

Cape Cod Field Schools

Discover the real nature of Cape Cod!



©Kristin Foresto



Mass Audubon

2025

CAPE COD FIELD SCHOOLS

Explore the beautiful coastal setting of Cape Cod and learn about its rich natural history while gaining new skills. The beaches, dunes, woods, and wetlands of Cape Cod are our classroom. Field Schools offer active, outdoor experiences taught by professional scientists, naturalists, and educators.

Mass Audubon has been offering Cape Cod Field Schools to adults since 1986. Won't you join us?

Coastal Birding for Beginners May 2-4

3-days: Friday-Sunday

For the new or aspiring birder, spring on Cape Cod offers an incredible opportunity to practice and hone new skills. Lingering winter species mingle with northbound warblers, hawks, and shorebirds, as well as returning breeding birds. We will focus on practicing skills in the field, identifying birds through observation and song, as well as beginning to understand the unique adaptations, biology, and life histories of coastal birds. A variety of field trips and experiences will explore the best birding hotspots the Outer Cape has to offer. While beginner-focused, this course is also great for intermediate birders looking for a refresher or a closer look at coastal birds.

Members \$415, nonmembers \$475



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Life in the Intertidal

May 30-June 1

3-days: Friday-Sunday

Twice a day, the tides ebb and flow, bringing with them many changes to our coastal habitats. In this course we will carefully inspect the seashore, where a diverse array of flora and fauna must survive the extreme daily changes in temperature, sun exposure, predation, and more. Learn about the amazing adaptations and life histories of these organisms and how they survive in such a dynamic environment. This program will place emphasis on the Atlantic horseshoe crab through hands-on surveys and tagging opportunities. Learn about the importance of this ancient creature, the threats and pressures it faces today, and what we can do to help!

Members \$425, nonmember \$490

Reading the Nature of Cape Cod

June 7-8

2-days: Saturday-Sunday

"Outermost cliff and solitary dune, the plain of ocean and the far, bright brims of the world, meadow land and marsh and ancient moor...This is the outer Cape" Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*

From Henry David Thoreau to Mary Oliver, Cape Cod's beautiful scenery has acted as a muse. Together, we will trace the steps of the artists and writers who have found inspiration in this constantly changing landscape. We will create our own nature journals and travel across the Outer Cape, visiting sites that led to the formation of important works of art and literature while recording our experiences. We will take a day trip to Provincetown, uncovering its unique literary history with a special stop at the Mary Heaton Vorse house, now home to the Provincetown Arts Society.

Members \$350, nonmembers \$400

Hiking Backwoods and Beaches

Offered Spring and Fall

June 14-15 or October 11-12

2-days: Saturday-Sunday

Take the road less traveled, cover new ground, and experience Cape Cod at a beautiful time of year. Our extended hikes will explore backwoods, remote beaches, dramatic dunes, quiet kettle ponds, and sheltering woodlands and take us to parts of local conservation areas that are rarely explored. Through this active experience, we will discover how protecting these important environments can benefit not only the resiliency of coastal habitats, but also our own mental and physical wellbeing in the face of environmental change. Hikes cover an average of five miles a day over varied, uneven terrain.

Members \$350, nonmembers \$400

Islands of Cape Cod by Land and Sea

June 20-22

3-days: Friday-Sunday

Separated from the mainland and surrounded by water, islands are alluring because of their remote and solitary nature. From Great Island in Wellfleet to the isles of Pleasant Bay, we will uncover the unique geologic history of these places. Along the way we will search for diamondback terrapins, horseshoe crabs, and a variety of bird species including nesting shorebirds. This active field school will feature both hiking and kayaking explorations.

Strong paddling skills and good swimming ability are required (this course does not provide paddling instruction to beginners); bring your own boat or use one of ours!

Members \$425, nonmembers \$490

Mass Audubon
members enjoy
discounted
prices.
Join today!



Register online by visiting massaudubon.org/capecodfieldschools

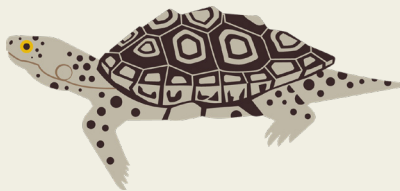
Introduction to Shorebirds

August 2-3

2-days: Saturday-Sunday

There is no better place to explore and study the topic of shorebird ecology than coastal Cape Cod at the height of shorebird migration. This course is designed to give the novice birder the skills to identify 'peeps,' plovers, and more. During the course, we will cover topics such as identification, biology, behavior, and migration, as well as the issues and threats these birds face in coastal environments. Excursions to barrier beaches, salt marshes, tidal rivers, and other unique ecosystems will provide opportunities to learn about the diverse array of shorebirds for which the region is famous.

Members \$375, nonmembers \$430



Hatching Diamondback Terrapins

August 23-24

2-days: Saturday-Sunday

For over 30 years, Mass Audubon has been studying and protecting the diamondback terrapin, a state-listed threatened species. Through our studies, we have learned the life histories of these fascinating animals, the human impacts affecting them, and conservation measures to help rebuild their populations on Cape Cod.

You will gain first-hand knowledge of turtle biology; monitor hatching activity; weigh, measure, and release hatchlings; and document nesting success at various Outer Cape locations. This program is action packed with several field adventures complemented by indoor presentations. Please come prepared to learn and get dirty in the wetlands and uplands that make up the terrapins' habitat!

Members \$375, nonmembers \$430

Coastal Ecology by Kayak

September 19-21

3-days: Friday-Sunday

From deep blue water to gently swaying marsh grass, Cape Cod is dynamic, diverse, and iconic. Learn about the habitats and natural systems that occur where land meets sea and their importance to wildlife and combating climate change. Kayaks provide a great way to explore remote areas that are inaccessible by foot or larger boats. While we will spend most of the time paddling on the water, each day includes stops to get out of the kayak and explore beaches and uplands on foot. Strong paddling skills and good swimming ability are required (this course does not provide paddling instruction to beginners); bring your own boat or use one of ours!

Members \$425, nonmembers \$490

Birding the Fall Migration

September 26-28

3-days: Friday-Sunday

Birding on the Cape during fall migration offers incredible diversity. Resident species mingle with southbound migrants and early arriving winter birds. We will explore the Outer Cape's barrier beaches, salt marshes, tidal flats, and woodlands in search of shorebirds, raptors, seabirds, songbirds, and ducks. This field school also features a whale watch out of Provincetown to search for pelagic birds!

During the course we will cover identification, breeding biology, foraging ecology, and migration—including a fantastic opportunity to experience a bird banding demonstration by Certified Master Bander James Junda. There is nothing as exciting as seeing a bird up-close and in-hand! That evening, an indoor presentation will complement our field experiences.

Members \$500, nonmembers \$575

Waxing, Waning, and Wellness

October 4-5

2-days: Saturday-Sunday

American naturalist John Burroughs said, "I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order." With that in mind, we are offering this mindfulness-focused retreat, letting the moon be our guide to a deeper connection with nature. Experience mindfulness in nature through bird watching, nature journaling, and sensory exploration. We will also focus on bird language, learning the five voices of the birds and key behavioral patterns. A moonrise campfire on the beach is also planned. Spending time in the natural world has been shown to have restorative health benefits, stimulating our senses and providing a feeling of harmony, balance, and stability. We hope our time together will increase your sense of awareness and appreciation of the natural world and yourself.

Members \$325, nonmembers \$375

Winter Ducks and Sea Birds

November 7-9

3-days: Friday-Sunday

Cape Cod is beautiful year-round, but winter brings a special beauty. Along serene stretches of quiet beaches, enjoy watching ducks and seabirds that are absent from the Cape's landscape in other seasons. Sheltered Cape Cod Bay and ice-free freshwater ponds attract thousands of wintering waterfowl and seaducks. Strong winds can blow pelagic seabirds close to shore for rare up-close viewing. Through field trips coupled with indoor presentations, we will sort out the differences between dabbling ducks and diving ducks, the heavy-bodied loons and cormorants, and geese by learning their field identification, natural history, and fascinating adaptations.

Members \$375, nonmembers \$430



REGISTRATION & INFORMATION

LOCATION

Cape Cod Field Schools are based out of the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. Located on the "forearm" of Cape Cod in South Wellfleet, Wellfleet Bay offers outstanding opportunities for exploration of the natural world. Our 1100-acre sanctuary features five miles of trails through eight different natural communities representing the diversity of Cape Cod.

Field Schools take advantage of the sanctuary's grounds, as well as many areas on the Outer Cape, including beaches, marsh, woods, and ponds of the Cape Cod National Seashore; the islands off Chatham; and the surrounding ocean and coastal waters.

COURSE LEADERS

Your Field School guides are skilled and professional Mass Audubon educators and naturalists certified in community CPR and watercraft safety. Visit our website for a listing of staff on individual courses.

WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

Courses are for adults ages 18 and over. Ages 15 to 17 are welcome to attend, but only with prior approval. They must be accompanied by an adult guardian registered for the same course.

Individuals are responsible for their own meals, except when noted in the detailed course descriptions online.

Courses are taught primarily outdoors and most require moderate physical activity. We do make accommodations for severe weather.

Participants may need to provide their own transportation to field trip locations. Housing is not available. We can provide a list of local motels.

A Certificate of Attendance is offered for those seeking professional development credit for courses.

FEES & CANCELLATION POLICY

Please refer to individual course listings on our website for details. Payment is due in full upon registration.

Cancellations must be received in writing (via email or regular mail) 30 days before starting date for you to receive a full refund (less a \$150 nonrefundable administration fee per registrant). Cancellations received less than 30 days before starting date may result in forfeiture of entire course fee. If we can fill your spot with another registrant, then your balance is returned, less the \$150 nonrefundable administration fee per registrant.

We reserve the right to cancel any course with a full refund to registrants.

HOW TO REGISTER

Registration is accepted via telephone or online via our website. Please do not fax or email credit card information. Call 508-349-2615, or register online at massaudubon.org/capecodfieldschools

You will receive an email with detailed information related to the class 2 to 3 weeks in advance of the start of course.

Thank you to the photographers:
Kristin Foresto, cover
Will Freedberg, page 2
Jenette Kerr, page 4

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES

3-DAY COURSES

Day 1

3:30 PM Arrival and Introduction to Course

7-9 PM Evening Activity

Days 2, 3

8 AM-4 PM Field Trips/Workshops

2-DAY COURSES

Day 1

10 AM Arrival and Introduction to Course

11 AM-4 PM Field Trips/Workshops

7-9 PM Evening Activity

Day 2

8 AM-4 PM Field Trips/Workshops



Register at
[massaudubon.org/
capecodfieldschools](http://massaudubon.org/capecodfieldschools)

