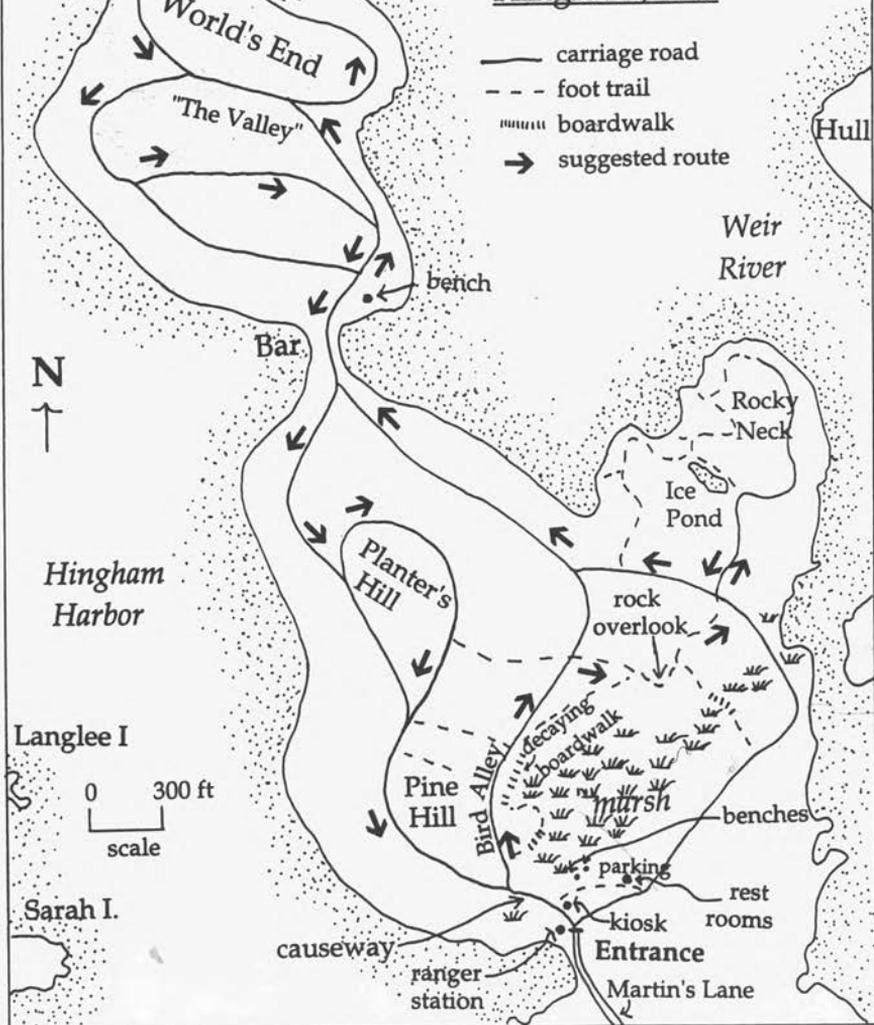


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World's End Reservation Hingham, MA



WORLD'S END RESERVATION, HINGHAM

Kevin Godfrey

A pretty gem of a property, World's End Reservation in Hingham has a rare sense of place and peace about it that truly inspires celebration. Fortunately, birds both resident and migrant seem to agree; and when those glorious mornings in May show the landscape in all its stunning fullness of feather and song, it is difficult for the birder to imagine a Massachusetts locale that could rival its natural beauty and rich avian life.

Covering approximately 250 acres, and way-station or home to nearly that many species of birds, World's End is a lovely land of open fields on rolling hills, with scenic tree-lined carriage paths that invite the visitor to venture beyond the next bend of road until all five miles of track have been traversed and appreciated. And there is much to appreciate, particularly for the birder.

As the map indicates, the reservation is a peninsula that extends northward into Hingham Bay. Consisting of two islands that are now connected to one another by a causeway known as the bar and to the mainland by a pair of stone dams that were built by seventeenth-century settlers, the property features four glacial drumlins (Pine Hill, Planter's Hill, and two hills north of the bar on World's End proper), an area of cedar-covered ledges and cliffs known as Rocky Neck, and an extensive paludal area between the dams that was once a tidal flat and that is now dominated by *Phragmites*. In conjunction with the coastal location of World's End, its peninsular shape makes it a superb migrant trap, especially in the spring, and its diverse habitat, from saltwater flats to open bays to brackish marsh to grassy fields to upland woods to brushy edges, is reflected in its diversity of birds. It is a reliable location for such species as Great Horned Owl, Eastern Bluebird, Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, and Mourning Warbler, and in recent years it has played host to a variety of more noteworthy visitors, including Barrow's Goldeneye, Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Wilson's Phalarope, Bald Eagle, Northern Shrike, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bohemian Waxwing, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Clay-colored and Lark sparrows, Townsend's Solitaire, White-eyed Vireo, Hooded, Kentucky, Worm-eating, Connecticut, Prothonotary, and Orange-crowned warblers, and Yellow-breasted Chat. On a good morning in May, more than ninety species are possible, including twenty or more species of warblers, but even on those occasions when the birding is less than ideal, the splendor of the landscape is always magnificent reward in its own right.

Historical Odds and World's End

Given its superlative waterfront setting in the midst of suburbia, what is perhaps most remarkable about World's End is that it has escaped several proposals for its commercial and residential use. In 1855, John Brewer of Boston purchased a ten-acre parcel of land south of the present reservation and proceeded to establish over the next three decades a magnificent country estate, complete with an extensive farming enterprise, that included almost all of World's End. Some time around 1886, Brewer, proposing to develop the farm, retained landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to design the roadways and landscaping for the subdivision of World's End into 163 house-lots. By 1900, roads had been constructed and trees planted, but the proposed subdivision was never carried out, and the land continued to be farmed.

Following the death of Brewer's last surviving child in 1936, the farming operations were eventually phased out, although a small number of dedicated workers continued to maintain the carriage paths and mow the fields. In 1945, World's End was considered as a possible location for the headquarters of the United Nations; twenty years later, it was the proposed site of the nuclear power plant that was ultimately situated in Plymouth. In 1967 the property was purchased, with funds raised from the public, by The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), the oldest private land trust in the world. Founded by landscape architect Charles Eliot in 1891, TTOR has served as a model for many conservation organizations, including the British National Trust. Its mission is to preserve properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The trust currently owns eighty-one properties and more than 21,000 acres statewide; perpetual conservation restrictions protect more than 11,000 additional acres. From Bartholomew's Cobble in the Berkshires and the Swift River Reservation in Petersham to the Crane Wildlife Refuge in Ipswich and the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge on Nantucket, TTOR properties serve as a living museum of Massachusetts birds and render the trust richly deserving of our support as birders.

To get to World's End, take Route 3 to exit 14 and travel north on Route 228 until it intersects Route 3A. Turn left onto Route 3A and drive 1.2 miles to the rotary at Hingham Harbor. Exit the rotary onto Summer Street, following the signs for Nantasket. Travel 0.4 mile on Summer Street, turn left at the traffic lights at the top of the hill, and proceed 0.8 mile on Martin's Lane to the entrance. If you lose your way, call the ranger station at (781) 749-8956.

The reservation is open daily from dawn to dusk. Early-morning parking is generally available in a small lot outside the gated entrance, but you may be ticketed if you park in restricted areas; please heed the signs. Ample parking is available inside the entrance once the gate has been opened, generally by 8 a.m.

Admission is free for members of TTOR; otherwise there is a \$4 fee per person. Annual individual memberships can be purchased for \$40 (\$30 for seniors and students); family memberships cost \$60. Additional membership information and applications are available at the ranger station or by calling the TTOR main office in Beverly at (978) 921-1944. Birders can also visit the Trustees' website at www.ttor.org

The Marsh

Beginning at the ranger station just inside the entrance, proceed northward along the main road for a short distance to a small information kiosk. Follow the trail up the steps directly behind the kiosk to a pair of benches that overlook the marsh to the north and that provide a good spot from which to look for ducks, herons, and shorebirds. In general, the marsh is not a favored stopover for migrating waterfowl, but Pied-billed Grebes, Snow Geese, Gadwalls, Wood Ducks, Northern Pintails, Blue-winged and Green-winged teals, Northern Shovelers, American Wigeons, and Ring-necked Ducks have all been observed here. Hooded Mergansers are more reliable visitors, particularly in late fall, while Buffleheads exhibit dependably entertaining courtship behavior in early spring.

A variety of waders can be expected in season, especially Great and Snowy egrets, Green and Great Blue herons, and Black-crowned Night-Herons, but watch for the occasional Tricolored or Little Blue heron, or Glossy Ibis, as well. The dead trees along the north edge of the marsh often harbor a heron or two and should also be checked for Osprey and Belted Kingfisher.

Shorebirds tend to be few on the marsh in spring, but Wilson's Phalaropes have been known to put in here for a brief respite in May before continuing on their journey. Autumn is a more favorable season, as a normally lower water table exposes patches of soggy terrain that southbound migrants find inviting for food and rest. Killdeers, Semipalmated Plovers, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Short-billed and Long-billed dowitchers, and Spotted, Least, and Semipalmated sandpipers are most numerous at this time.

As you scan the marsh from the benches, be sure to add to your list the more pedestrian species that are almost certain to be in the vicinity: Double-crested Cormorant, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, and Downy Woodpecker. During migration, the evergreens between the benches can attract a smattering of warblers, including Pine, Magnolia, and Black-throated Green, and in the small patch of woods behind the benches, Ovenbirds and Eastern Towhees can occasionally be heard. Eastern Screech-Owls have been found roosting in the nearby cedars, and scolding titmice and chickadees have betrayed the presence of sleepy owls in the tree holes in front of the benches, as well. Before returning

to the main road, you might wish to explore further the often quiet network of trails on the eastern edge of the marsh in the hope of finding Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Hermit Thrush, among other species. If warblers are present around the benches, however, "Bird Alley" (see below), west of the marsh, is almost always a better option. At this time, you might also wish to use the rest facilities that are located just a few paces farther up the trail behind the benches.

Return to the kiosk and proceed north a few steps along the main road to the exposed causeway that crosses the southwest end of the marsh. Beneath the causeway is a gate that is designed to regulate the level of water in the marsh. Recently repaired, the gate now permits a regular flow of tidal waters in and out of the marsh. As a result of the improved drainage, there was a marked increase in migratory shorebird activity here last fall. Discussions are currently taking place among various agencies concerning management of the water level and status of the *Phragmites*. Agency deliberations and decisions bear watching, as thoughtful management of the marsh may ultimately create habitat that is more inviting in the future for rails, bitterns, and shorebirds.

Just south and west of the causeway is a small marshy area that can be good for Green Heron, Snowy Egret, and the occasional Spotted or Solitary sandpiper. Black-crowned Night-Herons are common on the exposed rocks and posts north and east of the causeway and can often be found roosting in the trees along the west edge of the marsh. In autumn, Snowy Egrets may congregate on the marsh in substantial numbers, and their elegant late-afternoon profiles add a stately serenity to an already lovely setting.

This is also an ideal location for taking in the delightful aerial antics of Chimney Swifts and Tree, Barn, and Northern Rough-winged swallows as they pass sometimes surprisingly close overhead. Occasionally, a swallow may alight in the limbs of a dead tree just off the causeway long enough to provide more intimate looks. Try to locate the courting Belted Kingfisher rattling high overhead as it circles in display before plunging to a perch at water's edge. Come August, be prepared for quick identifications of peeps, yellowlegs, and dowitchers in flight as they wing their way to and from the flats in Hingham Harbor. The brushy edges on either side of the causeway offer suitable habitat for a variety of songbirds, including Northern Cardinals, Northern Mockingbirds, Gray Catbirds, Song Sparrows, and Common Yellowthroats, and in winter, Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows. It is not uncommon to find White-crowned Sparrows feeding in the grassy edges along the road in this area in May and October. Good numbers of warblers can sometimes be present in the trees and tangles just north and west of the causeway; be sure to listen for the soft *cheery cheery chorry* of a Mourning Warbler that may be hidden in a nearby bush. With luck, a Fish Crow may call as it passes overhead,

and occasionally the gangly silhouette of a Common Loon can be seen in a distant sky.

Bird Alley

After exhausting the possibilities of the causeway and its environs, proceed north once again for a short distance and take an immediate right onto the road that runs north and west of the marsh. Affectionately known as "Bird Alley," this stretch of woodlands and thickets frequently provides the most exciting birding on the property, and on a choice morning in May it can house a spectacular array of flycatchers, thrushes, orioles, vireos, warblers, cuckoos, and sparrows. For those who are on a tight schedule, Bird Alley can be used as a fairly reliable barometer for the level of activity elsewhere on the reservation, and can reasonably inform deliberations about whether to continue birding at World's End or to move to another location.

Proceeding north along the road, you will begin to get a sense of the impressive number of Baltimore and Orchard orioles that are present on the reservation. In recent years, World's End has benefited from the range expansion of several species that are more typically southern; Orchard Orioles have made the most conspicuous advance, but Red-bellied Woodpeckers and White-eyed Vireos, both of which can be found along Bird Alley, have also begun to show up with increasing regularity. To your right, in the leafy woods that run down to the marsh, Gray Catbird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Ovenbird, and Canada Warbler can be found. Overhead, myriad treetop vireos and warblers can strain the neck, but the possibility of spotting a Cape May, Bay-breasted, or Blackburnian warbler is worth the temporary discomfort. Watch, too, for an occasional splash of canopy red, because Scarlet Tanagers are regular visitors to these woods, and Summer Tanagers have also been recorded here.

Approximately a hundred yards down the road, the field to your left gives way to a wooded tract bordered by a stone wall. At this juncture, turn right onto a footpath that runs down into an area of brushy clearings and moist thickets at the west edge of the marsh. Rarely, a Ruffed Grouse is encountered here; more frequently, an American Woodcock may flush from just off the trail. Both Hooded and Connecticut warblers have been observed in this vicinity, which provides excellent nesting habitat for Mourning Dove, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Red-eyed and Warbling vireos, and both orioles, among others.

A decaying boardwalk passes through a wet clearing adjacent to the footpath and is well worth exploring if the water level permits. Its southern exposure among sheltering trees makes it a delightfully warm location from which to listen to the early morning chorus and to watch the feathered world awake. The boardwalk's immediate proximity to cover can result in exceptional views of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Goldfinch, Swamp Sparrow,

Orchard Oriole, and a variety of warblers, especially Blue-winged, Yellow, Nashville, Yellow-rumped, Northern Parula, and American Redstart. Louisiana Waterthrush occurs here as an infrequent April visitor, while Northern Waterthrush is a reliable migrant in May. Earlier in the spring, a lonesome Rusty Blackbird can sometimes be found cavorting with Common Grackles; listen for its distinctive creaking calls. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks are often drawn to the area by migrant passerines, and in September, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are attracted by the flowering jewelweed. The area around the boardwalk is also an excellent place to seek out irregularly overwintering species such as Northern Bobwhite, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Winter Wren, Swamp Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow.

Return to the main road and turn right into the heart of Bird Alley. This short wooded stretch of road often harbors eighteen or more species of warblers, the most regular of which are Yellow, Wilson's, Canada, Blue-winged, Magnolia, Nashville, Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, Yellow-rumped, Chestnut-sided, Northern Parula, American Redstart, and Common Yellowthroat. A Northern Waterthrush may dart across the road in a blur of yellow, while an emphatic *cher-tee cher-tee cher-tee cher-tee!* gives an Ovenbird away; be attentive once again for a Mourning Warbler in the bushes along the road, and listen as a hidden Prairie Warbler sings its way up the scale. Overhead, Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks add their delicious melodies to the chorus of warbler songs and oriole whistles, while Brown Thrashers, Gray Catbirds, American Robins, and Wood Thrushes respond with equally lush anthems to the spring. More often heard than seen, a Black-billed Cuckoo may suddenly appear on an overhanging branch, and just as unexpectedly a White-eyed Vireo may emerge from a tangle of green just steps away. Not infrequently, Least Flycatchers make an appearance here in May, while Great Crested Flycatchers and Eastern Wood-Pewees remain to breed. Sometimes present in good numbers, inquisitive Blue-gray Gnatcatchers flit nervously about, and in the cedars, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets busy themselves in seemingly endless activity. Retreating winter finches also pause here on occasion in late spring and can add a nice dimension to the careful birder's daily list; watch for Pine Siskins feeding on treetop buds, and listen carefully to be sure that the Orchard Oriole song is not that of a Purple Finch.

The road through Bird Alley can be a surprisingly good spot for sparrows, as well. Fox Sparrow is a regular migrant in early spring, and the brilliant song of a tardy bird is not unusual in May. In addition to the ubiquitous woodland White-throats, White-crowned Sparrows can often be found here during migration, sometimes in good numbers. No fewer than fifteen of them appeared here on a recent spring morning in their customarily handsome breeding

plumage. It is not unusual to find Lincoln's Sparrows along this stretch, either, and even a wayward Clay-colored Sparrow turned up here in May a couple of years ago.

As you exit the wooded stretch through Bird Alley, four options present themselves:

1. Go back and bird it again (caution: since this is always an option, the unwary birder runs the danger of being caught in an infinite loop at this point, and indeed some of us have been known to get stuck here all morning).

2. Turn left up the hill along the edge of the woods to search for Northern Bobwhite, House Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Indigo Bunting, and warblers you might have missed, particularly Prairie and perhaps a late Palm. Watch for Great Horned Owls that regularly roost in the cedars just inside the stone wall to your left. For three consecutive springs I have located Olive-sided Flycatchers in treetop snags along this edge, and both Willow and Alder flycatchers appear here from time to time as well. (If you wish to explore Bird Alley from a different approach at this time, alternative access into the back of the woods is provided via an overgrown path that runs off the main road between Pine Hill and Planter's Hill. Follow the footpath up the hill along the stone wall and turn left onto the road.)

3. Turn right to bird along the edge of the woods that abuts the marsh. Among other species, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and American Woodcock are possible. If you venture out into the field, you might scare up a rare Grasshopper Sparrow, but you are more likely to find wood ticks instead.

4. Continue north along the main road (this is the option we will follow), where orioles, vireos, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwing, and treetop warblers such as Tennessee, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll are the most likely rewards. To your left, a female House Wren may be comparing the relative merits of several nests that a male has begun constructing in the boxes along the edge of the field. Continue until you come to a wide, grassy footpath that crosses the road. Here, you can turn left and work your way up the hill along the brushy edges in search of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and additional warblers. From mid-March to mid-April, the lower portion of this path is a superb location from which to view American Woodcocks as they perform their dizzying aerial displays in the twilight sky. Interestingly, their numbers seem to have declined in the past few years, perhaps the unintended consequence of a recently enacted leash law that has no doubt abetted the reservation's red foxes, whose diet is certain to include such ground-nesting birds as woodcocks and bobwhites, along with their eggs.

Turning right instead, follow the trail through an open field into the woods at the north end of the marsh. Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and American Kestrels patrol the fields in April, while in May the riotous melody of newly arrived Bobolinks singing *en masse* may descend from

the tops of nearby trees. Entering the woods, watch for Carolina Wrens, Brown Thrashers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; with luck, a Yellow-throated Vireo might appear. The trail quickly climbs a wooded ledge to a clearing at the top of a large rock that overlooks the marsh; from here, scan for birds that you might have missed earlier. In March, a Green-winged Teal or Wood Duck might emerge from the reeds in the sheltered cove at the west end of the marsh, while autumn peeps, Spotted Sandpipers, and yellowlegs often feed in the mud at the base of the rock. During the summer, watch for Least Terns as they make occasional fishing forays over the marsh.

Exploring Rocky Neck

Directly behind the clearing is a trail that winds its way north through the woods toward Rocky Neck. Although the woods are often quiet, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-shouldered Hawk, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo, and additional woodland warblers are possible. Within 250 yards, the trail intersects the main road that separates Rocky Neck from the rest of the property. Turning right brings you back along the Weir River to the parking areas inside the entrance. A few steps down this road is a clearing that can be worth checking in fall for migrant sparrows and warblers. Ospreys have also been observed in this area feeding in dead trees along the river. From the intersection, the road to your left passes through a wooded stretch where Scarlet Tanager, White-eyed Vireo, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo are possible. Three Kentucky Warblers were observed in the wet roadside brush on a recent May morning, and two years ago a Mourning Warbler spent a week of his life here in early June, singing his heart out from a surprisingly exposed perch.

Returning to the intersection, follow the roadway that heads north onto Rocky Neck. This is usually the quietest area of World's End, but the cedar grove south of the ice pond can sometimes be productive. Rocky Neck is the most dependable location on the property for Brown Thrasher, and roosting Great Horned Owls are regularly harassed by resident Blue Jays and American Crows. Infrequently, Ring-necked Pheasants appear here, and rarely, Wild Turkeys. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher put in a brief appearance at the pond a few years ago, and a Townsend's Solitaire spent several months among the cedar-covered ledges north of the pond in late 1995. In late fall and winter, the cedar grove is a good spot to check for such species as Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Fox Sparrow, and House Finch. I once located an Ovenbird here on New Year's Day. Rocky Neck is an excellent place to search for southbound accipiters in the fall, and the number of kills in evidence on the snow indicates that some of them overwinter. Purple Finch and Common Redpoll are irregular visitors, and every few years several Pine Grosbeaks, Thoreau's "angels from the north," make an

appearance; rarely, a White-winged Crossbill or Bohemian Waxwing is observed here.

The narrow footpath that extends along the northwest edge of Rocky Neck leads to several locations at the top of the ledges that provide terrific views of the Weir River and the sheltered coves below. Common Goldeneyes, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Buffleheads are plentiful in winter on the open water, while American Black Ducks and Brant frequent the mussel beds at low tide along with the more common species of gulls. Occasionally Mute Swans, Red-necked Grebes, and Red-throated and Common loons may be observed. Watch for Belted Kingfisher and Common Tern during the warmer months, and Spotted Sandpiper along the rocky shore in May.

To the Bar and Beyond

Return to the main road just south of Rocky Neck and turn right, continuing west and north on the beautiful tree-lined carriage path that runs out to the bar through the sloping fields along the northeast side of Planter's Hill. The sugar maples, horse chestnuts, American basswoods, tamaracks, river birches, yellow poplars, northern catalpas, white ashes, sycamore maples, bitternut hickories, northern red oaks, and other native and introduced trees that frame the roadways and grace the fields here and elsewhere on the property offer prime nesting sites for a variety of breeding birds. Chipping Sparrows, Mourning Doves, Northern Mockingbirds, Eastern Kingbirds, Cedar Waxwings, and Warbling Vireos are common roadside nesters, but each takes a back seat to the reservation's orioles. A recent breeding bird census turned up twenty pairs of Orchard Orioles and as many as 50 pairs of Baltimore Orioles. For their abundance and beauty and song, I consider them the signature birds of World's End. Look for their beautifully crafted nests in the shade trees through Bird Alley and along the roads that encircle Planter's Hill.

As you move north on the road to the bar, watch for the occasional Northern Harrier, Turkey Vulture, or Red-tailed Hawk over the fields to the west; in April, American Kestrels are abundant. Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks nest in the hillside grasses, while Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows take up residence in the boxes east of the road. Two years ago, Great Horned Owls raised a pair of owlets in the tall evergreen just shy of the bar.

The bar itself is a man-made spit connecting the two drumlins of World's End to Planter's Hill. In winter, it can be a good spot to scan for grebes, loons, and ducks in Hingham Harbor. During spring migration, Savannah Sparrows often join the resident Song Sparrows on the bar, while anything from American Pipit to Snow Bunting may occur here in the fall. In the brushy hillside edges just north of the bar, Yellow Warblers build nests that are sometimes injudiciously exposed, making them susceptible to parasitism by ubiquitous Brown-headed Cowbirds. A large brushy tangle just off the road provides

occasional cover for Northern Bobwhites and Eastern Towhees, and gorgeous Blue Grosbeaks have been discovered here on more than one occasion in the spring. The bar is generally not a great location for shorebirds, but Semipalmated and Black-bellied plovers are common on the muddy flats in autumn, as are Least and Semipalmated sandpipers; occasionally a Willet is observed here. Late in September, hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants congregate to gorge themselves on fish that they have driven into the shallow coves flanking the bar; they are often joined in their frenzied feeding by Snowy Egrets, Common Terns, and Ring-billed and Bonaparte's gulls.

North of the bar, proceed up the main road east of the inner drumlin. Perched in a hillside tree on a recent September morning, a young southbound Peregrine Falcon graciously permitted an extended and intimate look before finally moving on. Each winter, Greater Scaup and American Black Ducks find shelter in the small cove just east of the road. A few steps beyond the cove, two roadside spruce trees often attract migrant warblers; be alert for Cape May in particular. The main road continues into a wooded area known as "The Valley," which runs along the saddle between the two drumlins. Although often quiet and rarely as active as Bird Alley, The Valley can be a good trap for migrants and at times can produce some excellent birding. During spring migration, watch for Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Least Flycatcher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Blue-headed, Red-eyed, and Yellow-throated vireos, Scarlet Tanager, Lincoln's Sparrow, and a host of warblers. Mourning Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat have been observed in the tangles north of the road, and a Worm-eating Warbler was once seen foraging on the leafy hillside to the south. Black-billed Cuckoos may nest in the woodland thickets, and on overcast days Eastern Screech-Owls may call to one another from their tree-hole roosts.

Retrace your steps east along the road through the valley, and then bear left to loop around the outermost drumlin. Generally quiet, the outer loop can easily be skipped, although it is certainly not devoid of bird life. Eastern Phoebes and American Kestrels are common April migrants, and a walk along the edge of the field cresting the drumlin can produce close looks at Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds perched on their nesting boxes. Northern Flickers often work the field for ants, while the roadside oaks are an excellent place to search for a Red-headed Woodpecker, which has been recorded here on several occasions, usually in the fall. At the northern tip of the peninsula, a small clearing provides an excellent view of the water where the Weir River empties into Hingham Bay. Look for Red-throated Loon and Bonaparte's Gull in the fall, and in winter, Horned Grebe, Common Loon, Bufflehead, Common Eider, White-winged Scoter, and Common Goldeneye; Barrow's Goldeneye has been observed here as well.

Continue the counterclockwise loop, but instead of entering the valley again, take a sharp right onto the road that curls around the west side of the inner drumlin. In season, the woods to the right of the road may shelter migrant gnatcatchers, thrushes, and warblers, and in the bushes farther along on the left, a nonplussed Common Yellowthroat may face the daunting task of feeding a fledgling Brown-headed Cowbird. A grassy footpath on the right leads down to a bluff that overlooks Hingham Bay and offers the birder close looks at Horned Grebes as they come into breeding plumage in April.

Continue south and east on the main road back to the bar. If warblers are present, a good bet is to proceed straight ahead, searching for additional species in the trees adjacent to the road. Red-tailed Hawks have nested in the woods along the water's edge, and Indigo Buntings have bred in years when the mowers have allowed small bushes to continue growing in the hillside fields. A nice alternative is to bear left onto the road that traverses the top of the inner drumlin. The expansive field to the north is home to breeding Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Bluebirds, and Tree Swallows, while Eastern Kingbirds, Baltimore Orioles, and Chipping Sparrows nest in the trees that border the road. Check the stand of trees at the top of the hill for the occasional Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, or Red-breasted Nuthatch; Northern Bobwhite can sometimes be found here as well.

On two occasions in recent years, I have witnessed a significant push of accipiters over World's End in early May, each time into a light northwest wind. A good spot from which to view their movement is the bench immediately north of the bar that faces southeast over the sheltered coves of the Weir. Sharp-shinned Hawks by the dozen cut across from Atlantic Hill in Hull and stream over the trees on Rocky Neck; they stay low over the water into the wind, then swing up over the outer drumlins of World's End where they may pause briefly before continuing north off the far end of the peninsula. An occasional Cooper's Hawk may wing past as well, and a wayward Broad-winged Hawk may also appear in their midst. The roadside on top of Planter's Hill is another great location for watching these magnificent birds, whose seasonal movement over the reservation warrants further monitoring and documentation.

The Inner Hills

Cross the bar heading south and bear right up the road that curls gently along the western edge of Planter's Hill. Once again, the rows of trees that frame the road provide splendid habitat for typical World's End breeders; note as well the pairs of Eastern Bluebirds nesting in the boxes along the edge. Take a sharp left to loop around the top of Planter's Hill. Facing north, there are excellent views of the Boston skyline and reasonable opportunities in fall to spot migrant raptors, which may include an infrequent Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, or Northern Goshawk. Once a Red-headed Woodpecker was observed here feeding on

acorns directly above the road. The east side of Planter's Hill provides a wonderful vista of the Hull peninsula and the ocean beyond; I have seen Great Cormorant from here but have yet to add Northern Gannet to my World's End list. It is also a good spot to be entertained by Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks in the fields below and by swallows and swifts as they wing their way past.

Continuing south, look for Warbling Vireos and Orchard Orioles as they fashion nests amid the blooms of a horse chestnut, and be alert for a Yellow-billed Cuckoo that may be feasting on caterpillars along the edge to your left. The scattered trees at the southern end of Planter's Hill often harbor a variety of migrants that have spilled out of the woods in Bird Alley. Farther south, in the saddle area between the two drumlins, a break in the stone wall east of the road marks the beginning of a short overgrown trail that leads into the woods at the back of Bird Alley. This area can become stuffed on May afternoons with migrants awaiting nightfall and the next leg of their journey. Before entering the woods, however, weigh carefully the risk of a few scratches and the very real possibility of contracting Lyme disease against the opportunity to find American Woodcock, Great Horned Owl, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, Hooded and Mourning warblers, and others along this trail.

From the road that traverses Pine Hill, two islands in Hingham Harbor are visible, Langlee to the north and Sarah to the south. Good numbers of Black-crowned Night-Herons can be seen hunkered down in the tangles and trees on Sarah, from which they launch their twilight forays to World's End and other local destinations. Cormorants, geese, egrets, and gulls are also commonly present on the island. Occasionally a migrant Peregrine Falcon may stir the gulls, and rarely in winter a Bald Eagle may do the same.

During migration, Red-breasted Nuthatches are not uncommon in the widely scattered pines that give Pine Hill its name. Watch for Black-billed Cuckoos nesting at the edge of the woods east of the hill. In the brushy fields to the west (a hot spot for wood ticks), American Woodcock, American Kestrel, Northern Bobwhite, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Mockingbird, and Yellow Warbler can be expected. An Osprey is occasionally seen tracking over the edge of the fields in April as it follows the peninsula northward, and at times a Sharp-shinned Hawk takes refuge in the cedars along the edge. Migrant Savannah Sparrows are easily flushed from their grassy cover, and a Grasshopper Sparrow shows up from time to time in May. Both Northern Shrikes and Rough-legged Hawks have been observed here in late winter.

As you descend Pine Hill along the main road, drink in the vistas of blue and green and admire once again the orioles flashing overhead in the late morning sun. Watch for an elusive mink that may dash across the causeway at the bottom of the road, and feel free to record any noteworthy sightings, avian or

otherwise, on the clipboard that hangs outside the ranger station. Finally, just outside the entrance, on a falling tide in late summer, check the flats in the cove for Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Laughing Gull, and Greater Yellowlegs, and if by chance you find a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron standing in their midst, you can safely add good fortune to your day's list.

One visit to World's End makes it easy to understand why people become so quickly protective of it and proprietary about it, and although it may be hyperbole to suggest that the world ends here, I am certain that it is no far reach to think that this is a place where earthly cares rarely fail to fade, where the scenery never seems to quit, and where some very pleasant birding begins.

In memory of Harry O'Brien, ranger and gentleman; and with many thanks to Ryland Rogers, Shelby Birch, Joanne Norton, Susan Shapiro, Lester Gammons, Helen Cross, and Nancy Swirka for sharing with me their love of nature and their appreciation of World's End and its birds.

A native of Hingham, **Kevin Godfrey** has been a fairly serious recreational birder for much of his life. He is partial to World's End not just for its beauty and birds, but also because it provided an idyllic setting for his first kiss, which he received there at the age of 13. When he is not birding or smooching, he works as a college administrator.

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