



South Shore Bird Club

of Massachusetts

since 1946

President's Message

Reflection

I am not going to sugarcoat it. The last several months have been difficult for us all. One minute it was a whisper, then a safety precaution at the Birders Meeting, and the next life we knew it was upended. For some it has been tragic, others merely inconvenient and others still somewhere in the middle. But I think that this event has taught us things. How to prepare for a disaster, how to entertain ourselves by ourselves, and how to engage with one another without the ability to do so physically. We've all been forced to change what we knew and develop a way to try to rebuild some sense of a normal life based on a new set of rules and standards.

Doing these things has been a challenge, but challenges are where the most growth is made. A year or two may seem like forever in the moment, but in the grand scheme of things represents a small percentage of our lifetimes. I am optimistic that life will one day be normal again and the whole event will be just a memory - one that challenged all of us as an entire species and results in new innovations on how we conduct our lives. When this is all over I hope that all of us as a species, a society, and as individuals, can all be able to say that it was a hard time, but we have learned things from it and we have come out stronger than we went in, and improved our "new normal."

One must wonder, in the countless hours he or she has spent outside in nature and looking at birds alone or with members of their household, do birds and other wildlife have any idea of what is going on? Perhaps not. The Turkey Vulture may notice less meals on the roadside due to the decreased vehicle traffic. The Fish Crows in downtown Falmouth may be emaciated from steep decline of dumpster nourishment due to restaurants being closed (or have they traveled elsewhere?). The songbirds fat and happy because people are home and keeping their feeders stocked.

To them, life is likely mostly unchanged. Business as usual; migrating, pair-bonding, nesting, raising young, migrating again, and surviving the winter to repeat the process again. For that fact, I believe all of us are very lucky to have an interest in nature and hobbies that keep us outdoors like birdwatching, botanizing, and other forms of nature study. We are all fortunate to have a hobby that can be done socially distant or isolated, close to home, and as frequently or infrequently as we would like. Things change so much season to season, day to day, and even sometimes hour to hour that there is no shortage of happenings to occupy our interests.

As it relates to the bird club, we have obviously been forced to innovate. We did not want to halt everything and become irrelevant. We wanted to provide all of you with value for being members to our humble bird club. At the onset of this situation, we started running Social Distancing virtual bird "walks." These were a great way for all of us to keep connected, and share our experiences and wonders in nature. Over group chat, we spent many a weekend day (16 so far!) enjoying the many wonders of nature, sharing photos of many a sunrise and talking about the birds, plants, and other critters we encountered during our outdoor endeavors. Summaries of these adventures can be found on our blog (<http://southshorebirdclubma.blogspot.com/>), and for those interested who do not already participate, announcements are made on our Google Group (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/google-group>).

We continue to evolve, now hosting informal presentations over Zoom which focus on a wide variety of nature-related topics, which can be found on our events page (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>). The annual meeting and photo share will also follow this format of being held digitally. While trips remain canceled, we will continue our annual surveys, Fall Roundup and Plymouth County Duck Count. These can be performed safely by birding in singles or with members of a household, and may even result in greater coverage as more groups are out first thing in the morning.

Lastly, some of our members have collaborated on providing a list of productive locations to go birding this fall and winter. We hope that although we won't be meeting as a group, you might use these blurbs to go out on your own birding adventures. Thanks to all who contributed these for the newsletter. I hope you enjoy this exceptionally nonconventional newsletter!

Best,

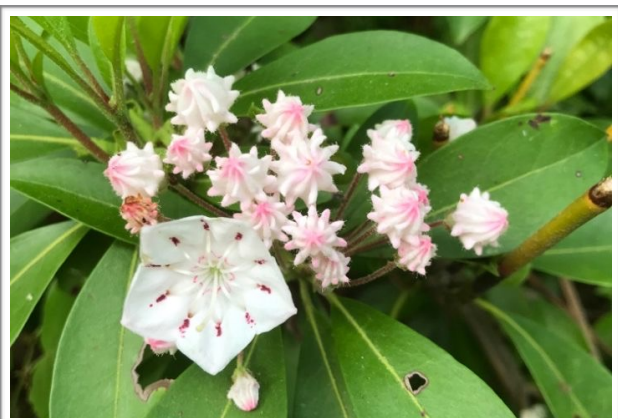
Nate

Nate Marchessault

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Mountain Laurel spotted by Christine while on a June 14, 2020 social distancing walk.

Photo: Christine Whitebread



Fresh Pileated Woodpecker holes at Triphammer Pond, Hingham, discovered during a June 7, 2020 social distancing walk.

Photo: Kathy Rawdon

Field Trips & Events

Fall Roundup

Saturday, September 19, 2020
Christine Whitebread: 617-395-8006
standch@hotmail.com

Join the Club for its long-term survey of the South Shore. You can make a difference, even if you can bird for only a few hours, but we know you will want to bird all day! This year, we're tweaking the protocol a bit and encourage birding alone or only with household members to ensure the safety of our members. Please contact Christine or a prior trip leader as soon as possible to be assigned to a team. A GroupMe chat will be held over the day where we can discuss our adventures, and will be announced on our Google Group (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/google-group>). Afterward, a tally over Zoom will be held on Sunday, September 20th at 6:30 PM where members can share their highlights for the day. Register for the tally via our Events page (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>).

Annual Plymouth County Duck Count

Saturday, November 21, 2020

Joe Scott: joescottbsn@hotmail.com

Let's fan out and count all the ducks in Plymouth County's freshwater lakes and ponds. This count is planned when waterfowl are at their peak numbers and diversity. This year, we're tweaking the protocol a bit and encourage birding alone or with household members to ensure the safety of our members. A GroupMe chat will be held over the day where we can discuss our adventures, and will be announced on our Google Group (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/google-group>). A tally over Zoom will be held on Sunday, November 22nd at 6:30 PM where members can share their highlights for the day. Register for the tally via our Events page (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>). Contact Joe by email no later than November 14th so you can be assigned to a team.

Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 16, 2021
5:00-7:00 PM

This year will be a little more business than usual as we are going virtual! (Our belts will thank us.) Meeting will consist of our open planning meeting followed by our annual meeting. Registration for the event can be found on our Events page (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>).



Iceland Gull, Craigville Beach, Cape Cod, December, 2019

Photo: Brian Vigorito

Member's Night Photo Share

Saturday, February 20, 2021, 4:00-6:00 PM

Shawn Carey: scarey@avfx.com & Nate Marchessault: natemarchessault@gmail.com
This year we are going digital with the Photo Share! Send your best, funniest, fondest encounters with birds to Nate and share those moments with us! Time is limited to 10 minutes per person. Registration for the event can be found on our Events page (<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>). Contact Nate with any further questions.

Something NEW

Nature and Birding-based Zoom Presentations

Starting Monthly in August

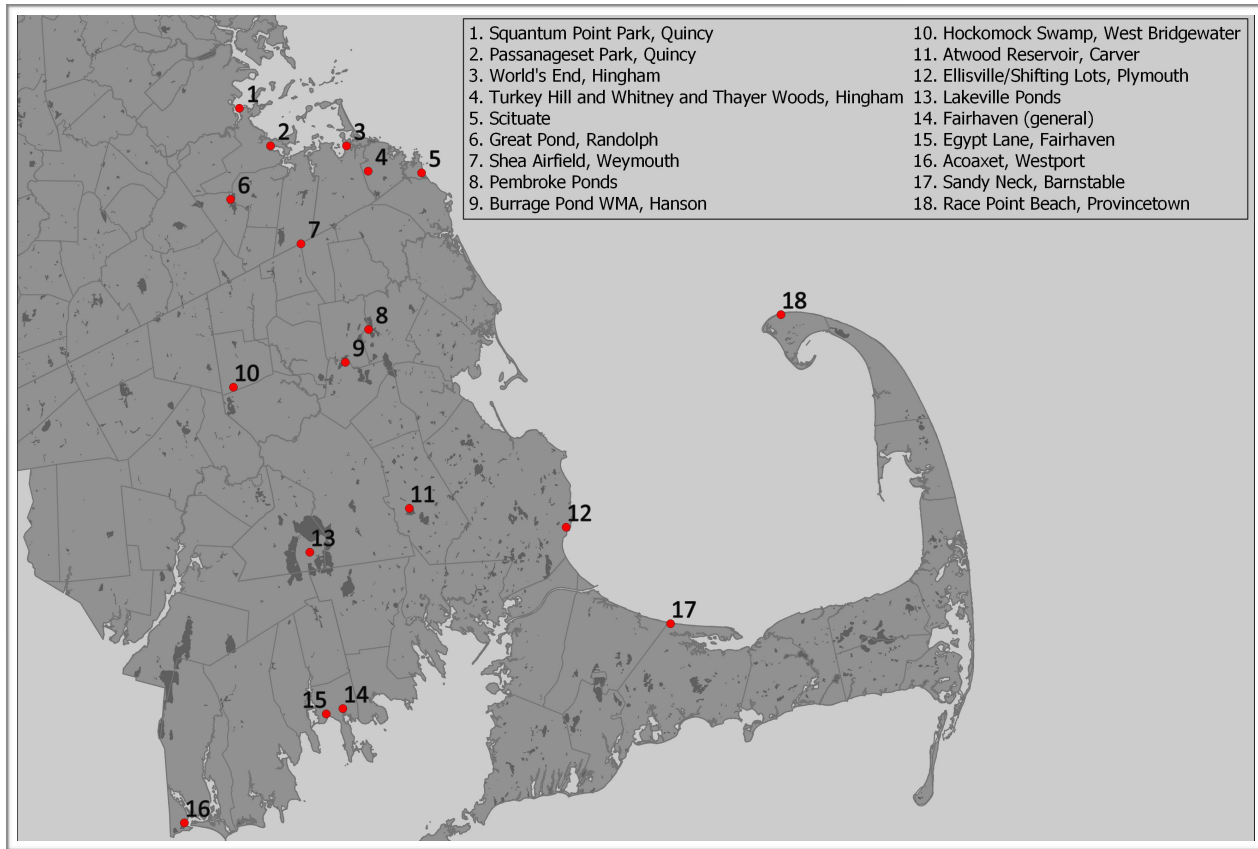
Bring your curiosity and knowledge, come learn and share.

Register on our Events page:

(<https://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc/events>)

Birding Hotspots

Below are several birding locations throughout southeastern Massachusetts that can be productive in fall and winter, organized north to south, and a few on Cape Cod. GPS coordinates can be copied and pasted into Google Maps for directions to parking areas.



1. Squantum Point Park, Quincy

Parking: Public lot for Marina Bay at the end of Miwra Haul Rd, Quincy, MA; [42.298521, -71.034032](#)

This site offers several different habitats in a relatively small area. Parking gives access to the former airbase runway, which is now planted with grasses and flowers. Open field and edge species can be found during fall migration. The trail through the woods running parallel to the Neponset River is a good migrant trap for warblers, vireos, and sparrows. This can be reached at the north end of the runway, but the trail sometimes floods at that point. When flooded, it's best to access the forest trail from the Neponset River Walk by parking near Boston Scientific off Commander Shea Blvd. Walking along the shore of the Neponset gives access to waterfowl and waders in the salt marsh to the west. Following the shore on the east side of the park gives a view of seabirds in the harbor.

Best times of year: September, February-March.

Written by Conor Gearin

2. Passanageset Park at Broad Meadows Marsh, Quincy

Parking: 60 Murphy Street – the Quincy Youth Hockey Arena, enter through the gate. In summer this can be obstructed with Japanese Knotweed. [42.260347, -70.993101](#)

The park was created in 2015 after the Army Corps of Engineers completed the salt marsh habitat restoration. The salt marsh adjacent to the DPW composting area is complemented with a few trees and some grassland. As of 2020 there are 183 species in eBird from this location.

Sparrows especially find plenty of food all through fall and early winter. The one-mile loop trail with the views over the marsh toward the Fore River Bridge is enjoyable throughout the year. After a lot of rain and during high tides boots are recommended as the trails are often wet. Passanageset is a great place to work on your sparrow ID skills and there are plenty of opportunities to watch one of the three Osprey nests in and around the area. Bring bug spray during the summer!

Best time of Year: Late October-November

For more information check the website: <http://passanageset.org/passanageset-park-at-broad-meadows-marsh/visitor-info/>

Written by Christine Whitebread

3. World's End, Hingham

Parking: Turn onto Martin's Lane from Summer St. in Hingham and drive to end: [42.258227, -70.873537](#)

Currently it is necessary to register with the Trustees for a specific time to enter the park. Free to members, \$10/car on weekdays and \$15/car on weekends.

Four drumlins connected by land bridges with fields, woodlands, and numerous views of Hingham Bay. Many paths well-gravelled and wide. A few side paths, especially in Rocky Neck, are grass or dirt. Scopes recommended mainly for viewing rookery on Sarah Island.

Best Time of Year: Spring is great for warbler viewing, especially in Bird Alley and the Valley when there is a fallout; Rookery on Sarah Island can be viewed from west side of reservation; shorebirds spotty at best in Damde Meadows in late summer; birds can be seen throughout the year and ducks are plentiful offshore through the winter.

Written by Sally Avery

4. Turkey Hill/Weir River Farm/Whitney-Thayer Woods, Hingham

Parking: 3A in Hingham near Cohasset Line: [42.234110, -70.823869](#) or Top of Turkey Hill Lane (from RT. 228 take Leavitt St.; go left up Turkey Hill Lane to top): [42.239587, -70.853520](#), parking is free.

A four mile walk through forest, fields, swamp, and riparian habitats. Ascend Turkey Hill and work the meadow, then cross over to the Weir River Farm to descend through meadows and forest to the Weir River. Follow the path along the river, then continue upwards to cross Turkey Hill Lane into Whitney-Thayer Woods. Continue on that trail through the American Holly Grove and onto One Way Lane. Left onto Side Hill Road and back to parking lot using one of 2-3 paths. Lots of maps posted along the trails as well as paper ones at the kiosks. Scope not necessary.

Best Time of Year: In spring/early breeding season expect around 50 species of song birds, raptors, even egrets; Good birding year round, however deep snow is difficult to navigate. Porta potty sometimes found on farm but don't count on it. Typical forest and meadow paths which can be muddy until mid-summer.

Written by Sally Avery



Broad-winged Hawk, Medfield, MA, June 2020

Photo: Josh Bock

5. Scituate

Musquashicut Pond:

North end off of Musquashicut Ave off of Hatherly Rd, park at side of pond on the street [42.230917, -70.762142](#). The South portion of the public section of pond is 0.5 mile south on Hatherly Rd (pulloff for about 5 cars) [42.225462, -70.759446](#)

Great in Shorebird migration and for waders, nesting terns, gulls. (Mew Gull, Iceland Gull, kittiwake, Marbled and Hudsonian Godwit, American White Pelican, Pectoral Sandpipers).

Does not seem to have a time of day that will determine the mudflats exposure (talk of placing automatic gates that will be open and closed with the tides).

Minot Light: seen from Glades Rd.; Pull off for 4 cars on right at first view of major rock with American flag, [42.234908, -70.760050](#) or drive straight to end and parking by high seawall in winter months for another vantage point (neighbors seem fine with this in winter) [42.241812, -70.763338](#)

Best Time of Year: Winter for harlequin, scoters, grebes, eider, gannets, Common and Barrows Goldeneye, Brant, Long-tailed Ducks and merganser.

Written by Kathy Rawdon

6. Great Pond - Randolph/Braintree

There is a small dirt parking lot next to the pumping station on Pond Street in Randolph; [42.198000, -71.051200](#)

This fresh water reservoir consists of two large sections of pond (upper and lower), bisected by a dike and a few smaller adjacent impoundments.

Best Time of Year: A productive spot for waterfowl during spring and fall migration until freeze-up. Big sky views can be had from the dike, making it possible to see a variety of raptor species. Dry summer weather can make conditions favorable for shorebirds and dabbling ducks from mid-August through September. Summer months are good for damsel and dragonflies. Terrain is flat, dry, and mostly exposed with well traveled trails on the east and west sides. A spotting scope is useful (dare I say essential) for this large expanse of open water.

Written by Vin Zollo

7. Shea Naval Air Field, Weymouth

Parking: Free parking along Bill Delahunt Pkwy, Weymouth, MA [42.153591, -70.939032](#)

One of the few reliable sites in Norfolk County for grassland specialists, particularly Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow. (Note: the eastern end of the airfield is in Plymouth Co., with a separate eBird hotspot.) The former airfield is a bit of a free-for-all for off-leash dogs, windsurfing, and model planes, so early morning is preferable. Eastern Meadowlarks are present roughly March-Oct., and other grassland birds can be found during fall migration. For grassland specialists, walk south along the main N-S runway looking/listening east, and walk east along secondary E-W runway looking to grass areas between runways. In early winter, look for Snow Buntings, accipiters, and Northern Harriers. Late winter brings American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, and various sparrow possibilities. Best times of year: September, November-December, March.

Written by Conor Gearin

8. Pembroke Ponds

Oldham Pond: Park at Town Landing - 183 Wampanoag St 42.062493, -70.830560

Furnace Pond: Park at Lucky Dawg Tavern - 242 Mattakeesett St 42.060410, -70.828600 or Furnace Pond Beach: 90 Furnace Colony Dr 42.050259, -70.822285

Great Sandy Bottom Pond: Park at the dirt pull off near 27 Ridge Ave 42.048477, -70.830052, then follow a short trail to the water's edge.

Little Sandy Bottom Pond: Public beaches at 44 Woodbine Ave 42.039465, -70.828072

or via a short hike through Windswept Bogs - 96 Glenwood Rd 42.046804, -70.830906

Stetson Pond: Public beach at 350 Plymouth St 42.024383, -70.829891

Silver Lake: Short hikes via Silver Lake Sanctuary - Bearses' Ln (small dirt road in the woods, not to be confused with the paved Bearses' Way) 42.020772, -70.792959 or Veterans Commemorative Town Forest - 526 School St (Rt 27) 42.033197, -70.801187

This area is best known for waterfowl, especially diving ducks. Ducks move around quite a bit from pond to pond in this area, so a thorough search involves making quick stops at multiple spots. For most of the listed locations, you can scope a large portion of the pond from the parking area. Great Sandy Bottom Pond is the most reliable place in SE Mass. for Ruddy Ducks. Small numbers often linger there into May, giving us a chance to see their breeding plumage. Best time of year: October-March for waterfowl. The small bog just south of Great Sandy Bottom can also be good for shorebirds in late summer/early fall.

Written by Brian Vigorito

9. Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area, Hanson

Main entrance: Hawks Ave, Hanson, a dirt parking lot on the left just after turning onto Hawks Ave; 42.029507, -70.858435

Burrage Pond is one the best birding spots in interior Plymouth County, a large area with different habitats, good for a full day of exploring or several shorter trips. The road from the main parking lot leads into an open area where broad trails crisscross former cranberry bogs. In fall, several sparrow species can be found in the vegetation around the bogs. Follow to the right to a long, straight path with several vantage points along the main pond. The northeast end of the pond includes open water and shallow, marshy areas, where diving and dabbling ducks can be found. Sandhill Cranes linger into late fall and can be seen on the far side of the pond. When the water level is right, there are many small mudflat islands to check for migrating shorebirds.

Back entrance: 474 Elm St, Hanson. A few parking spaces at the end of a gated road; 42.029429, -70.889544

for access to the northwestern corner of Burrage, with several small ponds and a sandpit. Large numbers of Ring-necked Ducks can often be found on these ponds and the sandy area can produce a variety of sparrows.

Best time to visit: Oct-Nov best for species mentioned above. Burrage can be quiet in the winter, though attracts Purple Finches and Common Redpolls in some years.

Written by Brian Vigorito

10. Hockomock Swamp, West Bridgewater

Skim Milk Bridge/Model Airplane field: Parking on Scotland Street, W Bridgewater adjacent to the Town River; 41.992397, -71.026338

The trail is a dry dike traversing along the Town River. In a short distance, on the right, is an ancient stone bridge crossing the river - Skim Milk Bridge. To the left is a trail bridge crossing a ditch. If safe crossing can be made, the fields on that side, known to birders as "The Model Airplane Field," can have good sparrows in the fall. Continuing on the dike, and keeping to the dike, marshes and flooded fields await. These fields are often good for waterfowl, kestrel, waders and shorebirds. Marsh birds seen are Virginia Rail, Sora and Least Bittern. Forest birding, field birding, marsh birding and the ecological wonder that is the Hockomock Swamp.

Maple Street Entrance

Parking: 672-540 Maple Street, West Bridgewater MA; 41.993673, -71.040439

Walking is on a dry roadway and on power lines. This spot is good for general birding and marsh and swamp specialties. Rusty Blackbirds, King Rail, Sora, and Virginia Rail are all possible in the right season. This spot has been, for some time, a breeding locale for Yellow-throated Vireo. My favorite reasons to go here are to hear/see first of the year Northern Waterthrush in early spring and to enjoy the ecological wonder that is the Hockomock swamp.

Best time of year: Sep-Nov for shorebirds, marsh birds, sparrows, and other fall migrants.

Written by Pete Jacobson



Peter Jacobson shared this mouth-watering image of blueberries on June 14 while social distancing with the caption, 'Can't wait!'

Photo: Pete Jacobson

11. Atwood Reservoir, Carver

Parking: Near pump house on Meadow Street; [41.869466, -70.775406](#)

From the parking area scope South Meadow Brook Reservoir, which sometimes has waterfowl on it. Walk through the woods on the opposite side of the street of South Meadow Brook Reservoir and along the cranberry bogs to Atwood Reservoir. This is a good spot for ducks and eagles, and occasionally shorebirds like Black-bellied Plover and Pectoral Sandpipers can be found on and around the stumps in the pond. Depending on water levels, big numbers of Wood Ducks will sometimes gather in the dense marsh grasses along the sides of the trail. Scope recommended. Best time of year: Productive September-February so long as there is open water.

Written by Nate Marchessault

12. Ellisville/Shifting Lots, Plymouth

Parking: Parking places on the side of Ellisville Rd ([41.843387, -70.540681](#)) for shorebird flats. Shifting Lots parking lot ([41.843387, -70.540681](#)) opens mid-September.

The flats along the edge of Ellisville Rd are good for shorebirds during fall migration, best on a rising or falling tide. Dead low isn't bad, but the birds aren't concentrated. If you arrive a couple of hours before high, you can watch the flocks focus their efforts on grabbing the last juicy morsels before all is covered with water. On sunny days, avoid the flats before 11am or so. Bright glare makes it impossible to see anything. Once the flats are submerged, head to Shifting Lots for easy access to the Beach. Decent sized groups of shorebirds, gulls, and terns use the barrier as a high tide roost. And in winter this is a great place to visit with scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, grebes, and the occasional alcid up close and personal, especially on days with a bit of wind. While on the beach, especially in late fall, scan the dunes for Savannah Sparrow and American Pipits. After checking the beach and the nearshore, walk north towards the cut, then follow the cut west back towards the flats. This is a good area for shorebirds and gives another chance to spot something unusual in the salt marsh. Follow the path back south to the parking lot.

For passerines, walk the dirt road that leads to the Shifting Lots parking area and make sure to check the thickets at the stream crossing for migrants or lingerers. The thickets below the main Ellisville State Park parking lot are good and can be accessed from Ellisville Road by a small path west of the flats.

Best time of year: Shorebirds: August to November, plus lingerers. Marginal weather days in winter can be good as well.

Written by Lisa Schibley



13. Lakeville Ponds

This area features several large and important freshwater ponds in Plymouth County that are among the most productive for waterfowl anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. Assawompsett Pond is the largest natural freshwater pond in the Commonwealth, and the nearby but less sizable Great Quittacas, Little Quittacas, and Pocksha Pond are sometimes more productive for waterfowl than Assawompsett.

For access, begin at the traffic circle at the intersection of Routes 18, 44, and 28 in Middleboro. Drive south on Route 18 (eventually joined by Route 105), for 4.4 miles until **Assawompsett Pond** appears on the left. Park at a small mini-mall across from the pond, Lakeside Landing, beyond the Lakeville Town Offices ([41.839774, -70.944720](#)). This vantage provides a fine look at Assawompsett Pond, but a telescope is essential for best viewing throughout this area. Double-crested Cormorants may be visible on the roof of a pumping station on the shore of the pond across the road, and in fall and winter they are sometimes joined by the much less common Great Cormorant. In fall from mid-October until freeze up, a variety of diving ducks can usually be seen from the Lakeside Landing lot, including Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded and Common Merganser. Other possibilities in late fall include Common Loon and Horned Grebe, and occasionally such uncommon species as Canvasback and Redhead.

Leaving the lot, continue another .5 mile to a parking area on the right, **Tamarack Park** ([41.832712, -70.940375](#)). This spot affords another wide view of the pond, and is also located across the road from a culvert that lets water flow from nearby Long Pond and pass under Route 18 and 105 into Assawompsett. The mouth of this culvert often remains open in winter when gulls gather on the ice or bathe in the open water. A check will sometimes produce an Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, or Glaucous Gull among the routine Herring and Great Black-backed gulls. A Pied-billed Grebe will occasionally winter in the open water. Check the thickets behind the parking lot for a wintering Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, or a Fox Sparrow. These thickets have turned up more than one surprise species through the years.

Continuing south after leaving Tamarack Park, in .2 miles on the left there's a small cemetery on a hill that affords a great view of Assawompsett and a chance of spotting a Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, or a few scoters on the distant portions of the large pond. Loons, grebes, sea ducks, and Common Mergansers seem to prefer these more distant parts of the pond, so the view from the cemetery offers a nice vantage. There is a pull off on the side of the road just beyond the cemetery where one or two cars can easily pull off the busy roadway ([41.832920, -70.936057](#)).

(Continued, next page)

**'Banded 36 p - taking care of two babies at Ellisville,'
July 11, 2020, social distance birding.
Photo: Lisa Schibley**

Lakeville Ponds (continued)

After checking the areas near Tamarack Park and the cemetery, continue 3.8 miles until reaching the southern end of **Little Quittacus Pond** and a small parking area on the right (41.786864, -70.909608). A short walk down a gated roadway there affords a nice view of Little Quittacus Pond, and oftentimes Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck, and sometimes a Pied-billed Grebe or two, as well as a few American Coot. If you have nothing else to do, try counting the number of bricks in the magnificent chimney beside the pumping station at the end of Little Quittacus Pond! After scoping Little Quittacus Pond, turn around and drive north 1.3 miles where there are wide pull offs on both sides of the road, and as well as gated trailheads leading into the woods on both sides (41.802876, -70.916628). Both of these trails are interesting during migration and in summer, but the one on the right side of the road leads you to the shore of **Great Quittacus Pond** and a view of the pond that is difficult to obtain from anywhere else. A small stand of planted spruce and a now logged-over Red Pine grove here hosted nesting Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-rumped Warbler until at least the early 1980s.

Leaving the roadside pull offs proceed to Long Point Road which will be the first road to the right. Follow this for 1.6 miles until Great Quittacus Pond appears on the right across from a dirt road beside some cranberry bogs and a sign for Betty's Neck on the left. Following this dirt road around the edge of the bogs will bring you to an obvious overlook of another pond on your right (41.819517, -70.900615). This is **Pocksha Pond**, which is actually a large southern embayment of Assawompsett Pond. This can be a very good pond for birds, and Brant, Tufted Duck, and Barrow's Goldeneye have all been observed here. After checking Pocksha Pond, retrace the route back to Long Point Road and turn left and follow the causeway that divides Pocksha Pond on the left and Great Quittacus Pond on the right (41.814817, -70.898362). This causeway is a wonderful spot to work on scaup identification, because the Lakeville Ponds are one of the best areas on the South Shore to routinely find both scaup species together, often in the same flocks. The causeway is also a good spot to check carefully in late fall for errant sea ducks and occasionally Bonaparte's Gull.

One to two pairs of Bald Eagles have annually nested on one or another of the Lakeville Ponds since the late 1980s, and it is not uncommon in winter to see several eagles at a time either soaring over the ponds, or perched in large pines that surround the shorelines in many places. Because of the large size of the Lakeville Ponds, the area is also an excellent place to check either during, or in the aftermath of strong storms or hurricanes, especially in fall when various species of seabirds and other unusual coastal birds are most likely to occasionally get blown inland.

For birders not wanting to drive to central Massachusetts for a taste of Quabbin Reservoir-type birding, the Lakeville Ponds are as fine a substitute as there is in southeastern Massachusetts, and the numbers of waterfowl, and sometimes the appearance of unusual species can be as exciting as anywhere else in the state. Give it a try sometime in October and November. I doubt if you'll be disappointed!

Written by Wayne R. Petersen

14. Fairhaven Thickets/Little Bay

This area is a good location to observe late migrants and wintering semi-hardy lingerers. The thickets along the **bike paths** and the paths/dirt roads intersecting the paved path are attractive to wintering land birds like catbirds, towhees, Fox Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chat, both kinglets, Hermit Thrush, sapsuckers and even a Seaside Sparrow one February. Take Arsene Street south from Rt 6 just east of Sconticut Neck Road and park in the small lot to the left of the road just before the bike path (41.640303, -70.875216). Bird the path in both directions; the thickets to the east can be quite productive and fun to work through. Take the bike path south of the lot going past the waste treatment plant and by the two windmills. This trail goes to Little Bay and the thickets one walks through are equally productive. Walk to the boat ramp which gives a good overview of the bay and adjacent marshes. This is where the aforementioned Seaside Sparrow was seen.

After birding this area go back to your vehicle and back to Rt 6 and head either to Sconticut Neck Road (left/west) or Gellette Road (right/east).

Take **Sconticut Neck Road** south. In a couple of miles there will be a farm with a private road which goes to a small community (little traffic in winter) and allows viewing of the farm and fields (41.616202, -70.862800). Over the years rare geese like White-fronted have been seen here and blackbirds are attracted to the feed.

Check other areas along Sconticut Road. **Winsegansett Avenue** on the right (west) is good to check during shorebird season (41.597129, -70.861223). **Shipyard Farm** on the left (east, 41.596873, -70.856818) has trails and Bell's Vireo was seen here late one fall. Pass Goulart Memorial Drive and look for a "hidden" pond on the right. This pond has ducks and possibly coots and one has to maneuver to get a decent look. Go to the end of Sconticut Neck and check the rocky islands for cormorants, bay ducks, and the occasional Snowy Owl.

Go back to Goulart Memorial Drive and turn right (east). This becomes a causeway to **West Island**. Just before the causeway check out **Hoppy's Landing** on the right (41.596084, -70.843954) for Snow Bunting and Horned Lark. Grebes and bay ducks can be seen from here. Continue to **West Island** and turn right at the first right (Alder Street) and follow to end (41.583698, -70.824289). This is a beach and looks south to Buzzard's Bay and the Elizabeth Islands. Barrow's Goldeneye is sometimes present and the occasional Razorbill, but wintering shorebirds and bay ducks are present.

If one goes to Gellette Road, follow to **Shaw Road** and over look the farm/grassy fields (41.642738, -70.847923). Check the trees for raptors and power lines for kestrel/meadowlarks. The cornfields on the east end and **Shaw's Cove Road** often harbors ducks in the pools and geese which includes the rarer ones like Snow and White-fronted. Shorebirds can be found in season with the occasional wintering Killdeer and snipe. There are other areas for one to check out in Fairhaven including the tidal marsh and adjacent "pond" on Egypt Lane.

Written by Glenn d'Entremont

15. Egypt Lane Ponds, Fairhaven

Parking: On Egypt Lane, cross the Phoenix Bike Path, and park on the grass strips along the road before the stone dike; 41.636163, -70.891884

Even though the hotspot's name refers to "ponds," the area includes views of the bay, salt marshes, creeks, a stream-fed pond viewed from the 15-foot hurricane dike, the lane, and the bike path. Walk across the right side of the dike to get close to the pond. Here, there are sights and sounds from the creek, pond, marshes and bay. A spotting scope will help to see birds in the bay. Other wildlife, such as mink, muskrat, red fox and coyote are living here, too. Walk along the other side of the dike as well. Here you will get great views of the osprey platforms and another salt marsh. Head to the lane and bike path where thick vegetation holds a variety of songbirds, especially warblers during migration.

Birding is great here at any time of the year. Over 200 species have been observed. American Wigeon, American Coot and Gadwall are regular visitors in fall. Also, Sora, American Bittern and Common Gallinule have been commonly sighted. In spring, woodcocks can easily be heard and seen in flight above the bike path. Breeding here are osprey, willets, Pied-billed Grebes, Black-crowned Night-herons, Green Heron, Great and Snowy Egrets, Clapper Rails and Wood Ducks. Both Turkey and Black Vultures, as well as a variety of hawks frequent the area.

Written by Carol Molander



**Marbled Godwit, Plymouth Beach
December, 2019**

Photo: Moe Molander

16. Acoaxet Area, Westport

There are several great spots for waterfowl, seabirds, passerines and raptors in this coastal community:

Drive south on River Road and scope the **West Branch of the Westport River**. Park on side of road near the **Pump House** (41.515481,-71.101666) and walk down grass path at NE corner of Cockeast Pond to this small concrete building. Continue south along River Road to the **inlet** (41.509768,-71.098125) and scope water on either side and thickets. Continue south to Atlantic Ave and park at **Elephant Rock Beach Club Parking Lot** (41.505167,-71.098211). Walk across street to beach, turn left and proceed, looking for seabirds (Harlequin Ducks frequently seen), Loon, Gulls, etc on sand, sea and outer rocks to the large rocky outcropping called the **'Knubble'** (41.507096,-71.088577). Scope across water towards **Horseneck Beach Point**. Turn left on Beach Ave to Acoaxet Road to Atlantic Ave, birding shrubs and shore to return to parking. From parking, drive west and take first right off Atlantic Ave (dirt road) to **Cockeast Pond** (41.505971,-71.100872). Scope along mudflats, vegetation and pond. Continue along Atlantic Ave going west, examining thickets en route. Turn left on Howland Road and scope **beach and Richmond Pond** (41.502753,-71.108012).

Best time of year: For parking, after Labor Day and before Memorial Day. There may be no parking signs but generally during off-season, residents tolerate single vehicles. Scope recommended. Ponds and River are often less productive if frozen over.

Written by Kim Wylie

17. Sandy Neck Beach & Trails, West Barnstable

Parking: For beach viewing, end of Sandy Neck Rd (#425), West Barnstable; 41.738833, -70.380472. For trail access, park at the Gatehouse (off season or off hours only, as it is reserved for employees); 41.735311, -70.385393

Parking fees through the end of September. There is a charge each day for beach parking from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day from 8 AM to 5 PM. There is no charge after 5 PM.

Bird from the parking lot or walk eastward along the beach (loose rocks/sand) or hike the trails on the marsh side (access near the gatehouse). Can be strenuous as there is soft sand in sections. Bring water and depending on the season, warm clothing. Scope recommended for beach viewing.

Trail map: <https://www.town.barnstable.ma.us/SandyNeckPark/fileuploads/snmap.pdf>

Best time of year: productive during Nor'easters for alcids and pelagic species. Trails can be good for migrants in the wooded areas (requires time/effort to hike the marsh trails).

Written by Keelin Miller

18. Race Point Beach, Provincetown

Parking: End of Race Point Rd, Provincetown, MA [42.079373](#), [-70.219239](#)

Parking fees through the end of September. Bird from the parking lot or walk westward ~2 miles to get to the "rip." Can be a long walk over loose sand, bring water and depending on the season warm clothing. Scope recommended. Historic (legendary?) hotspot for terns, gulls, waterfowl, seabirds, and alcids.

Best time of year: Productive September-February, specialty species vary by season.

Written by Nate Marchessault

19. Nor'easter Spots (Note: not listed on above Map due to widespread locations.)

Brant Rock, Marshfield: Roadside parking on Ocean St, Marshfield; [42.093797](#), [-70.646755](#)

Manomet Point, Plymouth: End of Manomet Pt Rd, Plymouth; [41.926614](#), [-70.539902](#)

Town Neck Rd Beach, Sandwich: Town Neck Rd, Sandwich; [41.772153](#), [-70.492522](#). This is on the opposite side of the Canal from Scusset. The advantage here versus Scusset is one can bird in or very close to the car rather than walking up the beach.

Sandy Neck, West Barnstable: End of Sandy Neck Rd, Barnstable; [41.738696](#), [-70.381191](#)

First Encounter Beach, Eastham: End of Samoset Rd, Eastham; [41.821371](#), [-70.003483](#)

Birding during or after a Nor'easter isn't for the faint of heart, but can pay off big time for those willing to take the plunge. All spots listed can be birded from or very near the car, which is immensely helpful for keeping yourself or optics dry. First Encounter should only be birded once the winds shift westward following a Nor'easter. Other locations are most productive if winds are still coming from the northeast. Depending on the time of year one might see alcids, jaegers, storm-petrels (Leach's tends to be a Nor'easter specialty from shore), shearwaters, phalaropes, big numbers of gannets- you never really know what you're going to get.

Best time of year: Nor'easters or any time there have been strong, sustained winds coming off of the ocean.

Written by Nate Marchessault



Christine and Steven Whitbread came across this bear on June 14 while social distance birding in Quabbin and sent a photo and caption reading, 'Bear hugs to everyone.'

Photo: Steven Whitebread



Spiderwort in bloom

May 31, 2020 social distancing walk

Photo: Conor Gearin



On a July 11, 2020 Social distancing walk, Vin wrote, 'In Squantum this morning. Shorebird migration is ramping up. Several Seaside Dragonlets (dragonfly) in the salt marshes.'

Photo: Vin Zollo

Annual Conservation Contributions

At the January, 2020 SSBC Annual Meeting, members voted to provide \$1,000 in donations to the eight conservation organizations listed below, to support their critical conservation efforts on behalf of birds and bird habitat. All donations have been gratefully acknowledged by each organization. Conservation contributions are a SSBC tradition, made possible with thanks, by the generosity of its dues-paying members.

\$200 to the [Buzzards Bay Coalition](#)

\$100 to the [Champions of the Flyway](#) 2020 campaign for the globally endangered Steppe Eagle in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

\$100 for [Keeping Company with Kestrels](#)

\$100 to [Manomet](#), with thanks to Brad Winn, guest speaker at the Annual Meeting

\$100 for [Mass Audubon's Birders Meeting](#)

\$100 for [Mass Audubon's Blue Hills Snowy Owls/Raptor Research](#)

in memory of former SSBC President Patty O'Neill

\$100 to the [Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program](#) in memory of Charter Member and former Chair of NHESP's Advisory Committee, Kathleen (Betty) Anderson, and prior SSBC Member

\$200 to [Wildlands Trust](#)



Snow Goose, Rochester, February, 2020

Photo: Brian Vigorito



Sabine's Gull, Provincetown, July, 2020

Photo: Josh Bock

South Shore Bird Club Membership Form

Annual Membership for Jan-Dec 2021 is \$10 per household. If you're unsure if you have paid your 2021 dues, contact Mike Nolan at menolan1700@gmail.com. Dues appreciated Jan-Feb.

Payable to: South Shore Bird Club
Mail to: South Shore Bird Club Membership
30 Rockland Street
Dartmouth, MA 02748

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

South Shore Bird Club Membership: Everyone interested in birds and wildlife is welcome to join the club. Annual dues are \$10.00 per address, payable to the secretary/treasurer in January/February. Please include address, zip code and email.

SSBC Google Group: Members are encouraged to join this web-based site, where impromptu birding trips are listed and bird-related updates and discussions are posted.

All field trips are currently canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Any updates to this situation will be announced via the Google Group and the SSBC website.

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Please check the SSBC website for updates.
<http://southshorebirdclub.wixsite.com/ssbc>