

# AMERICAN BIRDS

*Winter 1987*



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## . . . from the editor's desk

This issue was a particularly exciting one for all of the staff at AMERICAN BIRDS to work on. For many months we were looking forward to bringing you news of the publication of *The Birder's Handbook*, which is essentially a guide to the behavior of birds as opposed to the identification of birds. We were also extremely pleased about publishing P. William Smith's article on Eurasian Collared-Doves, and that's been in the works for well over a year. Naturally, our ICBP column presented challenges, but inasmuch as we've been dedicated to bringing our readers progress on the work of conserving fragile habitats and birds, the ends certainly justified the effort. We remain dedicated to keeping the constituency of AMERICAN BIRDS informed about our own responsibilities in the natural environment.

And then, out of the blue—or was it Siberia?—a wonderful little sandpiper appeared at Duxbury Beach in Massachusetts in late September of 1987, and this little sandpiper presented formidable problems as to its identification. Never before had this sandpiper been identified in North America or, for that matter, in the New World. Cox's Sandpiper was only described to science in 1982. Prior to this time, the bird has only been known in its adult plumage from descriptions and specimens in Australia, so, in fact, the presence of this bird represents not only the first occurrence of this newly described species in the New World, but also in a hitherto undescribed plumage, as this was clearly that of a juvenile bird. We are therefore gratified to bring to you in one issue the first photographs ever published of the juvenile plumage of the Cox's Sandpiper, as well as two authoritative articles. The first article was written by three Massachusetts shorebird workers, one of whom, Mark Kasprzyk, actually had the bird in hand, photographed it, and banded it, another of whom is Brian Harrington, the Director of the shorebird program at Manomet Bird Observatory, and Dick Forster, one of our longtime regional editors for the Northeastern Maritime Region. Our second article, detailing the occurrence of Cox's Sandpiper in Massachusetts, was written by three superb field observers: Davis W. Finch, whose most literate, comprehensive, and stimulating regional reports enlivened the pages of AMERICAN BIRDS from 1968 through 1976; Peter D. Vickery, also a former AMERICAN BIRDS Regional Editor and presently an active tour leader as well as a tireless advocate for the preservation of habitat in the state of Maine for Grasshopper Sparrows; and Paul K. Donahue, whose graceful paintings have appeared in AMERICAN BIRDS and who, for this article, has executed an excellent rendition of the Cox's Sandpiper. We feel sure that all calidriphiles, even those who didn't have an opportunity to study the bird in the field, will find these articles commendable, noteworthy contributions to the literature. I assure you we have made every possible effort to reproduce as many of the color photographs of this bird as were possible and we exhort all shorebird observers in the future to keep an eye out for this long-billed, strikingly plumaged bird.

Of course we hope you will enjoy this issue and we are very eager to hear from our readers on their reactions.

Please sponsor our 1988 AMERICAN BIRDS BIRDATHON by participating. You might be the winner of some very enviable prizes.

The two four-day pelagic trips that we sponsored in 1987 were wonderful, to say the least. For an entertaining account of those, see Frank Graham's article in the January 1988 issue of AUDUBON magazine. In 1988, we are sponsoring four more, bringing Peter Harrison, noted British seabird expert, in as one of the many leaders. We think all of our pelagic species-minded readers ought to seriously consider joining us on one of those trips in the Atlantic.

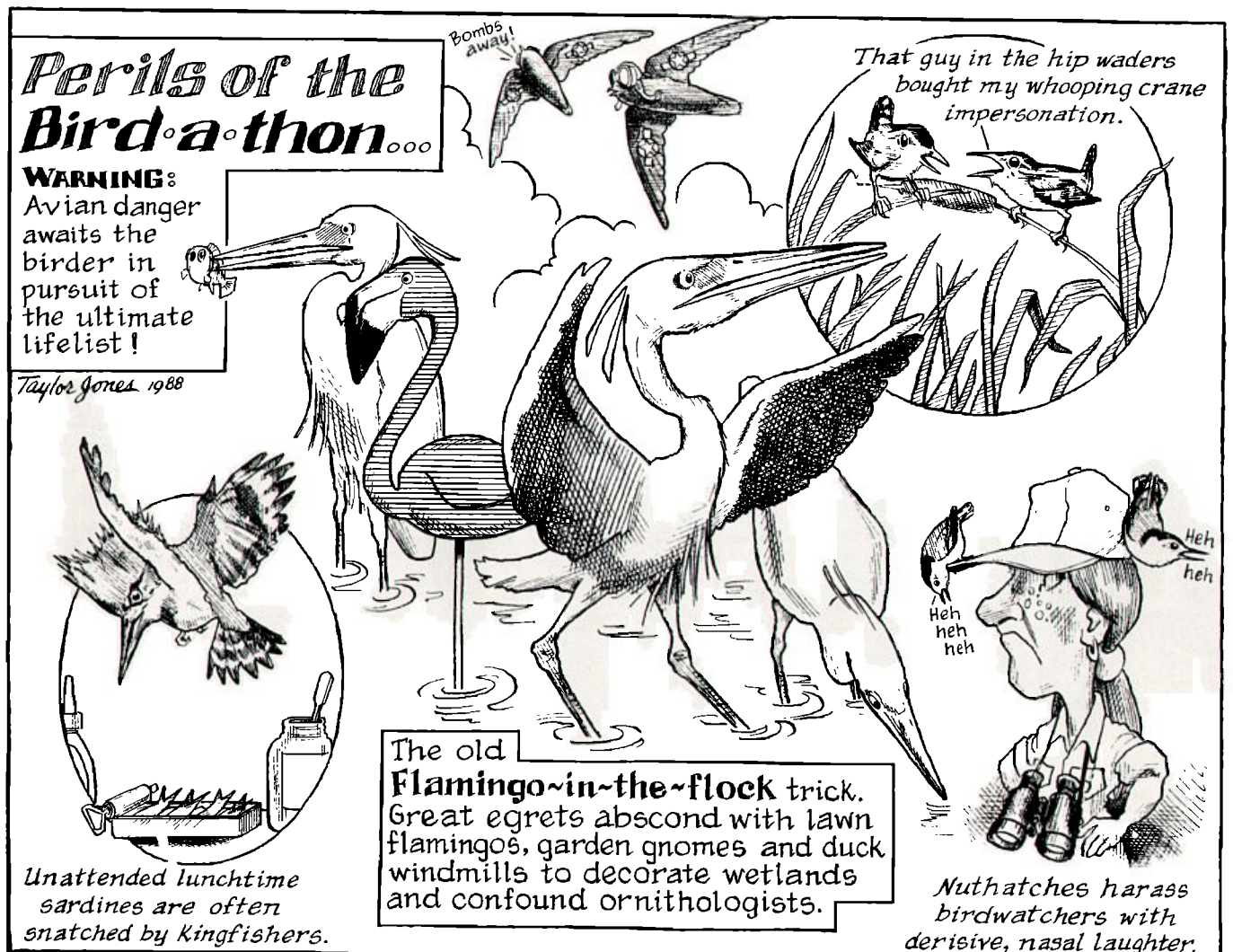
Stay tuned!!

—S.R.D.

# American Birds **BIRDATHON/88**

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(See details, page 1494)



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(Thursday through Monday)

#### June 1 through 5

(Wednesday through Sunday)

These first two trips are timed for the peak of the early spring seabird migration. As we explore George's Bank and the Great South Channel, the Super Squirrel II will also take us to some of the nearby deep water canyons. Our tour leaders will focus on finding lingering late winter visitors: skuas, alcids, fulmars, and gannets.

Participants can expect to see shearwaters and storm-petrels along with Humpback, Fin, and Minke whales. And we may even see a South Polar Skua!

#### August 24–28

(Wednesday through Sunday)

#### September 7 through 11

(Wednesday through Sunday)

From Hydrographer's Canyon to Hudson Canyon and moving south, our last two trips will focus on rare late summer and early fall visitors. Aboard the Super Squirrel II, we'll search for warm water specialties like Wilson's, Band-rumped, and Leach's storm petrels, and jaegers.

Last fall, tour participants saw the rare White-faced Storm-Petrel—a life bird for almost everyone on board! This year we hope to see this species again—and maybe even a Bridled Tern.

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The **Super Squirrel II**, newly refurbished, has 39 bunks in the hold, and an additional 33 bench sleepers (20" wide) inside (these are suitable for use with a foam pad). Cruising speed is approximately 14 knots. Two captains will be on board for all trips.

PHOTO/RON NAVEEN

For complete details of the **American Birds** pelagic adventure trips taken last year, see **AUDUBON** magazine January 1988 for a feature by Frank Graham.



This Humpback Whale was remarkably cooperative, and spent twenty minutes breaching and spouting alongside the boat.



Jaegers were abundant on both of last year's trips.

#### **PETER HARRISON-**

The world's leading seabirder and author of "Seabirds: A Photographic Guide." Well known as a raconteur, his birding skills are far-famed. A proponent of jizz- and gestalt-birding.  
(May 26-30, June 1-5, Sept. 7-11)

#### **RON NAVEEN-**

Founder and president of *Whales & Seabirds*, he gained his near-mythical expertise in identifying pelagic species after leading hundreds of ocean trips.  
(All four trips)

#### **MIKE O'BRIEN-**

An accomplished bird artist and a frequent photo contributor to *American Birds*. This young, aggressive field ornithologist loves to stand at the rail and call out "White-faced Storm Petrel!" Well, he did see it first last year.  
(All four trips)

#### **HAL WIERENGA-**

Well-known U.S. birder, who leads trips for various tour organizations. His seventeen years of Atlantic Ocean field experience make him an invaluable member of the team.  
(May 26-30, June 1-5)

#### **WAYNE PETERSEN-**

One of New England's top birders. His remarkable shorebird skills and expert knowledge of pelagic species have made him renowned among birders along the Atlantic seaboard.  
(May 26-30, June 1-5, Aug. 24-28)

## **TOUR LEADERS:**

#### **SUSAN RONEY DRENNAN-**

Editor of *American Birds*, she combines an extensive knowledge of field identification with an unparalleled enthusiasm for the sea and seabirds.  
(All four trips)

#### **MAURICE BARNHILL-**

A physics professor at the University of Delaware and a statistics expert, he has 17 years of birding experience. As the official bird counter for *Whales and Seabirds*, he keeps all the bird totals.  
(June 1-5)

#### **KENN KAUFMAN-**

Regional Reports Editor for *American Birds* and a popular tour leader, his celebrated reputation as one of America's keenest field birders is well-deserved.  
(August 24-28)

#### **JON DUNN-**

A veteran of many pelagic trips and a superstar on field identification. He was a major consultant on the National Geographic Society's Field Guide to North America.  
(August 24-28)

#### **GUY McCASKIE-**

Regional Editor of the Southern Pacific Coast Region for the past 23 years, his extraordinary field skills are legendary.  
(August 24-28)

#### **GEOFF LeBARON-**

*American Birds* Christmas Bird Count Editor. He developed his keen eye for pelagic species doing aerial censusing of bird and turtle populations in the western North Atlantic.  
(August 24-28)

#### **TOM BURKE-**

The voice and editor of the New York City Rare Bird Alert, and a superb and popular local field trip leader. The director of several non-profit conservation groups, he finds time to edit *The Myna's Field Notes* for the Greenwich Audubon Society, too.  
(September 7-11)

#### **PETE DUNNE-**

Director of the Cape May Bird Observatory his drawings and essays have appeared in many notable birding publications. His expertise in the field is matched only by his wit.  
(September 7-11)

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#### **DEPARTURES:**

The Super Squirrel II will leave Point Judith, Rhode Island, at 6:00 pm on Thursday, May 26; Wednesday, June 1; Wednesday, August 24, and Wednesday, September 7. We will be returning to Point Judith before 6:00 pm on Monday, May 30; Sunday, June 5, Sunday, August 28; and Sunday, September 11.

**Space is limited, so reserve NOW!**

# American Birds BIRDATHON/88

## OFFICIAL RULES

To enter and be eligible for prizes, fill out the coupon on page 1495 of this issue. Your entry must be received by April 15, 1988. Winners will be drawn at random and notified by mail.

Sweepstakes is open to residents of the United States. Employees of the National Audubon Society, its affiliates, agencies and their immediate families are not eligible. Sweepstakes is subject to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations and is void wherever prohibited by law.

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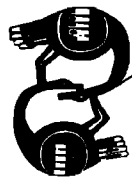
No substitutions will be made for any prize. All prizes will be awarded.

Travel prize departure dates are as stated. Falkland Islands prize includes roundtrip airfare between London, England and the Falkland Islands, as well as accommodations in the Falklands. Elk Lake Workshop prize includes the workshop and accommodations, but not transportation to and from the Adirondack Mountains.

Prize winners are solely responsible for their own actions and agree to hold the National Audubon Society and their agents harmless from any liability arising in connection with their prize.



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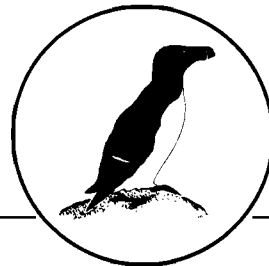
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|-----------------------|---|
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| 7/3-9<br>Maine        | Warblers<br>Jon Dunn  |
| 7/31 - 8/6<br>Maine   | Seabirds: Northwest Atlantic<br>Charles Duncan, Peter Vickery |
| 8/7-13<br>Maine       | Shorebirds<br>Wayne Petersen                                  |
| 8/21-28<br>Washington | Seabirds: North Pacific<br>Dennis Paulson, Terry Wahl         |
| 9/18-24<br>New Jersey | Raptors at Cape May<br>William Clark                          |

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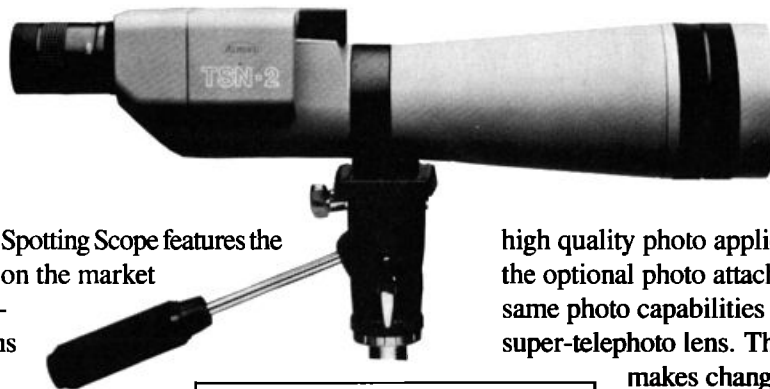
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		1458 South Texas Region <i>Greg W. Lasley and Chuck Sexton</i>
		1462 Northwestern Canada Region <i>W. G. Johnston and C. McEwen</i>
		1464 Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region <i>Thomas H. Rogers</i>
		1467 Mountain West Region <i>Hugh E. Kingery</i>
		1470 Southwest Region <i>Janet Witzeman, David Stejskal, and John P. Hubbard</i>
		1475 Alaska Region <i>D. D. Gibson, T. G. Tobish, Jr., and M. E. Isleib</i>
		1478 Northern Pacific Coast Region <i>Bill Tweit and Philip W. Mattocks, Jr.</i>
		1481 Middle Pacific Coast Region <i>Kurt F. Campbell, Richard A. Erickson, and Stephen F. Bailey</i>
		1486 Southern Pacific Coast Region <i>Guy McCaskie</i>
		1489 Hawaiian Islands Region <i>Robert L. Pyle</i>
		1491 West Indies Region <i>Robert L. Norton</i>

**Front cover photograph:** Juvenile Cox's Sandpiper (*Calidris paramelanotos*) photographed at Duxbury Beach, Plymouth, Massachusetts, September 21, 1987. Previously known only from Australia, this is a first New World occurrence. This photograph is among the first ever taken of a juvenile, a plumage described for the first time in this issue. Photo/Simon A. Perkins. Nikkor ED lens (400mm) with Kodachrome 64.

**Back cover photograph:** Cox's Sandpiper (*Calidris paramelanotos*), Duxbury Beach, Plymouth, Massachusetts, September 21, 1987. The crisp, fresh unworn plumage indicates this individual is a juvenile. The plump body, very long and thin black bill, unmarked white undertail coverts and dull olive legs are all apparent. Photo/Peter D. Vickery. Nikkor ED lens (300mm) with Kodachrome 64 film

