

THE IPA NEWSLETTER

Mystic Lake, Middle Pond, and Hamblin Pond

Summer 2008

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GRAY WILLOWS DISAPPEAR, TO CHEERS AND APPLAUSE

On Monday, July 21, Bartlett Tree Experts began to cut down the invasive gray willow trees that have infested the shores of the Indian Ponds for at least seven decades. Properties around Mystic Lake whose owners had contracted for removal were all completed after six days, and the arborists moved to Middle Pond, which also required a week, before finishing Hamblin Pond during the third week.

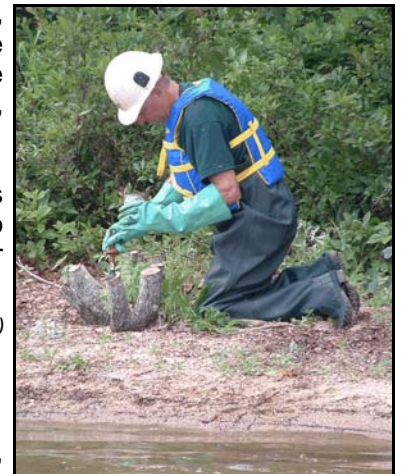


Cutting and loading branches onto rafts during the first day of gray willow removal in Mystic Lake.

Steve Heywood, Cape Cod Manager for Bartlett, first visited each client's property and located and marked each individual gray willow with orange spray paint. A team of arborists, working from the water side, cut the marked trees with chain saws (lubricated with vegetable oil) to a height of about one foot, then carefully painted herbicide on each cut stump. The masses of branches were loaded onto rafts towed by an outboard skiff and carefully transported to an onshore site, where they were fed into a chipper and hauled away to be turned into compost.

Although some property owners report having their views improved, most signed up for this project because they felt ridding their property of these invasives was the right thing to do ecologically. One owner has already reported seeing native plants beginning to appear where sunlight and growing space had previously been blocked out by the gray willows.

(Continued on page 6)



Painting a gray willow stump with Rodeo to kill the roots.

THREATENED MUSSELS THREATEN ALUM TREATMENT

The IPA has been informed by the Town's Conservation Division Director, Rob Gatewood, that the alum treatment for Mystic Lake is unlikely to be undertaken this year. In advance meetings with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (the

state agency responsible for the protection of animals and plants that are officially listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern in Massachusetts), concern has emerged for the possible impact to Mystic Lake's mussel population from an alum treatment. Mystic contains a unique assemblage of seven mussel species, of which three are listed as being of "special concern". The agency requires a clear demonstration that the proposed alum treatment will not harm the mussels by reducing the amount of nutrients in the water to a level too low to properly nourish them and allow them to grow and reproduce.

That demonstration becomes the responsibility of the project proponents: the Town, its consultant ENSR, and the IPA. ENSR has already begun to design a study that will provide data to satisfy Natural Heritage's concerns. It will result in a considerable increase in project cost and is likely to require more than a single season to obtain results.

The IPA will continue to monitor these events and report them to you in the newsletter. We will also offer assistance to the Town in the form of volunteers or whatever we can provide to help get the necessary work done. We're all going to learn a lot about freshwater mussels in the process and, importantly, how a cleaner Mystic Lake is a winning situation for them as well!

— IN THIS ISSUE —

- GRAY WILLOWS DISAPPEAR, TO CHEERS AND APPLAUSE
- THREATENED MUSSELS THREATEN ALUM TREATMENT
- PRESIDENT'S REPORT
- NEW BOARD MEMBER
- FESTIVE FOURTH OF JULY BOAT PARADE
- PURPLE LOOSESTRIPE UPDATE
- RECORD-BREAKING ANNUAL MEETING
- MARSTONS MILLS QUILT WINS SILVER BOWL
- AIRFIELD UPDATE
- "A FINE MUSSEL ASSEMBLAGE"
- RAPTORS ON CAPE COD

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The IPA is a 501(c)(3) organization and a registered public charity. All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

This newsletter, with a circulation of over 650, is a forum for the exchange of ideas on matters germane to the IPA mission and, as such, the views expressed by authors of articles do not necessarily represent official IPA policy.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Holly Hobart

This is an eventful summer for the IPA. The organization celebrated its 50th birthday on July 13 with a well-attended Annual Meeting and a great party at the magnificent summer home of Jon and Debby Halpert and Janis and Michael Maloney overlooking both Mystic Lake and Middle Pond. July's best weather graced the occasion, and attendance broke all previous records. Many thanks to all who contributed to its success.

Following the Annual Meeting program, the IPA Board of Directors held a brief meeting to elect new officers. Jane Smith was elected Clerk, replacing Rick Wheeler, who remains on the Board. Nancy Wong was re-elected to the post of Treasurer. Carl Thut of Wheeler Road replaced me as Vice President, and I was elected President. Emory Anderson's record of achievement will be a hard act for me to follow, but I promise to give the job my best efforts. I deeply appreciate all the messages of support I have received from IPA members and others. Thanks for your encouragement.

One tremendous advantage to following Emory as President is that I inherit a strong organization that is running smoothly, with projects that are well underway. There are two principal projects in process this summer. One is the removal of gray willow from about 65 pondshore properties whose owners have contracted with Bartlett Tree Experts, under a permit issued by the Barnstable Conservation Commission. That effort began July 21 and will continue into August. The results have been well received. See the article, "Gray Willows Disappear, to Cheers and Applause" in this issue for more details.

Another important activity this summer will be distribution of the new *Resident's Guide to the Indian Ponds*, which will be done under the capable direction of Geri Anderson. All members, friends of IPA, and other recipients of our quarterly newsletter will receive copies within the next few weeks. Response to this new publication has been overwhelmingly positive.

I had hoped to be able to tell you that the alum treatment for Mystic Lake would take place this summer, but as this issue goes to press, we have received word that it has been put on hold by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, part of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Their concern is the well-being of the mussels in the pond. To learn more, read the two articles, "Threatened Mussels Threaten Alum Treatment" and "A Fine Mussel Assemblage" in this issue.

The summer is whizzing by, too fast as always. Coming up in September will be Coastsweep, the massive annual cleanup of all coasts and pond and river shores in the United States. IPA is responsible for cleanup of the Indian Ponds public beaches and ways to water. Two local Scout troops have generously volunteered to help.

I am always interested in hearing from IPA members. My e-mail address is hhobart@comcast.net. Please drop me a line anytime to share your thoughts and ideas about the Indian Ponds, comments or criticisms about the IPA, or to ask questions.

Holly Hobart

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Gay Rhue, who lives with her husband, Larry, on Hollidge Hill Lane, was elected to her first two-year term on the IPA Board of Directors at the recent Annual Meeting. Gay is a graduate of Bridgewater State College. She was a kindergarten and first grade teacher in the town of Halifax before retiring in 2005. In addition to her teaching, she served as grade level coordinator, school re-certification com-



Gay Rhue

mittee member, and as a founding member of her church's Christian Child Care board. She and Larry moved to Marstons Mills because of the beautiful lakes and their love of fishing and native wildlife. Gay is dedicated to preserving the Indian Ponds for all to enjoy. The rest of the Board looks forward to working with Gay on important issues in the coming months and years.

FESTIVE FOURTH OF JULY BOAT PARADE

As advertised in the spring issue of this newsletter, an *ad hoc* parade of water craft on Mystic Lake and Middle Pond on July 4 became a reality. At around 3 PM, participants assembled in the northeast cove of Mystic Lake and, after a not-so-smooth start due to a balky engine on the lead pontoon boat (which ended up being towed until the engine finally cooperated and started), the parade began its counter-clockwise journey around Mystic Lake.



John and Deirdre Kayajan and their family enjoy the boat parade.

A total of five pontoon boats and three outboards, all from Mystic Lake, together with a small flotilla of kayaks from Middle Pond, took part in what was probably the first such parade. Hopefully it won't be the last! Literally every craft was decorated in some fashion with patriotic bunting and/or US flags.

Next time, and with more planning and instructions to participants, the parade line will be tighter so that boats aren't stretched from one end of the pond to the other. However, as a first-time endeavor, it was lots of fun, both for those on the boats and those on shore who happened to witness the minispectacle. At several places, people on shore clicked their cameras as the boats passed by. At other places, especially where the assembled swimmers, sunbathers, and picnickers were awaiting the arrival of the parade, the boat passengers were greeted by patriotic songs or frozen ice cream treats.



Herbert and Ruth Brofsky in one of the three outboards in the boat parade.

Only about half of the boats ventured from Mystic Lake into Middle Pond because of the difficulty in safely negotiating the narrow, shallow cut between the two ponds.



Kayakers join in the fun with flags flying.

A big thank you to all who took time to festively and patriotically decorate their boats and join in the parade. A special thank you to Don and Judith Houghton for coordinating participation. Next year, we hope that more boats will take part to ensure a much larger parade and that this will become the start of a new Fourth of July tradition on the Indian Ponds.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE UPDATE

In late July and early August, IPA volunteers revisited the shorelines of Middle Pond and Hamblin Pond over several days to pull remaining plants of the invasive purple loosestrife. A total of 24 plastic bags (55-gal size) were filled with the products of their efforts. Almost half of the bags were filled with plants removed from Town property immediately adjacent to the Hamblin Pond public beach, the same area where IPA volunteers in July 2006 pulled enough plants to fill 64 bags. Some of the plants pulled this year from private property were massive, had obviously been growing for many years, and were very difficult to remove. One plant in particular was the largest any of the volunteers had ever seen,

and could well have been the seed source for many of the other plants around Hamblin Pond. This year's effort demonstrated that it is very difficult to completely eradicate this tenacious plant. Identification is uncertain unless the plant is in flower. To ensure that purple loosestrife never gains a secure foothold along the shores of the ponds, residents are urged to frequently monitor the shoreline for any sign of reoccurrence.

Volunteers who assisted in this year's effort include Don and Jane Smith, Kevin Flaherty and Tamar Haspel, and Emory and Geri Anderson.

RECORD-BREAKING ANNUAL MEETING

On the glorious, sunny, and breezy late afternoon of Sunday, July 13, a record number of 91 members and visitors gathered on the lawn of the Halpert family home overlooking Middle Pond for the 51st Annual Meeting of the Indian Ponds Association and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization. All in attendance were thankful that Jon and Debby Halpert and Janis and Michael Maloney again agreed to host this annual get-together and social event.

IPA and present members owe a debt of gratitude to those who started and nurtured the organization over the past 50 years.

Anderson also drew attention to two notable accomplishments in the current year, namely the approval of funding for phase two of the Mystic Lake alum treatment by the Town Council, and the agreement on a plan for the removal of the invasive gray willows from waterfront properties of the three Indian Ponds. He thanked Town Manager John Klimm and Town Councilors Leah Curtis, Hank Farnham, and Janice Barton for their strong support in gaining Town Council approval for the alum treatment funding. Regarding the gray willow removal project, he pointed out that the owners of nearly half of the 138 privately owned waterfront properties on the three ponds had signed up, exceeded the wildest expectations of both the IPA Board and Bartlett Tree

Experts, who would be starting the work on July 21.

He also noted the new publication entitled *A Resident's Guide to the Indian Ponds* that had been prepared to commemorate the 50th anniversary and was available at the meeting. He remarked that the Board was very proud of this booklet, a copy of which would be provided to the roughly 650 recipients of the quarterly newsletter. He praised Vice President Holly Hobart, the editor of the publication, for her stalwart efforts in developing, writing, and assembling the entire booklet over a period of many months.

In closing his report, he stated that the IPA continues to be a strong organization, had gained respect in the Town and elsewhere for being proactive and diligent in working to protect and preserve the ponds and the surrounding area, and that membership was presently high, with many new families joining this year. He thanked the members of the Board for their service to the IPA and their assistance to him over the past years while he served as President, and also thanked the members of the IPA for their support and generosity.

Anderson read statements of greeting and congratulations from Councilors Curtis and Farnham, who were unable to attend. Councilor Barton spoke briefly, congratulating the IPA for its good work. She also voiced her commitment to support Town efforts to better understand the status of the other lakes and ponds in Town and to work to improve their quality.

Director Jane Smith described the IPA's third and fourth grade student environmental poster contest and named the 17 students from Marstons Mills East Elementary School and Hyannis East Elementary School whose posters had been selected as winners. She invited those in attendance to vote for their three top choices among the posters on display to



Part of the record crowd of 91 listening attentively during the business portion of the 2008 IPA Annual Meeting.

Members had been invited to bring memorabilia of the past 50 years in the IPA area. A number of old photos, other interesting artifacts, and old written records of past IPA Board and annual meetings were brought and placed on display. A special bonus was the first public showing of the Marstons Mills Quilt ([see article on page 6](#)).

Following opening remarks and a welcome by President Emory Anderson, a short business meeting was conducted, which included the election of one new Director (Gay Rhue) and the re-election of five incumbent Directors (Jon Halpert, Holly Hobart, and Robert Kohl for their second two-year terms and Jane Smith and Nancy Wong for their third two-year terms).

Anderson, in his President's Report, first recalled some of the history of the IPA. He noted that the principal organizers when the IPA was established in 1958 had been Bob and Carolyn Garbutt and Crawford and Mary Hollidge, but that others, including the Pittendreigh, Halpert, Kavanagh, McHenry, and Best families, to name just a few, had also been key members in the early years. Some of the important early accomplishments included pushing for one-acre minimum lot sizes around the pond in 1961, the first such zoning on the Cape; successfully proposing a 1200-acre Town of Barnstable conservation area in 1967; and getting a Town by-law limiting outboard motors to 10 hp on the ponds in 1975.

He also paid tribute to the early leadership of the organization, naming the Presidents before him since the mid-1970s (the extent of available records): John Hansen, Kevin Kavanagh, Joe Brown, Helen Best, Bob Mullen, Maurice Phillips, Vince Martin, John Kavanagh, and Bruce McHenry. He pointed out that Carolyn Garbutt was probably the only known surviving charter member of the IPA. Clearly, there is a rich history of the

determine those that would, if Town officials approve, be selected to be made into permanent posters to be posted at Town beaches.

Director James McGuire presented \$1,000 checks, certificates, and IPA caps to Edward Schwarm Memorial Scholarship recipients Rebecca Cabral and Robyn Pitera.

President Anderson introduced Ed Eichner, a water scientist formerly with the Cape Cod Commission's Water Resources Office and now with the UMass Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology, and thanked him both for his leadership in developing and conducting the IPA's pond study



President Emory Anderson presenting Ed Eichner with the IPA's Order of the Turtle award.

in 2004–2005 and also for the profound impact he had throughout the Cape by virtue of his development and leadership of the Pond and Lake Stewards (PALS) program initiated in 2000. In recognition of his extraordinary support of the mission of the Indian Ponds Association, Anderson presented him with a framed certificate signifying his induction into the IPA's Order of the Turtle, an award created last year by the Board of Directors. Eichner thanked the IPA for the award and remarked that it was easy to do the type of work he does when working with a group so supportive and enthusiastic.

Dr. David Mitchell of ENSR International, in his main address, reviewed the work his company had done under contract to the Town relative to the design and permitting process for the alum treatment of Mystic Lake. This included water and bottom sediment sample collections last summer and this spring as well as a freshwater mussel area/depth distribution survey last summer. He and his staff had summarized and synthesized all available data on the water quality and sediments of Mystic Lake obtained from these collections as well as previous studies in order to prepare a nutrient budget for the lake and develop a restoration plan to deal with the excessive amount of phosphorus in the bottom sediments. He noted that the water quality of Mystic Lake is in need of some type of remediation owing to the fact that over half of the phosphorus in the lake comes from internal recycling. Mitchell explained how phosphorus in the deep sediments (i.e. at depths in excess of 30 ft) is released during the



Dr. David Mitchell speaking about the alum treatment for Mystic Lake.

summer when the deep water loses its dissolved oxygen. The remedial treatment of choice would likely be alum (a mixture of aluminum sulfate and sodium aluminate) administered only to water over depths of 30 or more ft, which would be about 43 acres (about 30% of the lake), during a closely monitored, 5–6-day operation in the fall of the year.

Because of the presence of seven species of freshwater mussels in Mystic Lake, three of which are listed as endangered, and the fact that the lake is identified as a Core Habitat, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species program has raised concerns about the possible change in nutrient budget that might be caused by an alum treatment. In simple terms, the concern is that the alum treatment might make the lake too clean to support the mussels, whose food is planktonic algae. The main task for ENSR is how to address these concerns and provide assurances that the mussels would not be harmed as a result of the alum treatment. Although science has provided answers to some of man's most pressing and intriguing questions, some aspects of the life history of some of these mussel species (e.g. reproduction) remain unknown. Mitchell concluded his address by expressing the hope that a creative solution to the concern by Natural Heritage could be found.

Director Richard Wheeler and Vice President Holly Hobart concluded the Annual Meeting by recognizing and thanking Emory and Geri Anderson for their outstanding contributions to the work of the IPA over the past years. Emory received a large, framed aerial photograph of the Indian Ponds area and Geri was given a special Order of the Blue Heron award.

Following adjournment, the attendees enjoyed a sumptuous social hour that featured fine wines donated by Cotuit Liquors, numerous exquisite hors d'oeuvres made by Nancy Dawson and Geri Anderson from food donated by Trader Joe's and purchased by the IPA, various snacks provided by Stop & Shop and IPA Board members, and two gorgeous 50th anniversary cakes that were arranged for by Richard and Betty Ann Wheeler and purchased by the IPA. The social hour was so much fun that the last person didn't depart until 8 PM!



Members and guests enjoyed the social hour at the Annual Meeting.

Special thanks to John and Deirdre Kayajan for the use of their chairs, Ernest and Lois Ryden for providing the public address system and for videotaping the entire meeting, and all who assisted in any way with arrangements and logistics. It was indeed an annual meeting to remember!

MARSTONS MILLS QUILT WINS SILVER BOWL

The 51st Annual Meeting of the Indian Ponds Association on July 13 marked the debut showing of the beautiful and brand new Marstons Mills Quilt.

Eighteen months ago, Mary Beth O'Brien, the Postmistress of Marstons Mills, conceived the idea of making a community quilt depicting scenes around our village. She quickly advertised for anyone interested in the village and in quilting to contribute six-inch squares illustrating the various aspects of the village.

Several women came together and completed a total of 60 squares surrounding Mary Beth's large center street map of Marstons Mills. The squares represented three schools, many historic and contemporary homes, local businesses, municipal buildings, monuments, an airport, a golf course, and many natural and man-made features that make our community unique.



Mary Beth O'Brien (left) and Donna McGuire (right) proudly display the Marstons Mills Quilt at the 2008 IPA Annual Meeting.

The completed quilt displayed the talents of 16 village women and was remarkable. The Indian Ponds were well represented by all four corner squares which anchored each corner of the quilt, as well as an Indian Ponds Association logo square within the quilt itself.

Mary Beth was invited as one of the special guests for the 50th anniversary meeting and was pleased to meet many IPA members and hear the scores of compliments on "her" quilt. The quilt went from its IPA debut to the Barnstable County Fair where it received additional accolades — the Myers Furniture Silver Bowl Award, which is presented for excellence of design and craftsmanship.

The quilt will ultimately be displayed permanently at an appropriate community location, currently undesignated, for all to enjoy.

Donna McGuire

GRAY WILLOWS DISAPPEAR, TO CHEERS AND APPLAUSE *(Continued from page 1)*

The removal of gray willows at most properties has produced very noticeable changes. The before-and-after photos below depict just one of many such dramatic improvements, most of which are best seen from the water side.

The IPA is pleased to have been able to collaborate with Bartlett Tree Experts, the Town Conservation Commission, and the participating property owners in improving the biodiversity and habitat of the Indian Ponds. The Conservation Commission is pleased that the job was done with so little disturbance to the native pondshore vegetation. The project seems to be a win-win all the way around!

The stumps of trees that were removed this year will be checked next year for resprouting, and will be re-treated, if necessary, at no additional cost. Waterfront property owners who did not contract with Bartlett Tree Experts to have their gray willows removed this year will have another opportunity to sign up next spring. Several such property owners have already made inquiries.

To sign up for gray willow removal next year, contact Steve Heywood at Bartlett Tree Experts, P.O. Box 177, Osterville, MA 02655 (phone: 508-428-2397, fax: 508-428-2398, e-mail: sheywood@bartlett.com).



Scene at 1049 Race Lane before three very large gray willows were cut.



Same scene after the three gray willows were removed.

AIRFIELD UPDATE

As the 2007 summer season came to a close, the future of our beloved Cape Cod airfield, aka "Barnstable's Field of Dreams", seemed once again as if it might be in jeopardy. The management contract between the Town and FBO (fixed-base operator) Chris Siderwicz had concluded in April. Although it had been verbally extended through the summer in order to



Chris Siderwicz Jr. taking two customers up for a ride in the red Waco.

initiate the necessary request-for-proposal (RFP) process at a more seasonally and commercially appropriate time, a new RFP needed to be created, advertised, and a new contract awarded. Such moments are

always fraught with uncertainty, and this was no exception. A further extension was put in place through the end of the year to assure that the airfield's permit to operate would not lapse. As things turned out, Chris was once again awarded the contract to manage the field for another three years.

During this process, the concept of retaining the airfield as an extremely valuable environmental, scenic, historic, and recreational Town resource was reinforced repeatedly by various groups that sent testimonials of support to the Town Manager. These included the Indian Ponds Association, Wheeler Road Association, Marstons Mills Village Association, Marstons Mills Historical Society, and the Manager's own Danforth Property Advisory Committee.

Enormously high fuel prices and damp, hazy weather have been among the main challenges of the 2008 season thus far,

but as evidenced by a successful fly-in on July 19, complete with an Army Air Guard Blackhawk helicopter, vintage aircraft, and classic autos, the airfield is alive with many of its traditional enterprises back in place. Chris and his son are busy piloting scenic flights in their beautiful bright red Waco biplane purchased last year and now "the star of the Cape Cod airfield". Sky Dive Cape Cod, located on the site formerly occupied by the EAA chapter that moved to Falmouth over the winter, offers frequent flights for jumpers. The electric "crackle" of their opening chutes and triumphant "Yihaahs!" high overhead can be heard on the ground — proof that all is well and that they are having a blast! The traditional activity of banner towing has returned to the field on a limited basis on weekends, operated by an outfit from Plymouth using one of the less active runways. And longtime Marstons Mills resident Randy Charlton this year celebrates his 20th season at the airfield offering glider rides and instruction as "Cape Cod Soaring". His Blanik and Schweitzer sailplanes can be seen gracefully circling high over the village most nice days.



Two sets of skydivers landing after an exciting jump.

Operating an historic grass airfield in the 21st century is a fragile arrangement, at best a delicate balance between romance and reality. It is an undertaking for which the benefits are sometimes illusive. It's hard to put the wide open fields of green grass and the solid sound a radial engine "in the bank". The citizens of Barnstable should be very grateful to the Siderwicz family for their incredible commitment to keeping this wonderful community treasure safe and well.

Bob Frazee

"A FINE MUSSEL ASSEMBLAGE"

How can we be certain that there are seven species of mussels living in Mystic Lake, and which kinds they are? The answer is that, within the past two years, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species program had three surveys done by an environmental consulting firm from Amherst named "Biodrawiversity". The man who did the surveys is Ethan Nedeau, president of the company and a scientist who wrote *Freshwater Mussels and the Connecticut River Watershed*, a 150-page illustrated guide to Connecticut River mussel populations. Mr. Nedeau said, "Middle Pond and Mystic Lake are perhaps the two best ponds for freshwater mussel diversity in Massachusetts and each supports populations of three state-listed species. It was a pleasure to work in those ponds and see such a fine mussel assemblage. You should be proud!"

The seven mussel species found to be living in Mystic Lake are listed below:

<u>Latin name</u>	<u>Common name</u>	<u>State-listed status</u>
<i>Alasmodonta undulata</i>	Triangle floater	Special concern
<i>Anodonta implicata</i>	Alewite floater	
<i>Elliptio complanata</i>	Eastern elliptio	
<i>Lampsilis radiata radiata</i>	Eastern lampmussel	
<i>Ligumia nasuta</i>	Eastern pond mussel	Special concern
<i>Leptodea ochracea</i>	Tidewater mucket	Special concern
<i>Pyganodon cataracta</i>	Eastern floater	

RAPTORS ON CAPE COD

What a great time of year this is for birdwatchers! Almost all of the eggs have hatched, the babies have fledged, and, in most cases, the young have left the nest and are going about the business of learning to be like their parents.

The young of many species have grown to look so much like adults that it is hard to tell them apart. The babies are the ones fluttering their wings and making begging noises around the adults. The males are the ones who give in and feed them, and the mothers are the ones who generally ignore the pleading. I have even had a report of something I mentioned in my last article. Someone told me that they had, in their yard, a song sparrow raising a brown-headed cowbird chick.

Bear in mind that almost all new hatchlings will be expected to migrate with their parents when they start to leave for warmer climes in several months. Now is the time to build stamina and endurance, learn how and where to find food, and learn how to avoid certain other species.

The **osprey** is the Cape's only eagle. Despite the fact that they are commonly referred to as "fish hawks", they are eagles and in the same family as bald eagles. Ospreys are migratory and will leave late in the fall, fly to South America for the winter, and be back on the Cape next April. They feed primarily on fresh-caught fish, and watching them fish is a lot of fun. They readily accept man-made structures on which to build their nests and will return to the same nest year after year. Ospreys generally lay one to three eggs over several days which hatch over a period of up to a week.



Osprey

In times of poor food, the older and stronger chick will keep his/her siblings from feeding, and they will starve. With good providers for parents, there is usually no aggressiveness, and all chicks that hatch will grow to maturity. Save the following URL, which shows a long-established nest where a pair of ospreys have two or three chicks every year, and next year you can watch the whole process from egg to flight: <http://128.128.32.108/view/view.shtml>.

Although someone told me the other day that they had seen a golden eagle in the Hyannis area, I would have to see and identify it to be convinced. In North America, they are most often found west of the Mississippi. The bald eagle, on the other hand, is definitely moving east. For years, there have been several pairs living and breeding on the Quabbin Reservoir in Belchertown. Several of them used to fly regularly to the Cape to feed, particularly at the Yarmouth dump until it was capped. They are still seen now and again in the area.

We have several medium-to-large hawks which are year-round residents of this area and are regularly misidentified. The **red-tailed hawk** can be seen circling in our skies along with the turkey vulture. The turkey vulture is the one with his wings in

a slight V, while the hawk is the one whose wings are held in a straight line. The red-tail can also be seen sitting along the highway. He is looking for small rodents in the cleared areas adjacent to the highway, not necessarily for road-kill, although he will accept a fresh kill if provided for him. The call of the red-tail is used in movies to represent the call of any hawk or eagle anywhere in the world. They usually have a clutch of one to five eggs. They are found year-round in all parts of the United States.



Red-tailed hawk

When people see a hawk drop into a group of birds on their deck, they are almost certainly seeing a **sharp-shinned hawk**, which could be mistaken for a small red-tail. The sharp-shin has the same whitish coloring to its breast feathers, but a lot lighter brown to its back and wings, and it does not have the obvious red tail feathers. It does, however, have bright red eyes that are very apparent if you see one sitting in a bush near your deck. The sharp-shin has almost entirely given up migrating in favor of a ready food source, birds around your feeder.



Sharp-shinned hawk

The sharp-shin is an *Accipiter* type of hawk, which means that he has shorter wings and a longer tail that afford him more maneuverability in and among trees and bushes, which are his natural habitat. The red-tail is a *Buteo* type hawk with longer wings, which require more open space to get around and allow him to soar with the vultures. Both are year-round residents of the Cape who live and breed here.

And speaking of vultures. The other large raptor seen in this area is the **turkey vulture**. The turkey vulture is sometimes referred to as a buzzard. The name is interchangeable and is used to refer to the largest and most widespread member of the vulture family. The turkey vulture is a carrion eater. The part of his brain devoted to his olfactory system is larger than in any other bird. When you see him circling overhead or flying low across treetops, he is actually searching for the scent of decaying animal matter.



Turkey vulture

They do not use nests, but lay two eggs directly on the ground in crevices or caves and in hollow logs. The young are downy and helpless when hatched. They are widespread across all of North America unlike their cousins, the black vultures, which occur further south of New England.

Dave Reid