



THE MAIL BAG

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

VOL. 72, ISSUE 3

JUL – AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2015

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note

Autumn is right around the corner, bringing us migrating birds, cooler temperatures (eventually), and fall colors. In this issue, much is discussed about interesting migration habits, both on their way here and their way back. Keep your eyes and ears open, and remember to post your sightings to WV BIRD Listserv, Facebook, eBird, whatever is needed to get the word out and to help educate us all on what is on the move.



There will be plenty going on this fall, both with the club and with various groups and parks around the state. The annual Fall Reunion will take place in October at Bethany College, due in no small part to the hard work of Jay Buckelew. We hope to see you there!

November will take the BBC to the Eastern Shore, where tour leaders Carl and Juanita Slater will make every attempt to show you all the Snow Geese you'd ever want to see. Those, and 114 other species. This trip is always enjoyable, and there are many interesting birds to be seen.

At the beginning of October, there will be a Birding and Banding Weekend at Tygart Lake State Park, and at the end of October into early November, Joey Herron will be banding Northern Saw-whet Owls at Valley Falls State Park. Enjoy!

WV NO. SAW-WHET OWL PROJECT



George Hall with a Saw-whet at the AFMO
– photo by Ryan Tomazin

A few weeks ago I posted information about a study to survey breeding Northern Saw-whet Owls in the highlands of WV. We have wrapped up our NSWOW surveys for the season. Overall we sampled 308 points and detected NSWOWs in 55 of those 308 points (17.9% occupied).

We found NSWOWs as far north as Cooper's Rock and just outside Cathedral State Park, and as far south as Pipestem and Camp Creek State Parks. Not surprisingly,

the majority of the owls were found in the Blackwater Falls/Canaan Loop/Dolly Sods area or a little further south between Bemis and Snowshoe in the Monongahela National Forest/Cheat WMA, as well as Spruce Knobs. A total of 37 sites were occupied by NSWOWs in this area between Blackwater to Snowshoe. The Otter Creek Wilderness area also turned up 6 sites occupied by NSWOWs, and the Cranberry Glades/Scenic Hwy area turned up an additional 7 sites. We did not survey all of the potential NSWOW habitat by any stretch of the imagination so am quite sure that there are many more out there. Off the top of my head (meaning having not yet done the habitat modeling) I would not be surprised if there are 100-300 NSWOW breeding territories in the state, possibly more.

Now to the next phase of the project to characterize habitat so that we can (hopefully) estimate population size... Happy Owling!

– Ross Brittain, PhD
Alderson Broaddus University
Philippi, WV

BWD TO HOLD BIRDING EXPO

Bird Watcher's Digest is announcing an American Birding Expo Oct. 2-4, 2015 at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus, Ohio and will feature commercial vendors from all over the world representing every aspect of the birding/nature market. The Expo is free to attend, so they are expecting crowds of birders, coming from every corner of North America.....including bird clubs as a whole. (The goal is to brainstorm by doing face-to-face collaboration to create a networked community of bird clubs that can learn from and help each other.) A Bird Club Coffee Break and Brainstorm will be held on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 3 with a discussion to be led by staff members of the American Birding Assoc. and the Ohio Ornithological Society.





KATHY ROBBINS PASSES AWAY

Kathleen Ellen Cover DeGraff Robbins died June 11, 2015. After spending her early years in Ohio, and graduating from high school in Prescott, Arizona, she trained as an X-ray technician and worked at hospitals in several places including Florida, Mississippi, Bermuda and Maryland. She later trained in Wisconsin as a CT technician. Consequently, she became the only person known, to have ever worked both positions as X-ray technician and CT technician simultaneously, on the same shift, but only receiving pay for one of those technicians, not both. Her career spanned over thirty years until the point that she just was too physically drained to work anymore. She had more physical ailments than any one person ought to have, but fought a good fight to overcome her medical fallacies, until the end. She had been frequently hospitalized throughout the 22 years that I had known her.

She suffered a massive stroke almost five years ago, paralyzing her left side. Her left leg did not work. She was unable to move her left arm. And, her left eye was closed. After much therapy, she regained all functions except for her left arm. She also regained the ability to walk short distances, and was able to get around using her electric mobility scooter. She was born left handed, so fortunately in those days, they encouraged writing with the right hand. Consequently, after the stroke, she was still able to write, without having to re-learn with her other hand.

Besides being a highly skilled medical technician, she was a professional seamstress and a gourmet cook. She made all of the dresses for the ladies in our wedding party, as well as her own wedding gown. And, she even made some upgrade modifications to my suit, to make it into a color coordinated tuxedo. We would have been married 20 years this December.

She is survived by her husband Stuart B. Robbins, her mother Viola Cover and a twin sister Kay Cover. She also leaves three children by her first marriage: Deborah (Keith), Stephen (Patty) and Jennifer (Jason). And, they blessed her with nine grand children: Koby, Mason and Victoria; Austin, Erin and Sydney; Connor, McKenzie and Meadow.

She requested that her body be cremated. There will be no viewing. A memorial service was held Thursday July 9th. The family asks that donations may be made to Jill's House at McLean Bible Church (9011 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA. 22182) or the Brooks Bird Club, Inc. (P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003).



– *Contributed by
Stuart Robbins*

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

2015 PRESTON COUNTY DAILY FORAY REPORTS

Fri., June 5 – Sat., June 6, 2015

Campers arrived at camp Friday afternoon and got settled into their cabins and tents. There were Canada Geese, turtles, a beaver and a Great Blue Heron down by the lake when everyone arrived! It rained all afternoon, but then the clouds gave way to a lovely sunset for the first night. The very first morning birdwalk yielded 44 species! There were several bird breeding survey runs that left before dawn on Saturday morning and two different study plots for singing male census surveys.



Jesse Fallon of the ACCA with a Peregrine

After the successful morning of birding, the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia brought in several birds of prey for a raptor program and several campers went botanizing around the camp. In the afternoon, people split off to explore Terra Alta – botanizing, birding, and finding fossils nearby.



Emily with a Barn Owl

After dinner, Zach Fowler brought a dissecting microscope that could be shown on the projector and he showed us what various flowers, feathers, and

bugs looked like under the microscope. My favorite was the moth wing. It was a fascinating end to a great first day of Foray.

– by *Lori Petrauski*

Sunday, June 7, 2015



Open areas at Cathedral

The day started with 10 mile BBS runs and a morning bird walk with 23 species found. Following breakfast, we packed our lunches and headed to Cathedral State Park. The park ranger gave a short talk about the history of the area. The park was once a resort with cabins, a casino and stables. People from the east would travel there in the summer to enjoy cooler temperatures and low humidity. Super Storm Sandy in 2013 felled quite a few trees in the park which opened up some areas where there was once dense forest. Some of the highlights were very good looks at a Blue-headed Vireo, a serenade by a Winter Wren, Indigo Buntings, Willow, Alder and Least Flycatchers. Bluets, Forget-Me-



The Arringtons watch a Willow Flycatcher

Nots, blackberry bushes were plentiful and a 5-Leafed Jack-in-the-Pulpit as well as interesting fern allies were found.



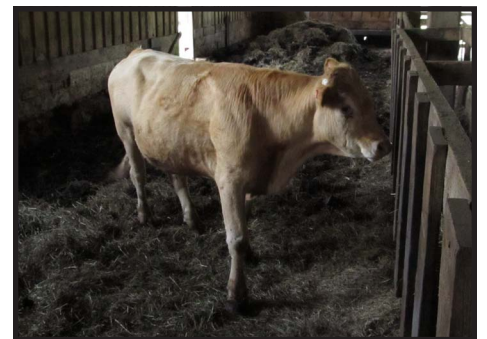
Eric Risinger educates about park dynamics

Following lunch, we drove down a short road through the park to Ed Utterback's 270 acre farm. Ed was there to greet us and give us an interesting



Ed Utterback shows the barn's interior

tour of his property where he raises beefalo (3/8 buffalo and 5/8 bovine) and sheep. We were all impressed with the inside of his 100-year-old barn



"Beef-a-lo" in the flesh

which was built with chestnut and formerly had a creamery. The milk hands lived upstairs in the barn. A hammered, copper antique weather vane worth \$28,000 formerly stood atop one of his older buildings until it was stolen in 1999 by thieves who swooped down in a helicopter and snatched it. No cul-



Martin & Zach are fenced in at the barn
 prit has yet been found. An American Kestrel, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows were at the farm.

Our evening program was presented by Lori Petrauski from WVU on Phrenology. Phrenology is the study of ecological cycles and biological events through the year. Lori is working on a WV Climate History Project and her objective is to create a baseline data set for the WVU Natural History Museum. She is analyzing song bird breeding and wildflowers, such as Spring Beauties and Trout Lilies. Lori is utilizing arboretum, ornithology, and nature club notes, herbarium data, field station records, dated photos, and personal journals to create baseline data. The busy and wonderful day ended with a bonfire.

—by **Sally Egan**

Monday, June 8, 2015

Today I had so much fun. I went on a 10-mile bird run with Ryan and Orion. With their help I saw a Cooper's Hawk, and it was magnificent. FORAY truly is the place to be.

—by **Gerald Maravanyika**

(Gerald's full notes were lost during the BBS route, which was a shame due to all the effort he put into them. — Ed.)

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

Under thin clouds steered by a light breeze, the Cranesville Swamp caravan set forth at 9:00 AM sharp. Botanist Jim Rentch of WVU met us at the swamp to lead us through a series of plant communities. First, on the high ground, we encountered

the heathland. Surrounded by pink sunbursts of mountain laurel, we took in the details of eco-disturbance survival along the power line. Thin acid soil on bed rock held lycopodiums (e.g. club moss), vacinuums (e.g. deerberry), trailing arbutus, and hair-cap moss (polytricum) along with the mountain laurel and bracken fern.



Jim Rentch talks about the beautiful laurel

Next, we scanned conifer plantations (a blend of conifers, mostly introduced, including Norway spruce, red pine (from Michigan, but locally found on WV's North Fork Mt.) and white pine. The forest floor, bare but for needles (short of nutrients), only slowly decomposed. Jim pointed out the 'streets-and-alleys' rowed spacing of these conifers, the selected distance juggling sufficient light and optimal yield.

Descending from this plantation, we passed rich ground cover such as Canada mayflower (wild lily of the valley), teaberry and partridge berry. Approaching the swamp, we surveyed the wetland community of ferns (New York, cinnamon, spikenard (false ginseng), gold thread, and more. Jim reviewed the wetland features: standing water, anaerobic (saturated) soil, plant species that tolerate wet feet and low oxygen. He compared the -wetland plants adapted for full "wetland" (90% wet), with those in the upland ('facultative' species versatile enough for wet or dry), and those such as skunk cabbage and cinnamon fern tolerant of 10% wet.

A brief sampling of serenaders:

approaching the swamp, we heard Blue Jay, Indigo Bunting, Redstart, Red-eyed Vireo, and towhee. Carolina Chickadee chattered in the rhododendron, and the veery called at the boardwalk's beginning. Warblers included Northern Waterthrush, Canada, and Yellow-rumped.

The caravan dispersed after a picnic lunch. Several groups reported afternoon scouting successes: Janice and Scott Emrick along with Sally Egan and Wilma Jarrell enjoyed Henslow's and Savannah Sparrows; Ryan Tomazin, Orion Metheny and Gerald Maravanyika added to those finds Prairie and Golden-winged Warbler. Botanizers Zach Fowler and Dick Diener, along with Dawn and Tom Fox noted excellent sedges.



Baby Brown Thrasher found by Ed.

Terry Bronson, a WV Breeding Bird Atlas volunteer, presented the evening program describing the thrill (and tedium) of chasing nest evidence. Terry shared stand-out observations gleaned from comparing the collected data from the 2nd atlas with that from the first, 20 years earlier. The most noted arrival was an invasion of Common Mergansers. Other new arrivals included Merlin, Eurasian Collared Dove, and Clay-colored Sparrow. Near or complete losses included Green-winged Teal, Black-crowned Night-heron, King Rail, Common Gallinule (moorhen), Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren and Lark Sparrow. A total of 165 species are identified as breeders (in all but ten of the priority blocks). Terry touched on beneficial impacts of

this research, such as government dollars ear-marked for sustaining threatened species' habitat requirements. Another excellent Foray day.

– *by Jane Robbins*

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Richard Thomas came and gave a program on WVU Forest pollution levels and the forest health. Him and his students worked with an area of trees. Studying carbon cycling of forest trees 1920-2010. Sulfur emissions and climate change had a big effect on tree growth. His charts showed that the trees grew the most after the clean air act. A very interesting program.

The Silent auction closed at noon with a bidding frenzy.

Most folks headed to the REHE WMA where Terry Bronson led them around. Showing the areas being worked on. It was very very hot there.

Evening program was presented by Tom Rodd. He got our attention by starting off playing a banjo and singing Country Roads. And then lead us into a program on climate change in the Allegheny Highlands. He had lots of charts and web sites to check out the climate change. He also kept our attention with several experiments on CO2 increases.

– *by Deb Tingley*

Thursday, June 11, 2015

The day started early, like it does every day at Foray. Jay Buckalew, Mary Grey, and Marjorie Boyd went to the Oglebay Mountain Camp for the singing male census. They saw and heard a good distribution of birds that morning. There was a redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, House Wren, Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Northern Flicker, Eastern Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and a Great Blue Heron on the lake nearby. Scott Emrick also went out

with Lori Petruski and Gerald Maravanyika to his singing male census location and took a survey. Fred and Carol McCullough went out on a 10-mile breeding bird survey.

We had breakfast at 8 am. Then, we went to Bruceton Mills to the Old Hemlock Foundation to see George Bird Evans' and Kay Evans' legacy. Director LeJay Graffious and his wife Helen Ann were our tour guides; they have been left in charge of the Old Hemlock Foundation. We were able to see a video about George and Kay, and then we received a tour of the house museum, then a tour of the beautiful grounds. The house had a building that still has an operating spring house. This was a beautiful morning.

Afterwards, we went to an area near the river to meet with members of the Friends of the Cheat. They gave us some demonstrations on water purifying techniques. Their first question for us was "What is a water shed"? To which they elaborated, a water shed is an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins,



LeJay Graffious gives a program on Evans

or seas. We also discussed water chemistry and how to check the water PH and the conductivity. In addition, they discussed how aquatic benthic macro invertebrates support the stream ecosystem. In order to survive, these creatures need oxygen from the moving water, rocks to live on or under, and nutrients which are mostly obtained from the detritus. They use a kick net to sample the macro invertebrates of the creek.

Some of the creatures found are: water penny, stonefly, mayfly, caddis fly, dragonfly nymph, damselfly, riffle beetle, black flies, leeches, and hellgrammites. You cannot judge a streams health by



Natalie & Brandon Jacobs learn about water quality with the Friends of Cheat

the color or the smell. The FOC are using the land in the Cheat River Gorge Wildlife Management Area that was obtained by the government for the protection of the flat-spined three-toothed land snail. Some members went to a local stream to collect macro invertebrates with the kick net technique, others went swimming in the Cheat River, and some went back to Camp Galilee to get ready for dinner.

The mug contest was judged and Kelly Boyden's mug won. They gave out prizes for best t-shirt. The Ugliest/worst t-shirt winner was Andy Arrington. The Smelliest t-shirt winner was Gerald Maravanyika. The best t-shirt over the age of 95 went to Chan Robbins. The James E. Olsen Scholarship winner was Marjorie Boyd. This was a very fun, and busy day at Foray.

– *by Marjorie Boyd*

Here is what Brynn (Buckley) wrote for Friday morning June 12. She is 10.

At 6:30 we went on a birdwalk and we saw an Indigo bunting and a Common yellowthroat. We heard lots more though. After, there was a program about Louisiana waterthrushes and Saw whet owls.

– *by Mary Grey*

FUN WITH MIGRANTS WITH TERRY BRONSON (AND GRETCHEN NAREFF!)

Nashville Warbler

I spent nearly 3 hours this morning at Cathedral State Park in southeastern Preston County. A NASHVILLE WARBLER foraging just a foot or two off the ground among downed trees and shrubs was a major surprise. It was not singing, but I got a good, though brief, view of the gray head and yellow throat and underparts. The eye ring was indistinct, so I think it is probably a juvenile.

This is the first eBird record for this species in Cathedral State Park, though since this park is off the beaten track and seldom birded, I think it may have just been missed before. More interestingly, there are only 4 eBird records for July for Nashvilles in WV, with 1 at nearby Cranestown Swamp and the next nearest further south at Canaan Mountain.

But the exciting news is that this bird may have been born in the park. Nashville is one of the latest breeding WV warblers, with the safe date period ending on Aug. 15 in the recently completed second WV Breeding Bird Atlas. That effort only found 8 breeding records for this species, with 7 of them in the Canaan Valley area south of Thomas and Davis. However, Cathedral State Park ranges from 2,460 feet to 2,620 feet, according to the park's web site, so it is just a few hundred feet lower than Canaan.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 7/29/15

In researching the WV Birds archives, I've found 2 additional July records for Nashville Warblers in WV, which I will enter in eBird:

- July 6, 2006, Canaan Valley Resort, Deer Run Trail
- July 4, 2009, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Middle Valley Trail, 2 birds

I've also heard from Tom Fox of the Brooks Bird Club, who points out that no Nashvilles were found at Cathedral State Park this June during the Brooks Bird Club Foray, nor have any been found there during the many years the WV Wildflower Pilgrimage has visited this park, usually in May.

So it may be that the bird I saw yesterday was a dispersing juvenile, which was my initial feeling until I looked up the WV Breeding Bird Atlas safe dates and found Nashvilles could still be counted as late as Aug. 15. Dispersal could come from the Canaan Valley area (though that is to the south) or from nearby ridges in Garrett County, MD or even Somerset County, PA to the north and east.

Still, wouldn't it be grand if they were breeding in Preston County, where there is much appropriate habitat from 2,000 to over 3,000 feet in elevation. I suspect a concerted search next summer might indeed find a few birds.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 7/30/15

Would you believe I found another Nashville Warbler this morning--my second in the last 3 days? I was in Cooper's Rock State Forest in Preston County along the logging road going back to the regenerating clearcut area just south of the Ken's Run Trail.

This bird had an extremely obvious bright white eye ring to go with the bright yellow throat, breast, and under tail coverts. The grayness of the head was not very sharply demarcated from the throat and breast as is usually the case in adults. I would therefore suspect that this is a first-year male.

So what's going on here? A check of Birds of North America Online indicates that migration of this species in eastern North America really doesn't get started until mid to late August. There is only one July migration record--July 22, 1993 in Michigan. So any birds in WV (and surrounding states, for that matter) in late July and early August should not be migrants.

In the last 30 days, there have been eBird sightings at Cranberry Glades in WV on July 22 and one southeast of Johnstown, PA on July 5, plus the one I saw 2 days ago at Cathedral State Park. There are 4 other July sightings in far northern and northeastern PA.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 7/31/15

Common Gallinule

I was absolutely shocked this morning to find an adult Common Gallinule poking along the edge of a pond in western Monongalia County. The bird was clearly seen; I immediately noticed the red frontal shield and yellow bill tip on a chicken-sized bird that was charcoal gray in front shading to dark brown in the rear with several bright white patches along the flanks. The tail was white and the legs yellow, but not bright yellow. I even saw the large feet. Wouldn't you know it, I forgot my camera today. Drat!

I saw the bird about 10:10 for 20 or 30 seconds, then it slipped into the weeds. It appeared a few minutes later for another 20 or 30 seconds, then went back into the weeds. I was watching the area about 99% of the time during those 3.5 hours, and I'm confident the bird did not fly away. I think it probably went into the weeds to take a siesta and will emerge later in the day.

In checking eBird, there are no previous records for this species in Monongalia County. The nearest are in Preston County at Terra Alta Lake back in 1936 and Lewis County at Jacksons Mills back in 1934. So it's been 79 years since this species has been seen in north central West Virginia. Most state records are in the Ohio River Valley and east of the Allegheny Mountains, but it has been reported at only 11 locations in the state since 2000. The most recent sightings were May 3, 2015 in Kanawha County, Apr. 16, 2015 in Mineral County, May 5, 2012 in Mason County, and April 18, 2011 in Cabell County.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 5/22/15

The day after Terry reported a Common Gallinule in Mon County, I thought I saw one in the pond in front of our house in Vandalia, Lewis County (near the triangle of Georgetown Rd, Old Georgetown Rd, and Little Skin Creek). It retreated quickly and we were not able to confirm its presence until just now.

– Gretchen Nareff, Morgantown, WV, 5/27/15

Common Gallinule (cont.)

I birded Little Indian Creek Wildlife Management Area in Monongalia County this morning. While there, Mike Peters of WV DNR arrived to do some field work, and he mentioned seeing a COMMON GALLINULE at a pond nearby on the preceding Wednesday, which was May 27. When I mentioned the Lynch Road ponds where I had seen one on May 22, he agreed that was the location. So the bird did hang around for a few days.

I thought there might be a possibility that that bird and the one seen at Stonewall Jackson Lake for the last several days might be the same bird. But Mike's sighting makes it clear they were 2 separate birds: Gretchen Nareff's first eBird report of the Stonewall Jackson bird was at 8:33 am on the same day that Mike saw his bird about 50 miles further north.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 6/03/15

CORRESPONDENCE

Thanks for the nice tribute to Jim Olsen. A few old-timers should remember him, especially the fellow in Texas. I've sent the issue on to Jim's son in Carmel.

I e-mailed Jay Buckelew about a note in the Charleston Gazette that the late Ephe Olliver, a long-time BBCer that Jay and I remember, will be enshrined in the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame at their annual dinner at Jackson's Mill on July 18th.

– Bob Rine



Ephe Oliver with a
Sharp-shinned Hawk in hand
– photo by Bill Higbee

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Brooke Bosworth
148 Elizabeth Ave.
Powhatan Point, OH 43942
Tel: 740-827-1261
Email: bbosworth@bethanywv.edu

Lee & Kimberlee Miller
2751 University Ave.
Morgantown, WV 26505
Tele.# 304-292-6013
E: jacobsmeadowbattery@msn.com

Bill Murphy & April Sterling
7835 Tufton Street
Fishers, IN 46038
Tel: 317-849-4868
Email: billmurphy8@sbcglobal.net

CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

Carl & Juanita Slater
56249 Hospital Rd.
Bellaire, OH 43906-9525

EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES

Wil & Donna Hershberger
wil@natureimagesandsounds.com

TELEPHONE CHANGES

Carl & Juanita Slater
740-671-1649

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

October 10, 2015 – BIG SIT! An all-day birding event. We begin at daylight and go until dark. Mountain Valley Lake in Summers Co. Contact Mindy Waldron at mwaldron@suddenlink.net.

October 17, 2015 – 5:00-8:00 PM. Annual Dinner and planning meeting. US Forest Service Lab near Athens, WV. Contact Mindy Waldron for more info.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

Sept. 19, 2015 – Begins at 2 pm. Picnic and field trip at the Stratton House Inn in Flushing, OH.

Oct. 20, 2015 – Birding Prairies and Potholes in North Dakota, presented by Mary Grey.

Nov. 17, 2015 – Appalachian Mushrooms, a World of Wonder at our Feet, presented by Walt Sturgeon.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

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

Sept. 17, 2015 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00 am, McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 24, 2015 – Ohio River Islands NWR. 8:00 am, ORINWR lot.

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

Oct. 1, 2015 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00 am, McDonough parking lot

Oct. 8, 2015 – Business / Planning Meeting. 9:15 am, Wood County Library Board Room.

Oct. 10, 2015 – SATURDAY – Big Sit, Ohio River, Sunrise to sunset, ORINWR Parking Lot. Islands National Wildlife Refuge, come anytime; stay as long as you like.

Oct. 15, 2015 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton. 8:00 am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, Nature Trail.

Oct. 22, 2015 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00 am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. 29, 2015 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area. 9:00 am, first parking lot, Northwest Pipe Drive.

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

Nov. 5, 2015 – Program, 6:30 pm, Vienna Public Library Meeting Room. Bring finger food.

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

I spent the weekend based out of Cabins, WV, and roamed the aforementioned counties. Though birding wasn't the primary focus, I did feel a little like Fred Atwood and had some good luck with birds. For rarity purposes, an adult Golden Eagle kettling with some Turkey Vultures near Cabins was probably the highlight. There is also a recently plowed field just north of Seneca Rocks that held several pools of water and lots of shorebirds (for WV) on Friday including Semi-palmated Plover, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper and Pectoral Sandpiper. Outside of those shorebirds, I found Spotted Sandpipers along the rivers in many places and Upland Sandpipers in Preston County and Maryland while traveling.

I climbed Seneca Rocks early one morning and had the 3 common owl species all sounding off before dawn. I sat alone at the top for a good two hours before I saw anyone else. Pine Warblers and Chipping Sparrows are still at home there. Worm-eating and Cerulean gave excellent views on the way down.

At least one Chuck-will's-widow was back at its usual haunts along North Mill Creek. Eastern Whip-poor-wills were easy to hear along Smoke Hole Canyon Road. Kentucky and Cerulean Warblers were present in the bottom of the canyon along with the other regulars. Upslope toward Dolly Sods, there were a pair of Golden-winged Warblers staking out territory along FR 19. There were Ceruleans there as well, per usual. Perhaps my favorite part of the weekend was just sitting on the deck (or hot tub) with a cold beer and listening to the dozen or so species of warblers serenade me... including at least 3 more Ceruleans. I ended the weekend with around 130 species or so with over 30 warbler species, so no complaints there.

– Derek Courtney, Morgantown, WV, 5/4/15

An unusual sighting along the Black Fork River near Parsons this morning: I watched an American Avocet glide just above the water for a good long flight till around the bend and out of sight. There were Baltimore Orioles singing all over nursery bottom.

– Mimi Kibler, Parsons, WV, 5/4/15

Over the last couple days amid an infestation of siskins (aren't they ever going north?), several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks appeared at my feeders, both males and females. Even better, a blue-colored bird appeared that was NOT our resident bluebird, nor an indigo bunting -- it was Blue Grosbeak! Better than finding Easter eggs! Almost makes up for losing two more feeders last night to the raccoons and now a suburban bear.

– Laura Ceperley, Kanawha County, 5/06/15

A somewhat belated report from the higher elevations. Rachel Wrenn and I birded parts of Tucker and Grant counties earlier this week. Migrants were returning in force with plenty of warblers. Our primary birding sites were Blackwater Falls State Park and then the forest service roads in the vicinity of Dolly Sods.

Blackwater Falls featured large numbers of Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers. Canada Warblers are back on territory, as are Northern Waterthrush and Blackburnian Warblers. Magnolia Warblers were back but in more modest numbers. A nice surprise was a male Bay-breasted Warbler. Prairie Warbler on territory near Pendleton lake. Blue-headed Vireos are putting on quite a show right now and are building nests. We located two nest sites that were being built at the time. Plenty of the usual kinglets, siskins, creepers and nuthatches.

– John Tharp, Norman, OK, 5/07/15

This morning we went to the private property where I will lead a walk on Friday morning of the Canaan Valley Birding Festival. When I climbed over the gate, one of the first birds I heard was a Golden-winged Warbler. Then it flew to the top of a small tree near us and sang.

When we got back to our house, I walked out to see if I could hear the Golden-winged Warbler here. I soon heard it far up toward the woods. As I was walking back to the house, I heard the classical bee-buzz-buzz-buzz right near me. It had just flown into a small shrub about 20 feet from me! It proceeded to sing and feed over the shrub. I was in awe. I think it could have flown right into my mouth.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 5/10/15

This morning a group of Tree Swallows were circling and dipping down on something in the grass. It turned out to be a dead Blue Jay, belly up. The swallows would pluck feathers as they made passes and hovered before dropping down to pluck. It was like watching an aerial ballet. Little feathers all over the grass. I knew Tree Swallows gather feathers to line their nest but I had no idea they would actually pluck them from a bird. It reminded me of titmice getting hair from an animal, dead or alive.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 5/14/15

It has been a morning for flycatchers. Just after daylight, on our way to Princeton, Mercer County, we saw an Eastern Kingbird. While waiting in the Hardee's biscuit line in Princeton, we got a Willow Flycatcher. Shortly after 7 a.m., while I was walking the dog on the Northside Trail in Pipestem State Park, Summers County, I found Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood-pewee and Great-crested Flycatcher. Then on the way home, I heard an Acadian Flycatcher along Pipestem Creek.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 5/15/15



Blue Grosbeak
– photo by N. Wade Snyder

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

The DeGrafs, who live on the Rolling Ridge Foundation Lands in Jefferson County, report that a Whip-poor-will spends its night on their "green" earthen roof and vocalizes extremely loudly at the wee hour of 3 AM. This is the second year in a row for the Whip and the roof roosting. Sounds absolutely lovely to me! When it gets too loud, they close the window that looks out on the roof. This is the only place in Jefferson County where I am aware of Whip-poor-will activity.

– Birdmom, Jefferson County, WV, 5/22/15

I had a very fine weekend birding in Jefferson & Berkeley counties – logging 2 WV life birds! I visited the Loggerhead Shrike site at the junction of Shepherds Mill Road and Shady Grove Lane on Friday (5/29). I brought a spotting scope because I had been alerted the nest was technically in Virginia, and I did not want to trespass on private property or stress the bird by approaching the nest (taking Rich Bailey's suggestion).

All I was seeing around the junction was numerous mockingbirds, which superficially look like shrikes from a distance; and, I started to get a bit disappointed. So I decided to walk further down Shady Grove Lane (which puts you further into West Virginia) without my scope. A tractor trailer leaving the local farm made me jump off the road and into corn field! Soon after my return from the corn field, a shrike flew right above my head and onto a power line (who needs a scope). I looked for Dickcissels at former known sites, to no success.

Later that day, I birded Altona marsh looking for a migrating (or resident) marsh wren, but didn't see or hear any. However, to my amazement two migrating Yellow-bellied flycatchers graced me with their presence! Also, I had a Virginia Rail calling.

– Jerry Westfall, Parkersburg, WV, 5/30/15

I was about to take a nap when I heard the familiar "picky-tucky-tuck" from my days down south. There was a male Summer Tanager calling outside the house across from the pond where the Common Gallinule was a couple weeks ago.

We then found his mate so we have a pair of Summer Tanagers in the yard. This is the first time we've heard them so I'm not sure about breeding status here.

– Gretchen Nareff, Morgantown, WV, 6/29/15

So that's 9 sparrow species today. And if you count junco and towhee as sparrows, 11 species.

I started the day at Fairfax Stone in the very corner of Grant Co, where I was able to hear one HENSLOW'S Sparrow, a Grasshopper Sparrow, and lots of Field, Chippies, and Songs. Also present here were Yellow-rumped Warblers, Purple Finches, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglets, one calling Bobolink, Cedar Waxwings, one Magnolia Warbler, and Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos.

As I drove out on the road from this park to the main road, I added Swamp Sparrow, Green Heron, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ovenbird, Black-throated Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. This is Tucker County.

Then I headed to Canaan Valley to Cortland Rd and the South Loop trail of Beall Tract. Here is where I had the greatest variety of sparrows: 8 species. There were SWAMP Sparrows singing at the beginning of Beall Lane. Then as I walked down the South loop trail I was surprised to hear a single HENSLOW'S Sparrow singing for several minutes between the first trailside bird nestbox and the powerline. There may have been a second more distant bird singing but I could not confirm it with further listening. I also heard two singing GRASSHOPPER Sparrows here, one of which was displaced from its song perch on a fence post by a SAVANNAH Sparrow. There were 3 singing Savannahs here and one Savannah carrying food for young. A little further down the trail a VESPER Sparrow was singing sweetly from the ground among the grass just a few feet from the trail. I could not see it until it flew. A second vesper flew up from the trail closer to the parking lot on my return also. Also singing here were SONG, FIELD, and CHIPPING sparrows. There were also two kestrels and a Red-tail here.

Then I headed to Thorn Hill Rd and Lake off of Patterson Creek Rd in Grant County where the CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was occasionally singing from its usual cedar. I also saw a Clay-colored Sparrow in the big oak on the hill very soon after hearing the bird singing in the cedar 75 yards away, so it might have been a second bird, OR it may have been the first bird that quickly moved to that spot. There was a lot of chipping noises coming from cedars along the road that sounded like fledglings to me but I could not see these birds. I did see an adult Chipping Sparrow there, so it might have been that bird's family, probably not my hoped-for baby Clay-colored.

Before I headed out this morning I heard a Whip-poor-will and 2 Barred Owls at my cabin and I heard an Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Yellow-throated Vireo as I drove down Powers Hollow Rd from my cabin.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV, 7/7/15

Sorry for the late post, but Casey's post yesterday reminded me-- while pumping gas in Canaan Valley (Tucker County) last week, I looked closer at a large robin zipping by, and it was a Merlin! After zooming around the motel, he perched in perfect view in a spruce right above the gas/convenient store. how's that for convenient birding? And the Wood Duck nursery at the water treatment ponds off timberline "only" has 10 immatures and females now, down from over 40 ducks in May.

– Laura Ceperley, Kanawha Co., WV, 7/30/15

– Sightings taken from WVBird ListServ



Clay-colored Sparrow

– photo by Matt Orsie, wvbirder.org

2015 EASTERN SHORE TRIP

NOVEMBER 11th-15th

It's been two years since we've done the northern end of our annual sortie and that's where we'll begin.

The Drifting Sands will be our "home away from home" the first two nights and will allow us easy access to Barnegat Lighthouse and other areas of interest on Long Beach Island.

Stops at Brigantine and John Forsythe Wildlife Refuge; the Avalon Sea Watch; and Cape May will still get us to the Lewes Ferry in time to cross the Delaware Bay and check into the Atlantic Sands which is located on the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach for nights three and four. After last time, with the Ferry filling up and the long wait we had for the "in the dark" crossing, I think reservations are going to be in order for everyone. The van will be reserved and everyone driving their own vehicle should make their own reservations. Reservations cannot be made before October 1st for the 3:00 p.m. crossing on Friday, November 13th. Phone number for reservations is: 800-643-3779.

Indian River Inlet and the many interesting spots along the Delaware Bay coast climaxing with Bombay Hook and hopefully, all those lovely Snow Geese will whet our appetites for the banquet dinner on Saturday evening. Sunday morning, after breakfast and checkout, will have us visiting a few last minute spots that will undoubtedly net us a couple more birds for the list before saying our goodbyes and heading for home.

You may, of course, drive yourself or make plans to "leave the driving to us" as we'll be taking a van from Wheeling with stops along the way. Van costs will be divided by those passengers.

Price includes Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights lodging (double occupancy); Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning breakfast; Thursday, Friday, and Saturday lunch; and banquet dinner on Saturday. Single rooms are available with a supplement. A full itinerary complete with maps, phone numbers, and addresses of where we'll be staying will be sent to everyone who signs up.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 29th

Make checks payable to Carl Slater and send along with your reservation to 56249 Hospital Road, Bellaire, Ohio 43906. (Note new address.)

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 @ \$340.00 each \$ _____

Single room supplement, additional \$190.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Are you interested in traveling in the van? _____

What bird would you like to get on this trip? _____

BROOKS BIRD CLUB FALL REUNION & ANNUAL MEETING

BETHANY COLLEGE, WV – October 16-18, 2015

The 2015 BBC Annual Meeting will be held at the Mountainside Conference Center at Bethany College, Bethany, WV, beginning with the club board meeting at 2 P.M on Friday, October 16 through lunch on Sunday, October 18, 2015. Registration begins at 3:00 P.M. on Friday or after the board meeting. After a morning bird walk, there will be a paper session Saturday morning with papers presented by BBC members and friends, followed by a field trip or a visit to the Bethany College bird collection in the afternoon. After a social hour with a cash bar in the late afternoon, we will enjoy a banquet and speaker, recently retired Good Zoo director, Penny Miller, Saturday evening. Mrs. Miller has just returned from a visit to Borneo. The BBC annual membership meeting will take place Sunday morning after breakfast.

The Mountainside Conference Center is on Route 88 about 100 yards south of the intersection of Rt. 67 and Rt. 88 in Bethany, Brooke County, WV. From Wheeling take Rt. 88 north through Oglebay Park and West Liberty and look for the conference center on the left in Bethany.

From Rt. 2, south of Wellsburg, take Rt. 67 east and turn right on Rt. 88 south. The Conference Center is about 100 yards down the hill from the intersection, on the right.

From Washington, Pa., take the Jefferson Ave. exit from I-70 west and take Rt. 844 west (Rt. 27 in W. Va.) into West Virginia. Turn left on Rt. 88. Turn right on Rt. 67 in Bethany and then left to continue on Rt. 88 south to the Conference Center about 100 yards further down the hill on the right.

For more information on the Fall Meeting, see our website <http://brooksbirdclub.org>

Send the registration form and your check before October 1, 2015, made out to the Brooks Bird Club, Inc. to:

**A.R. Buckelew Jr.
111 Logan Ct.
Bethany, WV 26032
304 829 4392
Jbuckelew@bethanywv.edu**

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ EMAIL _____

persons _____

Cost (full time – all meals and lodging included)

Single occupancy @ \$248.00/person \$ _____

Double occupancy @ \$174.00/person \$ _____

Commuter cost (all meals included but no lodging)
@ \$100.00/person \$ _____



Total cost \$ _____



...

The Master at work

*– Dick Diener worked to identify sedges and grasses at this year’s Foray
Photo by John Jacobs*

WHAT’S INSIDE

Editor’s Message	1
WV Northern Saw-whet Owl Project	1
Birdwatcher’s Digest Birding Expo	1
Kathy Robbins Passes	2
2015 Preston County Foray Daily Reports.....	3-5
Fun With Migrants.....	6-7
Correspondence	7
Changes In Contact Information.....	7
Chapter Happenings	7
Interesting Sightings Around The State.....	8-9
2015 Eastern Shore Trip Form.....	10
2015 Fall Reunion & Annual Meeting Form.....	11