



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME II

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1990

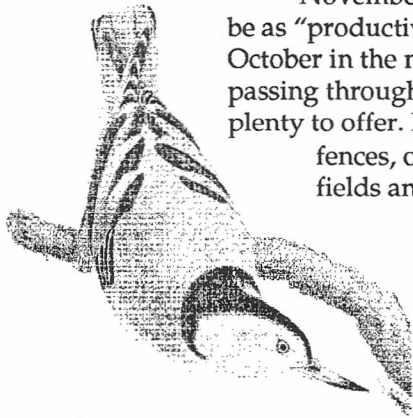
ISSUE 2

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Peter Trimble*

The Bird Club Year started with a wonderful program thanks to Peter Trull who discussed bird adaptations in a way that was always enlightening and often hilarious. Just when you think you have seen and heard it all, the program chairmen bring in another terrific speaker. Our Club has programs second to none.

November and December may not be as "productive" as September and October in the number of species passing through, but they still have plenty to offer. Investigating hedgerows, fences, or other windbreaks near fields and gardens will often turn



up a nice variety of sparrows and possibly a Sharpie searching for breakfast. November may be the time to prepare to assist on the Waterfowl Survey.

Start checking your local ponds and lakes to sharpen your skills at identifying these species and to check your access points. If you are in the Upper Cape (Falmouth, Bourne, Sandwich or Mashpee) and would like to join me looking for ducks, give me a call at 477-3847.

One of my favorite events of the birding year is the Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count. The enjoyment comes not only from a day of birding, but the camaraderie developed as groups of birders visit familiar areas searching for the expected and the unexpected. As I bird an area year after year, I sometimes find a new niche I had overlooked. Of course, the Christmas Bird Counts are important, and the results are published by The National Audubon Society. For all of these reasons, I urge club members to contact me and participate. New participants increase the pool of birders for the future. If you can't make one of the Cape Cod Christmas Counts, there are others around the state, and I would be happy to help you contact the compilers.

I announced at our September meeting that Birding Cape Cod has been published, and the Bird Club will benefit greatest if you purchase your copy (copies) at our monthly meetings.

## 1989-1990 Feeder Census Report

*John Redfern*

This year the Bird Club completed ten years of its winter feeder census. Probably the most significant finding after these years is that the winter bird population of Cape Cod is remarkably stable in total numbers and in species of birds appearing at our feeders. In 1989-90 an average of 60.7 birds were counted at each feeder every month, compared with the ten year average 59.8. All of species in this year's top ten have been there at least twice before, and all were repeats from 1988-89 with the exception of the Junco. Interestingly, the Junco has been number one in Cornell's national census, but never higher than 9th on ours. This year 57 species were observed, tying our highest previous count. April was the most prolific month with over 75 birds per feeder (495 grackles helped). February was second with 66. The Chickadee, as always, topped the list for percentage of feeders visited, every feeder for every month. Surely this little guy would be number one on both lists if he'd stick around to savor his goodies instead of taking off for the woods to eat in private!

### Birds per Feeder

1. Mourning Dove	6.66	(1)
2. Goldfinch	5.39	(6)
3. Housefinch	5.34	(3)
4. Chickadee	5.28	(2)
5. House Sparrow	4.74	(5)
6. Blue Jay	3.93	(4)
7. Grackle	2.85	(8)
8. Starling	2.77	(7)
9. Junco	2.64	
10. Cardinal	2.58	(9)
11. Titmouse	2.17	
12. Crow	2.15	
13. Downy WP	1.82	
14. Bob White	1.40	(10)
15. White-Throated Sparrow	1.37	Ten year ranking in parentheses.

### Percent of feeders reporting a species in 1989-90.

90-100%	Chickadee (100%), Mourning Dove
80-90%	Blue Jay, Downy Woodpecker, Cardinal, Titmouse, Goldfinch
60-70%	Housefinch, W.B. Nuthatch
under 60%	Crow, Song Sparrow, House Sparrow, R. B. Nuthatch, Junco, Starling



## WHAT'S A WHIMBREL?

Art King

How many of you have been upset by the various changes in bird names? Are you one of those who have complained loudly upon hearing of yet another seemingly unnecessary name change handed down from on high by the A. O. U.?

How I cried when the Hudsonian Curlew became the Whimbrel, and the Red-backed Sandpiper became the Dunlin. Give up a picturesque name like Hudsonian Curlew, that conjures up an image of a truly wild, mysterious creature of the far away tundra, for Whimbrel. What's a Whimbrel?

But wait. Are common names really written in

stone as we seem to feel? Let us look back. Through the years, Audubon's Great American White Egret became the American Egret, then the Common Egret, and today we know it as the Great Egret. His Golden-winged Woodpecker became the Yellow-shafted Flicker and is currently the Northern Flicker. And his Tawny Thrush was later the Wilson's Thrush, and is now the Veery. It would seem that many names have changed through the years. It is not just a recent phenomenon. See if you can give the present day names for the birds listed below under **Audubon's Name**.

Audubon's Name	1931 A.O.U. Checklist Name	Present Name
Common Crow Blackbird	Purple Grackle	Common Grackle
Great-footed Hawk	Duck Hawk	Peregrine Falcon
Bartramian Sandpiper	Upland Plover	Upland Sandpiper
Hudson's Bay Titmouse	Acadian Chickadee	Boreal Chickadee
Cowpen Bird	Eastern Cowbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Snowbird	Slate-colored Junco	Dark-eyed Junco
Yellow-crowned Wood Warbler	Myrtle Warbler	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Banded-3-toed Woodpecker	American 3-toed Woodpecker	Northern 3-toed Woodpecker

You can see that change has occurred before, and I am afraid the future will be no different. Yet, I will be among the first to the barricades when the move is made to change our Bald Eagle to Bald Sea-eagle, our Chickadee to Black-capped Titmouse, or our Sandpipers to Stints. Be forewarned. They got away with Whimbrel and Dunlin; they will not stop there.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

It seems names change faster than we had thought. The Globe of 10/23/90 reported the following sightings: "13 eastern ceebees, 10 unidentified inpidenak Flycatchers, three thick thistles, a pine ciskin, a yellow-breasted chack, and leaf sandpipers."

## EDITORIAL

Jim Talin

# THE GNP

Imagine this: It is July, and in the seas off Cape Cod, an oil tanker founders and breaks apart, its oil washing ashore on the beaches around Monomoy. An environmental disaster? Sure. But an economic one? Not at all, at least if you believe the Gross National Product. When the worst environmental accident in the history of the U.S. occurred in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989, the GNP registered an increase because of the money spent cleaning up the spill. An increase in the GNP is a commonly used measure of social progress.

When it comes to the environment, the GNP is a poor guide.

Buildings, machinery and the other capital investments of businesses have a value that can be depreciated over time as they wear out and need to be replaced. The same is not true of natural resources. For instance, according to conventional accounting, a forest has worth because it is a natural resource that can be cut down to create lumber, a process that employs a certain number of people and produces something tangible that can be sold, creating an increase in goods and services. No accounting is made for the destruction of a natural asset.

If we had an inventory of the natural resources of the world, we could place a value on a beach or a forest, so that when an oil spill occurred or a forest was clear cut, a loss can be entered into the account books. That way, the GNP might better reflect what we know to be true, that natural resources are treasures in and of themselves.



### Cape Cod Bird Club Newsletter

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

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## PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Frank Caruso

Monday evening **November 12** at 7:45 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, located on Route 6A in Brewster, Kathy Parsons from Manomet Bird Observatory will give a program entitled "*The New York Harbor Herons.*" Kathy has been studying a large population of wading birds including herons, egrets, and ibises in the waters around our largest city. She has been paying special attention to their reproductive ecology and feeding habits. The birds serve as an environmental monitor of the estuaries. This has been a particularly bad year, with numerous oil spills occurring in several of the waterways. Kathy will give us an up-to-date report on the bird's status.

Monday evening **December 10** at 7:45 at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History will be "*Member's Night.*" Normally we have this "program" in February or March, but due to the scheduling of our other speakers, this was the open month. As in past years, this is the opportunity for YOU to share with the rest of the Club members your experiences, travels, stories, and sightings. Bring your slides.

### Waterfowl Survey

The Bird Club's 7th annual Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey will be conducted on the weekend of **December 1-2**. This is one of the Club's more valuable projects, yet it is easy and enjoyable. We welcome all the help we can get, whether for only an hour, half a day, all day or the entire weekend. If you would like to participate, get in touch with Blair Nikula at 945-2153.

### Outer Cape Christmas Bird Count

The Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count, which covers the outer Cape from Harwich and Brewster to Eastham, will be conducted on Sunday, **December 16th**. Teams of birders will attempt to see as many species of birds as can be found in one day. The tally will be held at the Museum of Natural History beginning around 5:00 pm. Anyone wishing to participate should get in touch with Blair Nikula at 945-2153, or should sign up at the Dec. 10th meeting. Feeder watchers from within the circle—which includes Chatham, Harwich, Brewster, Orleans, and Eastham—are also needed.

### Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count

The Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count covers the towns of Dennis, Yarmouth and Barnstable, and will be conducted in December. Anyone wishing to participate can get in touch with Peter Trimble at 477-3847 or can sign up at the December 10th meeting.

## Field Trips and Backyard Birding

Sally McNair

### November

**Saturday Nov. 3rd**—Mid Cape. 8 am. Meet in the Burger King parking lot at the intersection of Routes 6 and 132. Sally Clifton 775-4693.

**Monday Nov. 5th**—Eastham. 9 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King. 255-8919.

**Wednesday Nov. 7th**—Falmouth, 9 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

**Thursday Nov. 15th**—Eagle Point. 9 am. Meet at Corporation Beach in Dennis. Charlotte Smith. 362-6891

**Thursday Nov. 29th**—Sandwich. 9 am. Meet at Angelo's Parking lot off Route 6A in Sandwich. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

### December

**Saturday and Sunday. Dec 1st-2nd.** Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey. Sign up at the Nov. 12th meeting or call Blair Nikula. 945-2153.

**Wednesday Dec. 5th**—Falmouth, 9 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

**Thursday Dec. 13th**—Backyard Birding. 10 am. Meet at Dick and Phebe Houghton's house, 207 Brick Hill Road, Orleans. 255-2776.

**Sunday Dec. 16th**—Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count (Outer Cape). Sign up at the Dec. 10th meeting or call Blair Nikula. 945-2153.

**Thursday Dec. 20th**—Yarmouth. 9 am. Meet at the intersection of 6A and Union Street. Charlotte Smith. 362-6891.

**December**—Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count (Mid-Cape). Sign up at the Dec. 10th meeting or call Peter Trimble. 477-3847.

### Massachusetts Birders Meeting

On **November 17th** from 9:00-4:00 the Cape Cod Bird Club and Mass Audubon will co-host this year's **Mass. Birders Meeting**, at the C C Museum of Natural History. Pre-registration is required with the fee being \$15.00 and payable to Mass Audubon South Great Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773 Attention Wayne Peterson

Frank Caruso  
 17 Freedom Road  
 Forestdale MA 02644



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



### Margueritte

We will walk in other places,  
 out into the marsh next time perhaps,  
 where the willet nests  
 and the sharp-tailed sparrow.  
 With luck, I'll show you  
 a diamond-backed terrapin,  
 a marsh hawk,  
 the black-bellied plover whose call  
 echoes in memory's transepts  
 like footfalls on old stone.



Robert Pease

### MEMBERSHIP WARNING

The mailing list will be revised very shortly. If you have not paid 1990-1991 dues by the end of the year, this may be the last newsletter you receive. We do not like to lose members, but at the same time, we do not want to have a mailing list inflated with names of those no longer interested in CCBC.

So please pay promptly.

According to our records your dues for 1990-1991

- have been paid
- have not been paid

Dues are single \$7, family \$10. Checks may be mailed to...

Treasurer, CCBC  
 Cape Cod Museum of Natural History  
 Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631