



The Kingfisher

VOL 49 (2)

Winter (January—March 2021)

The Cape Cod Bird Club meets on the second Monday of each month, Sept through May, at 7:00PM—via Zoom now—and at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, 869 Route 6A, Brewster, MA when in person meetings are permitted again.

President's Message

Dear CCBC Supporters,

It is easy to fall into the trap of being discouraged about 2020. There are certainly so many negatives—but I don't need to remind you about them. So, as I am writing this column during the Holiday Season, I decided to reflect on what we can be grateful for:

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The Kingfisher is published quarterly. Deadline for the next issue: **March 8, 2021**. Send articles, images, etc. to the editor, Jean Warneke, at jeanwarneke@gmail.com

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(with color copy of *Kingfisher*)

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CCBC Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/CapeCodBirdClub



American Robin, D. Clapp

- Our good fortune to be living on Cape Cod, where, for the most part, people have acted responsibly and with consideration for their neighbors.
- Our good fortune to be living in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where our elected leaders have followed the science in setting policies to mitigate the dual impact of Covid-19 and economic hardship.
- The many natural areas preserved by local Land Trusts and local, state, and federal government, where we can exercise, recuperate and seek solace while enjoying our wonderful hobby in a safe way.
- The hard work and imagination of your Officers and Board of Directors in building new programs (e.g., the Student Chapter at Barnstable Intermediate School—thanks to Maria Curley), revitalizing dormant programs (e.g., the Winter Waterfowl Survey—thanks to MJ Foti, Mark Faherty, and Eldon Ziegler), membership outreach—thanks to Peggy Sagan, and pushing forward with current programs (e.g., the Conservation Grant program—thanks to Herb Raffaele and now led by John Goodchild).
- Mark Faherty for finding us interesting speakers—month after month.
- Carolyn Kennedy and Jean Warneke for taking on editorship of *The Kingfisher*.
- Peter Fang for keeping the content fresh on the CCBC Facebook page.
- Terry Gavin for constantly updating our CCBC website, cheerfully responding to dozens, if not hundreds, of emails from me throughout the year.
- The wonderful way that you, our members, responded to our annual appeal: 40+ households contributed \$2,800+ to our conservation and education grant program.
- Your support. We have 400+ members, and, so far, 87% of you have renewed for 2021. We added 16 new members just since October 2020.

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope that we will be able to bring back some of our usual activities in the second half of 2021.

Good birding! *Peter Bono, President*

Programs (Winter 2021); Merchandise Corner, Membership Renewal

► **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 in the months ahead. 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 a few days before the meeting to request a link.** Check the [CCBC website](#) for detailed information.

Jan 11, 2021, 7 pm - Zoom Meeting: Fascinating World of Owls with Mike Tucker



Screech Owl by Mike Tucker

Owls have been adored by cultures all over the world for centuries. We will cover many facts about these perfect predators but also some of the myths as well. During this presentation, we will take a close look at what makes owls so unique, discussing both their biology and behavior. We'll take a closer look at several species found on Cape Cod, its identification, behavior, habitat and other interesting facts about each.

Mike's involvement in the world of birds began in Rhode Island at 11 years old with his first binoculars. His earliest involvement with bird surveys began in high school and he has continued to follow that passion throughout his life. Mike stays involved with survey work and volunteering to lead bird walks, talks, and workshops.

For more than 30 years, with career and volunteer work combined, his experience ranges from a wide variety of field biology work to education. When with Audubon Society of RI, Mike oversaw the Rare Bird Report and ran day-trip and overnight birdwatching tours around the Northeast, including Canada. He created an American Kestrel nest box program. Working with private landowners and conservation properties, Mike installed dozens of nest boxes around RI and bordering MA and CT. Other special projects have included Barn Owls, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and habitat restoration.

For February 8th and March 8th meeting topics check the Club website.

Merchandise: Our collaboration with Cape Cod Embroidery will reopen in the Spring. In March, please visit the website (<https://ccbird.itemorder.com/>). 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).

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 our speakers, and to fund our Young Birder Scholarship, as well as to support other worthy bird causes through the Conservation Fund.

Check your 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. See page 7 for renewal form and instructions.

2020 Waterfowl Census, Student Bird Club Kickoff

December 2020 Waterfowl Census

by Mary Jo Foti, Volunteer Coordinator

On December 5th and 6th, 28 teams, including 40 individual volunteers, surveyed 365 freshwater ponds while participating in the 2020 Cape Cod Waterfowl Census. Saturday brought heavy rain throughout the day, but we caught a break on Sunday with mostly clear skies, though still facing gusty, chilly winds. This did not deter our ever-intrepid volunteers. It was an incredible effort overall, with all



Razorbill, a pond surprise after Saturday's storm, photo by D. Clapp.

but two assigned ponds surveyed and subsequently entered into the waterfowl database within the week. A total of 29 waterfowl species were observed, including one Eurasian Wigeon and three Blue-winged Teal. There were an additional six species, including one Razorbill and five Dovekie, likely blown in from Saturday's storm system. It's always a surprise to see these adorable alcids bobbing on the waters of our freshwater ponds!

I wish to express my appreciation to the dedicated volunteers, both newcomers and seasoned veterans alike, for their spirit, enthusiasm, and drive, as well as for generously sharing their collective birding expertise. Special thanks also go to Eldon Ziegler who designed and maintains the database for the waterfowl census. There is a veritable wealth of easily accessible information and data available. It's definitely worth a look: <https://www.capecodwaterfowl.info/>

Kick-off of Student Bird Club at Barnstable Intermediate School

by Maria Curley

Tuesday, December 16th was a momentous occasion! The first five students of the Student Bird Club at Barnstable Intermediate School met after school with their Science teacher and Club Facilitator, Maria Curley. The students are embarking on a year-long and, we hope, a life-long journey into the world of birds and birding. Students received welcome folders that included coloring pages of birds recently frequenting the BIS feeders. In addition, they received a beautiful bookmark purchased from the Birdwatcher's General Store in Orleans that will help them become familiar with the New England avifauna many of us see and hear at our feeders. Students then played a fun True/False game on truths and myths about birds and then proceeded to learn the nuances of using binoculars. The group began by observing the feeders through the classroom window and excitement grew as group after group of birds visited the feeders (as if preparing for the storm ahead), including Black-capped Chickadees, Blue Jays, House Sparrows, a male/female Northern Cardinal, Northern Flickers, and Starlings. After venturing outside to continue observing and counting, the final count ended up with 13 species, 32 individuals. The students were thrilled. Students each also received a Peterson First Guide to introduce them to the world of birds.

This Student Bird Club is made possible by the generosity of CCBC members during the recent fundraising campaign. Thank you to all who donated. In addition, we would like to recognize and thank BIS Principal Jim Anderson for approving the bird club pilot and Tommy Thompson at Wild Birds Unlimited in South Yarmouth for his generous donation of the feeder pole set-up, critter baffle and a large bag of seed. And a shout out to CCBC members Sherra and Graham for their purchase of 40 student bird guides from Mike at the Birdwatcher's General Store. The Student Bird Club is already changing lives. One boy said as he was leaving the Club on Tuesday, "This was the best day of my life!" We know that we conserve what we love, so opening up the world of birds to students will hopefully inspire a life-long love of birds and conservation.

(Look for photos and updates about the Student Bird Club in future editions.)

Welcome New Members; Recovered Jewels; Notice on Club Walks

Welcome to New Members (October—December, 2020)

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Wendy Barry, East Falmouth | Rachel Bramson & Mary Hamlin, Wellfleet | Megan Doe, West Chatham |
| Beth Dunn, South Dennis | Pat Freysinger, Newton, MA | Valerie Freysinger, Hyannis |
| Jonathan Glover, Foxboro | Vicki Goldsmith, Harwich | Russel Keirstead, Plympton, MA |
| Rob Lindeman & Josy Siqueira, West Yarmouth | | Mark Marroni, North Andover |
| Dan O'Rourke, Canton, MA | Jean Smith, West Dennis | Ann Wesley, Farmington, CT |

Recovered Jewels, or Resuscitating a Hummingbird *by Peggy Sagan*

The summer of 2020 was unlike any other. Deprived of normalcy, including our usual waves of houseguests, we contented ourselves with the summer visitors to our bird feeders. To our delight, it was a banner year for hummingbirds and orioles.

With both male and female Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds coming to the feeder, in August we awaited the appearance of the first juvenile. We felt undeserved pride when “our” baby mastered the ruby-red plastic feeder. But delight turned to concern a few weeks later when we heard the unmistakable hum of wings in the rafters of our garage. The hummer was mesmerized by the blue sky beckoning through the sealed skylight, and no amount of gentle encouragement (with a soft mop) would redirect it to the wide-open garage door. Its efforts to escape were clearly exhausting the tiny bird. What to do? What else: Climb to the top step of the ladder, despite clear printed warnings. (“This is how I die,” I thought to myself as I told my husband to prepare to break my fall to the hard concrete below.)



By now, our hummer had found a tiny perch in the highest reaches of the window frame, and I could just barely but carefully wrap my hand around it. FACT: A hummingbird weighs 0.11 ounces, but when you hold one, it's weightless. I took it outside and placed it gently on the deck railing. It lay motionless – only its tiny eyes blinked, ever-so-slowly. Thinking of First Aid 101 for stunned, window-struck birds, I asked my husband to bring a berry basket (lightweight, small, with lots of ventilation) so I could cover it while it recovered. Simultaneously he Googled “How to revive an exhausted hummingbird.” (Smart man!) While I attended our inert jewel, he filled a test tube with sugar-water nectar. With the hummer in my right hand and nectar in my left, I guided the bill into the liquid. Nothing. Dismay. But on the second attempt, the tiny bill opened, the tongue flicked a few times (too fast to count), and our bird darted off, flying to a branch just overhead.

I like to think I can identify which hummingbird at the feeders is the one we rescued, and, for this reason, I can report that it lived happily ever after . . . so far. Good luck and safe travels, Little Jewel!

ADDENDUM: According to Sibley, ours was a sub-adult male, with his gorget just beginning to be defined – like a 5 o'clock shadow.

Another Option: Extend a hummer feeder on a shepherds crook toward the bird. Hope it jumps on. Take it outside!

Peggy Sagan is a bird feeder, bird watcher, and volunteer bird bander at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

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, on the following pages are some good spots for winter birds to explore on your own.

Self-guided Winter Walks by David Clapp

It is said that being confined indoors can be stifling and perhaps even depressing. I'm not sure about that, but let's see about getting us outdoors. As birders and nature people we truly need our time outside. Looking at birds at the feeders is okay but it is a bit like pasta every night. You know, great the first night and pretty good as long as the recipes last, but not exciting week in and week out. It's the same with birds.

On Cape Cod, especially in the winter, we have dozens of places where a small group can go birding and hundreds of locations where a single binocular-toting person can wander. I will leave the narrow trails for you to find, but here are a few wide and open areas where spacing and birds co-mingle. There is at least one location from the western part of the Cape and another from mid-Cape and a third from the northward arm. Enjoy them. Get out of the house!!

Western Cape Cod

First and foremost are the paved paths along the **Cape Cod Canal; officially called the Canal Service Road**. They are wide, have a yellow line down the middle, and expose the walker to lots and lots of birds. Both sides of the canal have large public parking areas and easy access to the canal road. On the landward side you can get on the path right under the Sagamore Bridge or out at Scusset Beach State Park. On the east side (not crossing the bridge) the best way to reach the Canal walkway is to get to the Sandwich Marina Park trailhead. Leave Route 6 west, at Exit 2, go north on Route 130 to Tupper Road and then into the canal on Freezer Road—easy as pie.



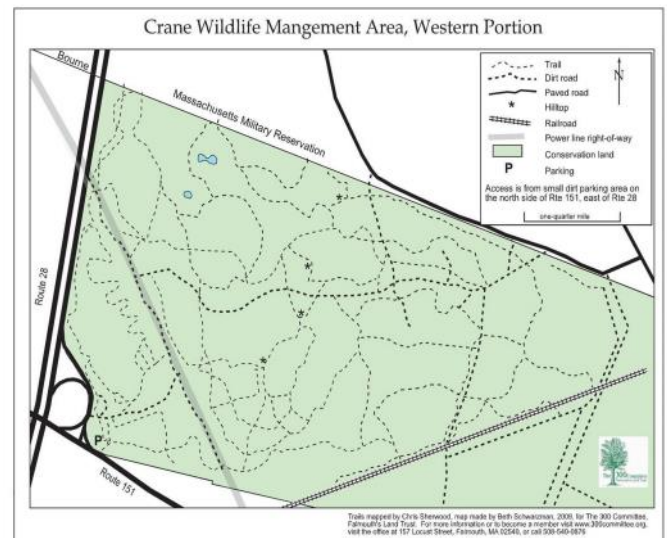
White-winged Scoter, D. Clapp

These walkways are about 6.5 miles from Mass Maritime in Bourne to Scusset in Sagamore. The Scusset end is the easiest and most usual destination for birders though the entire length allows good looks at birds and easy walking. The State Park has Horned Larks, lots of wintering American Robins and a variety of sparrows as well as canal views. Near the mouth of the canal, at the Scusset end, there are almost always

Razorbills, Common Loons, Common Eider, Red-breasted Mergansers, and a mix of our gulls. Most years, at least in the recent past, there has been a King Eider. The Mass Maritime end has the railroad bridge and lots of Common Eider. Parking on the Cape side of the canal might be easiest at this end of the pathway.

Crane Wildlife Management Area

Heading back inland from the canal you will find the wide open expanses of **Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area**. Its 1800 acres are accessible and inviting. This is a state Division of Fisheries and Game property and has recently been cleared of pines to open it up for New England Cottontail and Grasshopper Sparrows. It is an important birding area and offers habitat for wintering Short-eared Owls and perhaps Northern Shrikes. It is in Falmouth but is worth the trip from anywhere on the Cape. *Directions and trail maps at <https://300committee.org>.*



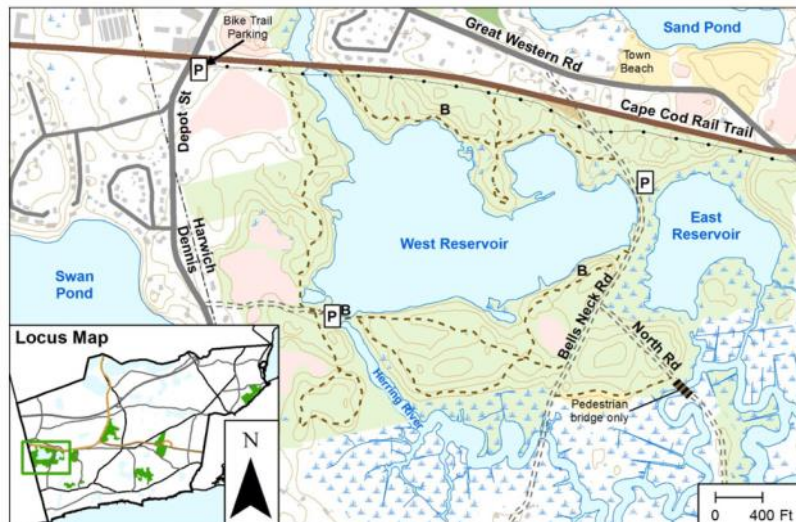
Mid-Cape

In the mid-Cape there are more properties that offer spaces large enough to help lower your blood pressure. One of the best is **West Dennis Beach**. This Nantucket Sound beach offers over a mile of paved or sand walking. On the inside is an extensive salt marsh that harbors ducks, lingering shore birds, and many avian surprises along the sand dune edges. The pines along this edge have had Saw-whet Owls and crossbills over the years. The entrance to the beach is on the east side of the Bass River; as with all locations nowadays, your cell phone will get you there easily.

Self-Guided Winter Walks *(continued)*

In Harwich, **Bell's Neck Conservation Area** has fresh water, salt marsh, and woodlands. A cornucopia of opportunity. These are all extensive properties with dirt-road trails for easy walking located in the mid-Cape.

Historical and other information can be found at <http://harwichconservationtrust.org/trails/>



Outer Cape



On the outer Cape you can follow the bike paths through pretty much every town. These trails will not have many bicycles in the winter but may have good thicket birds. One of the easiest access points, and a trail that probably won't freeze solid, is in Truro at the end of the High Head Road (a right off Route 6 just before Pilgrim Lake). Here you can get on the bike trail heading south and have a marsh on the left and a "thickety" pine covered hillside on the right. There is a lot of room here and the possibility of good birds.

And More

To find local places all you need to do is look at the local town's Conservation Commission's list of properties. There may be one right next door. The Commissions often have maps of their properties and some even have bird lists and most are available online.

Cape Cod has extensive open space properties owned by towns, Cape Cod National Seashore, The Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, The Commonwealth (Nickerson State Park), as well as non-profits like Mass Audubon, Conservation Trusts, and the Association to Preserve of Cape Cod. There are extensive coastal lands available to walk and even towns we think of as small (like Provincetown) have great swaths of open space. Here are a few to check out:

Harwich Conservation Trust: <http://harwichconservationtrust.org/trails/>

Orleans Conservation Trust: <https://orleansconservationtrust.org/category/trails/>

Dennis Conservation Land Trust: <https://dennisconservationlandtrust.org/properties/>

Hopefully we can all get out on our own, and even better, get out as a bird club. We will be scheduling walks as soon as everyone feels comfortable—but for now, you're on your own. Have fun and enjoy the wonders that are Cape Cod. And check for ticks when you get home!

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-deductible 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

Cape Cod Bird Club, Inc.

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, you may pay online or 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**

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