



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 23

SEPTEMBER ~ OCTOBER 1993

ISSUE 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Hall

As your incoming President, I would like to address what might be called **The State of the Club**. Earlier this summer, longtime member Bob Scott, whose perspective far exceeds mine, remarked that he had never before seen the organization function so smoothly. I think Bob's observation is right on the mark. The Club has indeed prospered over the past twenty years and has much reason to be proud. With fewer than three-hundred members, we publish a handsome newsletter under the able guidance of Jim Talin and Tom Noonan which is the envy of many clubs four or five times our size. The quality of our guest speakers stands second to none. One need only note that monthly attendance has nearly doubled in the past four years as sure confirmation of the fine job the last few program chairpersons have done.

I can personally attest to this increase. As the guy who had poured juice behind the cookie table for the past two years, I used to finish the task in five or ten minutes. Now it is a full evening's job, and I've been able to add "Cookie Chairman" to my resume. For the third or so of our membership who have not attended a meeting recently, I urge you to do so. I know you will be pleased. All of which is to say our club is strong and vibrant. Taking over as president under these circumstances is a joy. It is a joy made possible by the commitment of an unusually diligent group of club directors and officers, and the leadership of my two immediate predecessors, Peter Trimble and Frank Caruso.

There is a serious problem which must be addressed, however. It is, as you might guess, the state of our treasury. Lack of funds is often the bane of small organizations, but it really doesn't have to be in our case. At the end of our budget year in June, Mark Tuttle, our diligent treasurer, somehow managed to balance the books. But it was a close call. The Club had only a hundred dollars or so to carry forward. Mark's bare-bones budget for this coming year is thirty-seven hundred dollars. With fewer than three hundred members, the Directors really had no choice but to raise dues at renewal time. If our club has a failing, it is probably not communicating as well as it should the cost of running this enterprise. But I suspect most members are grateful that we don't spend meeting time discussing the tedium of budget business.

Without getting into great detail, let me just note that the single largest budget item is for speakers' fees. Program director Tish Noyes may have the Club's most daunting task, scheduling quality speakers on an inadequate budget. She had managed despite long odds.

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RARE BIRD HOTLINE

Mark Tuttle

We are in the process of revising our rare bird hotline and hope to come up with a system that is more efficient in getting out the word promptly when an unusual sighting occurs. Members who are interested in being included in the new hotline and are willing to make every effort towards making it work should sign up for it at the September meeting, or get in touch with Mark Tuttle, Box 635, Barnstable, MA 02630 (telephone 362-3015) by no later than September 20. Please sign up again even if you have been on the hotline this past year.



Illustration by Phil Kyle

The Cookie Roll of Honor

Richard D. Hall

The entire club owes a debt of gratitude to the following volunteers who generously provided so many tasty treats during the past two years:

Teddy Williams, Harriet Dickson, Lillian Marchant, Lois Tillson, Dorothy Henion, Pat Bergfors, Marcia Tuttle, Fahy Bygate, Corinne Everett, Charlotte Smith, Anne White, Sally Branch, Barbara Godard, Anne Swift, June Chamberlain-Auger, Susan Frawley, Norm Anderton, Bessie Tirrell, Betty Verdery, Bobsie Whitlock, Eleanor Winslow, Janet Silverio, Carol Jacoby, Dot Kierstead, Maria Cranna, Kathleen McPeck, Ellen Althouse, Jackie Sones, Diane Reynolds, Kay Walcott, Jinkes Keil, Betsiey Hewlett, Martha Hughes, Mary Chesnut, Carol Scott, and Don Scott.

To all of the above, a very big and long overdue Thank You from the 1991-92 Cookie Chairman. You will always be my unsung heroes.

If you have ever read Norman Hill's *Birds of Cape Cod* or Wallace Bailey's *Birds of the Cape Cod National Seashore*, you may realize the importance of documenting bird sightings. These written records give us a chance to develop some ideas about changes in bird populations over time. For example, the Tufted Titmouse which is now considered to be a common species, is described by Hill (1965) as "Status: Presumptive; a rare vagrant from the South...has never been recorded in late spring or summer and hence no suspicion of breeding."

What follows in this column is an attempt to record some of the bird sightings on Cape Cod at present. Hopefully, it will be of some interest to those birding on the Cape, both now and in the future. It would be impossible to include here all of the interesting bird sightings on Cape Cod during June and July. The following is a list of records that seemed to stand out among the rest:

Red-necked Grebe. Observed during the second week in July 93 in South Beach Cove, Chatham. This sighting is unusual for its occurrence during the summer. Also seen at the northern end of South Beach lately: all three species of scoters, two Oldsquaw, and several Common Eider. (various observers)

Seabirds. Observed 5 June 93 at the Chatham break. An exciting day brought observations of the following species (with approximate numbers): Sooty Shearwaters (200), Shearwater Species (1- Manx?), Wilson's Storm-Petrels (4), Northern Gannets (100), and Jaeger Species (1- Parasitic?). (Winty Harrington)

Black-tailed Godwit. First observed 23 June 93 on North Monomoy Island, Chatham. This was the first sighting ever of a Black-tailed Godwit on Cape Cod. All four species of godwits in the world have now been seen on Monomoy! (Blair Nikula)

Curlew Sandpiper. Observed 25 July 93 on South Beach in Chatham. This sandpiper, not seen every year, was spotted on the beach among the Semipalmated Sandpipers and Sanderlings (Blair Nikula). The South Shore Bird Club also saw this bird on North

Monomoy Island on 31 July 93.

Common Black-headed Gull. Observed 15 July 93 on New Island in Nauset Marsh. This bird was seen roosting with the Laughing Gulls on the flats. Lesson to be learned: Check those gulls! (Scott Hecker)

Little Gull. Observed 26 July 93 on the eastern end of Sandy Neck, Barnstable. This seemed to be an immature bird, molting into adult plumage. (Blair Nikula)

Sabine's Gull. First observed 1 July 93 on New Island in Nauset Marsh. This was an immature bird seen roosting with the Laughing Gulls on the flats (Jackie Sones). It was seen two other times, once on 15 July 93 on New Island (Scott Hecker) and once on 25 July 93 on South Beach, Chatham. (Blair Nikula)

Royal Tern. Observed 4 July 93 on South Beach, Chatham. Did anyone else see any this summer? (Ellen Bentley)

Swallow-tailed Kite. Observed 11 June 93 flying over Rt. 6 near Exit 11 in Brewster (Tish Noyes). This was the second sighting of a Swallow-tailed Kite this season; the first being observed at the end of April from Pilgrim Heights by Jeremiah and Peter Trimble.

Merlin. Observed 31 July 93 on North Monomoy Island, Chatham. Like the Red-necked Grebe, this sighting is unusual for its occurrence during the summer. (South Shore Bird Club)

Red-bellied Woodpecker. Observed 29 June 93 on Giddiah Hill Road in Orleans. I wonder if any Red-bellies are nesting on the Cape? Has anyone seen any signs? (anonymous)

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Observed 27 June 93 on Morris Island in Chatham. Lots of people looked for this bird after the initial sighting, but unfortunately had no luck. (various observers)

Please consider this a trial format — any comments or suggestions on how to make it better are more than welcome! Please feel free to call Jackie Sones at 349-2615 or Blair Nikula at 432-6348 with sightings during September and October.

EDITORIAL

Jim Talin

Ordinary Birds

I missed the rare birds of the summer, and that was okay with me. This spring, in the company of packs of other birders, I chased the migrant birds, racing at 60 mph up to Beech Forest each weekend. I could have been a commuter on the Southeast Expressway, abstracted from my environment in a rush to get there. Compelled by my goal of arriving early to see the "good" birds, I felt as if I were suspended animation until I arrived. Then one day after having returned from a trip to Beech Forest, a Scarlet Tanager, a Magnolia and a Blackburnian Warbler were waiting in the yard, as if to say: We're here, where have you been? So this summer, I gardened. I planted

vegetables and flowers, laid out plots that converted lawn into something more useful, built stone walls, and I observed the earth under my feet and the life around me. Instead of waiting or looking for the right place for things to happen, I started noticing the small things happening around me.

Like most birders, I find something special in spotting a rare bird, one out of the ordinary. I enjoy nature writing that dwells on those moments of transcendence, like religious writing from which it seems to be derived. But I've found myself preferring simpler, more mundane questions, such as: what about the life history of the catbird? Birding has been a way for me to become involved in the living world that surrounds me. So when I heard of people rushing across the country and racing down to Monomoy to see a godwit, I let the opportunity pass without any regret. I stayed home and worked in the garden in order to feel the pulse of life around me and to share a few moments of time and little bit of space with some "ordinary" birds.



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

Tish Noyes and Richard Hall

On Monday evening, **September 13** at 7:45 pm at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Dick Forester will present a program entitled, "*Nature's Wonders Down-Under*". Dick Forester was one of the original naturalists at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary when it was first acquired from the Austin family. He was the former Assistant Director of Natural History Services for Mass. Audubon. He has been a bird watcher for 35 years.

On Monday evening, **October 11** at 7:45 pm at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Derek Moore, who is visiting from England, will be presenting a program entitled "*The Birds and Wildlife Habitat of East Anglia*". Derek is the Director of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the largest organization of its kind in the United Kingdom. Similar to the Nature Conservancy in this country, The SWT presently owns and/or manages seventy Nature preserves. Derek is on his fourth birding trip to North America and has also birded extensively in such off-beat places as Cyprus, Poland, and the Falkland Islands. He has authored several magazine articles and books, and has a regularly scheduled program on the BBC. His most recent publication is a bird-finding guide to Cyprus.

Monomoy and South Beach Ferry

Members should be aware that Captain Keith Lincoln who runs a daily ferry service from the foot of the stairs at Monomoy Wildlife Refuge Headquarters during the summer will extend this service on weekends through mid-October or later if demand warrants. The fare is ten dollars round trip. For further information call (508) 587-4540 or (508) 945-5450.

Rare Ornithological Books

The Punkhorn Bookshop at 672 Main St. in Brewster has recently acquired a large private ornithological library. Many of these volumes are extremely rare, some dating back to the turn of the century. David Luebke, Proprietor, is a birder himself and an expert on antiquarian Natural History books. We welcome him as a new member of the Club and urge any interested members to visit his bookshop.

Belize-Tikal Trip

Blair Nikula is putting together a trip to Belize and Tikal next
February 14-28.

The tentative cost is \$3,400, all inclusive from Boston.
For additional information, get in touch with Blair at
432-6348 or 432-0970.

FIELD TRIPS

Ruth Connaughton

September

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

Monday September 13th. Eastham, 8 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

Saturday September 18th. Morris Island. 9 am.
Meet at the Monomoy Wildlife Refuge Parking Lot. Tom Noonan, 385-6858; Jim Talin, 896-7169.

Wednesday September 22nd. Harwich, 8 am.
Meet at the Conservation Area of Bell's Neck Road in West Harwich. Bessie Tirrell. 432-9248.

Saturday September 25. Hawk Watch, 9 am.
Meet in Pilgrim Heights Parking Lot, North Truro. George Martin, 896-8798.

October

Saturday, October 2nd. Sandwich & West Barnstable, 8:30 am. Meet in the parking lot at Sandy Neck. Bob Pease. 790-1351.

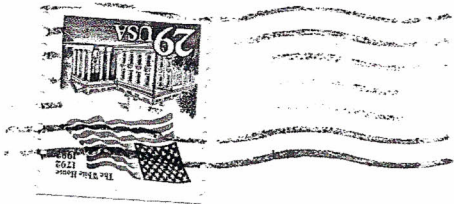
Monday October 4th. Eastham Ponds, 9 am.
Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Art King, 255-8919.

Wednesday October 6th. Falmouth, 8 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes. 548-6086.

Thursday October 14th. Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, 8 am. Meet in the parking lot. A naturalist will lead. 349-2615.

Saturday October 23rd. South Cape Beach, 8 am. Meet in the State parking lot at the end of Great Oak Road. From the Mashpee Rotary, follow the signs to South Cape Beach State Park. Peter Trimble, 477-3847; George Martin, 896-8798.

Frank Caruso
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale MA 02644



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The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
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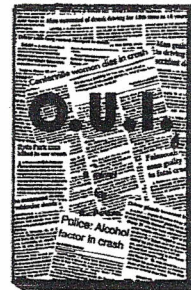
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Hall

The Club must, however, give Tish the tools she needs for continued success-namely an adequate speaker's fund. As of now, future program expenses will likely result in a deficit.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution-one in which we all can partake. I would like to challenge each current member to recruit just one new dues-paying member by November 1st. This simple effort would put the Club on solid financial ground which will enable us to continue producing the quality programs and newsletters which we all anticipate. To this end, I have asked Bob Scott, a new board member, to assume the role of Director for Special Projects, the first of which is outlined above. If we can significantly "jump" our membership in the next eight weeks, this Bird Club will truly soar!

Let us all make it happen.



O. U. I.

by Bob Pease

Author and member Bob Pease, whose poetry has appeared in this newsletter, has published a novel entitled, O. U. I. (Operating Under the Influence). O. U. I. is told from the point of view of a father whose daughter is killed by a drunk driver on the mid-Cape highway. It is a moving, literary work showing how the lives of all those known to the victim are permanently affected by this tragedy. It is also an indictment of the failure of the criminal justice system to offer any effective deterrent to this crime. Copies at \$12.95 each are available at bookstores or from Bob Pease, 13 Louisburg Square, Centerville, MA 02632, telephone 790-1351.