

CAPE COD BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

January - February 1986

A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL --- AND GOOD BIRDING!

Although we can look forward to a lot of cold, damp, slippery, foggy or otherwise miserable weather for the next couple of months, things aren't all that bad. Cape Cod does produce many good days in January and February, and the bad stuff doesn't last too long. A review of last year's feeder census results shows that January and February, were the two most productive months in numbers of birds per feeder and tied for the highest number of species. So keep an eye on those feeders! The club also offers a full schedule of walks which are listed below. Don't hibernate --- ambulate!

Ginny and I had an interesting birding experience in early December while visiting friends in Maryland. They are birders whom we had shown oystercatchers on Morris Island in October, and they reciprocated by taking us on a bird trail at the Antietam Battleground in Sharpsburg. We saw about thirty species including many Bluebirds, Carolina chickadees (which are almost indistinguishable from ours, but they don't say, "chickadee - dee") Red bellied woodpeckers, Turkey vultures, and one Black vulture. If any of you birders are also Civil War buffs, this is a great place to visit. As luck would have it, our visit coincided with their bird club's annual dinner meeting, and we enjoyed an excellent country dinner followed by a program of slides presented by a photographer who free lances for the "National Geographic." Their club participates in several Christmas counts in that area. Seventy five species is their norm --- how good we have it on Cape Cod!

PROGRAMS:

Monday, **January 13th - 7:45 P.M.** Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster. "PEAKS, PUFFINS, PELICANS (?), AND THE PACIFIC: THE C.C.B.C. IN WASHINGTON," Dee Forst, Bill Strahle, and Blair Nikula will show slides of the Club's recent trip to the pacific northwest.

Monday, **February 10th - 7:45 P.M.** Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster. "ANNUAL CYCLE OF MASSACHUSETTS TERNS." Our vice president, Peter Trull will give this program. If anyone knows more than Peter about terns, he flies, dives for fish and commutes to the Antarctic.

March meeting will be members' night, so get your slides in order!

WALKS:

- . Monday, January 6 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at lower parking lot, Fort Hill, Mike O'Connor (255-6910 or 255-6974).
- . Tuesday, January 14 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
- . Thursday, January 16 - 9 A.M. - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
- . Saturday, January 18 - 7 A.M. - Quabbin Reservoir. For details, see below.
- . Thursday, January 23 - 9 A.M. - Harwich Area. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor parking lot Rt. 28 Harwich Port. John and Ginny Redfern (432-6420).
- . Sunday, January 26 - 9 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind town hall in Falmouth center. Peter Trimble (477-3847).
- . Monday, February 3 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Mike O'Connor (255-6910 or 255-6974).
- . Wednesday, February 5 - 9 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind town hall in Falmouth center. Julie Nelson (540-1103) and Barbara Perryclear (563-6487).
- . Saturday and Sunday, February 8 & 9. Newburyport and Cape Ann. For details, see below.
- . Monday, February 10 - After Meeting - Owling at Nickerson State Park. Peter Trull (945-4391). Attendance limited to fifteen.
- . Tuesday, February 11 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
- . Thursday, February 20 - 9 A.M. - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
- . Sunday, February 23 - 9 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind town hall in Falmouth center. Peter Trimble (477-3847).
- . Thursday, February 27 - 9 A.M. - Harwich Area. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor parking lot, Rt. 28, Harwich Port. John and Ginny Redfern (432-6420).

QUABBIN TRIP: Day trip to the reservoir in search of Bald Eagles and winter finches (Crossbills, Grossbeaks, Siskins, etc.). Leaving the Burger King parking lot at Exit 6 of Route 6 at 7 A.M. If interested, contact **John Redfern (432-6420)** or **Peter Trimble (477-3847)**. Drivers (and their cars) needed.

NEWBURYPORT & CAPE ANN: This will be a week-end trip to look for Snowy Owls, Purple Sandpipers, Black Guillemot, King Eider, Barrow's Goldeneye, Glaucous & Iceland Gulls, etc. More complete details at the January meeting or call **Peter Trimble** or **John Redfern**.

BLAIR'S REVIEW: For those of use (both birds and birders) not fortunate enough to be able to escape to a warmer climate, 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 briars. Spots such as Salt Pond and Ft. Hill in Eastham, Muddy Creek in Harwich and Hallett'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 become very sedentary (as do many birders) and are remarkably dependable at certain locations. For example, Barrow's Goldeneye are almost always present in Pleasant Bay (most often seen from the end of Strong Island Rd. in Chatham), Stage Harbor and Bass River, while N. Pintails are present in numbers at Hallett's Mill Pond in Yarmouth and 1-3 Harlequin Ducks can usually be found just north of the Nauset Beach parking lot.

Provincetown offers some of the most exciting birding potential (as well as the most unbearable weather!). Close views of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls and Black-legged Kittiwakes can often be had at McMillan Wharf and in recent winters a Black-headed Gull has been associating with the Ring-billed Gulls in the parking lot there. An occasional alcid is also possible at the pier. When the sea is calm, alcids (primarily Razorbills and Black Guillemots) can also be seen in the area from the Race Point parking lot to Race Point light. Spectacular 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, Great and Coonamessett, 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.

The anticipated flight of southern finches (redpolls, siskins, crossbills and grass-beaks) has been nothing but a trickle so far, but these very erratic and unpredictable species may yet arrive in numbers to liven up this winter's birding.

VIDEO TAPES: At the suggestion of Bob Scott, the board of directors has authorized the purchase of one or two video tapes on birding. One likely candidate is "Watching Birds With Roger Tory Peterson". It is planned to make these tapes available to the membership on a loan basis, probably through the museum library.

LISTS: As suggested by Peter Trull during the "field notes" section of the last meeting, the start of a new year is the ideal time to start compiling lists of the species of birds seen during the year. We kept such a list for the first time last year and found that it increased our enjoyment of birding (we only saw about half of the 312 species in Blair's check list). Two lists suggested at the meeting were a "Cape Cod list", and a "Yard list". The latter would include all species seen from your yard as well as those in your yard. We hope to devise some sort of friendly competition amongst club members. An annual club list (or lists) of birds seen by all the members is also a possibility.

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE EARTH: One of our members, Roger Everett, is presenting a talk in this museum series. The title is: "BIRDS SEEN THROUGH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE". The date is: **Saturday, January 25 at 2 P.M.** Having seen some of Roger's photographs, I'm sure this will be a great program. Also at the museum: Ginger Carpenter is leading a winter waterfowl class starting **Friday, January 17** and continuing for the next three Fridays. This class requires preregistration and is designed for those who have never taken a museum bird class. This should be good for those new to the Cape. Ginger knows where to find the ducks.

