



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 23

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SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1993

ISSUE 2

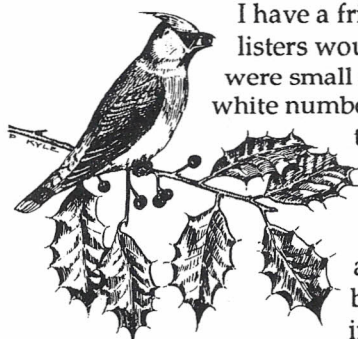
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Hall

A few weeks ago, I drove to Cape May, New Jersey to pick up Derek Moore, the Club's October speaker. While driving home after a few days of birding, Derek and I had a chance to discuss the role of the amateur birder in the more disciplined universe of field ornithology. Derek, visiting from England, quickly picked up on some of the differences between British and American birding customs.

Derek was surprised, for instance, by how many Americans carry field guides with them while birding. In England novice birders are taught to take copious field notes, make drawings and refer to guides only after leaving the field. I'm not convinced that this is necessarily a better method, but I'll concede it probably does sharpen the kind of observational skills which are so crucial to successful field identification. On a more critical note, Derek professed some dismay at how few American birders seemed to be taking any kind of field notes at all. Somewhat defensively I protested that many U.S. birders write up their sightings at home at the end of the day. Derek was not appeased. We all know, after all, what a treacherous mistress memory can be. On this point I think Derek is right. The British method of keeping a contemporaneous field log is far superior to one's memory or good intentions to record sightings later. I used to keep a log. I still have nearly a dozen pocket-size memo books full of my daily walks during my first five years of birding. Chastened by Derek, I shall start doing so again.

After all, birding is an acquired skill and a cumulative experience. For a few, regrettably, it may be no more than an endless quest for one more lifer to tick for the list.



I have a friend who jokes that obsessive listers would be just as happy if all birds were small and brown with a black and white number stenciled on their backs. "Aha, there's a number 561 for my North American list. Quick now, tick it and let's go get number 562!" This caricature aside, lists, records, and personal birding achievements are important. We all delight in bird

trips to the far away places of Bee Eaters and Bower Birds, or the rare vagrant such as this summer's Black Tailed Godwit on Monomoy. But the enduring satisfaction of birding comes, I think, in the repeated and intimate association each of us has with his or her own favorite local birding spot and in recording year to year what you

Illustrations by Phil Kyle

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## FEEDER CENSUS REPORT 1992-1993

John Redfern

The number of birds observed during the 1992-1993 feeder census was at a record high of 65.9 birds per feeder per month. This follows a poor year in 1991-1992 when only 52.5 were counted. This increase is largely due to substantial increases in the numbers of house finches, goldfinches, blue jays, and juncos. Nine of the top ten species are repeaters with the white-throated sparrow the only newcomer (replacing the crow which moved to number 11). As always, the chickadee was seen at most feeders. In all 56 species were counted-this is about average. Some of the results are tabulated below:

### Birds Per Feeder

1. House Finch	9.1
2. Goldfinch	6.8
3. Mourning Dove	5.7
4. Blue Jay	4.6
5. Junco	4.3
6. Chickadee	4.2
7. Starling	3.5
8. Cardinal	2.9
9. White-throated Sparrow	2.8
10. House Sparrow	2.7

### Percent of Feeders

1. Chickadee	96.2
2. Cardinal	92.4
3. Blue Jay	90.5
4. House Finch	90.0
5. Goldfinch	87.7
6. Downy Woodpecker	86.3
7. Mourning Dove	83.4
8. Tufted Titmouse	80.6
9. Junco	73.0
10. White-breasted Nuthatch	66.8



*Editor's Note:* As we set up our feeders for a new season, don't undermine the health of wild birds. Be sure to keep feeders and the area around them clean. To prevent the growth of mold that spreads avian disease, wash out your feeders occasionally, and rake up seed hulls on the ground under your feeders.

**Magnificent Frigatebird.** One female was sighted in Cape Cod Bay just north of Sandy Neck Point on 3 August by Cliff Wolfe. While fishing with a few friends, Cliff was lucky enough to have seen this bird fly by and then perch on a nearby channel marker.

**Shorebirds.** The peak count for Whimbrel this year was about 490 individuals on North Monomoy on 31 July. Eleven Marbled Godwits were observed on North Monomoy on 5 September by Winty Harrington. Three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported as follows: one on Nauset Spit on 3 September by Kathy and Rives McGinley; one on South Monomoy on 12 September by Blair Nikula and Simon Perkins; one on South Monomoy on 20 September by Blair Nikula. Two Baird's Sandpipers were reported, both from South Monomoy, one on 21 August by Blair Nikula and one on 20 September also by Blair Nikula. The earliest Lesser Golden Plover was seen on South Beach on 21 August by Simon Perkins; a maximum of 3-4 individuals was reported during the middle of September by various observers.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull.** One individual was observed on North Monomoy during the third week in August. Up to three individuals were sighted on North Monomoy during late September by Blair Nikula and various observers. Other reports during late September came from South Beach (near Outermost Harbor Marine) in Chatham and Paine's Creek in Brewster.

**Terns.** Two Caspian Terns were seen in Nauset Marsh on 12 September by Chris Brothers. Above average numbers of Forster's and Black terns were recorded by various observers, with the highest counts coming from the Chatham area. Approximately 50 Black Terns were seen on South Monomoy on 12 September by Blair Nikula and Simon Perkins. Forster's Terns reached counts of about 80 on South Monomoy on 12 September and about 60 on North Monomoy on 19 September.

**Northern Wheatear.** One individual was observed on South Monomoy on 25 September by Simon Perkins, Bob Stymeist and Hugh Ferguson. (Wheatears were also sighted in Newburyport, Northampton, and on Martha's Vineyard).

**Warblers and vireos.** Unless noted otherwise, sightings reported here were from Morris Island in Chatham. One Golden-winged

Warbler on 12 September by Mark Tuttle and various observers. Two Orange-crowned Warblers on 25 September by Wallace Bailey. Three Mourning Warblers, all on 25 September, as follows: one at Corn Hill by George Martin, and two on Morris Island by Wallace Bailey. Three Connecticut Warblers as follows: one on 2 September and one on 20 September by Wallace Bailey; one at Corn Hill on 20 September by Brian Cassie. Two Kentucky Warblers as follows: one on 20 August and one on 2 September, both by Wallace Bailey. One Hooded Warbler on 12 September by David Small. One Worm-eating Warbler in late August by Wallace Bailey. Six species of vireos were recorded by various observers during September, including the following; one White-eyed Vireo on 25 September, one Yellow-throated Vireo on 12 September, two Warbling Vireos and two Philadelphia Vireos, one of each on 12 and 25 September.

**Sparrows.** Three Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from Corn Hill in Truro as follows: one on 19 September by Mark Kasprzyck; one on 21 September by Bob Scott and Art King; one on 25 September by George Martin. Four Lincoln's Sparrows were reported as follows: two at Corn Hill, one on 21 September by Bob Scott and Art King and one on 25 September by George Martin; one on 20 September on Morris Island by Wallace Bailey.

**Dickcissel.** Five were reported as follows: one on 14 August on Morris Island and one on 22 August on South Monomoy, both by Blair Nikula; one at Corn Hill on 21 September by Bob Scott and Art King; two sightings were also reported from Sandwich by Peter Trimble.

**Summer Tanager.** One individual seen at Corn Hill on 25 September by George Martin.

**More than usual.** A few species seemed to stand out due to their occurrence in higher than average numbers. These species included Great Egrets, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Blue-grey Gnatcatchers.

To report sightings during October and November, please call Jackie Sones at 349-2615 or Blair Nikula at 432-6348.

*Editor's Note: We received from member Guitta Blau a clipping of bird sightings reported in the Boston Sunday Globe on September 5, 1993. Some of the rarer birds seen were "A larder head shrike, three wobbling vireos...450 yellow-crested cormorants...a morning warbler."*

## EDITORIAL

## Change and Fish

Jim Talin

Herbert Hoover said that Americans believe "they have a divine right to unlimited fish. They have inherited this notion from 10,000 generations of free fishermen." There were a lot more fish in the world when Hoover said this, but Americans still believe it. A 10,000 generation habit isn't likely to change easily, even if it contradicts natural realities. At the same time that landings of fish are at all time lows, we anticipate finding 8 or 10 fish dishes on restaurant menus, along with various

shellfish dishes and chowders, and we expect to find an abundance of fresh fish at the local market. Most of us believe the decline in fish stocks is due to mismanagement of the fisheries. The problem, we say, is with the people who fish for a living rather than with the number of people eating fish. So we try to limit catches, instead of rationing fish. This is like blaming air pollution on the garage attendant who fills your car with gas. If no one ate fish, no one would fish for a living.

It is hard to admit that we must limit our personal fish consumption, but the reality of declining fish stocks will soon force this change upon us. Right now, how many of us, birders and environmentalists included, would turn down a plate of halibut to preserve the species? Or would pass up some steamed clams or mussels so that diving sea birds would have something to eat? Caught in the midst of change, it seems inevitable that we would carry vestiges of a former reality with us.



## 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

*Tish Noyes and Richard Hall*

On Monday evening, **November 8** at 7:45 pm at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Paul Miliotis will present a program called, "*The History of Bird Books*". Paul will discuss the methods of historic and contemporary bird book authors and illustrators. He will bring examples of collectible books and illustrations for the audience to examine. He will also describe how to know what is collectible. Mr. Miliotis is an amateur naturalist, specializing in birds, butterflies, and dragonflies. He manages Merlin Books in Westford, Massachusetts.

On Monday evening, **December 13th**, at 7:45 pm at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Julio de la Torre will present a program entitled, "*The Owls Of North America*". Julio is an editor and writer, and he is the author of the book Owls: Their Life and Behavior. In his spare time, he is an actor and opera singer, who enjoys "talking to owls". His program introduces the nineteen different kinds of owls that nest north of the Rio Grande. It will be enlivened with recordings and imitations of owl calls, as well as with anecdotal encounters in the field.

## New Members

We are please to welcome the following new members of the CCBC. They joined between July and October.

Mark Blazis-Grafton  
Jean Colvin-South Harwich  
Arlene & Henry Freedman-Wellfleet  
Dr. Joseph & Nell Gramer-Brewster  
Mary Hamilton-West Barnstable  
Jeff Johnstone-Athol  
David Luebke-Brewster  
Robert Maller-Athol  
Patricia Marchant-Centerville  
Marguerite Marion-West Harwich  
Ginie Page-Concord  
Jonathan Shagrin-Brookline  
John and Pat Chase-Cohasset  
Dorothy Duquet-Yarmouthport  
Sara Beckley-Chatham  
Doug Chickering-Newbury

## Educational Programs

Some Bird Club members have expressed an interest in expanding our educational programs to include school age children. The possible formats for this will be the focus of a meeting this fall. Any members interested in this new project please get in touch with Kate Wallace at 255-5095.

## FIELD TRIPS

*Ruth Connaughton*

*November*

**Wednesday, November 3rd.** Falmouth, 9 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

**Sunday, November 7th.** Eastham, 9 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

**Wednesday, November 17th.** Orleans, 8 am. Meet in the back section of the Stop and Shop parking lot. Susan Thompson 255-1451.

**Sunday, November 21.** Wellfleet, Bound Brook, 8:30 am. Meet at P.J.'s on Rt. 6, just before the traffic light at road going left into Wellfleet Center. Kate Wallace. 255-5095.

*December*

**Wednesday, Dec. 1st.** Falmouth, 9 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

**Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4th & 5th.** Land and waterfowl survey. Sign up at the Nov. 8th meeting or call Blair Nikula at 432-6348.

**Sunday, Dec. 12th.** Eastham, 9 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

**Sunday, Dec. 19th.** Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count (Outer Cape). Sign up at the Dec. 13th meeting or call Blair Nikula at 432-6348.

**Sunday, Dec. 26th or Tuesday Dec. 28.** Mid-Cape Christmas Bird Count. Sign up at the Dec. 13th meeting or call Peter Trimble, 477-3847.

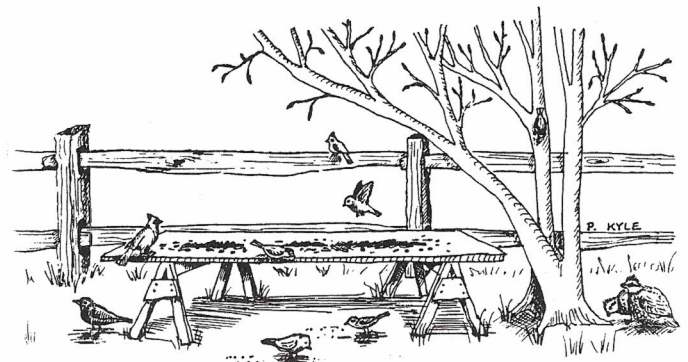
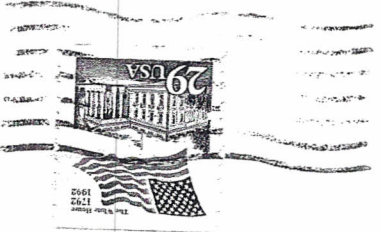


Illustration by Phil Kyle

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*Richard Hall*

see across the seasons. By keeping records, you are creating something of lasting value to yourself and possibly the world of birding. As Editor Jim Talin suggest in his last editorial, this spot can be as simple as your own backyard or the saltmarsh down the road or a woodlot edge you pass every day on your way to work. By recording what you alone see, you give permanence to your special knowledge.

Ornithology is one of the few scientific endeavors where amateurs regularly make important contributions. The nationwide Christmas Bird Count is probably the most obvious example comprising the recorded sightings of thousands of amateur birders. Blair Nikula's December Waterfowl Survey and the Club's Annual Feeder Census all follow in this important tradition. So Derek, you are right. The recorded observation is the very essence of good birding. I for one promise to do better.

**DUES ARE DUE**

The mailing list will be revised very shortly. If you have not paid 1993-1994 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 1993-1994

- have been paid
- have not been paid

Dues are - single \$10.00, family \$15.00.  
 Checks may be mailed to...

**Cape Cod Bird Club**  
 Mark Tuttle, PO Box 635, Barnstable, MA 02630