

In 2005, the number of boxes grew to 12 from 6 in 2004, thanks in part to Wild Birds Unlimited in S. Yarmouth and Tom Thompson, owner, for donating 4 boxes and to Lawrence Lynch for building and donating 2 boxes.

This year brought more nesting failures than last year due in part to a wet and cool spring and to predation. We installed baffles this fall to thwart predators for the 2006 season. We also saw our first House Sparrows at the trail this year and will be building "Sparrow Spookers" to install on top of nest boxes once our desired birds lay eggs and thus have an affinity for the

box. This dowel and mylar creation has been successful in "spooking" House Sparrows, but not the nesting bird once the eggs have been laid.

We had one brood of E. Bluebirds fledge around Sept. 7 this year, a late date in general, and approximately one month later than our last brood in 2004.

In summary, 8 of our 12 boxes had nesting activity in 2005. We had 10 nesting attempts as compared to 8 in 2004. This year, we had 4 successful fledgings (3 Eastern Bluebird broods and 1 Tree Swallow brood); "successful fledging" being defined as at least one bird fledging of the brood) and 6 failures due to "unknown," (abandonment, and/or predation reasons). In 2004, of the 8 nesting attempts, 5 were successful, 2 failed, and 1 record is incomplete.

This spring, 2006, I am interested in increasing our ranks so that monitors may go out in pairs and to ensure that monitoring is happening at least once a week, and more frequently during the peak breeding period. If any CCBC member is interested in joining our group of monitors please contact me at birder 526@aol.com.



### Altacal Audubon Society (from page 4)

trips to the refuges have provided views of impressively

large flocks of White-faced Ibis and the various white geese, sometimes flushed by raptors such as the two Golden Eagles scattering geese at the Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>.

On a recent trip to see the geese and ducks at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge at Willows, a group of us saw what we believe was a Cassin's Kingbird but had no photo or confirmation. A morning trip to the SNWR unit at Llano Seco rewarded birders with awesome views of flights of Sandhill Cranes coming in for landings. At the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Valley Birding Club Symposium in Stockton, CA, Nov 17-20, Altacal members saw a Harlequin Duck, only the fifth sighting in the Central Valley.

All of us at Altacal send best wishes to our Cape Cod Bird Club friends. Good Birding!

### CCBC Programs 2005-2006

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?"

# Mashpee River Woodlands – 100 Species of Birds

Mary Keleher

What is it like to find 100 species of birds? It's a complete and utter delight.

I've been keeping track of the birds I see at the Mashpee River Woodlands since January 2004. Each month I do a fairly intense survey of the west side of the river walking approximately two miles from River Road to the parking area on Quinaquisset Avenue. I took great pleasure in seeing my list grow over the past two years.

I've come to expect certain birds here in each season but there are still those few that surprise me. Today, October 30, 2005, was no exception.

After a day of cold weather and snow, yes snow in October, I arrived at the Mashpee River Woodlands at 6:15AM. It was 35 degrees and I realized I should have brought my insulated mittens. I did my usual loop around to the river finding several Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, and Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches. I arrived at the river hoping to find some ducks but I didn't see any. The only bird around was a ring-billed gull. Suddenly I heard the rattling call of a Belted Kingfisher. There's no mistaking this sound and I immediately looked out over the river. I could see the bird

hovering over the water. In an instant it dove down into the water with a splash hoping to catch a meal for itself. Looking down the slope I noticed a few Song and Swamp Sparrows to add to my list for the day. Then I heard a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Downy Woodpecker. A few Yellow-rumped Warblers joined the flock and I heard the high-pitched calls of a Brown Creeper and a Golden-crowned Kinglet.

I continued on to Amos Landing. This is a fairly large area with marsh grass and cattails. I wondered if I would find a Marsh Wren. There are several pairs here during the nesting season. I didn't see or hear any and assumed they all decided to head south before the cold weather arrived. I heard two Virginia Rails, one very close by but it never did show itself. Two Mallards flushed from the water, quacking as they flew off into the distance. I turned the corner and found another flock of birds consisting of Chickadees, Titmouse, and Nuthatches along with a few more Yellow-rumped Warblers and one Black-throated Green Warbler.

I continued down the main trail, the old River Road, and saw a Hairy Wood-

pecker and a Northern Flicker. I veered off to the right and took the narrow path to the bench that overlooks the river. This has to be the most picturesque place in Mashpee. The elevation is quite unusual here allowing for a beautiful view of the river. The colorful fall foliage added to the picturesque view. I always enjoy looking down the river and seeing the many twists and turns it has. I checked for deer, raccoon, and river otter. I've seen all of these animals here in the past but didn't have any luck today. A few birds were calling around me. As I turned to take a look I noticed a bird running on the ground. I got my binoculars and saw that it was a Hermit Thrush. But what is that behind it? It was another Hermit Thrush. The two seemed to be chasing each other as they ran along the ground.

I made my way down to the foot-bridges finding more birds along the way. This path leads to a small white pine grove. There's an opening to the river that I always check but I never seem to find anything of interest. Once I met up with the old River Road trail, I headed back to make a quick check of Trout Pond. I've seen Wood Ducks here on a few occasions but there were none there today. I saw a Great Blue

## Mary's List of Birds from the Mashpee River Woodlands - January 2004 – October 2005

1	Canada Goose	26	Least Sandpiper	51	Tree Swallow	76	Yellow-rumped Warbler
2	Mute Swan	27	Laughing Gull	52	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	77	Pine Warbler
3	Wood Duck	28	Ring-billed Gull	53	Black-chapped Chickadee	78	Black-and-White Warbler
4	Gadwall	29	Herring Gull	54	Tufted Titmouse	79	American Redstart
5	American Wigeon	30	Great Black-backed Gull	55	Red-breasted Nuthatch	80	Ovenbird
6	American Black Duck	31	Black-billed Cuckoo	56	White-breasted Nuthatch	91	Northern Waterthrush
7	Mallard	32	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	57	Brown Creeper	82	Common Yellowthroat
8	Green-winged Teal	33	Mourning Dove	58	Marsh Wren	83	Wilson's Warbler
9	Bufflehead	34	Eastern Screech Owl	59	Carolina Wren	84	Scarlet Tanager
10	Common Goldeneye	35	Great Horned Owl	60	Winter Wren	85	Eastern Towhee
11	Hooded Merganser	36	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	61	Golden-crowned Kinglet	86	Chipping Sparrow
12	Common Merganser	37	Belted Kingfisher	62	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	87	Field Sparrow
13	Red-breasted Merganser	38	Red-bellied Woodpecker	63	Eastern Bluebird	88	Song Sparrow
14	Double-crested Cormorant	39	Downy Woodpecker	64	Hermit Thrush	89	Swamp Sparrow
15	Great Blue Heron	40	Hairy Woodpecker	65	Wood Thrush	90	White-throated Sparrow
16	Black-crowned Night Heron	41	Northern Flicker	66	American Robin	91	Dark-eyed Junco
17	Osprey	42	Eastern Wood-Pewee	67	Gray Catbird	92	Northern Cardinal
18	Sharp-shinned Hawk	43	Eastern Phoebe	68	Cedar Waxwing	93	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
19	Cooper's Hawk	44	Great Crested Flycatcher	69	Nashville Warbler	94	Red-winged Blackbird
20	Red-tailed Hawk	45	Eastern Kingbird	70	Chestnut-sided Warbler	95	Common Grackle
21	Virginia Rail	46	Blue-headed Vireo	71	Black-throated Green Warbler	96	Brown-headed Cowbird
22	Greater Yellowlegs	47	Red-eyed Vireo	72	Prairie Warbler	97	Baltimore Oriole
23	Solitary Sandpiper	48	Blue Jay	73	Blackpoll Warbler	98	Pine Siskin
24	Spotted Sandpiper	49	American Crow	74	Northern Parula	99	House Finch
25	Sanderling	50	Fish Crow	75	Black-throated Blue (Female)	100	American Goldfinch

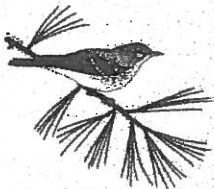
*Mashpee River Woodlands (Cont'd from page 6)*

Heron hunting along the backside of the pond. It saw me too and within seconds it took flight looking quite graceful for such a large bird. As I headed towards the parking area I noticed a White-throated Sparrow feeding on the ground in the path ahead of me. A moment later an Eastern Towhee popped out of the bushes and scurried across the path. I climbed up the stairs to the parking area. I sat on the fence to rest for a moment. The birds had quieted down a bit as they usually do later in the morning.

I began my walk back down the stairs towards the area where the river runs under Route 28. I heard some birds and looked over to see two ducks flush from the water. They were Wood Ducks, one handsome male and one female, giving a high-pitched alarm call as they flew off into the distance.

Then I noticed a flash of yellow, a bright yellow bird. I knew it was a Warbler. I thought it might be a Common Yellowthroat but this bird appeared yellow all over. Once I got my binoculars on it I realized it was a Wilson's Warbler. I could clearly see the black smudge on its head and its distinct black eyes that stood out against a bright yellow background of feathers. Most Wilson's Warblers have headed south by now but there's always the possibility of a few birds lingering around on the Cape into early November. I knew right away that this was a new bird for me here at the Mashpee River Woodlands. The strange thing was I didn't realize it was my 100<sup>th</sup> bird until I got home and checked my list. For some reason I had forgotten that last month I had found my 99<sup>th</sup> bird here.

I told my husband and I called and emailed the few people that know about my Mashpee River Woodlands list. They all seemed to be excited but not nearly as excited as I was! I never imagined that my 100<sup>th</sup> bird would be a Wilson's Warbler in late October.



## Joint Field Trips in 2006 – Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club & CCBC

The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and CCBC are teaming up to plan an exchange of joint field trips in 2006. HMBC will host a field trip in June to New York's Adirondack Mountains to look for breeding boreal species. In August, we will host their members for a birding trip to South Beach for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.

This summer I met Scott Stoner and his wife, two members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, when they were birding on South Beach on a Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary trip I was leading. They later contacted me offering to host the CCBC on an Adirondacks birding trip in exchange for us hosting their club on a South Beach birding trip in 2006. What a wonderful way to meet new birders and share respective "hot spots"!

The Adirondack trip is planned for June 10-11 with overnight stays on June 9 & 10. Possible locations for the overnights are Saranac Lake or Tupper Lake. Target species include Common Loon, Northern Goshawk, Northern Raven, Black-backed Woodpecker, Olive-sided & Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Boreal Chickadee, Hermit & Swainson's Thrushes, Purple Finch, and Lincoln's & White-throated Sparrows and a large variety of Warblers. Birding areas being considered are Massawepire Mire, Bloomingdale Bog, Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretative Center and Madawaska.

Unfortunately, breeding season is also the infamous Adirondack black fly season, so please come prepared for these pests as well as mosquitoes. Reservations are needed before May 1st so contact me at 508-398-9484 or birder526@aol.com if you want to join this trip.

Be sure to mark your calendar for Aug 26th when we will be hosting members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club for some great Cape birding! We will travel to South Beach and search for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. Don't miss this one!

Diane Silverstein

## Club Opportunities

The CCBC has suffered the loss of three special board members who have had to step down recently.

Ron Ayotte who has served on the Board since June '97 and has been our superb Club Secretary since Sept. '99.

Wil Sprauve who has done a great job as our Merchandise Coordinator this past year.

Michael Dettrey who has coordinated equipment demands for meetings as well as managing our top-of-the-line juice and 'cookie buffet' each month.

The good news is that Ron, Mike and Wil will remain active contributing members of the CCBC.

A big thank you to Greg Hirth who has stepped in as the CCBC secretary. And we also have the good news that Stephanie Ellis has accepted the CCBC Board position of Education and Outreach Director.

This means we are still looking for a Director of Merchandise Sales and an Arrangements/Refreshments Director. We need two volunteers who would like to become part of our Club's Board and Club's Vision. If you're interested, please email [capekingfisher@yahoo.com](mailto:capekingfisher@yahoo.com) or contact Diane (email addresses or phone numbers are in the club walks section). We would love to hear from you!



## BIRD BOOKS FOR SALE

A little birdie told me that ART KING is downsizing his bird book collection and he's got some great ones.

Call Art at 508-255-8919 for more information.





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



### 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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**Cape cod Bird Club  
2004-2005 Feeder Census**

This report compiles observations made by Club members in response to the annual Feeder Census effort. The compiler thanks all those who submitted data, and apologizes for the lateness of the report. This year's data, based on reports from 27 observers, are broadly consistent with trends reported over the past 26 years. The birds are listed in descending order (last year's ranking in parentheses) of percentage of feeders visited (A), along with the median birds/feeder/month (B). The 5-year (C) and 26-year (D) medians are presented for comparison.

<u>Census Species</u>	A	B	C	D
1 Black-capped Chickadee (1)	99%	4.39	4.20	5.02
2 Tufted Titmouse (2)	92%	2.64	2.46	1.97
3 Mourning Dove (7)	88%	4.37	4.70	6.24
3 American Goldfinch (6)	88%	5.76	6.15	4.65
4 Northern Cardinal (3)	85%	3.09	2.81	2.26
5 White-breasted Nuthatch (10)	83%	1.17	1.10	0.97
6 Downy Woodpecker (5)	82%	1.84	1.72	1.55
7 Blue Jay (3)	79%	2.79	3.01	3.77
8 American Crow (11)	74%	2.98	2.76	2.33
9 House Finch (9)	74%	2.93	3.50	4.73
10 Hairy Woodpecker (15)	59%	0.85	0.56	0.12
11 Carolina Wren (13)	58%	0.80	0.77	0.31
12 Song Sparrow (12)	57%	1.44	1.35	1.10
13 Dark-eyed Junco (8)	53%	2.15	2.24	1.97
14 Northern Flicker (14)	51%	0.85	0.66	0.56
15 Red-bellied Woodpecker (19)	50%	0.56	0.35	0.07
16 Red-breasted Nuthatch (18)	46%	0.67	0.43	0.37
17 American Robin (17)	42%	1.58	2.80	1.52
18 House Sparrow (20)	41%	2.69	2.97	3.85
19 European Starling (22)	31%	3.49	3.46	3.47
20 White-throated Sparrow (21)	26%	0.88	1.22	1.07
21 Yellow-rumped Warbler (16)	23%	0.42	0.94	0.20
22 Common Grackle (24)	17%	0.83	1.84	2.25
23 Sharp-shinned Hawk (27)	16%	0.14	0.10	0.02
24 Brown Creeper (25)	16%	0.80	0.12	0.11
25 Red-winged Blackbird (23)	15%	0.63	1.04	1.42
26 Brown-headed Cowbird (26)	10%	0.26	0.47	0.38
27 Pine Warbler (NR)	7%	0.08	0.12	0.02
28 Cooper's Hawk (28)	6%	0.05	0.03	0.01
29 American Tree Sparrow (31)	4%	0.08	0.07	0.19
29 Pine Siskin (30)	4%	0.08	0.20	0.06
30 Northern Bobwhite (31)	2%	0.12	0.38	1.35
31 Cedar Waxwing (30)	1%	0.08	0.11	0.02

Other Species Reported (Selected)

Eastern Bluebird	15%	0.34	0.16	0.03
Red-tailed Hawk	4%	0.05	0.02	0.00
Eastern Towhee	4%	0.04	0.01	0.00

**CAVEAT:** Given the small number of observers, these statistics should be used cautiously, and only to indicate trends. For example, one could say that Red-bellied Woodpeckers are increasingly seen, while Bobwhites are almost never seen. For total numbers and a fuller breakdown, see the reverse side. *Ron Ayotte, December 2005.*

