

CAPE COD BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

MARCH - APRIL 1986

The writing of this newsletter marks the half-way point of the winter season. I, for one, will be glad to see the end of it. Started the new year by sighting my first bird on the suet feeder outside our kitchen window....a starling! However, things haven't been all bad, Chatham's Thayer's Gull (which we have yet to locate) and Fort Hill's Northern Shrike have added some excitement to the birding, and our list has passed the sixty mark.

Starting in mid March, Ginny and I are planning a cross country trip in our new (to us) motor home. We will visit her brother in Mississippi and our daughters in British Columbia, Iowa, and New Jersey. We hope to do lots of birding in between and to be back on Cape in time for the May Bird Club meeting. Expect to have a mid-trip report for the next newsletter.

PROGRAMS: Monday, March 10th - 7:45 P.M. Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster. MEMBERS' NIGHT. Bring your slides to share with the club. Please limit to approximately fifteen slides.

Monday, April 14th - 7:45 P.M. Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster. "DOING WHAT COMES ALONG...THE STORY OF A BIRDER". Jonnie Fisk will share some of her experiences with us.

WALKS:

- . Wednesday, March 6 - 9 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth town hall. Julie Nelson (540-1103) and Barbara Perryclear (563-6487).
- . Monday, March 10 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Mike O'Connor (255-6910 or 255-6974).
- . Tuesday, March 11 - 9 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary parking lot. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
- . Saturday, March 15 - 8 A.M. - Outer Cape, Orleans to Provincetown. Meet at Friendly's off the Orleans rotary (Rte. 6). Janet Aylward (362-9078).
- . Thursday, March 20 - 9 A.M. - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
- . Sunday, March 23 - 9 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth town hall. Peter Trimble (477-3847).
- . Thursday, March 27 - 9 A.M. - Harwich. Meet at the conservation area on Bell's Neck Road, W. Harwich. Art King (255-8919).

Note that April week-day walks are at 8 A.M. instead of 9 A.M.

- . Wednesday, April 2 - 8 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth town hall. Julie Nelson (540-1103) and Barbara Perryclear (563-6487).
- . Tuesday, April 8 - 8 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary parking lot. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
- . Monday, April 14 - 8 A.M. - Outer Cape. Meet at lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Mike O'Connor (255-6910 or 255-6974).
- . Thursday, April 17 - 8 A.M. - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
- . Thursday, April 24 - 8 A.M. - Harwich. Meet at the conservation area on Bell's Neck Road in W. Harwich. Art King (255-8919).
- . Saturday, April 26 - 7 A.M. - South Shore. Meet at Burger King on Rt. 6 (exit 6) and Rt. 132 in W. Barnstable. Dick Comeau (432-9033).
- . Sunday, April 27 - 8 A.M. - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth town hall. Peter Trimble (477-3847).

OFF-CAPE TRIPS: The trip to Quabin Reservoir on a beautiful warm January Saturday produced several mature Bald Eagles, Pine Grossbeaks, a Goshawk, and a Porcupine among others. Those taking the week-end trip to Newburyport & Cape Ann were rewarded by seeing 63 species. These included a Barred Owl, a Thick-billed Murre, Black Guillemots, Rough-legged Hawks, and Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. These trips always produce good birding...we could use more birders.

NEW MEMBERS: We are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined the club since November: Barry and Carolyn Crawford, Osterville; Jean and Freeland Savage, South Orleans; Kathleen Vogt and family, Harwich; and Martha Sauvage, Harwich.

BIRD BOXES: The Bird Club's emphasis this year is to update the maintenance of boxes already in place at locations such as Blue Rock and Cranberry Valley golf courses. For those of you who have boxes on your own property, this is the time to clean them out and make any repairs necessary to assure their survival for another season. If Blue Birds are your goal, it will be necessary to evict House Sparrows, Chickadees, and the like as soon as they appear.

FEEDER CENSUS: The winter feeder census will be completed the first week-end in April. Please bring your completed forms to the April meeting and give them to Bessie Tirrell. Otherwise mail them to the Bird Club at the museum address.

VIDEO TAPE: The VHS Tape, "Watching Birds with Roger Tory Peterson", has been placed in the museum library and is available for loan.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: In accordance with the by-laws, the Board of Directors has appointed Aurele Thomas and Sally Clifton to serve with chairman Mary Ropes on this year's nominating committee. Anyone wishing to serve or having suggestions should call Mary at 548-6086. The committee's slate will be presented at the April meeting and election will be at the annual meeting in May (held in conjunction with the regular May meeting).

NON-GAME FUND: Club members are urged to consider making a contribution to the Massachusetts Non-Game Tax Check-off when they file their state income taxes. Some of these monies support research projects here on Cape Cod.

BIRD COUNTS: Two of the three bird counts conducted in December set new records. The Outer Cape Christmas Count (Dec. 22nd) was down slightly, but still reported over 125 species. The Mid Cape Christmas Count (Dec. 28th) set a new record of 110 species including 8 species new to the count. The Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey (Dec. 7-8) set new highs of 31 observers, 239 ponds, 29 species, and 10,551 individuals. Coonamesset and Morse Ponds in Falmouth had the most birds, followed by Swan Pond in Dennis. The most species were observed on Great Pond in Eastham (12) and Upper Shawme Pond in Sandwich (10). Many thanks to the leaders and all participants in those counts.

OWL PROWL: Those participating in the owl walk following the February meeting were treated to great close-up views of Screech Owls "talked in" by Peter Trull. Thank you Peter, for a great evening of birds and birding.

BLAIR'S PREVIEW: Late winter/early spring is a period of hope for birders. Each warm spell brings increasing expectations and anticipation swells as the most exciting (and shortest!) season of the year approaches. The first southerly winds in early March carry back flocks of blackbirds and mid-month Woodcock can be heard "peenting" at their traditional locales. Gannets and waterfowl begin winging northward and a trip to Corporation Beach will often produce numbers of the handsome Red-necked Grebe. By the end of the March the first egrets, Killdeer, Tree Swallows and Phoebes have often arrived.

Migration is in full-swing during April and by mid-month trips to the Beech Forest, Wellfleet Bay W.S., Dennis Pond, etc., will turn up kinglets, creepers, sparrows and gnatcatchers among others, and migrant hawks become conspicuous on the outer Cape. Southerly storms at this time will often blow up early Indigo Buntings, Orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and occasionally rarer southern species such as Blue Grosbeak, Summer Tanager and Prothonotary Warbler. By the end of the month the first warblers trickle in, vanguards of the hoped-for May waves.

ICELAND TRIP: Plans are underway for a bird club trip to Iceland, probably for 12-14 days in late June - early July. Cost is expected to be \$1500-\$2000. Although the variety of birdlife in Iceland is not great (75-100 species) the quality is hard to beat, with the possibility of Gyrfalcon, Great Skua, Whooper Swan, Rock Ptarmigan, European Oystercatcher, Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit, Puffin (2/3's of the world population is in Iceland), White Wagtail and Northern Wheatear among others. In addition, the country has remarkable landscapes and a fascinating culture. Anyone interested should contact Blair Nikula (23 Atwood Lane, Chatham, 02633; 945-2153) as soon as possible.

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