



The Kingfisher

VOL 49 (1)

Fall (Oct — Dec 2020)

The Cape Cod Bird Club meets on the second Monday of each month, Sept through May, at 7:00PM at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, 869 Route 6A, Brewster, MA. (see P.2 for COVID-19 update)

President's Message

Dear CCBC Supporters,

Well, it didn't take long for Fall to arrive! Just days after I spent three days at the beach over Labor Day weekend, it's been cool and, even at my condo feeder, the birds have changed. My orioles are gone; my hummingbird is gone; my House Sparrow and my Mourning Dove flocks are increasing. Soon my catbird will leave. But I can look forward to the arrival of the juncos and much later, when there is a snow cover, perhaps some winter finches like crossbills and redpolls. What changes are you noticing? Post your photos on our Facebook page and engage in a dialogue about the changing season.

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the CCBC Board has decided to not host any organized bird walks this Fall; however, we encourage you to get out and visit your favorite birding sites. Post your photos on our Facebook page. Meanwhile, our Conservation and Education program has been active and continues to fund worthy projects. Please read Herb Raffaele's report on page 3. You can be proud that your support enables us to help our Neotropical migrants on their wintering grounds.

This fall, we have started a new initiative—our first Student Chapter. Maria Curley, our Treasurer, is a middle school science teacher in Barnstable. In the absence of any Covid-19 crises, she has permission to start an after school CCBC Student Chapter. Outside her classroom, she has already set up a multi-arm feeder, donated by Wild Birds Unlimited of South Yarmouth, and she has loaded it up with bird food. However, she needs donations of used binoculars, beginner bird guides, and money (to pay for bird food). If you can help, please contact her directly (mcurley04@gmail.com).

You might have noticed that we have new Editors for The Kingfisher. For the first time in five years, I have not had to be responsible for producing an issue. Give the editors your support by contributing photos and articles. Don't wait to be asked; reach out and suggest ideas for stories to them.

Please note that the Merchandise Store will be open each month for two weeks at a time, so that you can purchase your logo-ed winter items—in time for the holiday season. Speaking of December, we are looking for good ideas as to what kind of online (virtual) event we should hold in 2020. Contact VP, David Clapp, with your suggestions. We need to find an alternative, but festive event to replace our usual bake sale and silent auction—our only fund-raising event of the whole year.



Komodo Island, Indonesia Jan

Good birding!

Peter Bono, President

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The Kingfisher is published quarterly. Deadline for the next issue: **December 08, 2020.**

Send articles, images, etc. to co-editors, Carolyn Kennedy & Jean Warneke at

c2kenn2@verizon.net
jeanwarneke@gmail.com

CCBC Website:

www.capecodbirdclub.org
(with color copy of Kingfisher)

Webmaster: Terry Gavin
wbmstr@capecodbirdclub.org

CCBC Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/CapeCodBirdClub

Wilson's Phalarope

Red Brook Reservoir, Barnstable
photo by Mary Keleher



IMPORTANT — PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

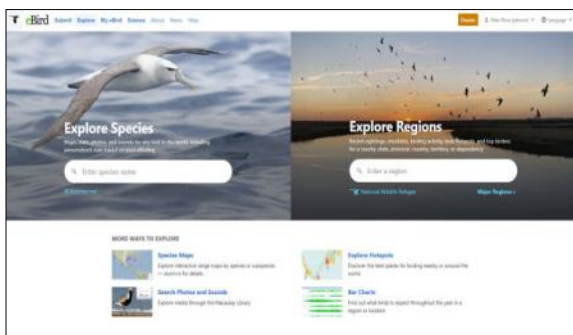
The new membership year started on September 1. We need your membership support to print and distribute this newsletter, to host our website, to pay for our Zoom account, to pay speakers, and to fund our Young Birder Scholarship, as well as to support other worthy bird causes through the Conservation Fund.

Check the Mailing Label: the expiration date of your membership is given after your name. If it doesn't say "(8/21)" or later, then you have not renewed for 2021.

Programs (Fall 2020); Merchandise Corner

► **Monthly meetings and programs will be via Zoom** until it's safe to once again gather at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster, hopefully next year. The meetings are **free** and open to the public and **start at 7 pm online via the Zoom teleconferencing platform. No registration necessary. A link will be sent to all active members. If you are not a member, email pbono@prba.com to request a link.** Check the [CCBC website](#) for detailed information.

Oct 12, 2020, 7 pm - Zoom Meeting - Learn to Use eBird Explore - Peter Bono & David Clapp



Bring your smart phone or tablet to the Zoom meeting and make sure you have the eBird app installed. Or have the eBird page open in your web browser on your desktop computer. You will learn how to use the Explore feature of eBird to help you decide where and when to bird. You can explore the eBird database by species, region, or hotspot. You can use this for your daily birding on Cape Cod or for planning trips further afield, anywhere in the world. Peter and David will walk you through several examples. You can follow along or just watch if you don't have a phone, tablet, or computer handy. Following the training session, they will answer questions about using eBird.

Peter Bono, President of the Cape Cod Bird Club, is a world birder and was one of the original beta testers of the early eBird website and later eBird app. David Clapp, Vice President of the Cape Cod Bird Club, is also a world birder and has led dozens of international birding trips over the years.

Nov 9, 2020, 7 pm - Zoom Meeting - Birding the Horn of Africa - Dana Duxbury-Fox & Bob Fox



Simply put, **Ethiopia** is one of Africa's most productive and rewarding birding destinations. If you like big species there are Somali Ostrich, Verreaux's Eagle, Arabian Bustard, and Ground Hornbill. There are colorful small birds like Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Shining Sunbird, Blue-breasted Roller, and Yellow-breasted Barbet. Also included are "odd" birds like Prince Ruspoli's Turaco, Hammerkop, Go-away Bird, Stresemann's Bush Crow, and Sidamo Lark. There are birds with unbelievable stories and, of course, a few mammals like the Beisa Oryx, Klipspringer, Mountain Nyala, Ethiopian Wolf, and Gelada Baboon. Dana and Bob visited all parts of the country, even towards the Somali border, meeting Ethiopians at work and where they lived and worshiped. Ethiopia is a fascinating yet little-known country.

Read more about Dana and Bob on our website at <https://www.capecodbirdclub.org/wordpress/meetings/>

Dec 14, 2020, 7 pm - Zoom Meeting - Program to be announced

In December, we usually celebrate the holiday with a bake sale and silent auction. This year, with COVID-19, it's a different story. Board members are working on a program that will be announced later. Contact VP, David Clapp, if you have any suggestions. Check the website and your email in November and early December for details.



Merchandise Corner—shop, support, and promote the Club



Our collaboration with Cape Cod Embroidery will be open for two weeks at a time following each of our monthly Zoom membership meetings in October, November, and December.

During those times, please visit the website (<https://ccbird.itemorder.com/>), where you will be able to purchase items such as shirts, caps, hats, jackets, and backpacks bearing the club's Belted Kingfisher logo. Meanwhile, if you need anything, contact John Goodchild, the CCBC Merchandise Director (john.goodchild@worchester.edu).



Conservation Fund Update

Making a Difference in Bird Conservation *Herb Raffaele, Director, Conservation and Education*

The Conservation Fund of CCBC is having a positive impact on birds far beyond what you might imagine your donation could do. If you have an inclination to help conserve the avian creatures that we all derive so much pleasure from, please consider contributing specifically to the Club's Conservation Fund this year. Detailed summaries will be posted on the website soon.

Project: I Protect Birds – and What Do You Do?

Cuba supports 26 bird species found only on that island (endemic birds); a number of these are threatened due to human impacts. The project we are supporting aims to reduce particular threats such as illegal hunting, bird commercialization, and the impacts of plastic pollution. The project will be implemented in the San Miguel de Parada Wildlife Refuge, in the province of Guantanamo in southeastern Cuba. There are three nearby communities with a total population of 325 inhabitants, 95 of them children and youth. It is intended to incorporate this initiative into the local school curriculum.



CCBC's grant of \$999 will be used to purchase materials. Local NGO's will finance personnel costs for staff who work directly in the communities and schools as environmental outreach specialists. Also, the local school system will cover the expenses of teachers and other professional staff associated with this initiative. All told, the CCBC grant will leverage many thousands of dollars in local support.

Project: Develop an environmental culture in the communities around Baconao Biosphere Reserve, Cuba.

Despite Cuba's interest in protecting its flora and fauna, the illegal capture and sale of birds still exists, especially in the Baconao area, located just outside the city of Santiago de Cuba, in the Sierra Maestra. It is a migratory route for birds of prey from North America as well as home to native species such as the parrots, parakeets, honeycreepers, and more.

The goal of this project is to encourage the population of Baconao to conserve birds by developing and disseminating environmental education programs in primary, secondary and adult schools in general. The project also aims to strengthen community participation in environmental conservation and outreach work, closely linked with the management of the protected area, to create a sense of belonging of the inhabitants to natural resources, especially birds.



The \$968 award from the CCBC will be used for basic equipment for the art contests as well as the preparation of bird documentaries for screening in schools. The National Forest Development Fund is covering the salaries of specialists hired to carry out the activities.

These activities in Cuba will be carried out in collaboration with organizations such as the Cuban Zoological Society, Friendship Association, Optics for the Tropics Environmental Education Program.

Project: Public awareness campaign on nesting seabirds in the British Caribbean

The British Virgin Islands is home to 15 species of breeding seabirds, an important, albeit often overlooked, part of the marine ecosystem. The goal of this project is to produce a short, high quality educational video to improve public understanding and to promote research and conservation projects.

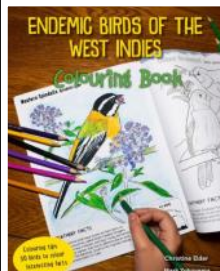
The \$1,000 award from the CCBC to Jost Van Dyke BVI Preservation Society will help with the costs of film editing and for fuel to reach the seabird islands for the video. An additional \$3,000 has been generated from other sponsors to cover the costs of video design, production, and dissemination.



Project: Translation of Endemic Birds of the West Indies Coloring Book into Spanish

BirdsCaribbean recently published a coloring book featuring birds only found in the West Indies. The book offers children the opportunity to learn interesting facts while learning the techniques of coloring the birds' vibrant plumage. A large portion of the Caribbean population speaks Spanish, including those from the islands of Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Translation into Spanish is important so that children and budding conservationists can have access to this fun and educational resource.

The award of \$1,000 from the CCBC will help cover the costs of translation and book design. They have arranged for volunteers in several islands to review the translation, and it is expected that BirdsCaribbean will be able to use some grant funds from the US Forest Service to help fund the printing and shipping costs.



Club Walks ; Welcome New Members; Birding in Scotland

All CCBC Walks for the foreseeable future have been cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

If we do resume holding walks, there will be strict rules to be followed, so make sure you understand your obligations before signing up for and attending a walk. Check the website should any changes be made to this policy. In the meantime, here are some good spots for fall migration to explore on your own.

Scusset Beach State Park – Sagamore

Walk around the camping sites, beach front and forests at Scusset. A variety of birds from waterfowl to passerines will be seen.

Fort Hill – Eastham

Walk along the loop trail at Fort Hill in Eastham. Watch the marsh during the incoming tide in hopes of those secretive sparrows being pushed up by the water. If you would like to walk the marsh edge, remember to bring your knee-high waterproof boots.

Crane Wildlife Management Area – Falmouth

Walk around the restored grasslands in search of sparrows, thrushes, buntings, and raptors.

Chapin Beach - Dennis (or actually any of our great beaches which are free to the public after Labor Day)

Watch as terns, gulls, and shorebirds display their massive numbers in preparation for fall migration.

Race Point Beach

That long slog through soft sand pays off as you observe both our more common species, and of course, the inevitable rarities that continue to put on a show at The Race. Don't forget to stop by Provincetown Airport in search of unusual passerines associating with our local and common sparrow species!

Winter Waterfowl Survey, December 5 - 6

Hopefully we'll be able to continue our long tradition of counting waterfowl throughout Cape Cod ponds and estuaries. We will keep you updated as plans unfold.

Welcome to Our New Members (Jul 2020 — Sep 2020)

Avery Famham, Centerville	Peter Galvin, Norton, MA	Bruce & Sharon MacDonald, Cummaquid
Noreen Seeders, E. Sandwich	Ruijiao Sun, Falmouth	Kathy Duncan & Bonnie McEwan, Brooklyn, NY
Wade Taylor, Truro	Tricia Vos, Boston	William Simpson, Yarmouth Port

Spring Birding in the Northern Highlands of Scotland, May 2017 *John Goodchild*

When I first became interested in birds, at around the age of 12, I soon realized that many of the ones I most wanted to see were not to be found in the part of England (Merseyside) where I lived. A better prospect appeared to be the highlands of Scotland, the wildest part of Britain, a land of mountains, lochs, and moors, but not many towns or people. It seemed a magical place that I read about in adventure stories. Its birds included Black-throated Diver, Dotterel, Greenshank, and others that I had as much chance of seeing as a penguin on the polluted River Mersey.

Although life led me in other directions for some 60 years, the allure of those early avian aspirations endured. So, in the spring of 2017, when my wife, Therese, and I returned to Europe for a vacation, we decided (figuratively) to kill two birds with one stone. We included a birding tour of

northern Scotland. I wanted to see the Highlands as much as the birds, because, in the imagination of my youth, the two were inseparable.

On May 22, 2017, we flew to Inverness where Mark Finn met us at the airport. Mark operates Birdwatching Breaks, a company that runs birding tours worldwide. Their Scottish trips operate as Black Isle Birding from Cygnus House, the home of Mark and his wife Jo, in the hamlet of Gordon Mills on the Black Isle. Neither black nor an island, this lovely peninsula separates the Firths of Cromarty and Beauly on the east coast just north of Inverness. Cygnus House has spectacular views over Udale Bay, a preserve of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, on the Firth of Cromarty so birding starts from the bedroom window.

Mark's earlier career was in the hospitality industry

Birding in Scotland, continued

and the catering in the Finn home is a delight. The home-cooking is superb. With a limit of seven participants on the trips, Mark and Jo accommodate all dietary needs (including single-malt ones). Jo is an accomplished birder and takes many of the photos for the company. She could join us only on one day birding because, as well as providing for us guests, she was managing a bank in Inverness!

Each day, Mark drove us in a minibus through the spectacular country that he knows intimately. Had this been just a touring holiday of the Highlands, it could not have been better. But we were going there for the birds, including those that I particularly wanted to see when I was young.

The Black-throated Diver (aka Arctic Loon) we found on the first day as we drove to the far northern coast of Scotland. Later, on the still waters of a loch ringed by mountains on the west coast, we saw a party of six close up in their spectacular breeding plumage. I thought these birds with their black throats even finer than their red-throated relatives that we also saw in breeding plumage, but both were memories to be treasured for life.

The Dotterel, a delightful and tolerant plover of moors and mountains, permitted us to approach within a few yards among the boulders on the peak of Cairn Gorm, the mountain which we had ascended by funicular railway in the Cairngorm Range.

On the Mersey, one of the most common shorebirds was the Redshank and I had always wanted to see its more delicate looking cousin – the Greenshank – which is not unlike our Greater Yellowlegs. Greenshank nests are notoriously difficult to find and the bird is secretive but we found one feeding on the shore of a small tarn.

It was particularly satisfying to see these three species, but we had many others equally memorable.

Handa Island, off the west coast of Scotland, is reached by a short boat ride from the village of Tarbet. It is famous for its seabird cliffs and the Great and Arctic Skuas (Parasitic Jaegers) that nest among the grass hummocks on the island. We were there while the skuas were still on eggs, and we could approach within a few yards. Once the eggs hatched, Mark warned us, these birds become aggressively protective and would not tolerate birders taking such liberties!

The Red Grouse (usually classified as a subspecies of the Willow Ptarmigan but sometimes considered to be a separate species) is found only in Scotland. They are endearing and rather comical birds, trotting and scrambling

over the thick heather. Sadly, large tracts of the country are groomed for their slaughter.

Quite different are the **Black Grouse**. The lekking grounds of Black Grouse are accessible only when accompanied by a ranger and you need to go early in the morning to see the show. By late May, when we were there, the females were on their eggs, but some males still turned up each day to stand around – just in case – and to show off their plumage. This is a bird that you must see to appreciate fully; pictures in books just do not do it justice. Perhaps it is the absolute blackness of the glossy plumage that brings out the intensity of its other two colors. The white is the brightest and the red the most vivid imaginable. If you are lucky enough to see one display, the effect is even more striking.



Black Grouse photo courtesy of Birdwatching Breaks

We spent one night away from Cygnus House when we stayed in a small hotel in Durness, the most northerly community on mainland Britain. Here a small party of Barnacle Geese lingered later than normal in a field by the sea.

A specialty of the far north is the Crested Tit which now remains only in some remnants of old Scotch Pine forests. Mark had to work hard to find one, and we visited several tracts of woods before we were successful. Along the way, I was very pleased to see another favorite from my early bird books. In the same dense conifer forest was another bird that had eluded me since then. Not rare like the Crested Tit, the Common Redstart of Europe is an old-world flycatcher and definitely very handsome.

In our week in the Highlands, I found what I had hoped for—a symbiosis between birds and place. The place took on more meaning because of the birds we saw there and they, in turn, were even more memorable in the magnificent setting of Northern Scotland. Come to think of it, the same is true of Cape Cod, even if not on quite such a grand scale. Perhaps the trick is to find that symbiosis wherever you happen to be.

If Scotland appeals to you, check out www.birdwatchingbreaks.com.



From left: Chaffinch, Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Jackdaw. All photos by John Goodchild.

Birding Thailand in the Time of Coronavirus

Birding Thailand, February - March 2020

Keelin Miller

February 17th seems like a lifetime ago. Although it is only about six months past from the writing of this article, the world has changed—a lot. The specter of Covid-19 had just risen, primarily in Wuhan, China, with outbreaks starting in Europe. We headed for a one-day layover in South Korea and spent the day with a guide seeing a few of the local parks and the DMZ. Most places were pretty empty of tourists, and everyone had masks on—at the time, it was because of the air pollution. I did pick up a few nice birds here: White-naped Crane, Red-flanked Bluetail, and Yellow-billed Grosbeak.

An evening flight brought us to Bangkok the next day. The grounds of the hotel had a few nice birds, such as Pink-necked Green Pigeon and Streak-eared Bulbul. The next day, the official tour with Tropical Birding began. This was an unusual tour in that there were

two groups of six running simultaneously. Off we drove to Khok Kham, an area of salt farms. The main target here was the critically endangered **Spoon-billed Sandpiper**. Within a few minutes of arrival, the locals had us on a single individual, mixed in with a host of other shorebirds. What a beauty! It's somewhat bittersweet to look at a species that has little chance of survival long-term. Nonetheless, it was amazing to see this bird on day one!

Our next stop was Pak-Thale (salt farms), where we scored Nordmann's Greenshank as well as two more Spoon-billed Sandpipers! Later in the day, we visited a hide where we had great looks at **Blue Pitta** as well as Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes. A couple of days at Kaeng Krachen National Park (as well as several nearby hides) produced a number of goodies, including Bar-backed Partridge, Red-bearded Bee-eater, and Black-and-yellow Broadbill. A surprise sighting was a Gray Peacock-Pheasant at one of the hides—a tough bird to find!

On to the famous Khao Yai National Park, where new birds came thick and fast—Siamese Fireback, Long-tailed Broadbill, and Banded Kingfisher are but a few. The bird of the trip was a fabulous Eared Pitta—a bird that is rarely seen, but our guide managed to get the entire group on this "chocolate chip cookie-like" delight!

As we moved north, the next major stop was Doi Inthanon National Park, with a whole new set of birds. Himalayan Shortwing, White-crowned and Slaty-backed

Forktails, Golden Babbler, Blossom-headed Parakeet, and (Mrs) Gould's Sunbird were a few of the highlights.

By now, the state of world affairs was in turmoil. Even as insulated as we were, the impact was felt as travel plans home were cancelled, booked and rebooked to avoid hot zones. It was a bit like the sword of Damocles, always there, threatening. Soldier on we did—the heat and hiking a good distraction. Thailand is chock full of national parks and sanctuaries, and we visited several more in the area (Doi Pha Hom Pok and Chiang Dao), where Spotted-winged Grosbeak, a very vocal Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Hume's Pheasant, and Mountain Bamboo Partridge were stand-outs. Nearby the Mae Ai paddies gave us Eurasian Wryneck, Rosy Pipit, and Short-toed Lark. The Doi Tung-Mae Fa Luang Arboretum had an awesome stakeout, Hodgson's Frogmouth.

Heading south for the home stretch, Ao Phang and Khao Sok NPs held more delights like Ruddy Kingfisher, Mangrove Pitta, Green-backed Flycatcher, and Copper-throated Sunbird.

Sri Phang-nga National Park served up the Malayan Banded Pitta, a "cracker" of a bird—it took tries at several locations to track one down, but we had great looks at a little feeding station some of the local rangers had set up.

Our final stop was Khao Luang National Park, where one could easily spend a week and find new birds every day. Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Yellow-eared Spiderhunter, Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, and White-crowned Hornbill all made appearances. With just minutes left to bird in this glorious place, a Green Broadbill flew in and sat quietly above our heads. This "luminous" green bird is in a new family for me—and was a most-wanted species. What a finale!

After a farewell dinner, everyone headed to the airport the next day for the arduous journey home. We were re-routed through Dubai, where we spent our layover birding of course, had our Covid-19 tests, and made it home with just days to spare as the window on international travel closed down. I consider myself extremely lucky to not only have seen/heard close to 500 species on this trip but to have had the opportunity to bird outside the US at all this year. Our guide Charley Hesse and the support staff at Tropical Birding were rock stars—getting everyone through the tour and home in one piece.

We look forward to the days when these experiences are once again possible.



Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Pak Thale, 21 Feb 2020 Photo by Keelin Miller



Blue Pitta, Nui Hide, 21 Feb 2020, photo by Neal Miller

Membership Form for New and Renewing Members

Membership Form for the Cape Cod Bird Club 2020-2021 Membership Year—RENEW NOW

This page may be used as your CCBC Membership **renewal form** and also may be used by new members joining for the first time. Remember—**dues should be paid before September 1, 2020**, and your membership will expire on Aug. 31, 2021. **New members may join at any time.**

- Individual Membership \$20.00
- Family (Household) Membership \$25.00
- Scholar \$50.00
- Sponsor \$75.00
- Patron \$100.00

Additional tax-deductable donations are much appreciated. Thank you for your support.

Membership dues \$ _____
Conservation & Education Fund \$ _____
Extra Gift to Club \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please return this form with your check made out to Cape Cod Bird Club and mail to:
Cape Cod Bird Club, Attn: Membership, PO Box 351, Centerville, MA 02632

Household Address (required): _____

Household Tel. No. (required): _____

Name(s)	M/F*	Email Address**	Approx. Year of Birth*

Notes: * (Optional) Please provide your gender and approx. year of birth (it doesn't need to be exact), so that we can design programs to serve you better.

** (Optional) If we have your email address, we can send periodic, updated notifications in a timely manner regarding speakers, meeting cancellations due to bad weather, and so forth.
 Your email address is not shared with any other organization.

CHECK HERE if you would like to save the Club postage expenses, by electing to receive your newsletter (*The Kingfisher*) **by email only.**



Cape Cod Bird Club
PO Box 351
Centerville, MA 02632

The Cape Cod Bird Club, Inc.

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 your dues along with the membership form available for downloading from our web site (www.capecodbirdclub.org/join/) or on page 7 to: **CCBC, PO Box 351, Centerville, MA 02632**

<i>Officers:</i>	Peter Bono	President	pbono@prba.com
	David Clapp	Vice President	ontheroadwithdec@gmail.com
	Jean Warneke ('21)	Secretary	jeanwarneke@gmail.com
	Maria Curley	Treasurer	mcurley04@gmail.com
<i>Directors:</i>	Mark Faherty ('21)	Programs	mfaherty@massaudubon.org
	Rick Floyd ('21)	Refreshments	rfloyd54@gmail.com
	Mary Jo Foti ('22)	Walks	maryjo1226@yahoo.com
	John Goodchild ('22)	Merchandise	john.goodchild@worchester.edu
	Herb Raffaele ('23)	Conservation & Education	birds.18@hotmail.com
	Peter Fang ('23)	Publicity and Outreach	fangmail@comcast.net
<i>Ex-officio:</i>	Carolyn Kennedy	<i>The Kingfisher</i>	c2kenn2@verizon.net
	Jean Warneke	Co-editors	jeanwarneke@gmail.com

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