



Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 24

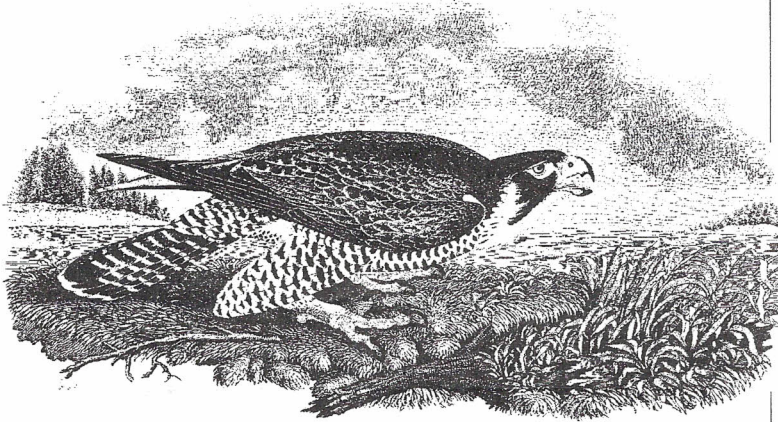
NOVEMBER ~ DECEMBER 1994

ISSUE 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard D. Hall

I've been feeling quite blessed lately. After years in city government, it has been my good fortune to spend many hours this past summer leading field trips on Monomoy Island and Nauset Marsh for the Museum of Natural History. And I've been thinking a bit how I came to this curious point in my life. Oddly enough, it has to do with Politics, more in the sense the ancient Greeks understood the term than the disrepute the word implies today.



For the Greeks, Politics was nothing less than the essence of daily life. To be alive was per force to live among others. The organization of one's actions in relation to others was the Greeks' simple but profound definition of Politics. One's conduct could be prudent or wise, reckless or destructive, or any variation in between. Whatever it was, everyone contributed to or detracted from society according to this vision. As we approach our biennial national election, it is worth thinking about what the Greeks knew and we seem to have forgotten. Many would agree that our civic discourse too often combines the worst of acrimony and triviality. Watching candidates bicker and commentators bloviate is not a pretty sight. Small wonder then that people turn away in disgust.

A birding friend once said: "Why don't politicians just leave us alone so we can enjoy birds and nature!" Such a thought is understandably appealing but absolutely wrong headed. As Cape Codders who love our natural environment, it is vital that we have some grasp of the complex matrix of policy, legislation, and bureaucracy which determine our collective future. Standing on Monomoy the other day watching a three minute aerial duel between a Tree Swallow and a Peregrine, it occurred to me that this may never have happened had it not been

Continued on Page 4

1993-1994 Feeder Census Report

John Redfern

After a record year two years ago when an average of 65.9 birds were seen at each feeder each month, results of the 1993-94 feeder census show a decrease in the number of birds seen per feeder. 1993-94 dropped below the 14 year average, back to the level of 1991-92; 52.9 birds were seen per feeder per month in 1993-94 compared to 52.3 in 1991-92. The average over the fourteen years we've conducted the census is 58.3. Perhaps the low numbers in 1993-94 are due to the record low temperatures and heavy snowfall. In 1991-92 we suspected hurricane Bob may have had an effect.

The rankings as listed below show no surprises. Seven of the top ten species have been there all fourteen years of the census. Cardinals have been there eight times and crows six. Only the Tufted Titmouse is a relative newcomer to the top ten; this is its second appearance, even though it has always been in the top fifteen. As always, the chickadee leads the list in percentage of feeders at which it was seen. Overall, a total of 50 species were seen; this is slightly lower than usual. 41 members submitted census forms.

Birds Per Feeder

1. House Finch	5.70
2. Chickadee	5.23
3. Mourning Dove	4.89
4. Goldfinch	4.69
5. Blue Jay	3.13
6. Cardinal	3.02
7. Starling	2.63
8. Crow	2.40
9. House Sparrow	2.37
10. Tufted Titmouse	2.18

Percent of Feeders

1. Chickadee	97.4
2. Downy Woodpecker	86.3
3. Cardinal	85.9
4. Tufted Titmouse	82.8
5. Mourning Dove	82.4
6. Blue Jay	78.4
7. House Finch	77.1
8. Goldfinch	76.2
9. White Breasted Nuthatch	67.0
10. Crow	59.0

Jackie Sones

Seabirds. On 5 and 6 September we were lucky enough to experience some fairly strong northeast winds. Seabirds were blown into Cape Cod Bay, where they were best seen from First Encounter Beach in Eastham. It was difficult to determine how many birds were actually out there, but the following are some rough estimates: 2000+ Wilson's and Leach's Storm Petrels (mostly Leach's), 35 Northern Gannets, 25+ phalarope species, 30+ jaeger species, 10 Pomarine Jaegers, and 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes.

Hérons. Two Tricolored Herons were reported on South Monomoy throughout the month of August by various observers. Great Egrets were uncommon this year, with the maximum number being four, from South Monomoy on 9 August by Blair Nikula.

Shorebirds. The last sighting of the American Avocet that appeared during July was from North Monomoy during the first week of August by various observers. There seemed to be more Lesser Golden-Plovers around this year than last year. They were seen in a variety of places around the Cape, with maximum counts of six coming from South Monomoy and South Beach by Blair Nikula and Jackie Sones, respectively. Marbled Godwits reached a high count of ten on North Monomoy on 25 September. There was one Baird's Sandpiper reported from South Monomoy on 10 September by Jackie Sones. South Monomoy also produced the only sighting of Buff-breasted Sandpiper I heard about this fall (3 September by various observers). South Beach seemed to be the hot spot for shorebirds during August. If anyone was wondering about numbers, the following are some rough estimates by Blair Nikula: 2000 Black-bellied Plovers, 1800 Semipalmated Plovers, 115 Hudsonian Godwits, 1700 Red Knots, 2300 Sanderlings, and 1500 Semipalmated Sandpipers.

Remembering Bob Scott

Editor's Note. On Thursday morning October 20, Bob Scott died, and the Bird Club lost one of its most dedicated and popular members. Bob was one of the first to welcome new members, whether it be on a walk, a bird count or at a meeting. He had a warm smile, a quick wit, and a hint of mischievous merriment in his eyes. He was a good man and a generous friend. Bob Pease, who birded frequently with him, has written this remembrance.

Maybe forty times, Bob Scott asked me out with him in his boat, the Osprey. We went for fish and for birds, sometimes found both, others neither. But to go with him into Barnstable harbor and around the east bar or almost down



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

Gulls. There were quite a few sightings of Common Black-headed Gull this season. On 12 August Blair Nikula had two individuals on North Monomoy. He had another sighting of one individual on North Monomoy on 17 September. There was one individual reported from the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary throughout the month of September. There were three reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, all by Blair Nikula: one sub-adult on North Monomoy on 12 August, one adult on South Monomoy on 3 September, and one adult on North Monomoy on 13 September.

Black Tern. A high count of 24 Black Terns was reported off Sandy Neck on 29 August by Peter Trimble.

Short-eared Owl. One sighting of this rare species was reported from South Monomoy on 29 August by Rich Hall.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Two individuals were reported this fall, both from Morris Island: one on 10 September by Mark Tuttle, and one on 13 September by Blair Nikula.

Thrushes. There were 8+ Veeries and 6+ Swainson's Thrushes reported from Morris Island on 13 September by Blair Nikula and Jackie Sones.

Warblers and Vireos. The second weekend in September produced sightings of up to 23 species of warblers and 5 species of Vireos on Morris Island in Chatham. Highlights included a Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Warbling Vireo reported by Jeremiah Trimble and a Golden-winged Warbler reported by Blair Nikula. One Connecticut Warbler was reported on North Monomoy on 25 September by Rich Hall and other observers.

Lark Sparrow. Two individuals were reported: one from South Monomoy on 3 September by Jackie Sones, and one from Morris Island on 4 September by Blair Nikula.

Report sightings to Jackie Sones & Blair Nikula at 432-6348.

to Scorton Creek (he was always cautious) was an experience no matter how close to home we stayed. On the sixth of September, some years ago, when we couldn't find fish on the outside, he turned the boat back into the harbor, and we anchored at the innermost point in Mussel Cove. On foot, we crossed the old road to the lighthouse, climbed the embankment to the crest of the dune and sat there, clam flats and the point and the channel before us, sun at our backs, its light on a constantly changing multitude of birds. There were maybe two thousand common terns, some resting, others dipping or hovering over the incoming tide. One black tern came up behind us, joined the others and vanished. Sanderlings, more than a hundred, huddled together. Semipal plovers were everywhere, and semipal sandpipers ran on the closest beach. Flashing, black-and-white in the air, were two willets, while big spooky whimbrels came in calling, those long decurved bills somehow sinister 'mid so much intense feeding, refueling. Gulls, mostly ring-billed, clustered together. And there were yellow-legs, greater

Continued on Page 3

PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Ruth Connaughton

On Monday evening **November 14th** at 7:45 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, North Cairn will give a slide lecture entitled "*Monomoy: Paradise Found.*" North Cairn is an assistant editor at the Cape Cod Times where she writes a weekly nature column. She is also editor of the Museum of Natural History's publication, "Cape Naturalist". She spent a month living in the keepers cottage on South Monomoy.

On Monday evening **December 12th** at 7:45 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Roger Everett will present a program of *slides taken at the Blackwater Refuge in Cambridge, Maryland; and at Chincoteague, a barrier beach in Virginia.* Roger has gathered his slides together to inform club members about these refuges which he has visited many times over the years. Roger's excellent photos have combined with his good sense of humor to create some of the club's most memorable programs.

Remembering Bob Scott *Continued from Page 2*

and lesser, as well as one quite-at-home, though seemingly out of place, Hudsonian godwit.

As the tide moved in over the flats, all this teeming assemblage kept shifting positions. We watched yellow-legs in teams running through shallows, the water before them boiling with minnows corralled and fleeing, those long saffron legs scissoring in the sunlight. We watched as at least sixty dowitchers appeared and disappeared, bills, almost half as long as their bodies, incessantly plunging into the watery sand. The sounds of so many species calling and crying filled us, the bent plaintive note of the black-bellied plover, hollow voices of gulls, chrring of terns, chittering of semipalmated plovers, a music turbulent and formless, an orchestra tuning up, a chorus whose only conductor was Life. Then, suddenly as a clap of thunder, every bird before us was in the air. Five thousand? Ten thousand? What put them up? Off the open water and through the panicked swarm came a single parasitic jaeger, falcon of the seas, swift pitiless predator. He came as a black missile from outer space and never paused, shot through and beyond the dunes and was gone, and all the birds settled down again, resumed feeding and resting and communing among themselves.

I owe this one to you, Bob Scott. No way I ever thanked you enough for this and the gift of true friendship.

The Cape Cod Bird Club

is an organization whose members are interested in the protection and conservation of the bird life and natural resources of Cape Cod.

If you are interested in joining, please send a check for \$10 single membership, \$15 family membership to CCBC, Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, PO Box 1710, Brewster, MA 02631.

FIELD TRIPS

Jinks Keil

November

Wednesday, **November 2nd.** Falmouth. 9:00 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6086.

Sunday, **November 6th.** Fort Hill. 9:00 am. Meet in the lower parking lot. Art King, 255-8919.

Saturday **November 12th.** Sandy Neck and Ponds in West Barnstable. 8:00 am. Meet at Sandy Neck Parking Lot. Stouffer Miller 362-3384.

Saturday **November 26th.** Nauset Beach. 9:00 am. Meet in the parking lot. Jim Talin. 896-7169.

Wednesday, **November 30th.** Falmouth. 9:00 am. Meet behind Town Hall, Falmouth Center. Mary Ropes, 548-6086.

December

Saturday and Sunday, **December 3rd & 4th.** Annual Waterfowl Count. Sign up at November 14 Meeting or call Blair Nikula. 432-6348.

Wednesday, **December 7th.** Wellfleet and Points North. 8:30 am. Meet in parking lot of P.J.'s on Route 6 just before traffic light for Wellfleet Center. Stouffer Miller 362-3384.

Sunday, **December 11th.** Fort Hill. 9:00 am. Meet in the lower parking lot. Art King, 255-8919.

Sunday, **December 18th.** Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count. Sign up at the December 12th meeting, or call Blair Nikula at 432-6348.

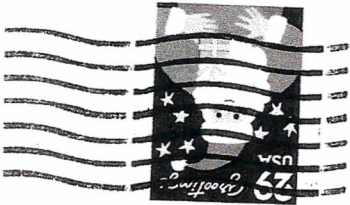
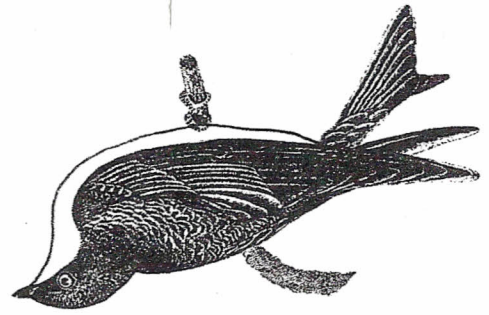
Record of Sightings

Elinor Miller is building a database of bird sightings on Cape Cod from January 1990 to the present in order to look for seasonality trends in bird appearances. She is getting her data from **Bird Observer** but would appreciate receiving any other sightings that may not have been included in that publication. If you have any records to share with her, call 362-3384.

New Members

The Clubs extends a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined recently. **Mandy Chandler** of North Eastham; **John Collins & family**-Harwichport; **Betty Comey**-Provincetown; **Than Drake**-Brewster; **Melinda & Brian Forist**-Yarmouthport; **Cliff & Carol Friedman**-Marstons Mills; **Laura Gill & Susan Schwartz** of Eastham; **Edward Grew**-Oronto, Maine; **Gail Martino** -Watertown; **Nancy & George Madison**-Chatham; **Audrey Nicholson**-Orleans; **Sari & Howard Rosenbaum**-Portland, CT; **Barbara Stanton**-Simsbury, CT and Eastham; **Kathy Thomas and family**-Cotuit; **John Tighe**-Truro; **Carolyn Weiss** -Franklin Lakes, N. J. & East Dennis; **Theresa Gavin**-Harwich; **Edward & Beverly Collins** -West Ridding, CT; **Bob Ayers**-Cataumet; **Mary O'Connell** -West Yarmouth; **Lisa Platanitis**-South Yarmouth. *Page 3*

Frank Caruso
17 Freedom Rd
Forestdale, MA 02644



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



Continued from Page 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard D. Hall

for aggressive political intervention. Imagine, for instance, that the falcon was fledged with the aid of State Fish and Wildlife rangers on Boston's Custom House Tower, and the swallow was raised in a nesting box erected by wardens on Plum Island. Would they have collided over Monomoy were it not a federally protected Wilderness Area?

Make no mistakes about it. Our greatest natural treasures and the weapons to preserve them do not come to us by accident. The Wetlands Protection Act, The Seashore National Park, and locally owned conservation land are first and foremost hard fought political triumphs. To pretend otherwise by disdaining Politics is to imperil that which we most cherish.

DUES ARE DUE

The mailing list will be revised very shortly. If you have not paid 1994-1995 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 play promptly.

According to our records **your** dues for 1994-1995

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-Treasurer
PO Box 635, Barnstable, MA 02630