



THE MAIL BAG

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

VOL. 71, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014 RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR



Editor's Note

It's wintertime! Christmas Bird Counts are upon us, as are another influx of Pine Siskins, Long-tailed Ducks, and (possibly) Snowy Owls. The owls, at press time, have been seen in states all around West Virginia with the exception of the south. Hope you can participate in one or five CBCs. Information on you local count is on page two.

Next year's Foray will be at Camp Galilee in Preston County, June 5th to the 13th. We are hoping for good attendance, interesting programming, and lots of fun for all involved. Please mark your calendars now!



Oh, I don't like to implore, but we'd love to hear from more BBCers, whether by post, by email, or through trip stories or articles in the Mail Bag. You might notice the extra games and Christmas-y images in our pages here, and while those are fun, they are only placeholders, waiting for words from our members. If you have traveled and have interesting stories that have a nature lilt to them, or if you just want to tell us if you are alive or otherwise interned, we'd all love to hear from you! Until then, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and have a great holiday season! Stay warm and bird often! And enjoy all of the goodies that the holiday times bring!

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Citizen science is on my mind. The Brooks Bird Club has incorporated citizen science projects in club activities such as the annual Foray for a very long time. And I know many members participate in projects run by other organizations. One such project that occurs this time of year is the Christmas Bird Count. This project has been conducted for over 100 years and the data compiled from the counts has proven to be very valuable in learning about changes of abundance in bird species, for example. Many counts occur in West Virginia and surrounding states. A list is included in this issue of 'The Mail Bag' and can also be found on the club's website: <http://brooksbirdclub.org/>. Please participate in as many counts as your schedule permits. Club Advisor, Jane Whitaker, compiles the data from our local counts; look for her report in a future issue of 'The Redstart'.

Another citizen science project that takes place this time of year is Project FeederWatch which is run by Cornell. Many club members participate in this. It involves watching feeders in your yard and recording which bird species take advantage of your feed. In addition to a list of species, you record the highest number of individuals of each species that you observe at one time. You can learn about this project and hopefully sign up to participate by going to the website <http://feederwatch.org/>. Banding, especially of Northern Saw-whet Owls, and raptor counts are also conducted this time of year. So there are many ways to get involved right now. Several other projects are conducted during other times of the year and those will be the topic of future messages.

Of course, a major focus of all of us at this time of year is family and friends. I wish you all a most wonderful holiday season. May all your feeders be active. And, as my friend Ralph Bell often said, 'Merry Christmas if I don't see you before then'.

– Carol McCullough, BBC President

2014-2015 WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Athens/Princeton

Friday, December 26, 2014
Ron Canterbury 513-556-9570
roncanterbury@aol.com (best)

Washington Co., PA/ Brooke Co., WV

Sunday, December 14, 2014
Larry Helgerman
bobolink3@verizon.net

Canaan/Tucker Co.

Sunday, December 14, 2014
Casey Rucker 304-866-4114
autoblock@frontiernet.net

Charles Town

Sunday, December 14, 2014
Bob Dean 304-754-3042
bobdean52@gmail.com

Charleston

Saturday, December 20, 2014
Doren Burrell
g.immer@doren.net

Elkins Area

Friday, January 2, 2015
Rich Bailey 703-307-1790

Hampshire County

Sunday, December 28, 2014
Vini Schoene
bcws2@earthlink.net

Huntington

Saturday, December 20, 2014
Wendell Argabrite 304-736-5747

Inwood

Saturday, January 3, 2015
Bob Dean 304-754-3042
bobdean52@gmail.com

Lewisburg

Saturday, January 3, 2015
Benjamin Handley
ben@potteryvalley.com

McDowell County

Saturday, December 27, 2014
Allen Waldron 304-573-3247
awaldron@suddenlink.net

Moorefield

Tuesday, December 30, 2014
Kathy King 304-538-7121

Morgantown

Saturday, December 20, 2014
LeJay Graffious 304-379-4492
lejaygraffious@gmail.com

Oak Hill

Sunday, December 14, 2014
Geoff Heater 304-573-0111
geoffheeter@gmail.com

Ona

Sunday, January 4, 2015
Wendell Argabrite 304-736-5747

Pendleton County

Tuesday, December 16, 2014
Fred Atwood 703-242-1675
fredatwood@yahoo.com

Parkersburg/Wood Co.

Saturday, January 3, 2015
Jeanette Esker
304-863-8765

Pipestem Area

Saturday, December 20, 2014
Jim Phillips 304-466-1275
jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com

Pocahontas County

Sunday, December 14, 2014
Rich Bailey 703-307-1790

Raleigh County

Sunday, December 21, 2014
Allen Waldron 304-573-3247

Wheeling

Saturday, January 3, 2015
Scott Pendleton 740-942-3267
tallyp2001@yahoo.com

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 ANNUAL REUNION AT BLACKWATER FALLS

The BBC gathered in mid-October at the beautiful Blackwater Falls State Park for our annual fall reunion. The weekend promised cold, dreary weather, and delivered! After a mild Friday, Saturday found us in a misty rain with falling temperatures, followed by a sunny, but windy, Sunday.

Cindy Slater chaired a weekend filled with great programs and workshops. On Friday night, Rebecca Wertime, a long-time friend of many of us from the Oglebay camps, had a spirited and humorous discussion on invasive species and how they affect different aspects of our ecosystems. It is usually distressing to hear about how many exotic flora and fauna are killing our trees, our bees and more, Rebecca made the talk light enough to buoy our spirits.

On Saturday, we had morning and afternoon workshop sessions covering astronomy, wildflowers and other edible plants, geology and more. Everyone seemed to enjoy whichever 'path' that they took throughout the day. Some of us birded in Canaan Valley, and saw Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, Palm Warblers and assorted fall sparrows.

Our Saturday evening banquet brought us together in all of our finery. There were tasteful fall decorations on all of the tables, and our party favors were homemade bird seed ornaments, with seed held to pinecones with soy butter. Our feathered friends will eat well in the region! The program was about the wide variety of insects and diseases that are affecting our trees, along with a section on whether or not the seventeen-year locusts affect the health and well-being of our forests. Afterwards, a hoped-for astronomy walk was nixed due to clouds and occasional misty conditions.

We had good morning bird walks on both days. Saturday gave us over 100 vultures of both species, Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes in the road, and kinglets. On Sunday, only a couple of us walked around, but we nailed down a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, White-throated Sparrow and Pine Siskins. For the weekend, we had a total of 38 species, thanks to weather.

In addition, the Board met three times, for the good of the club, and accomplished much.

— Photos and story contributed by Ryan Tomazin



The wonderful table decorations for banquet



Rebecca Wertime gives a great program

WINGS OVER THE MOUNTAINS NOW AVAILABLE

Just in time for Christmas, J. Lawrence Smith's final writings have been printed as he envisioned in the tome *Wings Over the Mountains*. A wonderful read, Smith's writing offers vignettes of many of our favorite West Virginia birds, locations and birders. The prose is light and interesting, and it gives us more insight as to the past and present of regional birds and birding. With chapters such as Mountain Spring, Winter Wanderers and Fading Wings, Smith reminisces and reminds us of where we have come from as birders. It is a wonderful read, and it is available through either the Headquarters Chapter store, or through the Handlan Chapter of the BBC in Charleston. It makes a great inexpensive gift for your friends and nestlings!



BIRD SONG MATCHING QUIZ



Match each Birdorable bird with its song mnemonic!
We found Common Yellowthroat to get you started.

More, more, more cheesies, please!

Peter! Peter! Peter!

Teakettle! Teakettle! Teakettle!

Witchety! Witchety! Witchety!

Here here! Come right here, dear!

Fire! Fire! Where? Where? Here! Here! See it? See it?

Cheer up! Cheerily! Cheerio!

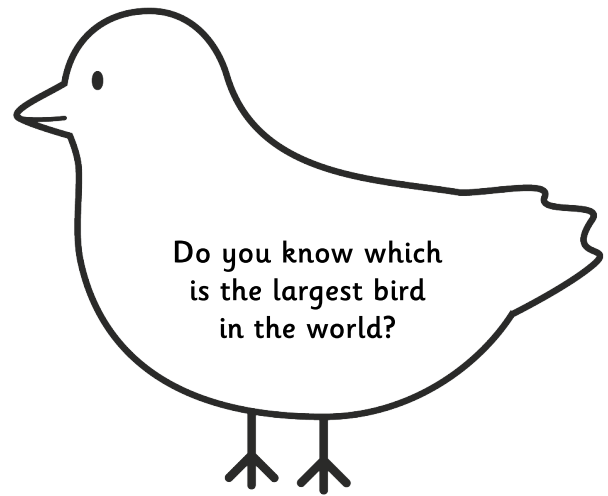
What cheer! Cheer, cheer, cheer!

Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?

Sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet!

Garden Bird Scramble

Can you unscramble the letters to reveal 14 birds that you might be lucky enough to find in the garden?



1. rdpwoekeco _____
2. dvoe _____
3. ingeop _____
4. lawoslw _____
5. nlsagri _____
6. olw _____
7. amipeg _____
8. bacblkidr _____
9. rhshtu _____
10. twsif _____
11. ewnr _____
12. onrib _____
13. cnfhiafc _____
14. porsraw _____

Birdorable Puzzle

Fill in the name of each bird on the horizontal rows and the answer will appear in the pink boxes. Do not enter any spaces or special characters (like apostrophes). If you don't know a bird you can look it up on Meet the Birds page at <http://www.birdorable.com/meet/>

Visit Birdorable at <http://www.birdorable.com> for more cute birds, available on t-shirts and gifts. Follow the Birdorable blog for more cute bird games and free downloads.

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Birdorable Puzzle: Barn Owl, Cockatiel, Razorbill, Redhead, White Stork, Zebra Finch, Osprey, Blue Jay, Herring Gull, Coopers Hawk, Killdeer, Mallard, Great Tit
Garden Bird Scramble: Woodpecker, Dove, Pigeon, Swallow, Starling, Owl, Magpie, Blackbird, Thrush, Swift, Wren, Robin, Chaffinch, Sparrow

2014 EASTERN SHORE TRIP REPORT

This year's shore trip marked the 42nd year for this annual event and as always, a good time was had by all. Our accommodations were great, food was delicious, and birding was fun. Our group of birders was smaller than usual, totaling twenty-three individuals, and coming from seven states, including Tennessee and Mississippi.

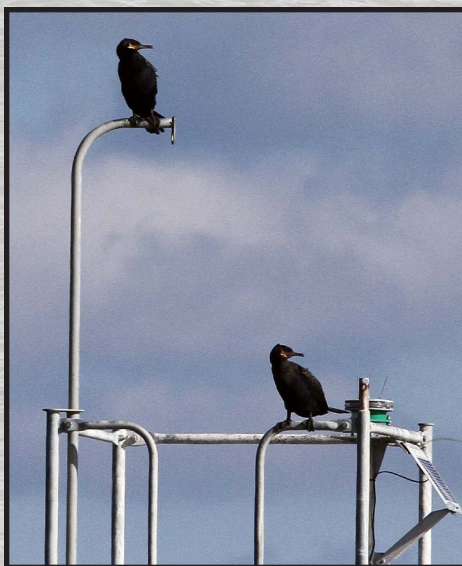
The weather was cool and mostly dry but was rather windy. At least we escaped hurricane winds and nor-easters but we were getting questionable weather reports of unfavorable weather crossing through the central part of the country heading east. Consequently, when we checked out of our hotel Sunday morning, we decided to drive a more direct route home with few stops so we would miss any bad weather driving over the mountains. As it turned out, we made it home two days before the Buffalo, N.Y., snow deluge.

Even though our bird list totaled 114, the volume of birds was low. There were no large rafts of ducks or large flocks of shorebirds and most disappointing was the number of Snow Geese. Instead of the seventy thousand we were used to seeing, only two or three thousand were seen and those at a distance. On a brighter note, one seldom seen Lesser Black-backed Gull was discovered in several places. Much discussion was had on where the Snows could be; maybe we were too early or too late? No one could find out.

At any rate, the indoor swimming pool at Chincoteague went unused but the gift shops at the refuge offices were well attended. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and hopefully, all will have a good winter and think about the fun they had.

– *Your Fearless Leader & Leaderette, Carl & Juanita Slater*

Photos by Neal J. Hohman



Great Cormorants



Immature Black-crowned Night Heron



Royal Tern



Brown-headed Nuthatch



Northern Shoveler

WV RECORD KIRTLAND'S WARBLER BANDED

Bob Dean banded a Kirtland's Warbler at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, Dolly Sods, WV today. This could be the first confirmed record for WV.



Kirtland's Warbler
– Photo from the WVBIRD Listserv

PUTNAM COUNTY 2014 FALL NIGHTHAWK COUNT RESULTS

Completed another season of counting Common Nighthawks tonight. Total = 1155. Have watched since 2003; lowest year was 2012 = 80, 2nd highest was 2006 = 656. Do watch annually for 3 weeks Aug. to Sept., 6 to 8 pm. Noted Whip-poor-will twice this year; highlight was Osprey on 9/7! Did count all birds observed each eve and submit to eBird. Very enjoyable to be out and tuning in to subtle seasonal changes.

Nighthawks observed 2014:

8/18---0
8/19---14
8/20---2
8/21---2
8/22---0
8/23---1
8/24---6

WV BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATES

Greetings fellow atlasers! As always, I want to thank all of you who helped make this project a success over the past 6 years. The data we've collected will serve to guide all manner of conservation and management efforts for years to come. We are now transitioning to entering all remaining available data, and cleaning a database that now has over 100,000 submitted observations!

We have a rather strict timeline over the next two years if we hope to have a completed manuscript to WVU Press by the beginning of 2017. To meet this goal, we have to meet certain general objectives. For the short term this means that we need to have ALL remaining data entered into the data portal NO LATER than Dec. 31, 2014. If you have not done so, please consider entering your data as soon as is convenient. Every little bit helps!

From there we will be cleaning the dataset priority block by priority block, with a goal of completion by March 31, 2015. While we are cleaning the dataset, we will almost certainly encounter entries that we have questions about. If you submitted such an observation, we will be getting in touch with you via email for further details/clarification. With your help, we will hopefully end up with accurate maps that will serve us well.

From now until Dec. 31st is also a time to review your existing data for accuracy. Did you enter appropriate codes and habitat data? Is there an entry you're having second thoughts about? You can edit or delete observations by clicking on the "Enter Observations" tab and then "edit observations". In addition, now is the time to enter any remaining EFFORT. This includes not only time spent atlasing, but other effort such as miles driven to a given survey block. Entering effort is critical for future comparisons between atlases.

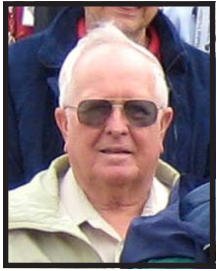
On another note, we are also hard at work compiling materials for the book. We will be discussing timeframe and plans with species account authors soon. For everyone else - we are very eager to receive any home-grown breeding season photographs of WV birds that you might have. We will be using as many of these as possible for the species accounts. If you have not already discussed this with us, shoot us an email!

Finally, there is one underrepresented species that we can still target from Dec. 15th - Dec. 31st: great horned owl! If you hear any deep hoots in the woods, please enter the observations!

Richard Bailey, Ornithologist
WVDNR Wildlife Resources Section
PO Box 67, Ward Road
Elkins WV, 26241
304-637-0245 x2018
www.WVDNR.gov

8/25---1	9/5---56
8/26---2	9/6---59
8/27---7	9/7---1
8/28---21	9/8---nc
8/29---11	9/9---20
8/30---29	9/10---1
8/31---37	9/11---14
9/1---70	9/12---0
9/2---172	9/13---0
9/3---383	
9/4---246	

– Cynthia D. Ellis,
Red House, WV



WALTER FYE PASSES

Walter Lee Fye, 82, of Knox, passed away at home following an extended illness on Saturday, November 15, 2014.

Born October 22, 1932, in Beaver Township, Knox, he was the son of Albert and Lola Berlin Fye. Walt graduated from White Memorial High School in Knox. He was married to Annabelle Hartzell on September 5, 1952.

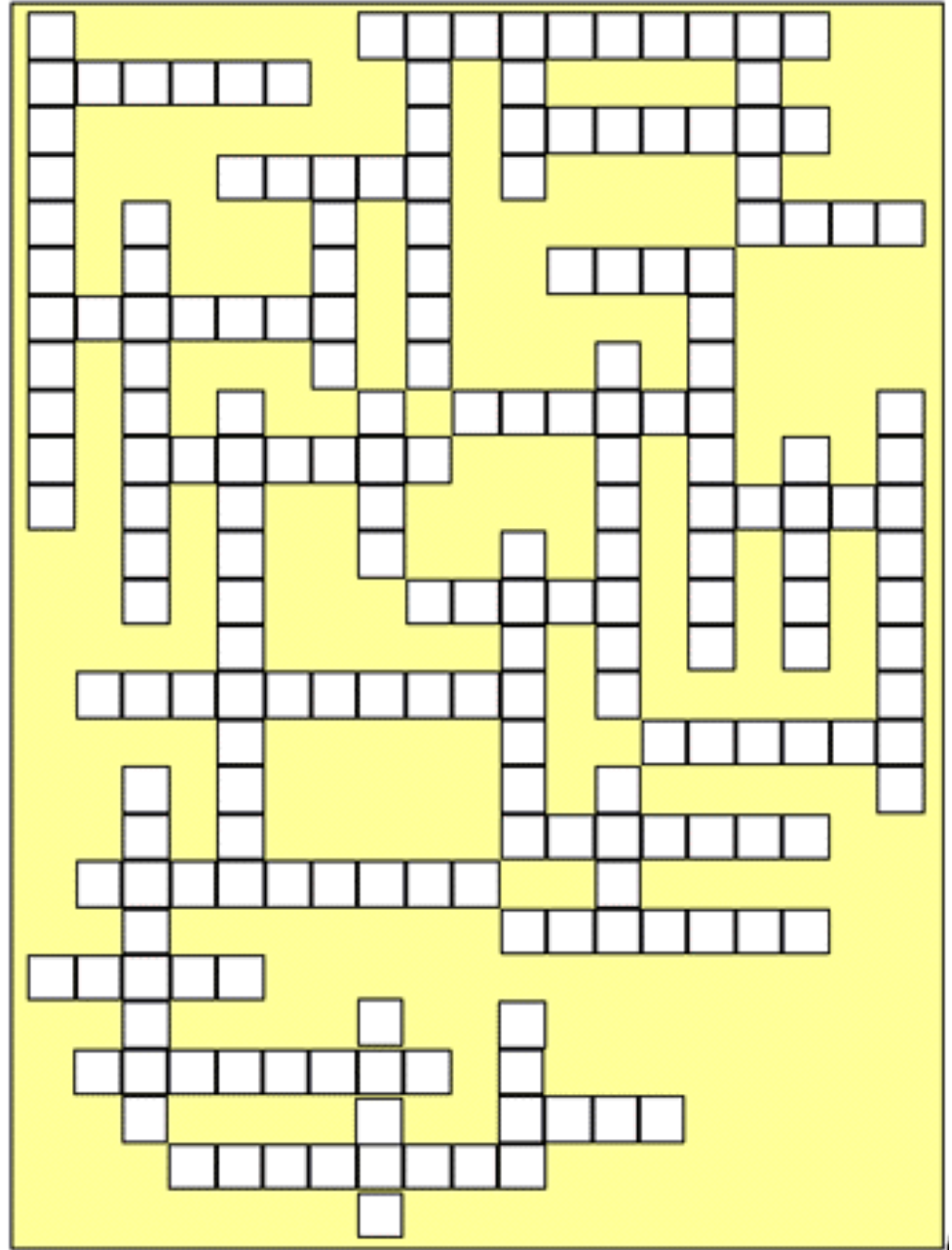
Walt was a Journeyman Tool and Die Maker, he owned and operated Clarion Sanitary Disposal, and also owned and operated Central Machine and Tool until his retirement. He was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Knox, having served on numerous church committees and on the St. Paul's Union Cemetery board.

Walt had a love for the outdoors, especially when it came to birds. He was an avid bird-watcher and bander. He traveled to Dolly Sods, West Virginia, every autumn to band birds during fall migration. He gave numerous speeches at several events on the topic of Ornithology. He was involved in many organizations, including the Brooks Bird Club, Seneca Rocks Audubon Club, Northeastern Bird Banding Association, and the Pennsylvania Society of Ornithology. Two of Walt's favorite vacations were when he traveled to Peru and Africa. He talked often about his experiences there, including the cultures and wildlife. Walter was a board member of the Alliance for Wetlands and Wildlife and the Clarion County Conservation District. He founded the Knox Nature Club.

Walt is survived by: a daughter, Deborah Shay, and her husband, Jeffrey, of Knox; a son, Michael Fye, of Knox; a brother, S. Leroy Fye, and his wife, Kay, of Knox. He is also survived by his three grandchildren and a step-grandchild, and by one great-granddaughter. Also surviving is Walt's long-time companion and friend, Shirley Monrean, of Knox, whom he made his home with for 12 years. He is preceded in death by his wife of 49 years, Annabelle.

BIRD FRAMEWORD

DIRECTIONS: The words are listed in alphabetical order according to length. Fit them in their proper places in the framework crossing off the words from the list as you go. Good luck.



- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>4 LETTERS</u> | <u>6 LETTERS</u> | <u>8 LETTERS</u> | <u>10 LETTERS</u> |
| CHAT | GROUSE | BOBOLINK | KING FISHER |
| DOVE | ORIOLE | CARDINAL | WOODPECKER |
| DUCK | THRUSH | GROSBEAK | <u>11 LETTERS</u> |
| HAWK | <u>7 LETTERS</u> | NUTHATCH | HUMMINGBIRD |
| LOON | BLUEJAY | OVENBIRD | MOCKINGBIRD |
| TERN | GRACKLE | <u>9 LETTERS</u> | |
| WRBN | SPARROW | BLACKBIRD | |
| <u>5 LETTERS</u> | TANAGER | GOLDFINCH | |
| CRANE | VULTURE | NIGHT HAWK | |
| EAGLE | WARBLER | SAND PIPER | |
| EGRET | | | |
| HERON | | | |
| PIBIT | | | |
| RAVEN | | | |
| ROBIN | | | |
| VIREO | | | |



INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

A gorgeous male Hooded Warbler just appeared at my office window and then fluttered away. I don't know which of us was more surprised. My wild cherry tree is full of almost-ripe fruit and there are some moths that hang out under the lights on the porch - maybe the bugs attracted him. He moved on through.

– Bev Delidow, Huntington, WV, 8/9/14

Well, we just had a bit of a treat. I've been hearing a Red-Shouldered Hawk calling on and off this morning, and Caroline noticed that it was perched on the phone line above our upper pond. We watched it through binoculars for a few minutes, and it was bobbing its head, obviously watching something. It finally flew down to our pondside patio, out of sight. I spotted in a couple of minutes later, barely visible through the bushes but perched either on the patio furniture. After several minutes down, it flew back to the phone line, carrying an 18-20 inch snake (of unknown variety), which it proceeded to eat head-first while we watched.

– John & Caroline Snyder, Persinger, WV, 8/27/14

Early in the evening I witnessed an peculiar encounter between a female American Kestrel and a female Northern Flicker. The kestrel was perched atop a power pole when the flicker swooped in and perched slightly below it on a wire. The birds were about a foot apart. The flicker then proceeded to do a weird head-bobbing and turning routine for at least a minute while facing the kestrel. The kestrel ignored the show, and the flicker departed. I'm not sure what was going on.

– Jeff Del Col, Philippi, WV, 8/30/14

We saw about 15 juvenile Black Terns flying over the Ohio River at Washington Bottom in Wood County. They were at the foot of River-view Drive (The road down to the river just beyond Sandy Creek Backwater.) They were flying back and forth, occasionally swooping down to pick something off the water. We watched them for about 15 minutes and then we lost track of them.

– Dick & Jeanette Esker, Wood County, WV, 8/31/14

A long day today took me to the North Bend State Park area in Ritchie County. The healthy Red-headed Woodpecker population at the lake at the state park continues. Today I found 6 across from the Ritchie County 4-H Camp along Old Bunnell's Run Road below the RV camp, 13 at the east end of the lake at the recently renamed Eldon Haught Lakeside Recreation Area, and 5 at the fishing area underneath the bridge a bit west of the golf course. 24 birds total, including 5 heard-only. However, only 3 juveniles were seen.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 9/5/14

What a gorgeous day it was today. I wouldn't mind if they all were like today. The American Goldfinches were enjoying feeding on the seeds of Coneflower and other past bloom flowers. While in my front yard, I saw and heard a Red-headed Woodpecker in a dead tree top across my road. It was doing a call that I've only heard only once or twice before. It sounds like a little monkey or a tiny ratchet wrench. The overcast sky which backlit the bird did not allow for seeing whether it was in juvenile plumage or not.

At dinner time, 30+ Tree Swallows circled high over the backyard, starting to form flocks for their journey south. And at about 8:00 PM when I sat down to do some computer work with the back screen door open, I heard an Eastern Screech-owl whinny a few times in the back woods. Always a welcome sound any time of year! And just now as I type this, I hear the vixen screams of a fox (horrid sound!) Halloween must be coming.

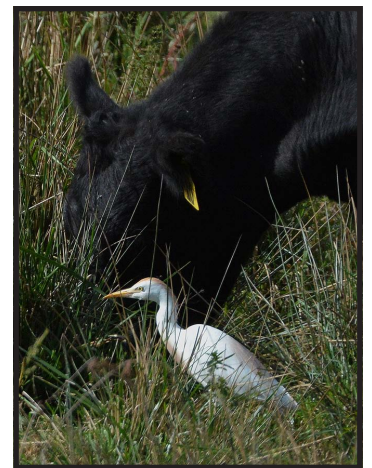
– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 9/8/14

Jane Whitaker, Diane Holsinger and I spent the day birding Western Hardy County, an absolutely beautiful day. We included High Knob in our travels. About noontime, we observed 43 Broad-wings, 2 Osprey, a Bald Eagle, 2 Sharpies and a Cooper's Hawk within an hours' time...all heading south, from that vantage point. Another highlight were thousands of swallows at the Moorefield Sewage pond. We spotted Tree, Barn, Bank, Cave and Rough-winged. We also saw a FOS Purple Finch and a Great Egret at other places.

– Kathy King, Moorefield, WV, 9/17/14

This morning I met Steve Kimbrell and Dick Shelton at the WVDOH wetlands near Montrose. We saw two American Kestrels, several Black-throated Green Warblers, a Black-throated Blue, a Chestnut-Sided, several American Redstarts, and two Palm Warblers. As we were heading towards the cars around 11:00 there a large group of Broad-winged Hawks. We first saw tens of dozens in a long loose group, gliding southerly. Then a few minutes later we watched a group riding thermals around and around like debris in a tornado. We don't know if we saw the same large group twice or two groups of well over 100, plus lots of smaller groups. Quite exciting for us!

– Mimi Kibler, Parsons, WV, 9/17/14



*Cattle Egret at Stony River Dam Road
– Fred Atwood*

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

I spent the weekend doing mainly non-birding things around Tucker and Randolph Counties. But birds are always around. There was a Connecticut Warbler skulking just off the railroad tracks at the High Falls of the Cheat. A Bald Eagle was seen well from the high bridge over the Cheat. A pair of female type Common Mergansers were seen on Lower Shaver's Fork. Other common passage migrants were seen but in fairly low numbers except early this morning at the state park in Canaan where a nice mixed flock of common passerines was seen.

Insomnia and restlessness did combine for some interesting nocturnal birding/walking. Barred Owls were vocal all over Canaan Valley with a total of 11 heard. 1 Eastern Screech-Owl was heard. 1 Northern Saw-whet was called in. And 1 Barn Owl was heard in the State Park along the main road toward the golf course.

– Derek Courtney, 9/21/14

I drove over to Silver Lake to look for the Snow Goose reported to eBird earlier this week. It wasn't present when I first arrived, but after talking with a local resident, he assured me that it would fly in at any moment. On cue, it flew in within minutes. The man I spoke with said that this Snow Goose has been present for two months now. He said that it grazes in the surrounding fields with Canada Geese in the morning and then flies to Silver Lake around 10:30 every day. On overcast days, he said that it comes in later. The goose appeared healthy and is fully capable of flying.

– John Boback, Morgantown, WV, 9/24/14

This morning at Dorsey's Knob Park I watched a Merlin repeatedly go after Blue Jays. The resultant commotion subsequently attracted a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk to the scene. The sharpie was chasing equally-sized Blue Jays until the Merlin actually went into a dive and almost got the sharpie! How am I supposed to get my work done at the park with this sort of excitement going on?

– John Boback, Morgantown, WV, 9/25/14

Just now, as I was walking the dog out our driveway, I observed Eastern Bluebirds flying high overhead. They were very vocal and seemed to be feeding in the manner of swallows or swifts. In all, I counted at least 34 in a matter of just a couple minutes. Most were heading to the east with the others heading south. They also attracted the attention of a Sharp-shinned Hawk that floated in amongst them.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 9/25/14

I was fortunate enough to have spotted a Fork-tailed Flycatcher at my place yesterday morning. I have been watching this morning since daylight, but it appears to have been one of those right place right time events. If the sighting is accepted it will be the first record of the bird in West Virginia.

– Rodney Davis, Monroe County, WV, 10/9/14

There seems to be a broad southern push of Double-crested Cormorants today. I saw 70 at Cheat Lake this morning and now I just saw an additional 50 or so cormorants flying above the West Virginia Botanic Garden in a large "V." Earlier today I spoke with Michael Dietrich who had seen three flocks of cormorants above Wheeling. The largest of those flocks included about 80 birds.

– John Boback, Morgantown, WV, 10/11/14

We decided to take guests to a bog on Backbone Mountain to pick cranberries today. On the way we stopped for a picnic at a pavilion near Thomas along the North Fork of the Blackwater River. There was a lone Double-crested Cormorant on an islet in the river when we arrived. However, as we ate, a flock of 40-50 birds began circling over and eventually landed on the river above where 219 crosses it. I have never seen so many cormorants in that area. There were also Wood Ducks sharing the water. It was neat in the mist and fog.

Then, while picking cranberries, I heard a Ruffed Grouse repeatedly drumming in the forest surrounding the bog while American Robins chattered in the trees. I wondered if the robins eat cranberries? They seemed fitting sounds for a bog socked in with fog and drizzle.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 10/11/14

I met Mike Slaven, Nick Goodman and Randy Bodkins at the upper Pleasant Creek wetlands around 8 a.m. Our targets for the day were Marsh Wren and Sora with an outside shot at Nelson's Sparrow and American Bittern. I personally ended the day with all 4. A great morning for the area! In all we had 3 Nelson's Sparrows at least 6 Marsh Wrens, 2 Soras and I flushed 1 Bittern.

– Joe Hildreth, Taylor County, WV, 10/15/14

Yesterday at Kimsey Run two friends and I were watching an adult Bald Eagle, a young Bald Eagle, a Northern Harrier, and a raven rising in some good air over the ridge to the east. As they gained altitude the whole group got tighter and some chasing began. The adult eagle suddenly grabbed the harrier and made quick work of it. The young eagle went under the adult and turned over latching onto the harrier as well. After a couple of somersaults the adult regained control and was last seen being chased by the young bird over the east side of the ridge with limp harrier in tow. Life in the wild is a very tenuous affair.

– Bob Dean, Hedgesville, WV, 10/27/14

– Sightings taken from WVBird ListServ



Ross's Geese in Davis, WV
– Herb Myers

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Suzanne Quinn
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Morgan Wiedebusch
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Wheeling, WV 26003
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EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES

Zach Fowler
zkfowler@gmail.com

TELEPHONE CHANGES

Jeanne & Mike Barnes
304-455-4454 (Home)

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

January 10, 2015 – Hinton Eagle Survey, coordinated by Jim Philips, New & Bluestone Rivers

March 14, 2015 – Hinton Eagle Survey, coordinated by Jim Philips, New & Bluestone Rivers

HANDLAN CHAPTER

January 12, 2015 - 6:30pm. Meeting at South Charleston Library. "Critters Need Plants, Too" by Diane Anestis.

February 2, 2015 - 6:30pm. Meeting at South Charleston Library. Richard Bailey, State Ornithologist, on the Breeding Bird Atlas.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

WV STATE PARK ACTIVITIES

January 1, 2015 – First Day Hike, Capon Resort State Park. Meet the Naturalist at 10:00AM at the Park's Nature Center to explore the natural beauty of the Ridge Trail. This trail is approximately 1 ½ miles with a few hills. Contact: 304-258-1022 ext 5209

January 1, 2015 – First Day Hike, Pipestem Resort State Park. Meet Kim Hawkins at Pipestem McKeever Lodge lobby at 1:00 p.m. for an afternoon hike to Long Branch Lake. Dress appropriately. Plan on about a 1-1/2 to 2 hour afternoon outdoors. Layer for the weather. Contact: 304-466-1800

January 1, 2015 – First Day Hike at Kanawha State Forest. First day hikes are led hikes designed to encourage visitors to enjoy state parks year round and to promote good health and exercise. Contact: 304-558-3500

January 1, 2015 – First Day Hike, Blackwater Falls State Park, along the Elakala Trail starting at 10:00 a.m. This is a walk along the canyon's rim, past some huge sandstone formations and over a section of Shy Run with interpretive stops along the way. This hike will be about 70 minutes long and cover a mile with some steps involved. The hike is open to the public without cost. Meet at the trail head of Elakala (near Blackwater Lodge). Contact: 304-259-5216

January 1, 2015 – First Day Hike at Twin Falls. Meet at the Pioneer Farm parking area at 10:30 AM. We will be walking along the Huckleberry Trail which covers 1-1/3 miles, which should last about 80 minutes. Contact: 304-294-4000

January 10, 2015 – Eagle Survey of the Pipestem Area, Pipestem Resort State Park. An annual survey of the skies and waterways for golden and bald eagles in the Pipestem area. From 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. volunteers are assigned sta-

tions at various areas to watch and record sightings. Naturalist Julie McQuade will take calls and emails from interested individuals for this survey and compile a contact list for the survey team. The team will then assign survey sites and contact individuals with survey info, maps, etc.; paring novice and avid birders. Contact: 304-466-1800 x 344

March 14, 2015 – Eagle Survey of the Pipestem Area, Pipestem Resort State Park. An annual survey of the skies and waterways for golden and bald eagles in the Pipestem area. From 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. volunteers are assigned stations at various areas to watch and record sightings. Contact: 304-466-1800 x 344

CORRESPONDENCE

In a response to an article on birding festivals on the ABA Blog on Nov. 18, Ted Floyd had praise for the BBC that you might find of interest for the Mailbag, to wit:

Noah Stryker of the ABA, paraphrased: *"My flight home from Harlingen, Texas, last Monday—after a wonderful week at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival—marked the end of an exhilarating and maybe unprecedented streak: This year, I participated in 15 separate birding festivals in 10 U.S. states.*

Of course, that's just a fraction of the current North American bird festival circuit. By my count, there are now more than 90 multi-day, annual birding events in the U.S. alone, with an increasing number abroad."

Ted responded: *"Nice write-up, Noah. Say, the number 90 seems low to me. Okay, "more than 90," but still.*

Does anybody know? I suppose it might depend on the definition of "festival." Some of the "conferences," "symposiums," and "state ornithological society meetings" I've attended are just what Noah describes above. A multi-day meeting of the West Virginia-based Brooks Bird Club was one of the best festival-type experiences I've ever had.

I would have guessed the number is well into the hundreds."

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV

BROOKS BIRD CLUB EARLY SPRING MEETING

MARCH 6-8, 2015

NORTH BEND STATE PARK

Time to sign up for the Early Spring Meeting. The meeting will be at North Bend State Park. Come and join us for a weekend of fun, fellowship, programs, field trips, adventures and our board and general membership meetings. Registration and check-in time is 3:00PM on Friday with dinner at 6:30PM. Departure will be on Sunday after lunch.

North Bend State Park is nestled in the north-western section of WV and is easily accessible from four-lane U.S. 50 that goes from Parkersburg to Clarksburg across north central WV.

- Driving east, take U.S. 50 to junction with WV 31 South. Take WV 31 South to Cairo and follow the signs to the park.
- Driving west, take US 50 to WV 16 at Ellenboro, then WV 16 to Harrisville and follow the signs to the park.

The Friday evening program will be a presentation by Professor Ed McCord, Director of Programming and Special Projects at The University of Pittsburgh. His presentation will be based on his book, "The Value of Species". The Saturday evening program will be a presentation by Patty Morrison, Biologist at the Ohio River Islands NWR. Patty will talk about the unseen (underwater) part of the refuge, with special emphasis on the role of mussels in the river ecosystem and recent reintroduction of mussel species.

Other Saturday activities will include a visit to the Ohio River Islands NWR Visitor Center at Williamstown, WV, and birding in the Ohio River Valley or local birding trips.

The annual membership meeting will be Sunday morning.

Deadline for reservations is January 31, 2015

Make checks payable to **BROOKS BIRD CLUB** and mail to:

Richard Esker
104 Wellesley Dr.
Washington, WV 26181

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

FULL TIME – INCLUDES ALL MEALS, LODGING AND REGISTRATION

2 PEOPLE PER ROOM \$150.00 EACH..... \$ _____

NAME OF PERSON SHARING ROOM _____

(Roommate will be assigned if no preference is given.)

SINGLE ROOM \$220.00 EACH \$ _____

PART TIME - CALL OR SEND E-MAIL FOR PART-TIME COSTS.

304-863-8765 eskerrb@frontier.com

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

INCLUDE E-MAIL OR MAIL ADDRESS FOR RESERVATION CONFIRMATION



...

**It was a beautiful day in
the neighborhood!**

*Not all the weather was
rainy at the BBC Fall Re-
union at Blackwater Falls.*

Read more on page 3

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