



# Cape Cod Bird Club

VOLUME 25

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ISSUE 1

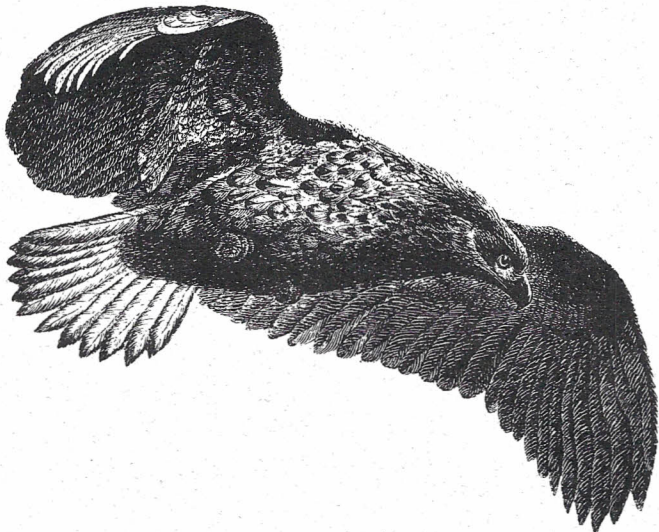
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Don Scott*

The beginning of a new season marks not only the fledging of a new president, but also a complete new slate of Club officers. Filling the shoes of Richie Hall, Sue Thompson and Mark Tuttle will not be easy. The forward thinking of this trio, and those who served with them on the Board, has moved the Club to new levels in every way. We will do our best to follow this tradition.

As most members know, the production of this newsletter is due greatly to the efforts of Jim Talin and Tom Noonan. When the newsletter expanded from four to our current six (sometimes eight) pages, articles were contributed by a number of members. More recently, however, Jim has become the primary source for material. So consider this paragraph a HELP WANTED! ad. There are many budding essayists lurking throughout our membership! Don't be shy. Share your talents and experiences with all of us. Submissions can be long, short, or shorter! But do join in!

This coming December will mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Cape Cod Bird Club. The next issue of the newsletter will focus on this momentous event.



Over the past three years, the Club's finances have moved from a state of constant struggle to a solid level of comfort. Two factors have created this positive situation: significant growth in membership and the collaboration with Massachusetts Audubon on publication of the very successful *Birding Cape Cod*, now in a second printing. As a result of this financial turnaround, the Board voted last

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## FALL WARBLERS AND A PRODUCTIVE ROUTE TO VIEW THEM

*Stauffer Miller*

The fall warbler season on Cape Cod is a fleeting time that runs from about the last week of August till the last week of September, and thus might be better termed the late summer warbler season. Indeed, by the time fall arrives, great numbers of these birds have moved to our south.

*"Confusing fall warblers"  
...for several reasons  
I do not like this phrase.*

Fall warblers are often referred to as "confusing fall warblers". For several reasons, I do not like this phrase. First, although several warbler species such as Chestnut-sided, Pine, Blackpoll, and Bay-breast are greatly changed from their spring appearance, a great many others are little changed, and therefore are not confusing. Second, because of this term I fear that many birders are intimidated by the idea of getting out in the "fall" and looking for these birds. This is unfortunate because we can ill-afford to pass up our second and last chance of the year to enjoy this highly pleasurable group of birds. Plus, it's a wonderful time of the year to be out.

Finding fall warblers on the Cape is not easy but there are a few things you can do to improve your chances of success. Foremost is knowing how to pick your spots and times. Look for a line of low shrubs and scrubby trees that are oriented toward the east, that is, will be hit by the first rays of the rising sun. Warblers, often mixed with Chickadees, will move up into this sort of vegetation as it is warmed. Best times are about 6:45 to 8:30. A calm morning after passage of a cold front is ideal. Try to keep yourself between the sun and the vegetation.

There are many fall warbler routes that could be worked out, but one that I have liked follows. From exit 6 of Route 6 go north on route 132 and make a left onto Oak Street. Go 0.7 miles and pull in to the left under the power lines. Check the shrubs that face east. Continue to Race Lane and go right (west). Watch for Walnut Street on the left. Turn right at this intersection onto an unsigned sand road and go to the orange posts. Walk in, again checking the shrubs and trees that face east. Return to Race Lane and continue west to Crooked Cartway. Turn right and park at

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*Jim Talin*

**Trouble Out West**

There is an old saying that politics is a diabolical parody of theater and that politicians are really just bad actors. Many voters tacitly accept this proposition when they vote for politicians and never expect them to enact their campaign promises. But surprises do happen, and this year many Republicans who voted for the current freshman class of zealous anti-environmentalists have found themselves regretting their votes.

The Republican party has a heritage of conservationism. It is the party of Teddy Roosevelt, the founder of American conservationism, and it is the party of Richard Nixon, who signed more environmental legislation than any other president. So it should be no surprise that local Republican activists in the West are working hard to control the damage being done to their interests by their Republican representatives in Washington. The Republican sweep in the West put anti-environmentalist into power. Right away, the Natural Resources Committee had its name changed to the Resources Committee. Its goal became to sell public lands, restrict the Forest Service, weaken the Clean Water Act, remove regulations from mining, timber and grazing interests, and even close some national parks. If there were any question about who ran things, when it came time to rewrite the Endangered Species Act, the new version was drafted by the people most interested in weakening it, the aluminum, timber, agricultural, and oil lobbyists.

In an article, 'Look Who's Hugging Trees Now,' The NY Times reveals that the opposition that has sidetracked many of these radical initiatives has come from within the Republican Party, from the local, Western activists who should be the staunch supporters of their party in Washington. When it came time to reintroduce bears and wolves to the open land of the West, loggers met with

environmentalists. "We found out that we didn't hate each other," Alex Irby, a sawmill manager said of environmentalists in the NY Times. "Turns out, we all like to do a lot of the same things. We love the outdoors." Other conservative Republicans are quoted in the article as saying, the party has been "mislead by zealots." "If anybody says people in rural Utah don't want wilderness, we say prove it." And some conservative Western Republicans are even going to vote for Democrats this year.

The result has been a moderation (more tactical than real) in Washington. Even Newt Gingrich will now admit: "The polling data are overwhelming. Most Americans agree with the goals of the environmental movement."

**BASIC BIRDING**

*Kathleen Casey*


**Memorable Experiences**

There are certain birding experiences which have increased my amazement and furthered my insight into the avian species. Some of the most memorable include my first look at shore birds through a scope at West Dennis Beach, the May visit of the warblers at the Beech Forest, the sudden quiet on the morning a Sharp-shinned Hawk landed by the backyard feeder, and the first visit of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. This past summer I've been lucky to add to this list by volunteering at WILDCARE.

WILDCARE runs under the auspices of the Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, but without any of its financial assistance. Its existence depends solely upon donations of time, supplies, and money. Karen Von den Deale, the Director, is a licensed rehabilitator who spends most of her waking hours caring for orphaned or injured wildlife, including birds. The aim of the organization is to return animals to their native habitat.

In June I saw a notice in the newspaper seeking volunteers to assist with feeding the baby birds at WILDCARE. I called and scheduled a 3 hour block of time. After filling out an application, reading a general information and sheet and a volunteer responsibility sheet, I was introduced to my charges, and shown the feeding, cleaning, and caring procedures. I would be feeding nestlings and juveniles who were on 20, 30, or 60 minute schedules, some inside and others ,soon-to-be-released, outside, in large cages.

Hours and weeks sped by, and I gained a new respect for all birds, in particular the dutiful parents. I experienced an awareness that walks, guides, and lectures had not been able to provide. For instance, young birds did one of three things: slept, ate, or pooped, and while I was on duty, they did the latter two constantly! Different species had different protein requirements, and thus diets varied.



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

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## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Jackie Sones

May ~ June ~ July

Hello! I hope everyone had a good summer! Sincere apologies for not publishing bird sightings during the last two newsletters. My life was a bit crazy at the time and many smaller projects, like this column, unfortunately fell by the wayside. Things are going smoother now and I'm glad to continue writing about recent bird sightings.

While compiling sightings for the bird club during the past three years, I've sometimes wondered whether or not it was a worthwhile project; e.g., whether or not anyone read the sightings column and whether or not it was valuable information. I have come to believe that this column illustrates the Cape Cod Bird Club's interest in documenting various aspects of local bird life: seasonal highlights, the occurrence of uncommon species, trends in populations, notable behaviors, etc. I sincerely hope the members of the club agree!

I'd like to encourage more members of the club to submit bird sightings for publication. If you'd like to report a sighting, you may do so in any of the ways listed at the end of this column. It is very helpful to include your name and phone number, the bird's name, the number of individuals, the date and location of your sighting, and any other information you've gathered!

**Seabirds.** During the month of July many people aboard whale-watching boats reported good numbers of Greater and Sooty Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-Petrels. After Hurricane Bertha passed by Cape Cod approximately 1,000 shearwaters (about 500 Greater, 500 Sooty, and a few Manx Shearwaters) were counted off Race Point in Provincetown.

**Gulls and Terns.** One Royal Tern was seen in East Orleans on May 25 by Seward Highley. Two Sooty Terns were reported during the week after Hurricane Bertha. One was observed off a whale-watching boat by Peter Trimble. The other was found dead on New Island in Nauset Marsh by Brendan Annett, a seasonal naturalist at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. One Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported from First Encounter Beach on July 14 by Rick Heil. Blair Nikula saw two Lesser Black-backed Gulls on North Monomoy Island on July 27; both of them were first-year birds.

**Rails and Bitterns.** One King Rail was heard calling near the West Harwich Conservation Area throughout the month of June. It was originally heard, seen, and taped by Stauffer Miller. Stauffer also discovered a Least Bittern calling in Cotuit, at a site very close to where the Wood Stork was seen in 1994. One female Wilson's Plover was seen on North Monomoy Island in Chatham on May 4 by Blair Nikula. This handsome southern species occasionally finds its way to Massachusetts.

**Chuck-will's Widow.** Three Chuck-will's Widows were

heard on Cape Cod this year. One was singing in Chatham for a couple days, while the other two were heard in Wellfleet. Steve Broker recorded one near the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp in South Wellfleet on July 22 and 23.

**Red-headed Woodpecker.** On May 24 Roger Everett was lucky enough to have seen a Red-headed Woodpecker at his feeder in Brewster.

**Yellow-headed Blackbirds.** Kathy McGinley reported at least 25 Bobolinks at a field in East Orleans on May 19. Three adult male Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported during the middle of June: one at the Provincetown Airport on June 16 by John Alciati, one at a feeder near Mill Pond in Chatham on June 19 by Eleanor Gelsey, and one at Otis Air Force Base on June 20 by Alex McCloud.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed reports! To submit bird sightings in the future, call Jackie or Blair at 508-432-6348, send regular mail to 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA, 02646, send email to odenews@capecod.net, or come to a bird club meeting and tell us about your observations!

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## BASIC BIRDING

Kathleen Casey

I fed the young with a syringe or a stick, and cleaned the flanges, or bill of the nestlings, to prevent bacterial growth. Blue Jays were very polite eaters, Cedar Waxwings loved fresh blueberries, and Starlings were clumsy and clown-like. Finches had to be fed carefully, since their crop, or throat pouch, was filled quickly. The wing flutter and loud cheep was a "feed me" behavior exhibited by all.

Similar species were kept together. Nestlings were kept warm in tissue-lined baskets or margarine tubs, some of which were placed on heating pads. The round nest shape would help form the bird's wings. Juveniles were housed in cages lined with paper towels or newspaper. Branches were used as perches, and food and water was always provided. Outside, older juveniles had space to practice flying and search the earth for insects.

Weekly I returned and found that some of my charges had been released, while a few had been too ill to survive. There were always new admissions, whose parents had been unfortunately killed or injured by predators, but fortunately these young had found a foster home at WILDCARE.



Wild Care

## ONE DAY IN MAY

Jim Talin

*The following is a report that describes various experiences birding on Saturday May 11 in different parts of New England. In some places, May 11 was a fantastic day with more birds than could be counted; in other places it was a good day, perhaps the first really good day of the season. Here are some perspectives on the day.*

When Seward Highly, Sally Clifton and Dick Comeau left Cape Cod early in the morning on May 11, their goal was to bird Newburyport. It was only as an after-thought, at Seward's insistence, that they decided to stop at Mount Auburn Cemetery. Little did they know that once they stopped, they would not leave the cemetery until 4:30 that evening. They had a "fabulous day...a mind-boggling day" according to Seward. Vivid in his memory were the birds bathing in the pond; there were always 6 or 7 birds bathing together, including Scarlet Tanagers, a Cape May Warbler (the only one Seward saw all season), Swainson's, Hermit and Wood Thrushes, and Veerys. They stood without moving beside the pool for an hour and a half, watching birds go in and out. In that area, they also saw Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Solitary Vireos. Elsewhere a Whip-poor-will perched on a branch for all to see throughout the day; a Red-tailed Hawk ate a squirrel in a tree; two male Indigo Buntings were in another tree. In the distance throughout the day, Fish Crows called. One birder said that 78 species of birds had been sighted by 10 am.

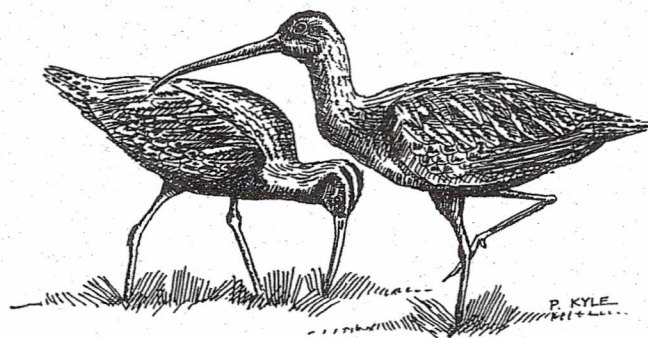
Richie Hall recounts this experience on Plum Island. "The idea was to arrive with a van load of museum birders on Plum Island as close to 8 am as possible and work our way quickly to Hell Cat Swamp at mid-island. One 100 yards inside the main gate, we encountered redstarts, parulas, yellow warblers, and 3 brown thrashers in the brush. Still I wouldn't let anyone out of the van. At the salt pans a little further along, we made a short stop. The sky was misty gray with a chill onshore breeze. Suddenly we were engulfed. Magnolias, Black-throated Blues, grosbeaks, tanagers and White-crowned Sparrows by the dozens. It took 2 hours to get to Hell Cat where the show started all over again. Later in the day, Margaret Argue, the doyenne of Bay State birders and friend of Ludlow Griscom, said to me: "This is the single best day of birding I've had in 20 years."

At Cherry Hill in Marshfield, Fahy Bygate had a "wonderful day birding." She saw orioles, vireos, Indigo Buntings, Kingbirds, three kinds of thrushes and twelve species of warblers. Good as the day was, however, it was not as good as the next weekend when she had 13 species of warblers move through her backyard in 35 minutes. "THAT," she says, "was the best birding day of my life, I think. It is hard to believe it happened."

Jim and Sue Talin went on the Bird Club's walk in Beech Forest, led by Blair Nikula. It was a good walk, with a

respectable number of birds sighted. There were not many people at Beech Forest that day, so Sue and Jim decided to walk the ridge trail before leaving. On the ridge, they discovered pockets of birds here and there, always comprised of similar numbers and species. "At first it seemed like we were seeing the same birds over and over again," Sue said, "But then, one tree filled up with 6-8 Chickadees, that just landed, took off and disappeared, and I realized that small waves of birds that were passing through. It was really exciting." So, they stayed in Beech Forest for over 5 hours, and saw 16 species of warblers that day, including a Tennessee Warbler, numerous Black-throated Blues and Black-throated Greens, as well as Blackburnian, Canada, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided and Nashville Warblers.

Peter Trull was in a boat that afternoon, 13 miles ENE of Race Point, and was surprised when birds began to land on board. His catch that day included 6 Yellow-rumps, 2 Yellows, a Black-throated Green, a Black-throated Blue, 2 Magnolia, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a Rusty Blackbird, Chestnut-sided, a Wood Thrush, a Goldfinch, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Water Pipit. Peter also saw 5 Barn Swallows, a Chimney Swift and a Black Tern as they flew by the boat. At one point, when he tried to take a picture of the birds, a Magnolia Warbler landed on his camera lens.



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## FALL WARBLERS AND A PRODUCTIVE ROUTE TO VIEW THEM

Stauffer Miller

the end of this short street. Walk till fields are visible on the right, and then walk the tree line between the field and the sand road. If you are inclined, there is yet another stop. Continue west on Race Lane into Sandwich, then left on Boardley, then left on Harlow to South Sandwich Road. Watch for "Ryder Conservation Lands" on the right. Go to the lower parking area. Good warblering. And remember. They're not really very confusing.

## PROGRAMS/ MEETINGS

Ruth Connaughton

On Monday evening, **September 9**, at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Peter Trull will start off this 25th anniversary of the Cape Cod Bird Club with an exciting program on the natural history of Stellwagen Bank. This program will feature the designation of Stellwagen Bank as a National Marine Sanctuary; and, although marine mammals and sea birds will be the highlights, Peter will mention other aspects of a marine sanctuary from insects to migrating warblers. Peter is a field naturalist who is in his 5th year as a naturalist for the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown where he conducts research and photography on the whales of the Gulf of Maine. For eight years he has been conducting the Bird Watcher's Report on WFCC. He is the author of *A Guide to the Common Birds of Cape Cod* and will have copies of the book at the September meeting (and perhaps copies of his new book, a children's book about terns).

On Monday evening, **October 14**, at 7:30 pm at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Route 6A in Brewster, Mara Silver will present a program on Cliff Swallows. Mara is a graduate of the College of the Atlantic and is a field ornithologist based in western Massachusetts. Mara has been studying Cliff Swallows under the auspices of the Mass. Audubon Society and the Endangered Species Program since 1991. Some of her research experimentation includes work on sea birds in coastal Maine and in the British Isles.

## A THANK YOU

Janet Silverio

I sincerely want to thank all the people who provided cookies for our meetings last year. You made my job as cookie chairperson "a lark."

Thanks to: Lois Tillson, Pat Bergfors, Randy (Nell) Gramer, Kathleen Edwards, Kay Wolcott, Lillian Marchant, Janet Lyon, Gemma Mathews (2), Kathleen Casey and Tom Noonan, Barbara Stanton (2), Jean Dana, Ellie Winslow, Jane Kelly, Margot Hakes, Anne Swift, Barbara Godard, Charlotte Smith, Bessie Tirrell, Bobsie Whitlock, Ron Hindman (Mrs.), Katie Redfern, Marge Marion, Karen Wilson and Sue Handy.

I am doing the same job this year and will be asking for your help.

So, thanks again.

## WALKS & FIELD TRIPS

Kathy McGinley

### September

Saturday, **September 7th**. Morris Island Chatham. 9:00AM. Meet at the Parking Lot of Morris Island Wildlife Refuge. Leaders: Tom Noonan 394-4588 & JimTalin 896-7169.

Sunday, **September 8th**. Fort Hill, Eastham. 8:00 AM. Meet at the lower parking lot. Leader: Art King 255-8919.

Wednesday, **September 11th**. Sandwich. 8:00AM. Meet at Stop&Shop on Rt. 6A. Leader: Bessie Tirrell 432-9348.

Saturday, **September 14th**. Wellfleet. Chequesset & Duck Harbor Rd. Area Walk 7:00AM - Meet at Wellfleet Town Pier Leader: Stauffer Miller 362-3384.

Monday, **September 16th**. 7:00 AM. Falmouth Town Forest. Meet inside first gate, north of DPW on Gifford St. Leader: Alison Robb 540-2408.

Thursday, **September 26th**. Yarmouthport. Dennis Pond and Conservation area. 8:00 AM. Take Summer St off Rt. 6A (at blinking light), continue past railroad tracks & park at edge of pond. Leader: Mark Tuttle 362-3015.

### October

Sunday, **October 6th**. Fort Hill, Eastham. 8:00 AM. Meet in the lower parking area. Leader: Art King 255-8919

Wednesday, **October 9th**. Sandwich. 8:00 AM. Meet at the Stop & Shop on Rt 6A Leader: Bessie Tirrell 432-9248.

Wednesday, **October 23rd**. Falmouth. 9:00 AM. Meet behind Town Hall, Main Street. Leader: Alison Robb 540-2408.

Saturday, **October 26th**. East Sandwich & W. Barnstable. 7:45 AM. Meet at Cemetery at intersection of Rt. 149 & 6A. Stauffer Miller 362-3384.

Tuesday, **October 29th**. Bell's Neck, Harwich. 8:00AM. Meet at Bell's Neck Conservation area, West Harwich. Leader: Ruth Connaughton 432-1580.



# Cape Cod Bird Club

1996-1997

## FEEDER CENSUS

**Directions:** Use this form to report birds feeding at your feeders or on natural food in your yard on the first complete weekend in each of the months listed. Watch your feeders on Saturday and Sunday (or 2 consecutive days near the weekend), and record the highest number of each of the species observed at one time. (Example: if on Saturday you see at one time 3 chickadees, record 3. If later that day or on Sunday, you see 5 at one time, cross out 3 and record 5. If later you see 2 or any number less than

5, don't record it.) Do not accumulate the number seen.

Record the dates you conduct the census at the top of each column. Species not on the list can be added in the spaces at the bottom of the list. Notes about special feeds, bird behavior, etc. can be put on the back of the sheet.

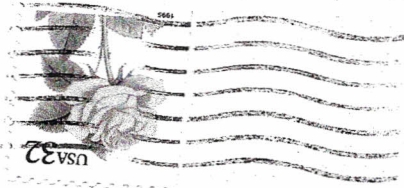
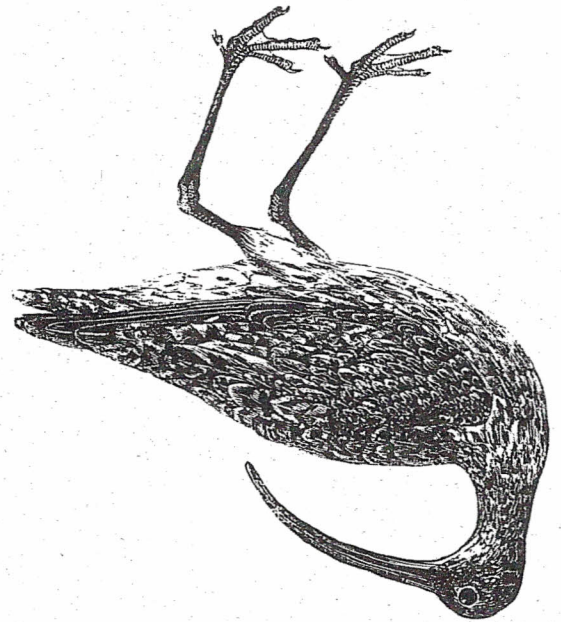
Return this form at the April meeting or mail it to: CCBC, c/o Museum of Natural History, Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631

	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
Bobwhite						
Mourning Dove	4					
Flicker						
Hairy Woodpecker	2					
Downy Woodpecker	3					
Blue Jay	2					
Crow	3					
Black-Capped Chickadee	4					
Tufted Titmouse	3					
White-Breasted Nuthatch	1					
Red-Breasted Nuthatch						
Robin						
Cedar Waxwing						
Mockingbird						
Starling						
Yellow-Rumped Warbler						
House Sparrow						
Red-Winged Blackbird						
Grackle						
Cowbird						
Cardinal	1					
House Finch	10					
Goldfinch	1					
Junco	1					
Tree Sparrow						
White-Throated Sparrow						
Song Sparrow						
Sharp-shinned Hawk						
Cooper's Hawk						
Red-bellied Woodpecker						
Carolina Wren						
Golden-crowned kinglet	2					

Name FRANK CARUSO

Address (census location) 17 FREEDOM ROAD, FORESTDALE

Frank Caruso  
Barbara Steller  
17 Freedom Rd  
Forestdale, MA 02644-1725



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



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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Don Scott

spring to make donations to two of our closest associates: Massachusetts Audubon at Wellfleet and the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. Several years ago, the Club pledged \$500 to Audubon, but has never been able to make the payment. Our donation fulfilled this pledge and added an additional \$500 for a total contribution of \$1000. The contribution to the Museum of Natural History was also \$500.

Two final notes in this pot pourri presentation. This issue of the newsletter will be printed on recycled paper. Hopefully we will be able to continue this practice.

And, due to popular demand, our meetings in the coming year will start promptly at 7:30 PM. I look forward to seeing you there.

### Susan



A letter,  
a leaf,  
a flower,  
a song on the wind,  
a sigh,  
the sound of moth wings  
on my window,  
the colors of love  
in the sky.

Bob Pease