



# THE MAIL BAG

A PUBLICATION OF THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB OF WEST VIRGINIA  
P.O. BOX 4077 • WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

VOL. 71, ISSUE 3

JULY – AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2014

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

## Editor's Note

If you were at Foray this year, terrific. If you missed Foray, we missed you. Janice Emrick and I directed Foray for the first time this year, and everything came together seamlessly. We had assistance and assurance from many in the Club, and it helped us to have a successful week. The speakers were varied and interesting, and the day-to-day operations went off without a hitch. Many thanks to Donnie Pritt and his crew in the kitchen and on the grounds. They took good care of us and were very pleasant to deal with. Weather was pretty reasonable. Comfortable most days, though humid. Not too much rain got in the way of our activities. Birding was quite good, as well, and many Breeding Bird Surveys went out. Since we've received no complaints, we can say with some certainty that a good time was had by all.

Next year's Foray will be at Camp Galilee in Preston County, and details will be released when the dates are firmed up. Plans are in the works.



Please note the two reservation forms at the end of the Mail Bag. Our Annual Fall Meeting is a little earlier this year, so make sure to get your reservation in on time. We will be back at the wonderful Blackwater Falls Lodge, and a good program is planned. A few weeks later, the Club will be on its way to the Eastern Shore, a trip that always is fun and interesting. Not to mention all of the great seafood that is to be had! Thanks to everyone who are helping to put together these two terrific annual events.



*The Shearers, the Jacobs and Mary Grey roast marshmallows at our only Foray campfire*

## CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

### NEW MEMBERS

James Farley  
921 Wild Rose Lane  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
Tel: 540-686-2056  
Email: jamesfarley@frontiernet.net

Aden Hubbard  
57490 Washington Boulevard  
Martins Ferry, OH 43935

Cheryl Jennings,  
30 Wild Hare Road  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
Email: graysquirrel@frontiernet.net

Mike Oldaker (*we need an address for Mike, if anyone can send it to us*)

Jenny Ortt  
3105 E. Howell Street  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Email: elaine.jennifer@gmail.com

Annie Petsonk  
204 Wilson Avenue  
Morgantown, WV 26501  
Tel: 724-880-3923  
Email: apetsonk@gmail.com

Bob Sites  
133 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Marietta, OH 45750  
Tel: 740-336-7383  
Email: bobsites1@yahoo.com

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Luke and Carolyn Head  
12042 MacCorkle Avenue  
Chesapeake, WV 25315

Steve & Charlotte Icardi  
2298 Davis Yancey Road  
Michie, TN 38357

### EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES

Robert Rine  
rrine1269@comcast.net

David & Joan Schroeder  
dlsjes2@roadrunner.com

## MARILYN ORTT PASSES

Marilyn Wilking Ortt, 78, of Marietta, passed away May 25, 2014. She fought the fight with grace, dignity and humor.

Born July 14, 1935, in Pittsburgh, PA, she was the daughter of the late Clarence and Mildred Wilking.

She grew up in Oak Grove. After graduation from Marietta High School with the class of 1953, Marilyn worked as a secretary for several years with the FBI in Washington, D.C. during the Herbert Hoover Administration. She returned to Marietta, and became the first woman in Marietta College's history to graduate with credits earned entirely in the MC evening school program while working full-time at Fenton Art. She graduated cum laude with a B.S. in Chemistry. Marilyn worked as a spectrograph technician in the laboratory at the Electromet Corp. She met and married the late William Charles Ortt on Aug. 23, 1958. Marilyn's passion and love of botany and the environment led her to work as a field botanist for the State of Ohio in the Dept. of Natural Areas and Preserves monitoring endangered species.

Marilyn was instrumental in help founding local environmental programs including: Friends of the Lower Muskingum River, Marietta Area Recycling Center, Kroger Wetlands, Kris-Mar Woods, Marietta Natural View, Community Earth Day Celebration, The Outdoor Education Center so local school children could explore woods and streams in a natural setting, Marietta Natural History Society, Marietta Tree Commission, Washington County Household Hazardous Waste Day, the Tefft Property, the Boord Preserve and the Ladd Natural Bridge - each of these has now been protected, either through the Ohio Nature Conservancy or ODNR. She strongly believed that you should leave this world in a better place for future generations and she did so.

Marilyn loved camping with her family especially in the Canaan Valley, WV, area at Dolly Sods for hiking, berry picking and campfire stories. She enjoyed the yearly trip to the Eastern Migratory Bird Station to see and share the bird banding with family.

## CONTACT THE EDITOR

Have an interesting story about the nature around your neck of the woods? Want to contribute an article or travelogue? Have a nature-related event that you'd like to tell the Club about? Please contact me by mail, email or phone:

Ryan Tomazin  
348 Station Street, Apt. 7  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
412-220-9726  
wwwarblers@hotmail.com



## CORRESPONDENCE

We would love to hear from members of the BBC. What have you been doing? Have you taken recent trips? What interesting birds or plants have you seen in your locality or backyard?

The Club looks forward to little notes on Christmas cards and dues notices, but feel free to get in touch with us at other times of the year too. Even just a line or two would be of interest to our readers, especially if we haven't seen or heard from you in a while.

Correspondence may be mailed to: Juanita Slater, Corresponding Secretary, c/o BBC, PO Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

For those of you who prefer email, correspondences may be sent to: gusind@stratuswave.net



## 2014 CAMP PIONEER FORAY REPORTS

**June 13-14** – Foray started on Friday, June 13th at Camp Pioneer near Beverly, WV with campers settling into their dorms or tents or campers before dinner. Old friends were greeted and new ones were welcomed. After dinner the first order of business was a meeting to discuss the who, what, and when of Foray all while enjoying the air conditioning in the main meeting hall.

The early birds were up and about running the 10 mile Breeding Bird Surveys. Scott Emrick and Chris Tingley went out early to set up and run the only study plot at the Valley Bend Wetlands. An early morning bird walk was held for novice and experienced birders.

After a big breakfast there was a program by Mike Book of the West Virginia Raptor Recovery Center. The Center has rehabilitated 74 birds already this year. He brought along a Red-shouldered Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk and passed along some very interesting facts about them. Also, did you know that baby Kestrels have red tails?

After lunch there was a workshop held by Ann Payne on nature journaling which those attending enjoyed. Others went out exploring the Foray territory of Randolph County. The evening program was given by our own Luke Head on environmental law issues. Campers retired early to get ready for the next activity-filled day at Foray.

– *Janice Emrick*

**June 15** – The highlight of the early morning bird walk was the discovery of a baby Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher by P.J. Murray along Mt. Vernon Road. We all heard the baby calling, but it was hidden in tall grass. Some of the other birds seen during the walk were Yellow-throated Warblers, baby Red-Winged Blackbirds and baby Chipping Sparrows. On Ryan Tomazin's BBS run, he found an abundance of Yellow-billed Sapsuckers (22) and a Mourning Warbler. Lots of deer with their fawns were seen by morning birders and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers seemed to be everywhere.

The first afternoon program, The Ecol-

ogy of Mushroom Hunting, was given by Robert Voshell, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year grad student with a passion for edible mushrooms. A mushroom is a sexual fruiting body with the purpose of releasing spores. Mushrooms usually can be found on north-facing slopes in old growth forests. Spore prints can help with identification. His power point presented pictures and information about a large variety of mushrooms. He suggested using two field guides to verify a mushroom. Robert urged all who are new to edible mushrooms to try only a small amount, at first, cook thoroughly, not boiling but exposing them to high heat cooking oil. Fungiperfecti.com was a recommended internet site.

The second afternoon program was Jim Fregonara from the DNR on "Snakes." There are 20 species and 2 subspecies of snakes in WV. Most people see only 6 snakes in their lifetime. Jim gave us a rhyme to remember, "If eyes are round, no venom found. If eyes are slit, don't get bit." A Smooth Green Snake will turn bright blue when it dies. He brought a variety of snakes for us to see, touch and take pictures of. The Timber Rattlesnake was especially interesting. Every time it sheds, it adds a ring to its tail and it shakes its tail 50 times per second. Jim stated that bites are rare and usually happen when a person uses poor judgment. Special snake boots are sold that go up to the knee. The medical cost for a copperhead or rattlesnake bite can be \$100,000. Rattlesnakes are pit vipers (have holes in their heads) that can sense a .003 degree in temperature change. The best snake bite kit you can carry is a set of car keys to get you to the hospital and a telephone to call the hospital. Snakes in the wild usually live to be 15 years old and will live longer in captivity with the oldest being 44 years old.

After dinner, Jay Buckelew took the annual foray photo with smiles all around. Orion Matheny did the bird list and our evening speaker was Doug Jolley who presented an interesting program on Native Orchids. There are 45 species of orchids in WV. Doug presented pictures

of many of them and where they can be found and at what time of year. Orchids are monocots with a lower lip that fascinates people. A recommended book is [Native Orchids of the Southern Appalachian Mountains](#). Orchids are untransplantable by and large. There is a fungus associated with the roots and the roots eat the fungus cells. Early settlers had uses for orchids, such as, the Putty-Root Orchid in which they got adhesive from the root. Sunday was an abundance of fun and excellent information!

– *Sally Egan*

**June 16** – It was another excellent day at Foray—good weather, great friends, and a beautiful location!

The early risers were up before 5:00, as usual, and took part in 10 mile breeding bird survey runs (with the McCulloughs, Ryan Tomazin, or the Triplets) and the singing male census study plot (with Scott Emrick). The semi-early risers gathered at 6:30 and did a bird walk around the camp. After these activities, a good breakfast was eaten in the dining hall.

The day's schedule was mostly taken up by an all-day trip, and participants were given two choices. About half of the camp went on a botany-centric tour of Bickles Knob, Bear Heaven, and Otter Creek Wilderness area, all of which are Northeast of Elkins. Along the way, they found many interesting plants, worked on Jane Whitaker's scavenger hunt, and really enjoyed each other's company. The other half of the camp went on the annual infamous Buckelew Death March—this year an out and back to the High Falls of the Cheat on the Shaver's Fork River. Most of these hikers made it to the falls, had a swim and came back. Some hikers, however, in their wisdom, elected to lounge in the sun on the ridge half of the way to the falls and listen to hermit thrushes, Swainson's thrushes, veeries, and winter wrens until the real death marchers passed back through.

After the all day trip, everyone enjoyed dinner before the evening program, which was a slide show by Don and Martha Shearer (real slides). The Shearers

told everyone about trips that they had taken to Great Basin National Park and New Zealand. The photos were wonderfully composed, of course, but the real treat was the beautifully narrated presentation by Don and Martha. We are very lucky to have them talk to us about their experiences.

It is days like this, filled with adventure and camaraderie, that really make Foray such a wonderful week.

– *Zach Fowler*

**June 17** – The regular participants were up early, and routes and the plot were run. The morning program was Hannah Fincham from the WVU Extension Service, and she taught us about canning and preserving many types of food safely. It was very informative. Right after the food preservation program, John Fichtner presented us with a chain saw wood carving demonstration. In short order, using a piece of redwood, he produced a bear, which was sold at the silent auction.

The afternoon program was with Elizabeth Byers of the DNR. She led us all to the Tygart Valley Wetland to explore swampland that we don't normally experience in the West Virginia uplands. There were swamp oaks, lots of ferns and mushrooms, plus a bevy of snails. A bonus was two immature Hooded Mergansers that Yan Tomazin spotted and that were confirmed by group effort, as none of us really had a clear look at them. There was a lot of interesting habitat to be seen there.

While we were at the Wetlands, the Tingleys and others went through the Sinks of Gandy exploring.

The evening program was a musical campfire with the Potluck Jug Band, made up of local mountain musicians. They played a number of songs for us as the sun set over the hills, and then they joined us for a few of our BBC camp songs that they also knew. It was a really nice experience that was enjoyed by all, including the Shearers, who were serenaded with "Tell Me Why" by all of us, with musicians.

– *Ed., due to missing reporter*

**June 18** – Another sunny day with a nice light breeze. The early morning 10-miler

with Fred and Carol up on Cheat Mountain wasn't too exciting until we came to an open spot and heard a Mourning Warbler. We heard lots of Hermit Thrushes and Veerys, which are always beautiful to hear. Ryan's 10-miler turned up many Blue-winged, Golden-winged and Kentucky Warblers.

After breakfast, we all drove to Stuart Recreational Park to watch Ross Brittain show us bird banding. Ross is a professor at Alderson Broaddus University. He was able to catch a Louisiana Waterthrush in a mist net before we got there, so we were able to learn the process the bird goes through when being banded. He showed us four nets that he had set up. However, we ran out of time before any more were caught.

The afternoon adventure was in Kumbrow State Forest. Rob Tallman, from the DNR, showed us a foresting reclamation project in its early stages. Someday, it will provide an open habitat with viewing areas.

Alicia Mein, from the DNR, had some new hunting and fishing GIS maps to show us for the evening program. The new mapping programs online have many new features that we can utilize, such as trails and the means to measure them. We look forward to exploring the website. And so ends a busy and beautiful Wednesday.

– *Deb Tingley*

**June 19** – Despite the threat of rain, Carol McCullough and the Triplets did the Breeding Bird Surveys at 5:00 AM. The bird walk at 6:30 went on as scheduled, and Sally Egan, Wilma Jarrell and Janice Emrick found Cliff Swallows. The first of the rain in camp came at 7:00 AM.

At breakfast, announcements were made and awards were given. Natalie Jacobs received a bird key chain for herself and one for her brother, Brandon. Janice Emrick was given the special shell wind chime award for naming the most birds and trees on Don Shearer's quiz. She said, "You have to think like Don to do this!" Laughingly, she presented the shell award right back to Jim Triplett for the Best BBS Route. I think we haven't seen the last of the shell awards.

Dr. Thomas Pauley, Professor Emeritus from Marshall University, talked to us about the history, identification and habitat of the Cheat Mountain Salamander (*Plethodon nettingi*). It is now a federally protected species found originally at Barton's Knob by Graham Netting and Leonard Llewellyn. Later, it was classified and named after Netting by Maurice Brooks. All three men were members of the BBC.

Dr. Pauley explained how the colonies are now disjunct, and efforts to reintroduce them have failed so far. Sadly, they were named after the Cheat Mountain, which got its name from the saying that those mountains will "cheat you of your life." Tom Pauley pointed out that "the fate of every species is to become extinct," but we don't want to see that in our lifetime.

We walked down the hill to the ponds and stream and discovered Northern Two-lined Salamanders, a baby Northern Water Snake and a baby Snapping Turtle. Bev Triplett stepped in the mud up to her knees. First her foot, then her boot was pulled out.

After lunch and a few goodbyes, John Fichtner played a few tunes on the flute, and a few of us decorated t-shirts and bags with leaf prints. A few brave souls, including Deb Tingley, Alaina Heck and Chesi White went off to a popular swimming hole.

The evening guest speaker was Rodney Bartgia from the Nature Conservancy, who gave us an overview of their work in West Virginia. One-hundred thirty-thousand acres have been conserved in our state. Cheat Mountain, the wettest, and Smoke Hole, the driest, are two well known sites.

Ryan Tomazin then ran a slide show that recapped the week in photos and video. We had a party with snacks and ice cream, and then played our usual spirited game of charades.

– *Cheryl Jennings*

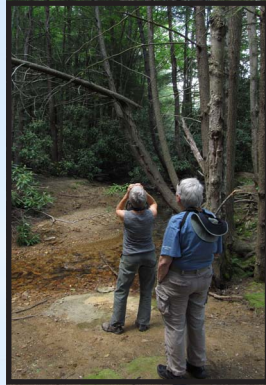






Mike Book of WVRRC with a blonde Red-tailed Hawk

2014 Foray Photos by Ryan Tomazin  
If you have photos to share, contact Ryan



Mimi Kibler & Sally Egan in the Otter Creek Wilderness



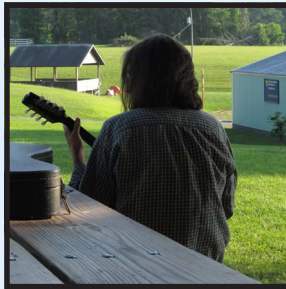
Ross Brittain shows off a Louisiana Waterthrush at Stuart Rec Area



Don Shearer -- WITH hat!



Travis Miller and Rob Tallman (both left) explain clearcutting



Cindy Proudfoot tunes up



Elizabeth Byers prepares us for a walk into the Tygart Valley Wetlands



Luke & Carolyn Head and Ed. go herpetile hunting



Carol McCullough and the Emricks enjoy the music and the evening sun



The Potluck Jug Band playing for us at campfire



Tom Pauley (2nd from right) leads a stream herp walk



Jim Fregonara sharing the snake experience with the Jacobs family



Baby snapping turtle at camp



Brandon Jacobs explains the way it is to Yan Tomazin on Bickle's Knob



Jay gets ready to lead the last morning's bird walk



What Ryan and Orion found while cruising the streets of Elkins one night



## BABY FALCONS STEALING THE SHOW UNDER NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE

By Marcus Constantino – Daily Mail Staff

*(Reprinted from the Charleston Daily Mail. Wendy and Rob Perrone, of the Three Rivers Avian Center, are BBC Members, and the Club makes a yearly donation to the TRAC. Edited for space constraints.)*

More than 800 feet above the New River in Fayette County, brave tourists who come here to traverse the narrow catwalk under the New River Gorge Bridge are getting a rare glimpse at the bridge's three newest avian residents.

About four weeks ago, tour guides at Bridge Walk — a company that takes groups across the New River Gorge Bridge on a two-foot-wide catwalk beneath the bridge deck — started noticing four falcon hatchlings poking their heads out of one of the bridge's beams. Since then, guides and tourists have regularly sighted the baby birds of prey in their nest, about 50 feet below the catwalk near the center of the bridge.

"They were like white little fluffballs," said Ali Braenovich, a tour guide for Bridge Walk. "They're getting bigger, though."

Braenovich said a pair of adult peregrine falcons have been nesting under the bridge since 2011. Peregrines are very territorial; they typically build their nests at least two miles apart from each other.

"He doesn't let us get too close to him," Braenovich said of the male falcon, though she says the nest isn't close enough for bridge-walkers to disturb it.

"He basically wants us off his bridge. If he sees us, he'll sometimes squawk at us until we move on."

Tour guides think the falcon hatchlings are about four weeks old. When they come near their nest's entrance for sunlight, tourists on the catwalk above snap photos of the birds, which have now grown feathers.

On Friday, the juvenile falcons could be seen taking in the morning sunlight, occasionally peering their heads out of the bridge beam. One of the little ones climbed to the edge of the entrance to the nest and stretched its wings out over the foggy gorge.

The species of falcon was once plentiful in the New River Gorge, but was nearly driven to extinction because of the pesticide DDT. The peregrine falcon had already virtually disappeared from the East Coast when the EPA banned the use of DDT in 1972.

Through restoration efforts, the peregrine falcon is making a comeback. Wendy Perrone, executive director of the Three Rivers Avian Center in Brooks, Summers County, has served as project coordinator for the New River Gorge Peregrine Falcon Restoration Project. From 2006 to 2011, 120 peregrine falcons have been raised and released into the New River Gorge.

"We're delighted they're coming back into the gorge," Perrone said. "There's a very good habitat not just in the Gorge Bridge, but in the gorge. They've also been seen in Charleston and Nitro."

The Three Rivers Avian Center worked with wildlife organizations in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware to capture baby peregrine falcons that were born into nests in dangerous locations. As baby peregrines learn to fly, they are susceptible to being hit and killed by vehicular traffic if their nest is near a roadway.

"There were chicks coming out of those nests and getting killed right away," Perrone said. "These nests were in endangered areas. They had a history of high — if not complete — mortality in a couple of years. The chicks were taken from these nests and brought to the New River Gorge to try to reestablish peregrine falcons into the gorge."

Peregrine falcons released by the Three Rivers Avian Center are ankle-tagged and sometimes given GPS trackers so staff can track the birds' movements. Perrone said one peregrine falcon was tracked to six of the seven continents over a one-year period before returning to West Virginia. Though many peregrine falcons released in the Gorge end up nesting elsewhere, Perrone said there are many more sightings than there were 10 years ago.

"When we started we wouldn't see any. You'd see one or two once in a blue moon," Perrone said. "But once we started the restoration you'd see 15 or 20 peregrines."

Though there's no way of knowing how many falcons are nesting in the gorge, Mark Graham, chief of natural resources for the New River Gorge National River, said the real indicator of the program's success came in 2011, when falcons that had been released into the gorge in previous years started coming back to their "hack box" for food. When baby peregrine falcons were brought into the gorge, they would be released from a hack box, and staff would put out food at the box as the eagles acclimated to their new environment.

"That was a good sign that there were returning falcons," Graham said.

Because of the pair of falcons, Braenovich said no other birds typically nest on the bridge. "We'll get pigeons sometimes, but if the falcons see them, they're going to be dinner," Braenovich said.

Bridge Walk guides said the underbelly of the New River Gorge Bridge had been covered in pigeon droppings before the falcons nested in the bridge. But once the family of falcons took residence on the bridge, other birds have mostly kept away from the bridge.

Over the next few weeks, guides and tourists will be watching for the baby falcons' first flights. Peregrine falcons typically learn to fly five to six weeks after hatching.

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

### BIBBEE CHAPTER

**September 13, 2014** – 9:00 AM, all day. Burke's Garden in Tazewell Co. VA, for birds. Start at East River Mtn. We'll meet at the East River Mtn. park at the top of the mountain, check it for hawks, then travel to Burke's Garden. Contact Mindy Waldron.

**October 4, 2014** – 5:00 - 8:00 PM. Annual Wild and Tame food Dinner. We meet for dinner, have a short business meeting, then have a speaker. US. Forest Service lab near the Athens exit off of I-77.

**October 11, 2014** – 6:00 AM to dark. Big Sit all day birding event. This is a fun day and we'll repeat it again this year. Join us at Mountain Valley Lake in Summers Co. Contact Mindy Waldron.

**November 2014** – date TBD. Birding event with the Buchanan County Bird Club of Virginia. We will meet in Hinton around 9:00 AM and travel to Bellepoint, Bluestone Lake, Mountain Valley Lake and Sandstone Falls. Contact Mindy Waldron.

### HANDLAN CHAPTER

**October 20, 2014** - 6:30pm. Meeting at South Charleston Library.

**November 17, 2014** - 6:30pm. Meeting at South Charleston Library.

### HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

**Oct 21, 2014** – Meeting at the Schrader Center. Ryan Tomazin – Dolly Sods Revisited by Pat Temple (1966 slide show with possible audio from original program)

**Nov 18, 2014** – Meeting at the Schrader Center. Janice and Scott Emrick – Pot-holes and Prairies Birding

### MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

**September Coordinator: Jeanie Hilton (304-428-8641)**

**September 18, 2014** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**September 25, 2014** – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am. ORINWR Parking Lot.

**October Coordinator: Barbara Hohman (740-374-5548)**

**October 2, 2014** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**October 11, 2014** – SATURDAY – Big Sit, Ohio River, sunrise to sunset – come anytime; stay as long as you like. Islands National Wildlife Refuge, ORINWR Parking Lot.

**October 16, 2014** – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, Nature Trail.

**October 23, 2014** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**October 30, 2014** – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am. First parking lot, Northwest Pipe Drive.

**November Coordinator: Sandy Albrecht (740-373-8994)**

**November 6, 2014** – Program, 7:00pm. Vienna Public Library Meeting Room, Bring finger food.

**November 13, 2014** – Ohio River, Little Hocking Area, 9:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**November 20, 2014** – Middle Island area, 9:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch.

## NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

### POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

**November 15, 2014** – Cathedral State Park/Blackwater Falls Field Trip. Free! Join us for a special trip to West Virginia's Cathedral State Park. The trip will be led by Master Naturalist Clark Dixon and include a guided tour of the park led by the park's naturalist. The guided tour will start at 10:30 a.m. and last about one-and-a-half hours. Afterwards, the trip group will travel to nearby Blackwater Falls State Park, with a lunch stop along the way. The group will depart the falls for home around 5 p.m., arriving back at the Food Lion parking lot in Inwood at about 7:30 p.m. The drive to

the park from the Eastern Panhandle is about two-and-a-half hours long.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate, including families with children. However, space will be limited to only 20 people so pre-registration is required. For more information about the trip contact Krista Hawley at [adult-programs@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adult-programs@potomacaudubon.org) or 703-303-1026.

### WV STATE PARK ACTIVITIES

September 19-21, 2014 – Nature Wonder Weekend, North Bend State Park.

October 3-5, 2014 – Fall Migration - Bird Banding Weekend, Tygart Lake State Park.

October 31 & November 1/7/8, 2014 – Saw-whet Owl Banding at Valley Falls State Park, Tygart Lake State Park.

Check [http://www.wvstateparks.com/Hikes\\_Walks.html](http://www.wvstateparks.com/Hikes_Walks.html) for more details.

## CORRESPONDENCE

I received a letter in early June from Karl "Mike" Haller in Sherman, Texas. He donated eight cases (65 pounds!) worth of shipbuilding and crafting tools, as well as other items, for our Foray Silent Auction. Every year, Mike ships us so many interesting things, and selling them at the Foray helps to raise money for the Scholarship Fund. We also have much fun trying to identify what many of the items are! BIG thanks to Mike!

*I mailed eight packages today to Beverly, WV, for the Foray. Some very good items, and some may not be so good (= junkpile).*

*Have a good time. Only a few names in the club are familiar to me now.*

*Have fun with the White-winged Dove tail feather (enclosed in the envelope). I have about 12-15 coming to my feeder. They drove out the Mourning Doves except for about 2-3. Also, hardly ever see the Eurasian Collared Doves. Maybe two still around. Regards,*

– Karl "Mike" Haller

## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

*I didn't intend to have a "Big Morning" today, but it sure ended up that way. It started when I stepped out the front door and heard a Great-crested flycatcher singing in the woods across the road. After meeting Chuck P. in Charles Town, we had plans to walk the trails at Shannondale Springs WMA, but we first made a stop at Shannondale Lake to see if the Red-necked Grebe was still there. Affirmative. I am so amazed with these birds that we have been so fortunate to see so much of this winter and spring. We also found two Gray Catbirds near the dam, plus a Spotted Sandpiper. A Horned Grebe was also on the lake, which I was surprised to see there so late in the spring.*

*When we got to Shannondale Springs WMA, it was amazing driving slowly in on the entrance road to the boat launch. My Prius hardly sounds like it is running anyway, but the birds didn't seem to notice us either. I felt like I was at High Island, Texas, watching birds that had just landed from their migration, and were too busy looking for food to notice people. It took us at least 3 hours to get to the end of the entrance road parking lot and boat launch. After nearly 1 inch of rain yesterday, the mosquitoes and gnats were in full form, and the warblers and gnatcatchers knew it. A nice mixed flock of warblers must have just arrived last night.*

*Northern Parula were singing, and we observed 1 carrying nesting material. This bird was literally 2 feet from the passenger car door below eye level, much to Chuck's amazement. While sitting in the passenger seat, he was actually looking down on this bird! A Hermit Thrush stood alongside the road for quite some time. Black-throated Green warblers sang frequently. We smelled a dead deer, and it wasn't hard to locate its carcass. Near it, we found a Yellow-throated warbler that frequented the ground and road. We also watched the warbler gathering deer hair from the carcass for its nest. How cool is that?!*

*Louisiana Waterthrush were singing, and a Green Heron did a flyover, with a Bald Eagle and Osprey also as flyovers. Along "warbler lane", we found 2 Nashville Warblers and got excellent looks. Yellow-rumps were everywhere, and we counted a conservative 45 of them. Ruby-crowned Kinglets sang frequently, and we watched 2 Downy Woodpeckers copulating. A late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker flew by. We heard a Black-and-White Warbler singing like a squeaky wheel, and got excellent looks at 4 Blue-headed Vireos who were not singing.*

*And the warblers kept coming! We had 2 Palm Warblers together in a tree, while more Black-throated Green warblers sang again and again. I found a Ruby-throated hummingbird sitting quietly on a tree branch. We scored on vireos too--got all but the White-eyed Vireo. Purple Martins flew along the river with Chimney Swifts, Barn and Tree Swallows.*

*When we finally got to the parking lot, my stomach said it was nearly lunch. As we were eating in the car, a Warbling Vireo sang and a Black-throated Blue warbler repeatedly sang "I am lazy." We got outstanding looks as this bird sang while he ate insects. On the return trip out, we found two Gray Catbirds. We ended up with a whopping 57 species for just that short drive to the boat launch. We decided we didn't need to walk the trail, as it took us over 4 hours to just drive the road!*

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 4/27/14

*What a morning already! I am ecstatic!!! On our walk up the mountain in a pasture above our house that is grazed by sheep and cattle but has some scrubby brush, Sarah and I both heard a bee-buzz-buzz-buzz. It was the song of the Golden-winged Warbler. On our way down on a very brushy hillside overtaken by multiflora rose, we heard a lower bee-buzzzzzzzz. It was the song of the Blue-winged Warbler. We may have heard two of the latter.*

*When we got to the house we walked on to our nature labyrinth. There was the che-bek of the Least Flycatcher where we usually hear the Acadian Flycatcher. On our way back in the brush beside our yard, we again heard a Golden-winged Warbler. We both got great looks at it. It was in an area where they previously nested but not for the last two years. We did not even hear any around our place last year. I hope!*

*We had 30 species on our walk but the return of the Golden-winged Warbler is wonderful.*

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 5/1/14

*What an exciting morning this has been. About 7:30 I had two woodpeckers on the suet cakes -- a Red-bellied Woodpecker and to my surprise a Red-headed Woodpecker. He left and checked out the cherry tree about 20 feet away. When he took off again I quickly hung a suet basket on that tree as well, hoping to entice him to stay. Stay he did indeed, flying around the backyard and every so often going back to the new suet. Later on I had to leave the house but when I came back at 11:00 he was still here. He has also been coming to the suet on the walnut tree right next to the patio. Sure glad the Red-headed showed up today instead of tomorrow when we have our Birdathon.*

*The two male Orchard orioles have been here all day. I managed to get a photo of the RHWP and the Orchard Oriole sitting only 15 inches from him in the same frame. The male Indigo was also here and looked really pretty with a bright yellow goldfinch sitting opposite him on the tube feeder. Another surprise bird was a White-crowned Sparrow.*

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 5/2/14

*We just got home and had TEN male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at our feeding area with one female. All I can say is, WOW!" The Golden-winged Warbler was singing again this morning with a Blue-winged Warbler on the opposite side of the yard.*

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 5/2/14

*Looks like the local Blue Grosbeak families are expanding their empire. I heard (then found) a first spring male Blue Grosbeak singing away in the "magical" locust tree - the same one I'd found the Western Kingbird in a couple Septembers ago. Two meadowlarks perched near him.*



## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

*He was all splotchy, not the mature deep indigo of the adult male – with a dark chestnut cap and other brownish body blots. But his song was the unmistakable sexy crooning of his fellow grosbeaks. There was such a successful crop of little grosbeaks last year, it makes sense the offspring would be “spreading their wings.”*

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry, 5/10/14

*I counted 46(!) Blackpoll Warblers on our dog walk this morning, which consisted of a 4-mile block through Bolivar, Harpers Ferry, Cavalier Heights and the Shenandoah wetlands/Virginus Island area. These latter two sections rang with the concentration of Blackpolls, much like the ringing trill of the Yellow-rumps just a week or so ago. My count was a conservative number. I also heard the Prothonotary Warbler that lives near the town’s sewage plant on Lakeshore Drive, an American Redstart, and another Orange-crowned Warbler – I am not kidding or imagining things. This last guy’s soft wave of trill was heard on Virginus Island in the patch of woods near the WV-340 bridge. Despite the loud din of semi-trucks and vehicular traffic there, I could hear his sweet voice several times but could not locate the bird himself. That’s the third I’ve heard within the last week.*

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry, 5/14/14

*I started and ended the day today with whip-poor-wills and barred owls near Cabins. Before dawn in Powers Hollow there were 2 barred owls and 2 whip-poor-wills. After dark along Smokehole Rd there were 6 barred owls and 2 whip-poor-wills. Along North Mill Creek Rd the Chuck-wills-widow was singing again at dusk by the North Mill Creek veterinary office.*

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV, 5/25/14

*I encountered a pair of Northern Goshawks in southern Preston County yesterday morning. 2014 is clearly my year of the goshawk. Last Saturday I found a “Brewster’s” Warbler back-cross (Brewster’s x Golden-winged) in central Preston County. At home, five Rose-breasted Grosbeak pairs are fueling their breeding activities at my feeders. I’ve discovered they like thistle seed as well as sunflower.*

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV, 5/29/14

*With A-Frame Road opened back up from the recent weather damage, I took the opportunity to head to the Canaan Valley NWR. It was a fine day of birding with only some minor sprinkles in the afternoon. I stayed mostly in the trail areas accessed off A-Frame Road and ended the afternoon at the Fairfax Stone Park. There were notices at the trailheads that bridges were washed away due to flooding crossing Glade Run on the Middle Valley and South Glade run trails. Clay-colored Sparrows were back at their usual haunts and I counted at least 7 individuals. There was a Nashville Warbler seemingly on territory where the Middle Valley Trail comes down into the valley bottom from A Road. An American Bittern was a nice way to start the morning at dawn at the beaver wetlands near the parking area. Henslow’s Sparrows were heard along both the Middle Valley Trail and at the Fairfax Stone. Vesper Sparrows were also at the latter.*

– Derek Courtney, Morgantown, WV, 6/2/14

*For those interested, the Chuck-will’s-widows are once again at Cedar Lakes (Jackson County) this year. I heard at least two in a hayfield (posted private property) to the north of the lake behind the dining hall. At first they were singing at the far edge of this field, but later one approached the dam. The serenade began at 9:14 p.m. Good stuff!*

– Jerry Westfall, Parkersburg, WV, 6/5/14

*This morning at the Canaan Valley Birding Festival, the field trip I led to the end of the Camp 70 Trail in Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge was astounded to see not one, but two, Ospreys circling over the wetlands at the beaver pond at the end of the trail. One was carrying a fish. Both were being harassed by Red-winged Blackbirds. We were also*

*privileged to see an American Bittern fly up from one side of the pond, fly across, and put down on the opposite side, where it proceeded to stalk around for several minutes with just its head and neck showing. Other notable species included an immature Red-shouldered Hawk, 3 Alder Flycatchers and Swamp Sparrow.*

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 6/6/14

*While my wife was doing some fishing near Opekiska Lock and Dam southwest of Morgantown this morning, I wandered up and down the Monongahela River Rail Trail in both directions from the dam, noting the following: Cliff Swallow—at least 150 nests on the dam, with maybe half in use. Dozens of nestlings poking their heads out of the nests to be fed by adults. Conservatively 200 birds present, including young in nests. Likely 300 if 2-3 young in each nest. Certainly one of the largest colonies in the state, higher than the current eBird high count of 154 birds in Red House along the Kanawha River in 2012, though I’m sure historically even higher counts occurred. A whopping increase at this location since eBird has only 1 record of 2 birds in late-July 2006. Statewide, Cliff Swallows have made a big comeback since the first WV Breeding Bird Atlas in the late 1980s. That Atlas found the birds in only 35 blocks; the not-quite-final-yet count in the current Atlas update is 88 blocks.*

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 7/13/14

*My husband and I were returning home from quick trip to Moorefield about noon today when we saw a flock of about 30 Canadas flying low and disorganized with 10 Snow Geese following in a group. We spotted them again as they circled down behind the trees by the river.*

– Kathy King, Hardy County, WV, 7/28/14

– *Sightings taken from  
WVBird ListServ*

# EASTERN SHORE TRIP 2014

## NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>

Here we go again on one of our favorite sorties to the east coast! Ocean breezes, good food, beautiful accommodations, good friends and, oh yes, great birding. We haven't been to the southern Assateague/Chincoteague part of the trip for a few years and so that's where we'll begin. I have researched the wildlife refuges and found them to be all in good shape and waiting for us.

We will begin at Chincoteague where we'll arrive on Wednesday, check into our nice motel, have dinner at one of the many good restaurants and perhaps try out the indoor pool or health spa before heading to bed.

Thursday, after a breakfast at the hotel while we check out the marsh from our private deck, and picking up your bag lunch, we'll bird the south end of Assateague Island and surrounding areas. Dinner at one of Chincoteague's fine eateries and a quick dip in the pool and bed. Friday we'll do the breakfast-lunch thing again then check out of the hotel and head north, ending in Rehoboth Beach and our ultra plush, ocean front hotel. Many birding spots along the way and maybe a walk along the beach before or after dinner and we'll be ready for bed.

Saturday morning's breakfast buffet and box lunch pick up will get us started up the Delaware Bay Coast with stops at various refuges and birding areas ending, of course, at Bombay Hook and all those beautiful Snow Geese. After we get all seventy-nine thousand, four hundred and seventy-one geese settled down for the night, we'll head back to the motel for our banquet dinner and final bird count of one hundred and thirty-two species before bed. Sunday morning after another big breakfast, we'll say our good-byes and head for home under a beautiful blue sky.

We will again have vans leaving Wheeling and making pick up stops along the way for anyone not wishing to drive themselves.

Price includes Wed., Thurs., Fri., and Sat. night's lodging (2 per room); Thurs., Fri., Sat., and Sun. morning breakfast; Thurs., Fri., and Sat. lunch; Sat. banquet dinner; and all the fun you can stand. A full itinerary complete with phone numbers, addresses and maps of where we'll be staying and birding will be sent to everyone who signs up.

### DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 25th

Make checks payable to Carl Slater and send along with your reservation to:  
57290 Mehlman Rd.  
Bellaire, OH 43906

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. NO. \_\_\_\_\_ Name of person sharing room \_\_\_\_\_  
(2 people per room) If you need a roommate, I'll get you one, trust me

\_\_\_\_\_ people @ \$330.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Single room supplement, additional \$190.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in traveling in the van? \_\_\_\_\_



# BROOKS BIRD CLUB FALL REUNION & ANNUAL MEETING

## BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK – OCTOBER 17-19, 2014

Blackwater Falls WV, will be BEAUTIFUL this time of year with its majestic hills and wonderful fall foliage!

The dates for the BBC reunion are **October 17-19, 2014**. To attend part or the entire weekend please fill out the application below. The event will be held at Blackwater Falls State Park West Virginia.

Plans include a Friday night Dinner 5:30pm-6:30pm prior to a program given by Rebecca Wertime at 7:00 P.M. A bird walk around the Lodge will be held Saturday morning at 7:00 A.M. Breakfast to follow. Lunch will be a box lunch pick up after breakfast in the Davis Room or sit down Lunch in the main dining room at 12:00PM. Paper Sessions will be held before Lunch and after Lunch. The Saturday night banquet will be 6:00 P.M. in the Conference Room with Dr. Sandy Liebhold scheduled to speak at 7:30 P.M. After breakfast Sunday morning a Reflection Service will be held at 9:30 A.M. followed by the BBC's Annual Meeting for the membership of the Club at 10:00 A.M.

**All reservations must be received by Thursday, October 9, 2014,  
and must be accompanied by a check for the full amount.**

**Make check payable to the Brooks Bird Club, Inc. and mail to:**

**Cindy Slater**

**2310 Cowling Road • Scottdale, Pa 15683**

**Telephone 724-570-8502 • Cindy's Email: [mountaingirl127@gmail.com](mailto:mountaingirl127@gmail.com)**

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. NO. \_\_\_\_\_ DO YOU NEED A ROOMMATE? \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Weekend \_\_\_\_\_ No. attending @\$189.00 (Double Occupancy) TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Single Room @\$282.00 TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

(Includes Fri. & Sat. night's lodging; Friday dinner & program; Sat. & Sun. breakfast buffet; Sat. lunch, Morning & Afternoon Paper Sessions or hike; Sat. banquet, and program. Sunday Reflections and Annual Membership Meeting.)

**Saturday Lunch Option: (must have your selection at this time)**

Ham \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey \_\_\_\_\_ Swiss Cheese \_\_\_\_\_ or Dine in Lodge \_\_\_\_\_

**PART TIME (NO LODGING OR BREAKFAST)**

Friday's Activities: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Attending Dinner and Speaker @ \$20.00 TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Sat's Activities: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Attending Sessions, Lunch, Dinner & Speaker @ \$40.00 TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

PART TIME TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*You must be a BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBER TO ATTEND any of the weekend events.*



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**We were there!  
Where were you?**

*Baby Barn Swallows  
in the fields near  
Camp Pioneer*

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