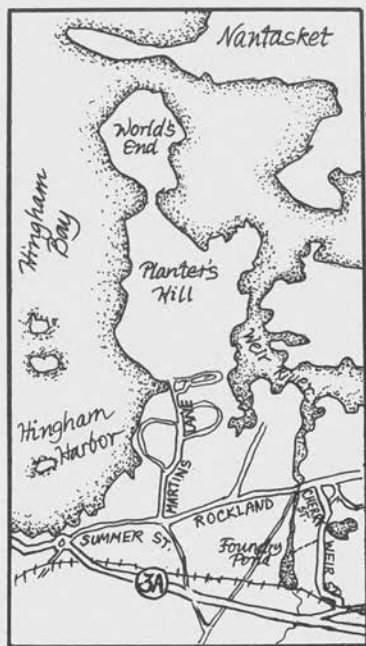


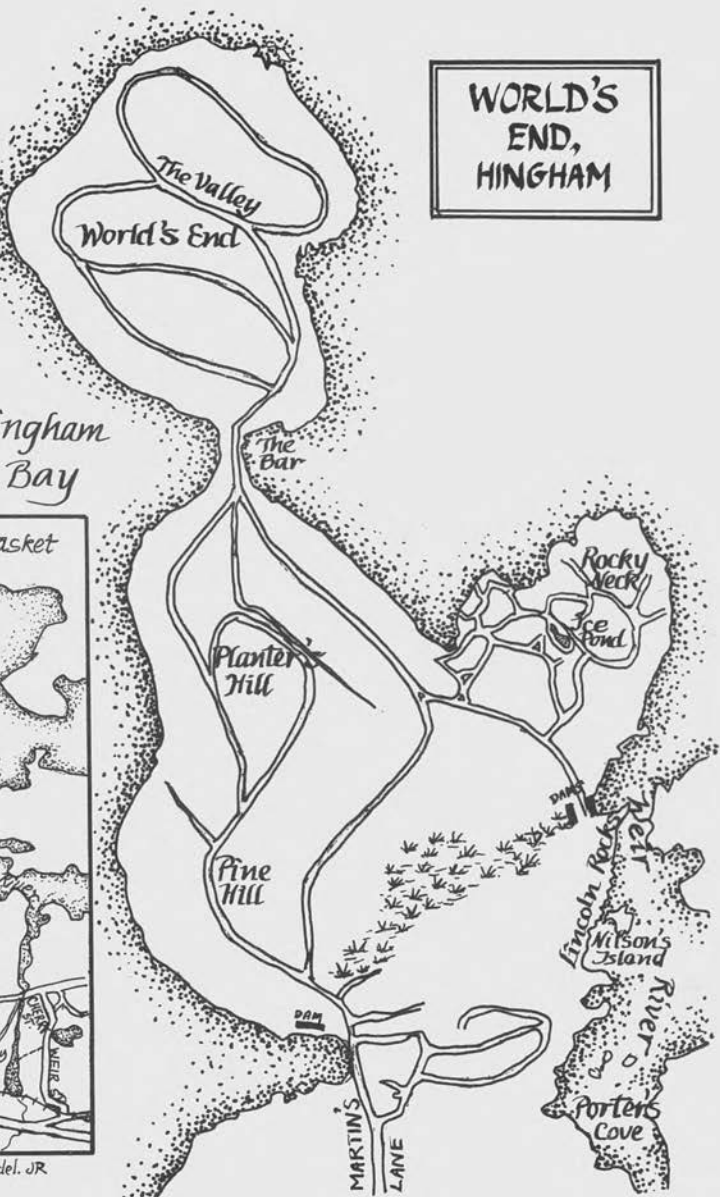
WORLD'S
END,
HINGHAM



Hingham
Bay



del. JR



BIRDING IN HINGHAM

WORLD'S END TO FOUNDRY POND

by Neil Osborne, Cohasset

World's End, a property of the Trustees of Reservations, is located at the north end of Cushing's Neck between Hingham Harbor on the west and the Weir River on the east. To reach the entrance from the Route 3A traffic circle near Hingham Harbor, drive east on Rockland Street towards Nantasket. At the first set of lights turn left onto Martin's Lane and go to the end of the road. There is currently an entrance fee of \$1.25 per person, the proceeds being used for the care and maintenance of the reservation. A season pass may also be obtained, which is good for one year from the date of purchase. Cars are allowed only as far as the parking area inside the gate. The gates are open from about 9:30 A. M. to about 5:00 P. M. When there is room to park in the small area outside the gate, you can walk into the reservation early in the morning when the birding tends to be the best. If you leave before the custodian arrives you can even avoid the fee.

The reservation consists of approximately 250 acres, mostly on two islands with over 5 miles of shoreline. The southern island is now connected to the mainland by two stone dams built by settlers in the seventeenth century. The island is made up of two drumlins, Pine Hill and Planter's Hill, and an area of cliffs and ledges to the east of Planter's Hill known as Rocky Neck. Some of the geological history of this area can be seen in the granite rocks, and geology buffs can often be found exploring the neck. The area between the dams, once tidal mudflats, is now a marshy area dominated by Phragmites. The northern island is also composed of two drumlins that have a depression between them known as The Valley. The origin of the name World's End for this area is unknown, but one story attributes it to local fox hunters. The hunt would drive the foxes from the farms and forests of South Hingham to Cushing's Neck and eventually onto a narrow spit on the north side of Planter's Hill. For any fox unfortunate enough to arrive here it was the end of the world. The spit is now a gravel causeway connecting the two islands. There are some excellent views of Boston and the South Shore from the tops of the drumlins, especially Planter's Hill which is the highest.

After entering the reservation from Martin's Lane, follow the road north across the west end of the marsh. As you cross the dike there is a drainage ditch on the right where birds such as egrets, bitterns, rails, or dabbling ducks can sometimes be seen. There can also be passerines at the edge of the Phragmites stand, especially in the fall. After crossing the dike, follow the road to the right as far as the entrance to a small clearing on the right. The area you are now pass-

ing through often provides the best birding in the reservation. The trees and thickets along this northwest side of the marsh make an excellent migrant trap, especially in the fall. I have found as many as twenty species of warblers in this area on more than one occasion. The edges of the clearing can also produce some exciting action. At the back of the clearing is a small stand of cat-tails and a wet area full of weeds and bushes. A variety of birds including warblers, wrens, sparrows, blackbirds, thrushes, rails, and ducks can be found here.

Near the entrance to the clearing a short boardwalk passes through some thickets near the edge of the woods. Cross the boardwalk and follow the path to the edge of one of the large fields which dominate World's End. Bluebirds have occasionally been seen in this area. Continue east on a path along the edge of the woods, keeping alert for birds such as meadowlarks, bobolinks, and raptors. Soon a path on the right goes into the woods and, bearing to the right, leads to a boardwalk across the eastern end of the marsh. The boardwalk passes one of the largest stands of Swamp Rose Mallow on the south shore. In late summer it is a spectacular sight, with colors ranging from white to deep pink. The thickets, mudflats, and open water can produce a variety of passerines, shorebirds, and waders. Near the end of the boardwalk turn left and follow a path over a wooded ledge. After descending the ledge, follow the path that bears right, keeping the stone wall on your left. The path passes through a small stand of pines and ends near the bank of the Weir River. Here the merging of several habitats provides an opportunity to find a variety of migrants in the trees and thickets and waders, shorebirds, or waterfowl in the river on the appropriate tides. A road to the right crosses the stone dam and enters the woods, passing Lincoln's Rocks on the edge of the river. Soon some short paths on the left lead to a point, near Nelson's Island, where there is a good view of the river and Porter's Cove. If the tide permits, walking onto the island can give a better view. The road continues on through the woods and returns to the parking lot and the entrance. On a warm evening in late March or April one can see and hear dozens of woodcocks performing all along this route around the marsh.

To continue birding, return across the dam and turn right on the road which leads to the cedar covered ledges of Rocky Point. A network of roads and paths wanders through the cedars, and along the bank of the river. Winter finches can be found in this area during flight years, especially in November. Pine Siskins are fairly regular and redpolls and both crossbills have been seen here. Boreal Chickadees have also been found in this area. Near the center of the point is Ice Pond which is bordered by thickets and bushes. Dabbling ducks can be found here in the spring and shorebirds in the fall when there is usually very little water in the pond. At the north end of the pond a road leads to the top of a cliff which pro-

vides an excellent vantage point for observing the waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds in the mouth of the Weir River. Working back towards the west, several paths along the cliffs or through the cedars lead back to the fields on Planter's Hill. A road to the right leads around the summit of the hill to the causeway known as The Bar that leads to the outer island.

The two drumlins which make up this island are mostly covered with weedy fields and The Valley between is filled with trees and thickets. The Valley usually provides the best land birding on the outer island. The road makes a complete circuit of the island, providing many opportunities to observe gulls and waterfowl in Hingham Bay and raptors such as Red-tailed, Rough-legged, and Marsh hawks, and occasionally Short-eared Owls hunting over the fields. The same raptors, and rarely Snowy Owls, can be seen on the islands in the bay. Large numbers of kestrels and all three species of accipiters have also been seen here. Winter and early spring are usually the best times to bird on the outer island. Returning across The Bar, the road to the right leads back to the entrance.

After leaving World's End, return to the lights at the beginning of Martin's Lane and turn left. At the bottom of the hill continue straight through the lights on Rockland Street. Just before the lights is an area known as The Heronry. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a large Black-crowned Night Heronrookery here, apparently supporting several hundred pairs. The last few pairs were finally driven away when the road was built around 1855. There were also a number of fossilized trees uncovered at this time which were remnants of an ancient forest that was inundated by the sea. Further along the road some of these huge stumps can be found in the marshes on the lefthand side of the road. Just before the road crosses the Weir River, park at the small power substation and follow the power lines down the river bank. An old quarry behind the Old Colony Sand and Gravel yards and the mudflats of Weir River Bay a little further down the power line have produced a variety shorebirds, waders, and waterfowl over the years. There is also a colony of Rough-winged Swallows and several kingfishers nesting in the sandy cliffs at one end of the quarry. The remains of an old stone dam can be seen where the river widens into the bay. This was once the site of a woolen mill owned by General Benjamin Lincoln. It was subsequently the site of a flour mill, and later of a smallpox hospital.

Returning to the road, cross the river and take the first right onto Cherry Street which quickly merges with Weir Street. A small pond on the left is worth a good look. It is especially popular with Wood Ducks in the fall. The thickets and trees along the road can also provide some good birding. Across the street from the pond, a wood road runs through the oak woods and along the top of a ridge near the river.

Great Horned Owl and Broad-winged Hawk have been seen in this area. Continuing south on Weir Street, stop at a pull-off on the right where a dirt road leads along the edge of an abandoned quarry and down to Foundry Pond. A variety of waterfowl, waders, and passerines can be found in this area. Five species of swallows have been seen here and at least three of them nest regularly. A little further along Weir Street, there is a pull-off on the left where an old road leads into the woods. This can be a worthwhile walk as far as a small swampy area on a road that branches off to the right. When birding the Weir Street area, it is advisable to spend some time walking along the street. Migrants, especially warblers, like to forage in the oaks beside the street, particularly where it runs along the rim of the quarry. Some of my best success has been walking along the street on a warm spring evening. Further along the street there is an abandoned railway bed. The birding can be good in either direction and you can drive to Foundry Pond by turning right. At the end of the street a right turn leads back to Route 3A and a left goes toward Nantasket Beach.

I have been birding the area described for about ten years, with some excellent results. My list for the area exceeds 230 species including Cerulean Warbler, Summer Tanager, Caspian Tern, Redheaded Woodpecker, Wilson's Phalarope, and seventeen species of raptors. This area, especially World's End, also contains some interesting flora for those interested in botany. The walls of the quarries also reveal some of the intriguing geological history of the area. A brief outline of the history of this area is recounted in a booklet entitled A History of World's End, published by the Trustees of Reservations, 224 Adams Street, Milton, MA 02186.

NEIL OSBORNE is a professional organic chemist with the New England Nuclear Corporation who has been in birding for over twenty years. He is interested in natural history, is the current president of the South Shore Bird Club, and has birded regularly on the south shore for the past twelve years.

JULIE S. ROBERTS majored in studio art and art history at Smith College, did postgraduate work in art education at the University of Wisconsin, and taught art in Malden public schools. An active birder for ten years and staff member of BOEM since 1978, she enjoys print making and nature drawing, and her graphics regularly embellish these pages.

Wanted: Leitz Trinovid binoculars (10x40 preferred) to buy or swap for small oriental rug. Fred Bouchard: 617-489-2298
