



Cape Cod Bird Club

MAY - JUNE 1990

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Trimble

At last! For those of you who prefer to watch birds at the feeder from the comfort of indoors during the winter and who don't care for the cold, wet and blustery days of "Spring Birding," May and June have arrived! With the more appealing weather come colorful warblers, secretive thrushes, mostly drab flycatchers, graceful terns and sleek shorebirds. Well, the above combination makes me anxious to go for an early morning stroll.

Beech Forest (Provincetown), Morris Island (Chatham), and Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary are familiar hot spots for migrants and incoming breeding species. While it is not always possible to get to these areas, I enjoy walking the woodland paths near my home. By doing this regularly, I witness the passage of north-bound species, as well as the arrival of nesters and the build-up of bird song in general. I usually have only 30 minutes to an hour, but this is often my favorite time of the day. Please check our walk schedule and participate. Also note that in May and June, two valuable birding efforts are undertaken: the Mass Audubon Bird-a-thon and the Mid Cape Cod Breeding Bird Count. Mark them on your calendar, and please take part.

A special thanks to Ruth Mayo. Ruth has worked behind the scenes for 8 years keeping our membership list card file up to date. Due to her effort, we have had a very accurate mailing list. Thank you Ruth for your contribution. If anyone is interested in filling this position, please get in touch with me.

Fahy Bygate and Bill Swift have completed their terms as members of the Bird Club Board. Fahy held the "fun" post of planning, staffing and scheduling our walks, and it was always her challenge to find the next walk leader and to organize the special walks. All of us on the Board will miss Bill's input as a level-headed contributor of sound ideas and good thoughts.

I will close with a brief note on a new idea. Various Massachusetts Bird Clubs, in collaboration with Manomet Bird Observatory, are considering the development of a formal communications network. This network would help to organize and conduct projects that are beneficial to birds in Central and South America, and would also improve birding in Massachusetts via increased contact between clubs. Watch for more details, and feel free to pass on your own ideas to me.

See you in the Beech Forest.

Who Where They?

Art King

You are just back from a day of birding. You have seen, among other birds, a Cooper's Hawk, a Swainson's Thrush, and a Forster's Tern. Who were these people? And why are their names attached to birds? Was Lincoln's Sparrow named after Abraham Lincoln? Was Napoleon the Bonaparte of Bonaparte's Gull? All of this calls for a second look. We have taken these names for granted for too long.

Cooper's Hawk was named for William Cooper (1798?-1869), one of the founders of the New York Lyceum of Natural History. He was interested in paleontology, botany, and herpetology, as well as ornithology. He was the father of an early California ornithologist, William Cooper, for whom the Cooper Ornithological Society was named.

William Swainson (of Swainson's Hawk, Swainson's Warbler, as well as Swainson's Thrush) (1789-1855) was a widely traveled and much published naturalist, but one dogged with bad luck. He had a collecting trip to Brazil canceled by a revolution, he lost his collections while on his way to New Zealand, and much of his life he had difficulty making ends meet. He was a friend of Audubon's, who named the warbler for him.

Johann Forster (1729-98) was a German naturalist who accompanied Cook on his second voyage around the world, and who, in 1771, published the first book to attempt to catalogue the fauna of America. He listed 302 birds. Thomas Nuttall named the tern for him.

And what about Lincoln and Bonaparte? Our Lincoln was not "Honest Abe", but a Thomas Lincoln (1812-83), a Maine farmer, who as a young man accompanied Audubon on his Labrador trip. While on the trip, he collected a new sparrow which Audubon named in his honor. Charles Bonaparte (1803-57) was a nephew of Napoleon I. He spent 8 years in America and wrote an **American Ornithology**. He is considered to have been one of the foremost ornithologists of his time, but is perhaps less well-known for having lived in the shadow of the two giants of the time: Audubon and Wilson.

For further information on the above and on others whose names are found in bird names, consult one or all of the following:

The Birdwatcher's Companion by
Christopher Leahy

Words for Birds by *Edward S. Gruson*

The Dictionary of American Bird Names by
Ernest A. Choate.

Fahy Bygate

At camp, my favorite night sound was the soft footsteps of the Masai warriors who were hired to patrol the path in front of our tents from sunset to sunrise. The Masai came strolling into camp at sunset out of the same forbidden territory we knew was crawling with lion, hyena, buffalo, wild dogs and God knows what else. They were each wrapped in a piece of red patterned wool and enjoyed standing around on one long brown leg like a stork. But once the black African night had closed us in with a net of sparkling stars, they began pacing up and down the pathway that lined the front of our eight tents. To our knowledge, they never encountered any disturbance, and at dawn they would slip away across the grass like tall black shadows.

On our last night at the camp, a few of us were sitting around the campfire, listening to hyenas and trying to convince ourselves that we had correctly identified the Southern Cross, when someone asked if the Masai would sing for us. To our surprise, the Masai jumped onto the request like frustrated rock singers. Before we knew it, four of us were surrounded by six of them all jumping, yelling, singing, stamping, whooping around our chairs and brandishing their spears in the firelight. It seems that they had chosen for our entertainment their pre-lion slaying dance, the purpose of which was to send them into a blood-thirsty frenzy! I had been assured that they were utterly obedient since Jill, a comely young Kenyan woman of British background (whose idea of a 9-5 job was overseeing 25 Kenyans and 6 Masai warriors in



an isolated campsite in the middle of the Kenyan edge of the Serengeti-alone), had given their leader a Swatch Watch, but that night, as the goosebumps raced up and down my neck, I wasn't so sure, and I prayed that the batteries were still working.

I was somewhat reassured to notice that, even at the wildest moments, they reserved their nose-to-nose "whoops" for the men in our group. I decided that, if they were truly planning to massacre all of us, they wouldn't have been so gallant to the women. Or would they? Just as my blood was starting to run cold all over again, they suddenly stopped dancing, slapped each other on the back and burst out laughing. Then one of them asked if we'd like to hear a few selections from the Nairobi Radio Top Ten, and the spell was broken. Jill sent them off to patrol duty, and the next day we left for the coast with a new set of wonders ahead, but with memories of that night in camp, of the flames and the flashing spears and the menacing faces of our Masai dancing round and round us in that black, black African night.

EDITORIAL

Jim Talin

On a mild January evening, I ventured out at dusk to listen to the courtship of the neighborhood Great Horned Owls. By keeping track of them at dawn and at dusk, I hoped to learn the day when they would nest, the day when they would not leave the pine forest at dusk or return at dawn after a night of hunting. This night, I listened to a beautiful owl duet as the two birds moved gradually toward the cove through a dark corridor of pines and oaks on an undeveloped parcel of land. As they hooted back and forth, I noticed that they were silent when a car passed, its headlights blinding to eyes accustomed to the dark, and its engine and tires deafening to ears accustomed to silence.

I was reminded of an owlet in a nest that I had watched one evening two years before. The owlet was getting playful, climbing out of the nest, up into the higher pine branches and pouncing on the nest. Suddenly it froze, bent down and fluffed its feathers out, as I had seen its mother do one day when a Red-tailed Hawk had flown over the nest. I half-expected to see another Red-tail when I turned to look, but instead I saw a glittering jet airplane flying toward Europe and reflecting the light of the sunset.

In May, the woods fill with a different sort of bird, one that travels from jungle to northern forest and that is mostly immune from human influence. I once watched Ruby-crowned Kinglets feeding in a wild rose bush. When I hummed like a bee, one Kinglet flew directly at me, only to veer away at the last moment, as if it did not recognize a human in a world of trees and shrubs. For just a moment, I caught a glimpse of the bird's world. It was a vision of a world in which trees and rose bushes were more important than people. It was a refreshing vision.



Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
RR 1, Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631

Editor - Jim Talin

Design - Tom Noonan

PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Monday evening **May 14** at 7:45 at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, located on Route 6A in Brewster, *Joy Viola, assisted by Alfred Viola*, will present a slide lecture on "The National Parks of the World: from Acadia to Alaska and Australia to Africa." The history of the national park concept in the United States, the variety of environments preserved within the park system, as well as the exportation of the park concept to other nations around the world will be the topics of discussion.

Monday evening **June 11** we will hold the annual *Bird Club Picnic* at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster. The day will start with a walk at 3 pm at the Museum. The picnic will start between 4:30 and 5:00. So bring a dish and enjoy the good company.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

This is the proposed slate of Directors for 1990-91 to be voted upon at the **May 14th** meeting of the Bird Club.

Peter Trimble, *President*

Jim Talin, *Vice-President*

Marjorie Jones, *Secretary*

Art King, *Treasurer*

Sue Talin, Mary Field, Carl Bergfors, Frank Caruso,

Tom Noonan, Sally McNair

MASS AUDUBON BIRD-A-THON

On **May 18 & 19**, Mass Audubon will sponsor its annual bird-a-thon. Each sanctuary sends out teams of bird watchers in an effort to spot the most birds in a 24 hour period. The bird-a-thon is more than a competition, however. Each sanctuary also collects pledges for each bird species counted, and the money raised provides important financial support for Audubon's activities. During this fundraising event, Bird Club members can support their favorite sanctuary by pledging money or by volunteering to join a birding team.

MID-CAPE BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

One of the important bird counts that is sponsored by the Bird Club is the annual Mid-Cape Breeding Bird Census which will be held on Saturday June 9th. Like all the counts, the data which is gathered is an important resource in the effort to track and monitor bird population trends. This census takes only half a day and is not an endurance trial. Birders will cover the same territory as they did in the Mid-Cape Christmas count, but the starting time is later, and the census only lasts until around noon. The results are then tabulated at Charlotte Smith's house over lunch. Bird Club members can help by volunteering to be a part of a birding team by calling Peter Trimble at 477-3847, or by volunteering to call in reports of birds at their feeders or in their yards if they live in the Mid-Cape area.

UPCOMING WALKS

Fahy Bygate

May

Please note ...

the new times on many of these walks.

Most have changed from 9 am to 8 am.

Wednesday May 2—Falmouth. 8 AM. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

Monday May 7—Eastham. 8 AM. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King. 255-8919.

Thursday May 10—Yarmouth. 8 AM. Meet at intersection of 6A and Union Street. Charlotte Smith. 362-6891.

Saturday May 19—Sandwich. 8 AM. Meet at Angelo's parking lot of 6A in Sandwich. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

Tuesday May 22—Beech Forest. 8 AM. Meet in the parking lot. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

Wednesday May 23—Wellfleet Bay Audubon Society. 9 AM. Meet in parking lot. A staff naturalist will lead.

Thursday May 24—Harwich. 8 AM. Meet at Conservation Area on Bell's Neck Road in West Harwich. John & Ginny Redfern. 432-6426.

Sunday May 27—Beech Forest. 4 pm. Meet in the parking lot. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

Special Walks:

Saturday May 5. Off Cape Birding Trip highlighting Ospreys to the Westport area with Dick Comeau. Meet at the Burger King parking lot at the intersections of Route 6 and 132 at 7:30 am. Bring a lunch. 432-9033.

Beech Forest Weekends

As usual, there will be a leader at the Beech Forest parking lot every Saturday and Sunday morning during May. Starting time will be 8 am. Leaders are still needed. You don't need to be an expert. Please volunteer by calling Fahy at 617 934-6978.

June

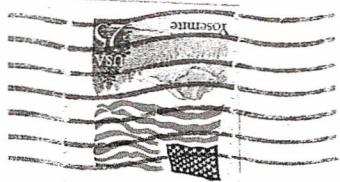
Summer Walks

Saturday June 23—Great Island Wellfleet. 8 am. Meet at the parking lot. Bring a lunch. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

Saturday August 18—Great Island Wellfleet. 8 am. Meet at the parking lot. Bring a lunch. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

This is my last walks schedule. Great thanks to all my long-suffering walks leaders who have dealt patiently with all of my transposed dates and times, garbled directions and misidentified leaders. Good luck to the next Walks Coordinator; I'm outta here!!! Good birding, *Fahy*.

Frank Caruso
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale MA 02644



The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
RR 1, Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631

Cape Cod Bird Club



Volunteers Needed

Summer is a time when the resources of Cape Cod are strained to the maximum, as hundreds of people migrate here to enjoy (and love to death) the environment. Natural history organizations are hard pressed to meet the demand for their services. If you have some spare time and would like to use it in educational and fulfilling ways, consider helping one of the following organizations. Each group not only relies upon volunteers to give time, but also has a wish list of needs from computers to binoculars, and outboard motors to 4 wheel drive vehicles.

Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631
896-3867

Coastal Waterbird Program (monitors nesting shorebirds)
Mass Audubon Society, Lincoln, MA 01773
attention: Scott Hecker
617 259-9500

Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary off West Road,
PO Box 236, South Wellfleet, Ma 02663
349-2615

Field Notes

Art King

Grackles and Red-Wings are back. Killdeers, Woodcocks, and Cowbirds have been reported, and with the lengthening days, the birds are finding their voices.

February: 3 Tundra Swans in Eastham. 60 Common Mergansers at Mill Pond in Yarmouth Port. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in East Orleans. A Pine Warbler at a Brewster feeder.

In Eastham: Ring-necked Ducks and Wigeons. In Provincetown: Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. A Rough-legged Hawk, as well as a Merlin, at First Encounter Beach in Eastham. Snow Buntings at Duck Harbor in Wellfleet. Meadowlarks still holding at Fort Hill; and at Crosby Landing in Brewster, Lapland Longspurs.

March: A Northern Shrike in Wellfleet. Bohemian Waxwings in Truro. A blue phase Snow Goose at Sider's Pond in Falmouth. In Falmouth and East Orleans, nesting Great Horned Owls. At Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, a Saw-whet Owl, a Short-eared Owl, and a Rough-legged Hawk. Also, a Bluebird checking out a nesting box at the Sanctuary.

By the time you read this, the Spring migration will have started. Get out and enjoy. Let us know what you see.

Good Spring birding to all.