

CAPE COD BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1986 7

This is the first newsletter I've prepared since Ginny and I returned from our fall trip to the midwest. Unfortunately, the season and the weather combined to reduce the quality of the birding, but we had a good time trying. Birding highlights included the sight of hundreds of White Pelicans clustered on flooded rivers in Kansas awaiting the end of the storm before continuing their migration to the Gulf; the common sight of Sissor Tailed Flycatchers on fence posts and wires in northwest Arkansas; and the numerous Eastern Bluebirds present in most of the states we visited. Also quite common throughout that area were Eastern Meadowlarks and Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. After a total of 15,000 miles of motor home travel, I would venture the opinion that the most commonly seen bird in the USA is the House or "English" Sparrow.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, we had the opportunity to revisit the Brigantine NWR in New Jersey. Most impressive were the thousands of Snow Geese in from the Arctic. We also saw several species of ducks including goodly numbers of Hooded Mergansers and Gadwall. The trip from our daughter's home to the refuge was an eyeopener for me. I grew up in New Jersey and have made hundreds of trips to the Jersey shore, but I still couldn't believe the amount of traffic on a Monday. It made Cape Cod seem like the Sahara Desert.

MEETINGS: Monday, January 12 - 7:45 P.M. - Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. "Bring Back the Bluebirds" Lillian Files, past president of the North American Bluebird Society, will discuss her favorite bird.

Monday; February 9 7:45 P.M. Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. "Birding in Alaska" Doug Resnick will present slides taken during an unofficial Brookline Bird Club expedition to Alaska.

WALKS: Wednesday, January 7 - 9 AM - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth Town Hall on Main St. Julie Nelson (540-1103) and Mary Ropes (548-6086).
Monday, Jan. 12 - 9 AM - Fort Hill. Meet at lower parking lot. Mike O'Connor (Home 255-6910, Office 255-6974).
Tuesday, Jan. 13 - 9 AM - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
Thursday, Jan. 15 - 9 AM - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in South Wellfleet. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
Thursday, Jan. 22 - 9 AM - Harwich. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor on Rt. 28 in Harwich Port. John and Ginny Redfern (432-6420).
Sunday, Jan. 18 - 6:30 AM - Quabbin Reservoir. Meet at Burger King Exit 6 off Rt. 6 and Rt. 132 in West Barnstable. Peter Trimble (477-3847).

Wednesday, Feb 4 - 9 AM - Falmouth. Meet behind Falmouth Town Hall on Main St. Julie Nelson (540-1103) and Mary Ropes (548-6086).
Monday, Feb. 9 - 9 AM - Fort Hill. Meet at lower parking lot. Mike O'Connor (Home 255-6910, Office 255-6974).
Monday, Feb. 9 - After Club Meeting - Owling. Nickerson State Park. See Peter Trimble at the meeting.
Tuesday, Feb. 10 - 9 AM - Yarmouthport. Meet at playground at Rt. 6A and Union St. Charlotte Smith (362-6891).
Thursday, Feb. 19 - 9 AM - Outer Cape. Meet at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in South Wellfleet. Bob Prescott (349-2615).
Thursday, Feb. 26 - 9 AM - Harwich. Meet at Saquatucket Harbor on Rt. 28 in Harwich Port. John and Ginny Redfern (432-6420).
Saturday and Sunday, Feb, 7 & 8 Cape Ann. Weekend trip to Cape Ann and Newburyport. Sign-up and details at January meeting or call Peter Trimble (477-3847) or John Redfern (432-6420).

MEMBER'S NIGHT: Our annual member's night will be held at the March 9th meeting. Members are reminded to start selecting their favorite slides for this occasion.

LISTS: Those of you who have been keeping annual bird lists are urged to bring them to the January meeting. Categories are: Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and Yard (all birds seen in or from your yard). Peter Trull emphasizes that he needs everyone's list...even if you're not overly proud of its length or variety of species. Information from these lists will help him develop a handicapping system for future years. It is hoped that we'll generate some friendly competition between birders of similar capability.

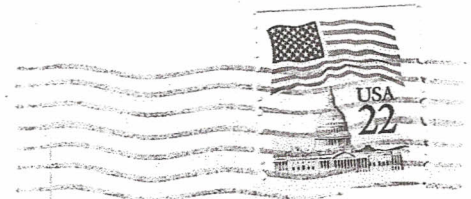
WATERFOWL SURVEY: The results from the December 6th and 7th waterfowl survey are not complete as of this writing. The overall impression is that the numbers are down from last year. Outstanding sighting: Tundra Swans in Eastham. Also of interest: a significant increase in the population of Redheads...especially on the outer cape.

FAVORITE BIRDING SPOTS: For this newsletter, I've decided to write about some of my own favorite spots in the Harwich - Chatham area to bird during the severest cold spells of winter. It doesn't happen every year, but there are times when all of the fresh water ponds are frozen over and even Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound are ice-bound. When you see ice boats on Pleasant Bay, you won't see Hoodies on Jemima Pond or Canvas Backs and Scaup on Swan Pond! Where to go? One place that I've never seen frozen over is the passage between Strong Island and Nickerson Neck in Pleasant Bay. To get there, take Fox Hill Road east off route 28 (this is the Chatham - Orleans portion of route 28). Go past the Eastward Ho! golf course and turn left on Strong Island road and proceed to the town landing which overlooks the bay. This is a great spot for Buffleheads and Goldeneye. Usually a thorough check of the Goldeneyes will reveal that one or more is a Barrows. Great Cormorant are frequently observed flying by, and seals are apt to be seen in the channel.

Another spot which freezes late is the Muddy River which runs between Chatham and Harwich before entering Pleasant Bay. This should be birded from at least three locations; From route 28 take Training Field Road (directly opposite Fox Hill Road) west to the four-way stop at Old Comers Road. Turn right and continue to Captain Kendrick Road (Old Comers will become Queen Ann Road before this). Turn right onto Captain Kendrick and bear left at every intersection until you dead-end at a cul-de-sac which over-looks the river. After birding this location, return to Queen Ann Road, turn right until you reach the Methodist Church where you turn right onto Church Road. Access to the Muddy River is via Harden Lane and Sugar Hill Road. Try both. Likely to be seen at these locations are mergansers (all three species), Green Wing Teal, Black Ducks and Bufflehead. Kingfishers and Great Blue Heron are common. Thickets along the shore are apt to produce a variety of passerines. NOTE: This area can also be reached by taking Queen Ann Road east off Rts. 39 or 137 in Harwich or Church Road south off Rt. 39.

MONOMOY ISLAND MASTER PLAN: The National Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed master plan for the Monomoy NWR had a hearing in Chatham on December 10th. Among the proposals of the plan is the requirement that all visitors obtain a written permit to visit the refuge. The primary purpose of this is to educate the public as to what areas are closed and the reasons for such restrictions. Another major proposal is the maintenance of an area of gull-free habitat for the use of roseate, common, and arctic terns and laughing gulls. According to the Wildlife Service, this will probably require the poisoning of some small percentage of the herring and greater black-backed gull populations. In spite of what you may have read in the Cape Cod Times, there was no great hue and cry at the hearing against this poisoning. My feeling of the consensus is: if it's absolutely necessary, do it, but don't over do it. In general the audience seemed to favor the rest of the plan with some questions from fisherman about fishing restrictions.

PLEASANT BAY ACEC NOMINATION: The towns of Brewster, Chatham, Harwich, and Orleans have nominated Pleasant Bay as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This nomination has been accepted by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs of the Commonwealth. For those interested, a public information meeting will be held at the Orleans Town Hall on Tuesday, January 20th at 7:00 P.M. A formal public hearing will be held the following Tuesday; same time and place.



Frank Caruso

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