



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME III

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1991

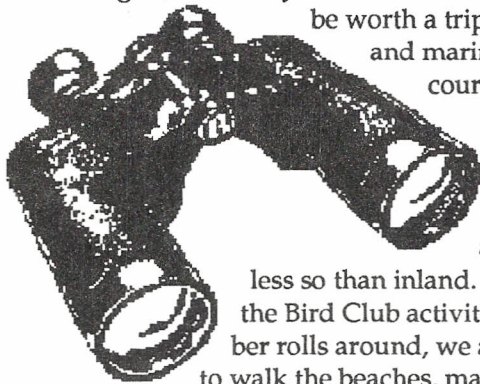
ISSUE 1

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Peter Trimble*

I trust everyone has had a pleasant summer on beautiful Cape Cod. As I write this message, I have begun whale watching on Stellwagen Bank, and I am looking forward to day trips to Monomoy and Cuttyhunk Islands. Stellwagen has had mostly Wilson's Storm Petrels, although there appear to be numbers of shearwaters coming in; so when you receive this newsletter, it might

be worth a trip to see pelagic birds and marine mammals. Of course, it is always worth the trip just for the whales. The summer on Cape Cod can be hectic and hot, although



less so than inland. This may slow down the Bird Club activities; so when September rolls around, we are more than ready to walk the beaches, marshes, and woods in search of birds. On June 15, the club held a combination Breeding Bird Census and picnic. Participation was up from previous years, and everyone enjoyed themselves. I appreciate the time and effort of those who participated. Especially, on behalf of the Cape Cod Bird Club (and myself), I extend heartfelt thanks to Art King (treasurer), Marjorie Jones (secretary), Mary Fields (hospitality), and Sue Talin (publicity) for their devoted service to the club. They have made the past few years great and my job easier.

September and October are big birding months on Cape Cod. With the migration of shorebirds in full swing, and land birds and raptors moving through, these are two key months to get into the field. Take advantage of the bird club walks set up by Sally McNair, or get out on your own. There will be plenty to see.

We have a very important club event in September. Our annual Birdathon, which benefits the Manomet Bird Observatory, the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History as well as our club, is scheduled for September 21st and 22nd. Participation by members in the way of active birding and in pledging has varied over the years with 1990 an up-year. I hope that we keep that trend; as in these difficult times, we can help some fine institutions continue their work. It also helps us fund our club programs which are some of the best in the state as well as one of our key functions. So, get out and enjoy your birding in September and October. Take part in club activities, and help with the birdathon.

## BAYOU BIRDING

Part One of a Series

*Fahy Bygate*

Who would leave the comfort and warmth of their bed on a rainy April morning at 2 a.m. in time to catch a plane for the muggy and buggy rice fields of Louisiana? Six demented members of the Cape Cod Bird Club and Blair Nikula, their long-suffering leader, that's who! Actually it was Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama we were heading for—that edge of the Gulf of Mexico often ignored by larger bird finding tours. So what's there to attract these vagrants from New England? Herons, egrets, rails, ducks, shorebirds, stilts and avocets, hawks and sparrows, tanagers, orioles, grosbeaks, buntings and warblers, warblers, warblers. That's what we went for, and that's what we saw!

We landed around noon in New Orleans and loaded up our luggage, our picnic supplies and our cooler into a very forgiving Ford van. Motivated by the whimpering, Blair decided it was lunchtime. We broke a rule and went out to lunch. None of your "hit the Mickey D's and we're outta here" stuff. We celebrated being in a "life state" (for some) with "Po Boy" sandwiches and root beer at the *Front Porch Restaurant* just outside New Orleans where we got our first lesson in Southern hospitality and Northern impatience. Gotta slow downnnnn, Yankees! Pack a submarine roll with just fried fresh oysters, sprinkle liberally with Louisiana Hot Sauce (well, not all of us "desecrated" our oysters), tip up an IBC Blue Cap Root Beer, put your feet up on the railing and relax: This is the South where, while admittedly people do talk funny, when they talk they really say something. Example: Take the word "fixing." It has nothing to do with repairing anything but means "getting ready to" as in "I'm fixing to bring you some more biscuits, honey." Or take the word "bald" which of course has nothing to do with hair loss, but rather with cooking in hot water, as in "I'm fixing to bring you a mess of bald shrimp, honey." By the end of day one, we were getting into it and starting to love it.

We spent a day near New Iberia, birding Avery Island, home of thousands of nesting herons and egrets and of genuine Tabasco Sauce. The Jungle Gardens of Avery Island are the work of an incredible man, Edward Avery McIlhenny who built this huge park of live oaks, azaleas and camellias, rare oriental trees and flowers, holly trees, wisteria vines and wildflowers. There is even a wonderful 800 year old Buddhas which Mr. McIlhenny acquired under *very* shaky circumstances, it seems. But best of all is Bird City, a huge heronry of Snowy, Great and Cattle Egrets and Little Blue and Tricolored Herons

*Continued on Page 2*



## BAYOU BIRDING

*Continued From Page 1*

nesting on platforms covered with tons of sticks brought in by the truck load in order to do what Mr. McIlhenny began in 1892: Save the Snowy Egret from plume hunters. Looking at the thousands of milling and squawking birds,



*Illustration by the author.*

it's difficult to believe there could be a shortage of them. But, or course, there was nearly an end to them until we decided that saving them beat wearing them on our hats.

We strolled the gravel paths under enormous live oaks, dripping with Spanish Moss, and got used to a pace of birding that never really changed the entire trip: strolling, stopping, looking, exclaiming, strolling, stopping, etc. Alligators lifted their eyes just far enough out of the tea-colored water to check us out, and then submerged with a bored look. We checked off Red-headed, Pileated, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-eyed Vireo, the Egrets and overhead, a few resident warblers, wonderful butterflies, warm air and blue skies. Well, mostly blue skies. We managed to get ourselves into some interesting thunder and lightning storms at times. But at Avery Island, the weather was benign, and all seven New Englanders were grateful. We purchased the obligatory bottles of genuine Tabasco Sauce at the little shop (if your bottle of Tabasco Sauce doesn't say McIlhenny Co., Avery Island La., it ain't Tabasco Sauce). Then we headed west.

*Part Two will appear in the November-December issue.*

## EDITORIAL

### Guest Editorial

How can you buy or see the sky, the warmth of the land? We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle on the water.

Every pine needle shining in the sun, every sandy beach, the mist hanging in the dark woods, every clearing, every humming insect, every part of the earth is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We are part of the earth and the earth is part of us. The fragrant flowers are our sisters. The deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky heights, the foaming crests of waves, the meadows' flowers, the body heat of the pony—and human beings—all belong to the same family. The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst, they carry our canoes, and feed our children. You must remember and give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

The white man is stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he wants. The earth is not his friend but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, and sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No

place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of insects' wings. The clatter seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if you cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond.

You must treat the animals of this land as your brothers. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo, which we kill only in order to stay alive. What are human beings without animals? If all the animals should cease to exist, humans would die of a great loneliness of the spirit. Whatever happens to the animals will soon happen also to human beings. If you spit on the land, you spit on yourselves. The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. All things are connected, like the blood which unites one family. Mankind did not weave the web of life. We are but one strand within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

When the last red man has vanished from this earth, and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people, for they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children.

*Attributed to Chief Seattle from a letter sent in 1844 to President Franklin Pierce who wanted to purchase the land that is now Washington State.*



### 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

Circulation - Charlotte Smith



## PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

---

Frank Caruso

Monday **September 9**, at 7:45 at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Mr. Alvah Sanborn, who has talked to the club at previous meetings, will present "*The World of Birds.*" An intimate study of birds and how they live, this program is a close-up look at the marvelous adaptations of birds, both structural and behavioral, from feathers, their use and care, their beauty and function, to the fascinating techniques employed in procuring food, to the reproductive cycle, starting with courtship and ending with fledging of the young. A great variety of birds both native and exotic are used to illustrate this action-packed program.

Monday **October 14th**, 7:45 at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Rt. 6A in Brewster, *Piping Plovers at Sandy Neck* will be presented by Eric Strauss. Eric Strauss, a faculty member in the Biology department at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, has studied the beach at Sandy Neck peninsula and it's piping plover population for 11 years. This particular bird has a great difficulty in maintaining its numbers. Now it finds itself in the middle of a conflict between people who don't want the beauty of the beach spoiled and people who don't want the numbers of ORV's reduced in the pursuit of the beach's beauty. Come and join us for what should be a stimulating presentation.

## BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

---

On June 15, the Bird Club conducted its annual census of birds that are breeding in the Mid-Cape area. The territory covered is the same as that covered during the Christmas Bird Count, ranging from West Dennis Beach on the southside to Barnstable Harbor on the northside. Perhaps because the weather was fine, a number of interesting birds were sighted, including a Great Egret, 11 Wood Ducks, 2 Turkey Vultures, 3 Killdeer, 3 Greater Yellowlegs, a Least Sandpiper, 3 Black Terns, a Fish Crow, a Brown Creeper, a Hermit Thrush, 2 Blue-winged Warblers, 2 Northern Parulas, and 2 Purple Finches. A total of 9130 individual birds of 98 species were seen. The most common birds were 2485 Herring Gulls, followed by 631 Great Black-backed Gulls, 566 Common Grackles, 372 Least Terns, 350 Canada Geese, 340 Red-winged Blackbirds, 332 Starlings and 326 Robins. The teams of birders gathered at Gray's Beach after the count ended to enjoy one of the better Bird Club picnics in recent years.

## Membership Reminder

---

Your membership dues are due. The mailing list will be revised soon. We would like to keep you on our mailing list for the newsletter, so please forward those dues.

## FIELD TRIPS

---

Sally McNair

### September

---

Monday **Sept. 9th**-Eastham. 8 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

Wednesday **Sept. 11th**-Falmouth. 8 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6086.

Saturday **Sept 14th**-Morris Island. 9 am. Meet at Monomoy Wildlife Refuge parking lot. Tom Noonan, 385-6858. Jim Talin. 255-1710.

Wednesday **Sept. 18th**-Harwich. 8 am. Meet at the Conservation Area on Bell's Neck Road in West Harwich. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

Saturday **Sept 28th**-Hawk Watch. 9 am. Meet in the Pilgrim Heights parking lot, North Truro. George Martin, 896-8798.

### October

---

Wednesday **Oct. 2nd**-Falmouth. 8 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6086.

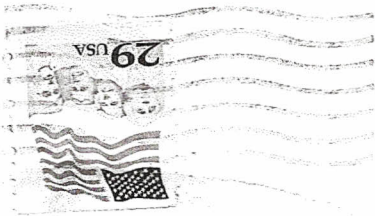
Saturday **Oct. 5th**-Sandwich, West Barnstable. 8:30 am. Meet in the parking lot at Sandy Neck. Bob Pease, 790-1351.

Thursday **Oct.10th**-Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. 9 am. Meet in the parking lot. A naturalist will lead.

Monday **Oct.14th**-Eastham Ponds. 9 am Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

Sunday **Oct. 27th**-South Cape Beach, Mashpee. 8 am. Meet in the State parking lot at the end of Great Oak Rd. From Mashpee rotary follow signs to South Cape Beach State Park. Peter Trimble, 477-3847.

Frank Caruso  
17 Freedom Rd  
Forestdale MA 02644



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

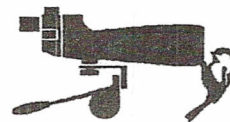


In Memory Of  
**GINNY REDFERN**

*by Charlotte Smith*

Cape Cod Bird Club members were saddened early this past summer to learn of the death of Ginny Redfern. Ginny and her husband John have contributed greatly to the club. Together they led walks in the Harwich area on the fourth Thursday in the month for many years. Ginny's friendliness made those walks fun to attend. She also contributed to other organizations, as a volunteer in the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, to her church, and to her college alumni association. In a quiet but very effective way, Ginny gave a great deal to the community. She will be greatly missed. We all extend our deepest sympathy to John and their daughters in their great loss.

**BIRD-A-THON**



*Mark your calendars:*

**Saturday and Sunday  
September 21st and 22nd**

Proceeds from the Birdathon are split between the Club, the Museum of Natural History, and the Manomet Bird Observatory. Each of these three organizations relies upon the proceeds from events such as the Birdathon to continue operation.

**Birders may send sightings to...Peter B. Trimble, 22 Somerset Rd, Mashpee, MA 02649**

**Pledges may be sent to...Mark Tuttle, Treasurer, PO Box 635, Barnstable, MA 02630**

**or to... The Museum of Natural History, Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631.**