



The Kingfisher

In this issue:

President's Message	1
Club Meetings, New Members	2-3
Fall Bird Walks	4-6
BIS Birds and Blooms Club	7
Project in Kenya	8
Research Spotlight	9
Pecking Order	10
Membership Form	11
Board Members	12

Cape Cod Bird Club meets on the 2nd Monday of each month, Sept through May, at 7:00PM. January and February meetings will be by Zoom. Others will be hybrid meetings, simultaneously live and online. We meet at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, 869 Route 6A,

The Kingfisher is published quarterly.

Deadline for the next issue is December 8, 2023.

Send submissions by email. Attach text as a MS Word document or plain text. Attach images as separate files; please do not embed them in the email body. Send the largest resolution possible for your images; they will not print well if preformatted for the Web. Please credit the images. Submissions might be edited for style or length. Editor has the final say on content.

Editor:

Carolyn Kennedy
info@capecodbirdclub.org

Webmaster:

Terry Gavin
wbmstr@capecodbirdclub.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/

President's Message

Greetings, Cape Cod Bird Club!

Fall is upon us, when we may once again make left turns, go to any beach for free and admire our fall migration avian visitors. But we should also take time to reflect on what has been an exciting summer... for birders at least. Our club continued to offer engaging bird walks, carefully orchestrated to accommodate the tourist season. Meanwhile, we were "invaded" by plovers this summer! Besides our favorite Piping Plovers, that thankfully seem to be slowly increasing in numbers, we had two extremely unusual plovers visit the Cape. First was our visitor from the Rocky Mountains, the Mountain Plover, who veered **waaaay** eastward instead of heading south to Mexico. The last time the Cape saw one of these was over 100 years ago!

Even more shocking was the appearance of a plover from Asia, a Lesser Sand-plover. This species has never ever been seen in Massachusetts! Was it wildfires? Storms? Magnetic field aberrations? Of course, these migration explanations are all conjecture on my part, but it's fun to imagine the weird and wonderful ways these things may happen, and how fortunate we are to witness these rare birds. See page 3.

Our club is happy to again offer hybrid meetings this season, with both in-person and on-line options. We have an exciting slate of speakers lined up! The schedule through December is on page 2.

We are seeking volunteers for a few select areas where the club could use your help. The time commitments and skills needed vary, so please check our website for a list of positions. These opportunities offer a rewarding means of giving back by getting involved in some of our club's activities. The listings are posted at: capecodbirdclub.org/volunteer/. For any questions or to volunteer, just send an email to info@capecodbirdclub.org. Thank you for considering assisting our club!

Happy Birding!
Peter Fang, President



Mountain Plover, Cape visitor from its prairie home in the Rocky Mountain states.
Peter Fang, photographer

Club Meetings—Gloria Smith, Programs Director

For the 2023-2024 membership year, monthly meetings and programs from September to December and March to May will be a “hybrid” of in-person gatherings at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster with a simultaneous Zoom broadcasts. Meetings in January and February will be by Zoom only. Our meetings are free and start at 7 pm (doors open 6:30 pm). No registration necessary. A Zoom link will be sent to all active members for whom we have an email address and published on the CCBC website.

Please do not come if you do not feel well or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID or COVID-like symptoms. Masks are optional but individuals should feel comfortable wearing a mask at any point during a meeting.

Monday, October 9, 2023 at 7 PM (Doors open at 6:30pm)

The Osprey Project of Falmouth



While utility poles can appear as ideal home sites to the osprey, nesting on them can result in fires, power outages and even the electrocution of these amazing birds. Come learn more about ospreys and the efforts being made to keep them safer by providing these unique birds with safe nesting sites as an alternative to the dangerous utility poles. Sit back and enjoy some of professional photographer Kevin Friel’s amazing work as he captures what makes these birds so unique and special to most of us.

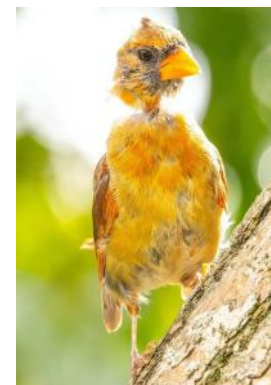
Kevin Friel and Barbara Schneider, well-known Falmouth residents and co-founders of The Osprey Project, plan to share how their different stages of The Osprey Project has done more than just save bird lives. Kevin Friel is a local wildlife and family photographer whose passion and love for photography and animals has driven him through life. He is a co-founder of The Osprey Project. Dr. Barbara Schneider is a former educator and journalist. She currently serves as Chair of the Falmouth Beach Committee, Town Meeting member and precinct captain, president of the Falmouth Dog Park, co-founder of The Osprey Project and IFAW marine mammal rescue volunteer.



How are you feeling about the changing seasons?

Share a funny bird photo with us for a future Kingfisher!

Northern Cardinals molting: Ron Cadillac



Club Meetings, continued

Future Fall Programs at Cape Cod Museum of Natural History:

Monday, November 13 – New England Wildlife Center of Barnstable – Where Animals and People Thrive. CEO Zak Mertz and Medical Director Dr. Priya Patel will highlight the successes and challenges of caring for injured and orphaned birds and other wildlife, while also educating the public and spreading the important message of environmental conservation.

Monday, December 11 – Members Holiday Party featuring our 2023 Hog Island Teen Scholarship Recipient, Megan Morey, who will share photos and reflections of her incredible experience at the camp.

Welcome to our New Members

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------|--------------------|---|----------------|
| Ellen Berson | - | Orleans | Sandra Phillbrook | - | Dennis |
| Jeanne Branson | - | Chatham | Sara Phillips | - | Brewster |
| Shelly Dufresne | - | South Yarmouth | Elisabeth Schibley | - | Plymouth |
| Ruth Green | - | Monterey | George Slama | - | South Yarmouth |
| Kim Kelly | - | Brewster | Sheryl Stewart | - | Harwich |
| Cynthia Mike | - | Dennis | Teresa Snow | - | Harwich |
| Joan and Bob
Novack | - | North Dighton | | | |

First-time Summer Visitor!



Another star of the 2023 summer season on Cape Cod. The **Lesser Sand-plover**, native of Asia, was seen by many birders during its nine day stay at South Cape Beach State Park.

Peter Fang, photographer

Cape Cod Bird Club Fall Walks – Mary Jo Foti October 2023 – January 1, 2024



Please check the website beforehand for schedule changes and cancellations.

Please email the trip leader to let them know you wish to join their walk.

Garden Varieties: Brewster – Harwich

Saturday, October 7th – 8am

Al Curtis killdeer89@comcast.net

Meet at the Harwich Community Gardens on Sisson Road just north of the Stop & Shop on Route 28. This has traditionally been a nice spot for fall migration with some unlikely surprises in past years including Ash-throated Flycatcher and Grasshopper Sparrow. If time permits, we can head directly north to Brewster Community Gardens just opposite the Eddy Bay Trail. This requires little walking on hard pack dirt and is easily navigable.

Crane Wildlife Management Area - East Falmouth

Sunday, October 8th – 8am

Jeff Bryant five_loons@yahoo.com

Meet at the parking lot of Otis Model Aero Club Flying Field. As you drive north on Nathan Ellis Highway, the entrance to Crane will be on your right. You can count on productive raptor activity while this unique grassland habitat is also host to a rich variety of species including Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, American Kestrel and possibly Blue Grosbeak. Hard pack trails are easily navigable, between 1.5 and 3 miles of walking.

Chapin Beach, Dennis

Monday, October 16th – 8am

MJ Foti, maryjo1226@yahoo.com

Meet in the Chapin Beach parking lot off Chapin Beach Rd. Walk the flats at this secluded beach with nice views of Sandy Neck Lighthouse and Grays Beach boardwalk. We'll wade in front of the rock outcropping as shorebird and tern species gather in tight clusters to feed. Forster's Terns occur in nice numbers at this location. Rubber boots/waterproof shoes recommended as we may be wading in ankle deep water. Low tide approximately 7:15 AM.

Fort Hill and Hemenway Landing – Eastham

Wednesday, October 25th – 8am

Jeff Bryant five_loons@yahoo.com

Meet in the lower parking lot on Fort Hill Road. We'll walk the loop trail towards Hemenway Landing where there should be some nice migrant activity. We can also scan the marsh for incoming shorebirds, herons, egrets and hopefully a bittern or rail with the rising tide. You may want to wear (Next page)

Photo: Purple Sandpiper, MJ Foti

Cape Cod Bird Club Fall Walks, continued

waterproof boots/shoes. Expect 2 miles of walking on hard pack trail with mixed elevation. High tide occurs about 9:25 AM.

High Head – N. Truro **Sunday, October 29th – 8am**

Ross Sormani rsormani@yahoo.com

Meet at the High Head Bike Trail parking lot. Bear left on High Head Road at the steep hill and you'll be on a dirt road that leads to parking for the bike trail. We'll be looking and listening for rails, bobwhites and American Bittern skulking through the marsh as well as searching overhead for raptors and scanning the thickets for songbirds. Walk begins on a paved bike trail but may also include hard pack dirt trails of mixed elevation.

Forest Beach Conservation – South Chatham **Saturday, November 11th – 8am**

Jeff Bryant five_loons@yahoo.com

Take Route 6 to Exit 85 and head South towards Rt. 28. Make a right on Rt. 28 and a left turn at about 0.5 miles at Forest Beach Rd. This will take you directly to the beach – parking is free of charge. We'll walk the marsh trail to where it meets Mill Creek and return via the beach before heading towards the overlook on Bay View Road. This is another area with mixed habitat, a nice variety of bird species and the occasional rarity. Expect ½ to 1 mile of walking on soft sand. Waterproof boots/shoes recommended.

Bells Neck Conservation Area – Harwich **Wednesday, November 15th – 8am**

Peter Fang & Gloria Smith fangmail@comcast.net

Meet at Bells Neck Road at the landing of the West Reservoir. Take advantage of low tide conditions on the East Reservoir, enjoy the marsh overlook at the footbridge and scan the car bridge for raptors, waterfowl and a possible bittern or rail. You may want to have waterproof footwear/rubber boots. Expect to walk 2 miles on generally flat, hard pack and sometimes narrow dirt trails with one mild hill leading to the footbridge.

Hinckleys, Seymour and Long Ponds – Harwich/Brewster **Saturday, November 18th – 8am**

MJ Foti maryjo1226@yahoo.com

Meet at the Rail Trail parking lot off Headwaters Drive. From Route 124 (Pleasant Lake Ave.) turn on Headwaters Drive and drive less than a half mile to access the Cape Cod Rail Trail parking area. Explore these mid-Cape ponds that host a variety of waterfowl species including Greater and Lesser Scaup, Mergansers, Bufflehead and American Coot. After exploring Hinckleys Pond we'll head to Seymour followed by the large parking lot at Long Pond accessed from Crowells Bog Rd. We'll be walking a paved bike trail to Hinckleys, observing from the sandy beach at Seymour and a viewing from a parking lot at Long Pond. Aside from pond jumping, there is only about 1 mile of walking on paved trail.

Scusset Beach State Reservation – Sagamore **Thursday, November 30th – 8am**

MJ Foti maryjo1226@yahoo.com

Take Scusset Beach Road to the main entrance. Parking is .25 miles past the entrance at the fishing pier. We'll walk the bike path that parallels the canal to view impressive numbers of wintering waterfowl, Great Cormorant and possible alcid species. The campground area and adjacent field by the playground hosts a variety of wintering passerines including Horned Lark, an occasional Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur. Expect 2 to 3 miles of paved trail and possibly some wooded dirt trails.

Cape Cod Bird Club Fall Walks, continued

West Dennis Beach

Wednesday, December 13th – 8am

Jeff Bryant five_loons@yahoo.com

Meet at the East end of the West Dennis Beach parking lot just past the entrance. This will be a leisurely paced walk as we sort through gulls in hopes of seeing the Lesser Black-backed that has been a regular at this beach for many a winter season. There will also be a variety of waterfowl and late shorebird species including Dunlin, Yellowlegs and Sanderlings in winter plumage. Expect 1-2 miles of walking the long, paved road that borders the beach and possibly scoping from the beach as well.

Corporation Beach

Saturday, December 23rd – 8am

MJ Foti maryjo1226@yahoo.com

Meet in the Corporation Beach parking lot in South Dennis off Route 6A. Known for its impressive variety of seabird, waterfowl and gull species, this beach offers up dramatic views of Cape Cod Bay. Our gathering is open to all, but particularly well suited for anyone wishing to observe the exciting activity from a stationary vantage point. You may want to bring a chair and fleece blanket as we observe from the parking lot. If you have a scope, bring it along.

New Year's Day with Ed Banks – Mid-Cape

Monday, January 1, 2024 – noon to 4PM

Ed Banks 68edbanks@gmail.com (508-769-6762),

Meet in the Stop & Shop parking lot at Patriot Square on Route 134 in South Dennis. Please join us for this annual New Year's Day walk. Get your 2024 year list off to a great start! Click off your yard birds in the morning and join us at noon. We will bird the mid-Cape and perhaps some other hotspots. Party hats optional!

Cape Cod Bird Club Health Guidelines: October 2023 – January 1, 2024

- Please do not participate in trips if you do not feel well, or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID or COVID-like symptoms;
- Individuals should feel comfortable wearing a mask at any point during a trip.
- It is up to each participant to decide whether or not they wish to carpool.

2023 Annual Cape Cod Waterfowl Census

This year's waterfowl census will take place Saturday and Sunday, December 2nd and 3rd. Last year, 26 teams covered 341 ponds with a total of 30 waterfowl species observed. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who contributed to this exceptionally successful survey. We're hoping to duplicate that success this year. *MJ Foti*

BIS Birds and Blooms Club Update — Maria Curley

Hello fellow birders! The middle school student Bird Club at Barnstable Intermediate School in Hyannis, which is sponsored by the Cape Cod Bird Club with an annual stipend for seed and suet, had a great year last school year and is expected to add new 6th and 7th graders this fall. This year it will be called the “BIS Birds and Blooms Club,” where we will focus on a diverse range of topics including: developing knowledge of local birds, feeder birds, bird migration, bird ID (visual and vocalizations) and apps like Merlin, Audubon, eBird, and iNaturalist. We will also explore different nest boxes and feeder designs and their purposes, seed and suet varieties and specialized feeding for bluebirds, swallows and hummingbirds.

Planting pollinator plants with special focus on hummingbird-friendly plants and also some for bees and other pollinators will occur in the spring. We have several dedicated garden plots available to us, so it will be an exciting year of integrating pollinator plants into our birding theme. We also hope to get a bird bath in the back of the school near the feeding platform, with an eventual goal of getting the school site certified as National Wildlife Federation wildlife habitat.

Below are pictures of our feeding pole station and, new this year, are several window feeders that have already brought Black-capped Chickadees, Blue Jays and Mourning Doves right in during the day with kids in class! They were amazed! Many students had not seen birds that close before! We also were gifted with a visit from a Red-tailed Hawk recently...nature brought right to the classroom window! It is going to be an amazing year of learning and discovery and we hope to cultivate some life-long birders and gardeners!



Many thanks to the CCBC Board and membership for supporting our BIS Birds and Blooms Club!



Maria Curley is a Science Teacher, school Club Advisor and Treasurer of the Cape Cod Bird Club.

A Project in Kenya with Impact - Peter Bono, Director, Conservation and Education

Every year the Cape Cod Bird Club awards grants of up to \$1000 to organizations whose work benefits the well-being and protection of birds. When we consider projects to fund, we look for those with the potential to make a lasting impact. That is, while our grants are modest, we ask the project proposers to explain how they will leverage the funds to have maximum impact on the problem they are describing.



In the summer of 2021 we funded a project in Western Kenya on the shores of Lake Victoria, which is Africa's largest lake by area, the world's largest tropical lake, and the world's second-largest freshwater lake by surface area after Lake Superior in North America. The Yala River and adjacent papyrus wetland are subject to many anthropogenic pressures: farming, clearing, harvesting, hunting, fishing and pollution. In the Yala wetlands, there are six restricted-range endemic birds that are papyrus specialists: Papyrus Yellow Warbler, White-winged Warbler, Carruthers's Cisticola, **Papyrus Gonolek** (pictured above), Papyrus Canary, and Northern Brown-throated Weaver. Yet, there is little to no knowledge about the abundance of these species (and many others) in the Yala ecosystem.

Our project partner, MobiNature Frontiers, undertook a four-part project during 2022-23. Their goals were to:

- Conduct an inventory of the birds living in the Yala Swamp
- Assess the source and magnitude of the anthropogenic pressures
- Train volunteers to carry on the work
- Educate villagers about conservation and sustainability.

Six facilitators trained 18 **volunteers** from ten different schools. A mobile education unit ran seven outreach events involving talks, video shows, **theatre and puppetry outreaches** in schools and strategic social networks such as beaches, markets, and churches. Over 3000 people were estimated to be in attendance (25% primary school children; 20% secondary students; 40% adult women; 15% adult men). The CCBC can be proud of our small contribution to groups such as MobiNature Frontiers. I urge you to take the time to read their final report which can be found on the [Conservation and Education](#) page of our website.



Outreach through drama at local school



Survey and monitoring volunteers

Photo Papyrus Gonolek: David Clapp

**Research Spotlight: Temperature swings — how birds are weathering the weather
— Katherine O'Malley**

The summer of 2023 has been fraught with extreme weather events all over the globe: the devastating Maui wildfires, extreme heat and fires in Spain and Greece, a 'heat dome' in the Southern U.S. and intense rain resulting in widespread flooding here in New England.

All of this abnormal weather has caused disruption and hardship for many bird species, struggling to keep up with intense swings in weather and maintain fitness and reproductive ability. To better understand how extreme weather events are impacting birds, Conor Taff (Cornell University) and J. Ryan Shipley (Swiss Federal Institute) published research indicating that cold-snaps are impacting fitness across 16 of 24 surveyed common species.

Taff and Shipley classified both cold-snaps and heat-waves as three-day periods of intense cold or intense heat and used community breeding records to match breeding data, bird fitness and availability of resources with weather and geographic data. The community breeding information came from three sources: the Nestwatch, a program run through Cornell's Ornithology Lab; a program through Birds Canada; and Project MartinWatch, an archive dedicated specifically to purple martins. Using these three databases, the researchers were able to identify that cold-snaps reduced fitness across 16 of 24 common species, and heat-waves reduced fitness across 11 of 24 common species. Of note, cold-snaps were most harmful to 8 of 24 species during the breeding stage, including Purple Martins, Tree Swallows, Eastern and Western Bluebirds and Carolina Chickadee

While overall temperature in spring breeding seasons did not increase significantly, the variability of temperature increased in recent decades, making it difficult for nesting birds to manage wild swings in temperatures between cold-snaps and heat-waves. This variability in temperature may be what is contributing most to reduced fitness for birds, along with a reduction in food availability as insects are also unable to survive these major swings in temperature.

Researchers advise that much more research is needed to identify the timing and severity of extreme weather events across species. One area noted by researchers as valuable for future research is continuing to investigate how changes in temperature and weather are causing a decline in overall body size across species.

(Article based on research cited in *New York Times*, Science Times, August 25, 2023.)

Young Eastern Bluebirds huddled to stay warm.
Photo: Kathy Kennedy



FYI: Nesting data collected by Cape Cod Bird Club volunteers each summer is submitted to NestWatch at Cornell Lab of Ornithology to become part of their database.

Pecking Order, or How I Spent my Summer Vacation — Peggy Sagan

Once our Northern Cardinal triplets fledged in late June, we felt like empty nesters, a bit adrift. So, turning our attention to the many feeders in our backyard, we began to take note of pecking order; that is, who trumps whom at the feeder. Here are a few observations:

Grab-and-Go birds (Tufted Titmouse, nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees): These species typically wait for an empty perch at the feeder, managing to avoid most encounters. Once an opportunity presents itself, they're in and out in a flash.

Trough Feeders (American Goldfinch, House Finches): When they've claimed their perch, they chow down, not relinquishing their spot until they're full. Even birds twice their size can't displace them.



Bossy Bullies (Blue Jays, Common Grackles): These birds use their size and their brash calls to intimidate the competition. Most other birds meekly wait until they leave to claim a spot at the feeder.

Wary Big Guys (Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers): Rather than diving into a crowd of small birds and grabbing perches, these two larger specimens tend to wait deferentially until the feeder is clear. Once "in possession," however, just a slight lifting of their wings is enough to send other birds flitting away.

Unruly Gangs (Red-winged Blackbirds): When two or more Red-wings gather, birds their size (Northern Cardinals) and even larger (Common Grackles) hold back.

Rodan vs. Godzilla (Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Flickers): The face-off that we anticipated never occurred, alas!

Tiny Tyrants (Ruby-throated Hummingbirds): Generally we observed one female defending "her" feeder against all others of her species. But how to explain the hummer who chased and harassed a Black-capped Chickadee for no apparent reason?



Admittedly, our "study" of feeder dominance was not scientific. If you're interested in learning more about the topic, check out this Cornell Lab of Ornithology article: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/when-136-bird-species-show-up-at-a-feeder-which-one-wins/>. Volunteers participating in Project FeederWatch, a joint Cornell Lab and Bird Studies Canada project, reported 7,653 observations of "successful displacement" at the feeder between November 2016 and April 2017, resulting in a ranking of 136 species. The Cornell study was conducted during the winter months, when food is scarce. Cornell Lab postdoctoral associate Eliot Miller, the author, admits that these hierarchies could vary seasonally, or between habitats or regions.

What interesting interactions have you observed at your feeder. Forward your observation to the Kingfisher Editor at info@capecodbirdclub.org.

Peggy Sagan is a bird feeder, bird watcher, Cape Cod Bird Club director, and volunteer bird bander at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. Photos by Peter Fang.

JOIN CCBC or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW !
Membership year runs from September 1 through August 31.

Use this form if paying by check. If credit card, <https://capecodbirdclub.org/wordpress/join-online/>

NEW MEMBERS may join at any time.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWING MEMBERSHIP | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBERSHIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth***(18 or under) FREE | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$75.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (Household) \$25.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$100.00 |

Additional donations are much appreciated. Thank you for your support.

Membership Dues \$ _____

Conservation & Education Fund \$ _____

General Operating Fund \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Household Address (required): _____

Household Tel. No. (required): _____

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

NOTES: * Knowing your gender preference and year of birth helps us design programs to serve you better.

** 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 and paper expenses by electing to receive your newsletter in color (*The Kingfisher*) **by email only.**
- CHECK HERE** if you would like to be contacted about helping the Club by leading a walk, writing an article, being a guest speaker, or serving on the Board or one of its subcommittees.

*****Signature of adult family member of youth member** _____

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



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. *Please join us!*

- To join and pay dues online, visit www.capecodbirdclub.org/join/join-online/.
- If you prefer to send a check, please use the form on the previous page or download a membership form from the website at <https://www.capecodbirdclub.org/join/join-by-mail/> and send it along with your check to: CCBC, PO Box 351, Centerville, MA 02632.

Officers: Peter Fang	President
Mark Faherty	Vice President
Carolyn Kennedy	Secretary
Maria Curley	Treasurer
Directors: Mary Jo Foti ('25)	Bird Walks
Peter Bono ('25)	Conservation and Education
Peggy Sagan ('26)	Membership
Michele Burnat ('24)	Merchandise Sales
David Clapp ('24)	Outreach and Publicity
Gloria Smith ('26)	Programs

The Kingfisher, Editor: Carolyn Kennedy

Board members may be reached by email: info@capecodbirdclub.org