



Cape Cod Bird Club

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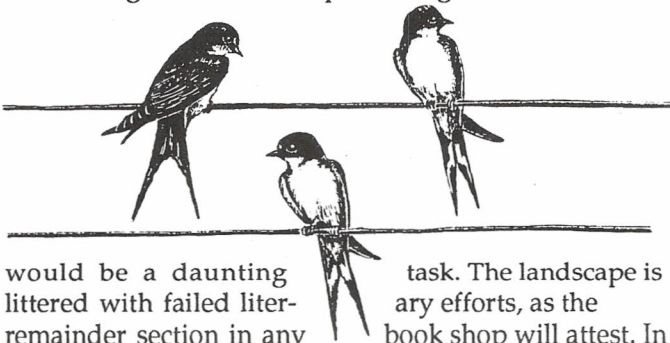
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard D. Hall

BOOK MAKING...

Although it is traditional to write something about the upcoming Spring migration in this issue, I'm going to look to the past instead. It was exactly ten years ago when a small committee of Bird Club members led by Janet Aylward and Blair Nikula decided it would be a good idea to publish a Cape Cod birding guide. You don't have to know a great deal about publishing to realize this

Illustration by Phil Kyle



would be a daunting task. The landscape is littered with failed literary efforts, as the remainder section in any book shop will attest. In 1984, bird-finding guides were in their infancy. The Lane's Guides pretty much summed up this universe, and whatever their strengths, lay-out, graphics and typography were certainly not among them. I have no idea how fully that committee conceived the final product a decade ago, but the venture with Mass Audubon produced a regional guide second to none in content and appearance. After four years, the first edition (5000 in all) of this handsome volume is sold out, making it the most successful publication in Mass Audubon history.

It is with considerable pride that I can announce the Club's decision to authorize a second edition of 4000 which will be available this summer. One anticipated improvement should be the addition of the Club's bar graph checklist as an appendix. The book has also been a considerable financial success, leaving our treasury \$6000 richer than before. Much of this success must be credited to Diane Reynolds from the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary, who for the past four years has mastered all the thankless and tedious details involved in promoting, shipping, and invoicing the dozens of retail vendors who get the book before the public. There are still a handful of first editions available, which will be for sale at the May meeting.

...AND BIRD FARMING

Our Club has been presented with an exciting opportunity. You may be familiar with the Sea-Call Farm on Tonset Road opposite the Orleans Cemetery. This five and a half acre truck farm was purchased a few years ago by the Town to be preserved as public open space. A group of citizens known as Sea-Call Supporters has in

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CCBC Tripping Fools or Blair's Trips

Fahy Bygate

In June, Blair Nikula will lead another of his famous trips to the ends of the earth looking for birds. He has been doing this since 1982, and his trips have been full of amazing birds and places. I know that Blair's genius for finding, identifying and best of all sharing birds is legendary, but it occurred to me that some members may not know what a good time we have while Blair is doing all of this.

I have been on many of Blair's trips but not all. I missed the first two or three. I missed them mainly because I never considered that it was something I could do. I suppose I thought that you needed to be an expert birder to go along. The fact that Blair still allows me to go along should disabuse everyone of that idea. It wasn't the price, certainly. Blair's trips are extraordinarily cheap. He never charges anything for all the work he does over and above the cost of his airfare and lodging. Believe me, he works for that. He plans the itinerary, plane, motel reservations, the van and loads it with provisions. He books us on little boat trips, big boat trips, train rides, even ski lifts to mountain tops. He wrestles with our luggage every day and handles all of our lost belonging crises.

If Blair could bottle his talent and sell it, he would be a millionaire. We can be sitting in downtown Houston or Seattle in bumper to bumper traffic at 11:55 and at noon we are lounging beside a babbling brook watching American Dippers trying to drown themselves. We can be headed down a desert highway with no sign of human habitation for as far as the eye can see and the next minute be setting out our noontime feast on a mountaintop with a 360 degree view of the Chiricahua Mountains. We have slapped together sandwiches on mountain trails in Big Bend, along the Louisiana bayous, even on the side of Mt. Kenya. We've lunched with 1.5 million Flamingos in Africa, 100 thousand Gannets on Bonaventure Island and 1 Whooping Crane at Aransas, Texas. We have stayed in charming ski chalets overlooking the Canadian Rockies, we have slept in tents with Masai watchmen pacing up and down all night to protect us from lions, we have run wild in a derelict Cajun motel with rags stuffed in the holes in the screens and have been on our very best behavior at the six course meals at a French Canadian inn. I just don't know a better way to see the world and its birds.

This June Blair is taking us to Colorado. It promises to be full of magpies and Mountain Plovers, bluebirds and buntings, Burrowing Owls, hawks, eagles, flycatchers, thrushes, Blue Grouse, and Blue Grosbeaks. We'll see mountains and valleys, grasslands, wetlands, sagebrush flats and the Pawnee Buttes and... lunch. I can't wait.

P. S. The trip is not fully booked yet.

Pacific Loon. One individual was seen from Head of the Meadow Beach in Truro on 18 February by George Martin.

Red-necked Grebe. Up to seventeen were seen next to MacMillan Wharf in Provincetown by various observers. Others were found dead on the following beaches: Race Point, Herring Cove, Mayo, and Nauset.

American Bittern. One individual was seen in Harwich on 8 February by Blair Nikula.

Harlequin Duck. Two were reported: one at the Cape Cod Canal on 1 February by Helen Pickett, and one in Osterville on 13 February by Peter Trimble.

Pectoral Sandpiper. One individual was seen flying by Race Point on 15 March by Dick Forster and Ken Hamilton.

Gulls. Iceland and Glaucous gulls were seen fairly regularly in Provincetown during February and March. Maximum counts were reported by Dick Forster and Ken Hamilton on 15 March from Pilgrim Lake: 4 Iceland Gulls and 2 Glaucous Gulls. Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported from Chapin Beach in Dennis on 15 March, also by Dick and Ken.

Alcids. Atlantic Puffins were observed twice from Race Point: four on 5 February by Wallace Bailey, and two on 17 February by George Martin. High counts for other alcids were reported by Blair Nikula on 19 March: 20 Razorbills, 2 Thick-billed Murres, 1 Common Murre, and 5 Black Guillemots.

Rough-legged Hawk. Two were reported: one near Morris Island in Chatham on 19 February by Bob Clem and one at Hatches Harbor in Provincetown on 9 March by George Martin.

Owls. One Common Barn-Owl was seen on Pochet Island in Orleans on 19 February by David Emerson. I heard third-hand about a Short-eared Owl at Chapin Beach in Dennis around 23 March, but haven't heard specifics about this sighting. Single Snowy Owls were seen at First Encounter Beach on 14 March

and Race Point on 20 March, 30 March, and 2 April.

Wild Turkey. Four birds were reported from Sandwich on 21 March by Peter Trimble.

Eastern Kingbird. One very early individual was seen at Fort Hill in Eastham on 30 March by George Martin. Previously the earliest date in Massachusetts was 4 April!

Bohemian Waxwing. George Martin was the "Waxwing King"! He reported the following: 110 in Truro on 11 February, 204 in Wellfleet on 13 February, and 136 in Wellfleet on 24 February. Smaller numbers were recorded during March from scattered locations. The highest count in March was 80 on 19 March by George Martin and Tish Noyes. The latest report so far was 6 birds in Chatham on 1 April by Barbara McCarthy.

Yellow-headed Blackbird. A single adult male was observed in Wellfleet on 15 March by Mitch Rosenbaum.

Common Redpoll. A flock of seventy-five was seen in Chatham on 5 February by Bob Clem. Eight birds were reported from Pocasset on 15 March by Peter Silva. Bob Scott saw two at his feeder in Yarmouth during the last week of March. One individual was seen at the Wellfleet Sanctuary feeders on 26 March by Jackie Sones.

Evening Grosbeak. One individual was observed in Chatham in late February by Wallace Bailey.

Early Spring Migrants. The last week of March brought a flurry of sightings: Green-winged Teal, Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, American Woodcock, Snowy and Great Egrets, Little Blue Heron, Laughing Gulls, Turkey Vultures, Eastern Phoebes, Tree Swallows, and Fox Sparrows.

To report sightings, please call Jackie Sones at 349-2615 or Blair Nikula at 432-6348. Thanks!

Spring is the beginning of the natural year, the time when soaking showers, warmth and increased sunlight synchronize to inspire the whole generative cycle. While many effects of acid rain are well documented, it has only recently been shown that acid rain can cause a thinning of the shells of nesting birds and can in fact be as dangerous to birds and their reproductive cycles as DDT was. Researchers in the Netherlands have found that passerines, particularly the great tits that nest in forests, are producing eggs with thin, porous shells. Toxins were ruled out as the cause which remained a mystery until researchers also found that snails, the birds' principal sources of calcium, were disappearing from the forest floor due to the acidity of the soil. To replace this missing

calcium, birds flew up to a mile to raid local chicken farms and picnic sites for eggshells. Spiders, interestingly, provide 10% of these birds requirement of calcium. Liming the soil restored the snail population and the shells of the nesting birds. These links were discovered, according to Kenneth Rosenberg of Cornell, because Europeans monitor their bird populations more closely than Americans do.

April remains a time of hope, however, despite all that we know of the noxious effects of urban society. In our neighborhood, people who have left their lots of land in a natural state are reaping the rewards of their neglect. In the thicket out front, White-throated Sparrows sing every morning, and last week a Fox Sparrow sang. A neighbor has attracted a pair of Screech Owls to nest in a box, perhaps because he has left a low spot in his drive where a puddle of water collects. This spa seems to have become the owls' favorite twilight bathing spot. We watched the female in the trees at dusk the other night, as she sang a kind of whisper song, sotto voce, as the male flew in to feed her. We wished them well. The ancient courtship songs of these birds resound with hope and promise, oblivious to the hazards our urban society.



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

Tish Noyes

On Monday evening **May 9** at 7:45 pm at the Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Blair Nikula and Roger Everett will present a program entitled "Birding the Beeches: Spring Migration in Provincetown." For many, the spring migration is the highlight of the birding year. On Cape Cod, the premier spring birding hot spot is the Beech Forest. Drawing upon Roger's extensive slide collection, Blair Nikula will give us an overview of spring migration and a typical season in Provincetown.

Nominating Committee Report

Frank Caruso (Chairperson), Sally Clifton, Bessie Tirrell.

This is the proposed slate of Directors to be voted on at the May 9th meeting.

Officers

President - Richard Hall
Vice President - Tom Noonan
Secretary - Susan Thompson
Treasurer - Mark Tuttle

New Board Members

Donald Scott (for three years)

Jinks Keil (for ~~three~~ years) *2 = Kate Wallace*

Head of the 1994-1995 Nominating Committee

Kay Walcott
Ruth Connaughton - 3

Help Needed

Anyone who would be interested in helping Peter Trimble and his students with breeding bird work in Sandwich, please call him at 477-3847. You should be willing to work with 8th graders. If you can identify birds by ear, that would be a plus.

Mass Audubon seeks volunteers to assist with their Grassland Bird Research this summer in locations on the upper and lower Cape. Volunteers will be asked to play recordings of bird songs in areas already established as nesting territories for these species, and to record bird responses. Get in touch with Tish Noyes at 349-2615 or 255-9810. A meeting will be held in early May for those interested.

Mid-Cape Breeding Bird Census

Saturday, June 11th. Mid-Cape Breeding Bird Census followed by the Annual CCBC Picnic at Flax Pond Picnic Area. The picnic starts at noon. If you can't help with the census, come to the picnic and listen to the tally. Get to Flax Ponds Picnic Area by taking Exit 8 off the Mid-Cape. Go south to the traffic light. Then go east on White's Path to Great Western. Turn right on Great Western until N. Main Street (a short distance). Take a right on N. Main until Flax Pond entrance on right, just prior to the Windsor Nursing Home. From Route 28, go north at traffic light just west of Bass River. This is N. Main Street. Proceed past Windsor Nursing Home to Flax Pond entrance on the left. Peter Trimble. 477-6348.

FIELD TRIPS

Ruth Connaughton

May

Wednesday, May 4nd. Falmouth, 8 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6068.

Tuesday, May 10th. Yarmouth. 8 am. Meet in playground on Route 6A. Bob Scott, 362-4866.

Wednesday, May 11th. Blair's evening walk at the Harwich Conservation Area. 5:30 pm. Meet at Bell's Neck Rd. in West Harwich. Bring a picnic if you like. Blair Nikula 432-6348.

Saturday, May 14th. Open Option Off Cape Trip with Dick Comeau. 7 am. Meet in the Burger King parking lot at the intersection of Route 6 and 132. Bring a lunch. 432-9033.

Sunday, May 15th. Orleans, Sea Call Farm, 9 am. Meet at the parking lot of the farm on Tonset Road. Jim Talin, 896-7169.

Friday, May 20th. Provincetown, 8:00 am. Meet at the Beech Forest Parking Lot. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

Thursday, May 26th. Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. 8 am to 10 am. Meet in the parking lot. A naturalist will lead. 349-2615.

Beech Forest Weekends. There will be a leader at the Beech Forest in Provincetown every Saturday and Sunday during May. Meet at 8 am in the parking lot.

June

Wednesday, June 1st. Falmouth, 8 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6068.

Saturday June 4th. Yarmouthport-Dennis Pond. 8 am. Met at the pond on Summer Street off Route 6A just before you get to Barnstable. Mark Tuttle. 362-3015.

Tuesday, June 7th. Yarmouth. 8 am. Meet in playground on Route 6A. Bob Scott, 362-4866.

Friday, June 10th. Fort Hill and Down Cape, 8 am. Meet in the lower parking lot, Fort Hill. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

Saturday, June 11th. Mid-Cape Breeding Bird Census followed by the Annual CCBC Picnic at Flax Pond Picnic Area.

Summer Walks

Friday, July 15th. Fort Hill, Eastham. 8 am. Meet in the lower parking lot. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

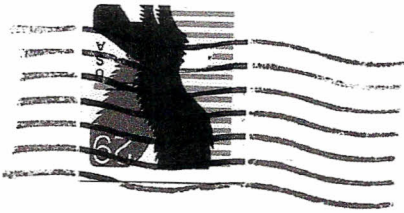
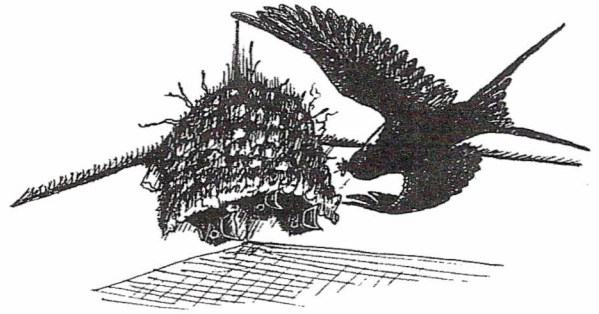
Friday, August 19th. Fort Hill, Eastham. 8 am. Meet in the lower parking lot. Bessie Tirrell, 432-9248.

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined during the past two months.

Linda McLean, Brewster; Jane Kelly, East Falmouth; Charlene Babcock, Brewster; Donna Bohannon, Orleans; Roselaine Cheslock, Brewster; Roger Beatty, Truro; Barry Good, Hachville; Tom & Beverly Hammel, Sandwich.

Frank Caruso
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale, MA 02644



The Cape Cod Museum Of Natural History
PO BOX 1710, Brewster, MA 02631

Cape Cod Bird Club

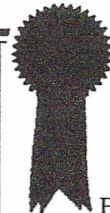


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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

turn leased the farm with the goal of preserving its agricultural heritage and creating a nature sanctuary. The Supporters have asked the Bird Club to help them in this effort. Despite the Farm's modest size, it possesses a remarkable variety of habitats: shore front on Town Cove, woods, thickets, a bluff, a dwelling, gardens and a field. In short, all the ingredients necessary to make a superb pocket sanctuary.

We've talked about establishing a feeding station; planting a sparrow field similar to the chicken farm in Truro; scheduling walks (the first of which will be this May) and providing interpretive materials; and occasional help with landscaping and simple maintenance. So far our discussions have been very preliminary. There are any number of exciting ways in which the Club could get involved, determined solely by our members' willingness to do so. Anyone who would like to be part of this project should call me at 945-4882 or Ruth Connaughton at 432-1580.



Two Jobs Well Done

For the past three years, George Martin has faithfully and efficiently seen to it that the Cape's many weekly newspapers have received a steady stream of notices detailing the Club's various walks and programs. When George accepted this assignment, he promptly bought himself a computer and taught himself to type. Unfortunately for us, the Club's By Laws mandate strict terms limits, and George's term as Director is over.

Meanwhile Kate Wallace, Refreshments Director, is leaving before her term is officially over to accept a challenging Peace Corps assignment teaching environmental education in the Dominican Republic. The Board reluctantly accepts her resignation provided Kate sends us a tropical birding report, preferably in February, when we'll all need a hit of Caribbean sunshine.