



THE MAIL BAG

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

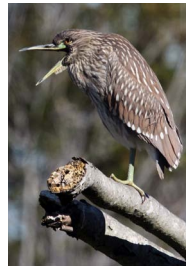
VOL. 73, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2016 RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note

Marketing the Brooks Bird Club is always foremost in the minds of many of us involved in the inner workings of the club. Membership is less than in the past, but is holding relatively steady. Foray and the Eastern Shore Trip both brought us new participating members. With increasing membership and awareness in mind, the Club will be producing a full-color brochure in the new year. We will likely need assistance in distributing these to every state park, refuge, hotel kiosk and birdwatcher we can find, so contact me for information, and to give us an idea on how many we need.

I've also written an article, with photos, on Forays past and present, and it is slated to be published in *Bird Watcher's Digest* in the March/April issue, barring any change in their schedule. A similar article will be published in *The Peregrine*, publication of the Three Rivers Bird Club of Pittsburgh, all in the name of increasing awareness of this great thing that we call the Foray, which is just about the only event of its kind in the entire country, and possibly the world.



*American Oystercatchers, Bald Eagles, juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron and Ruddy Ducks.
Photographed on the Eastern Shore Trip by Neal Hohman*

Foray should be quite interesting, being at the crossroads between the mountains and the eastern panhandle. More program information will be available in the next issue (I hope), and we encourage everyone to find participants, new and old, to come to Foray in Hardy County. We hope to cross-pollinate with BBC members from the east, as well as other birders from the panhandle that we know by name, but are not members.

Echoing our President's message below, we are hoping to plan a great 85th anniversary. Lang Elliott and Bill Thompson III are possible speakers with programs, which should be wonderfully interesting, as both are great presenters.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JAY BUCKELEW

Next October, the Brooks Bird Club will celebrate its 85th anniversary at Oglebay in Wheeling, October 20-22, 2017. We will have an exciting program of speakers and field trips, so plan on attending. The month before our celebration, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy will celebrate their 50th anniversary on September 15 -17, 2017, in Canaan Valley. Anywhere we go in the West Virginia mountains, we see the results of the WVHC's work to preserve West Virginia's natural environment from predatory interests and development. We enjoy Dolly Sods, Canaan Valley, the Cranberry Wilderness and many other beautiful places that might have been lost or severely damaged if not for the leadership in conservation provided by the WVHC. The Brooks Bird Club is proud to be an organizational member of the Highlands Conservancy and proud of its president, Cindy Ellis, who is also The Brooks Bird Club's organizational director on the Conservancy board. If you are not a member of the WVHC, check their website and please consider joining.

– Albert R. Buckelew, Jr., BBC President

Check out the Mail Bag in color online, and check out the website for the latest up-to-date information on the BBC at www.brooksbirdclub.org

2016-2017 WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Athens/Princeton

Friday, December 23, 2016
Ron Canterbury 513-556-9570
roncanterbury@aol.com (best)

Buffalo Creek - Washington Co., PA/Ohio & Brooke Co., WV

Sunday, December 18, 2016
Larry Helgerman 412-508-0321

Canaan/Tucker Co.

Monday, December 26, 2016
Casey Rucker 304-866-4114
autoblock@frontiernet.net

Charles Town

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Bob Dean 304-754-3042
bobdean52@gmail.com

Charleston

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Doren Burrell 304-553-8592
g.immer@doren.net

Elkins Area

Tuesday, January 3, 2017
Rich Bailey 703-307-1790

Franklin/Pendleton County

Tuesday, December 20, 2016
Fred Atwood 703-242-1675
fredatwood@yahoo.com

Hampshire County

Friday, December 30, 2016
Vini Schoene bcws2@earthlink.net

Huntington

Monday, January 2, 2017
David Patick 304-633-4450

Inwood

Monday, January 2, 2017
Bob Dean 304-754-3042
bobdean52@gmail.com

Lewisburg

Saturday, December 31, 2016
Benjamin Handley
ben@potteryvalley.com

McDowell County

Friday, December 30, 2016
Allen Waldron 304-573-3247
awaldron@suddenlink.net

Moorefield

Thursday, December 29, 2016
Kathy King 304-538-7121

Morgantown

Saturday, December 17, 2016
LeJay Graffious 304-379-4492
lejaygraffious@gmail.com

Oak Hill

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Geoff Heater 304-573-0111
geoffheeter@gmail.com

Ona

Sunday, December 18, 2016
David Patick 304-633-4450

Parkersburg/Wood Co.

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Jeanette Esker
304-863-8765

Pipestem Area

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Jim Phillips 304-466-1275
jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com

Pocahontas County

Saturday, December 17, 2016
Rich Bailey 703-307-1790

Raleigh County

Sunday, December 18, 2016
Allen Waldron 304-573-3247

Wheeling

Wednesday, December 14, 2016
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
wwwwarblers@hotmail.com



BBC 2015-16 CBC INFO ON WEBSITE

Data from last years' WV Christmas Bird Counts is up on the BBC website at www.brooksbirdclub.org/wv-cbc-results.html

There are two ways to access the information on the BBC website: via the menu tabs, or the link on the "Home Page" under "Coming this Fall: Christmas Bird Counts". All data is from Audubon.

A visit to the CBC website can help refresh your memories of last years count, and you can check the results of other circles to see what you've missed.

Good luck to all the WV and bordering CBC counts, and remember to email your results to Jane Whitaker, and to the main CBC website as soon as possible.

2016 BBC EASTERN SHORE TRIP REPORT

Thirty seven members of the Brooks Bird Club found their way to the Island Resort on Chincoteague Island in Virginia on November 9th, which was the only day we had a little rain.

The next day, after a hearty breakfast, we picked up our box lunches and also added Alma Lowery and Mindy Waldron to our group for the day as we set off to explore Chincoteague. Workers were paving the causeway, so we did have to wait a little to get to the beach, but it was worth the wait. Many gulls, including a (lifer for many) Black-headed Gull, were found. A Black-crowned Night Heron was found on the way back along the causeway, as well as a Great Horned Owl and Eastern Screech-Owl. Over the next causeway we found 80 American Oystercatchers, along with Brant, and Common and Red-throated Loons.



Immature Black-crowned Night Heron



Cattle Egret

After eating lunch at the Visitor Center, where Golden-crowned Kinglets were found, we went to the loop drive of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Driving the loop twice, we had Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, one Cattle Egret, and some heard a Virginia Rail. We also had a Merlin and American Kestrel. After another great meal, bedtime came early.

The next morning we all packed up and headed north. Some birded back on Chincoteague, while others headed for Public Landing. There we had Laughing Gulls, among other species. Next was a stop on Golf Course Road near Ocean City which had 10 species of ducks and other birds. Next we went to the inlet at Ocean City where there were Harlequin ducks and dolphins to the delight of many. Lunch was eaten there.

The next main stop was at what we call the Indian River Inlet, or South Unit of the Delaware Seashore State Park. There we found Black Scoters, a Great Cormorant, and various other birds. Some cars went to Cape Henlopen and heard Brown-headed Nuthatches. Finally we headed to the Atlantic Sands for dinner and rest.

Saturday, November 12 dawned as another sunny but cool day with bearable winds. After breakfast and getting our box lunches, we headed to Cape Henlopen again, where we got to see the Brown-headed Nuthatches. Some went to the Hawk Watch, and some went to the Christmas Bake Sale/Bazaar/Book Sale. Some made other stops, but we headed up to Bombay Hook for a much needed rest stop. At the observation tower, we had Hudsonian Godwits, some Greater White-fronted Geese, and various other birds. Next on the loop was a flock of some 200 American Avocets, with some Marbled Godwits mixed in. We ate lunch there. We birded down to Broadkill Beach since Prime Hook was completely closed due to a big deer hunt that was going on. There we had Ruddy ducks and some Surf Scoters. Back to the Sands hotel we went for our banquet and bird list, which totaled 136 species.

On Sunday we once again had breakfast and said our goodbyes until next year when we once again have an exciting Eastern Shore adventure!

– *Story and photos contributed by Janice Emrick*

HIGHLIGHTS OF MR. & MRS. ED'S VERMONT TRIP

My wife, Yan, and I took a five-day trip to Vermont and northern NY. While a good amount was driving, sight-seeing and, of course, eating Vermont's wonderful food, we did get some birding in.

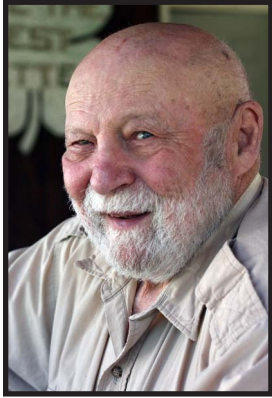
Montezuma NWR in the Finger Lakes region of New York had thousands of ducks and a Merlin. I got them their first 550 Snow Geese, as well.

The highlights were had at Wenlock WMA/Moose Bog in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Led by local Audubon President Tom Berriman and his friend Charlie, they had the birds eating out of our hands...literally! To go with the Gray Jays, they helped us get Boreal Chickadees. After they left, I called in a Black-backed Woodpecker. All three NEK birds were lifers for us!

We ended up with 71 species. – **Ed.**



JOSEPH RIEFFENBERGER



PASSES AWAY

Joseph Carol Rieffenberger, age 89 years, a resident of Elkins, passed away Saturday August 27, 2016 at Colonial Place in Elkins.

He was born December 2, 1926 in Austin, MN, a son of the late William John and Frances Genevive [Ulwelling] Rieffenberger. He was married for 43 years to Mary Moore [Adams] Rieffenberger who preceded him in death. Joe was the last surviving member of his immediate family. He is survived by nephews John Rieffenberger and Rick and Joe Strezishar. Two nephews, Jim Rieffenberger and Anthony Strezishar also preceded him in death.

Joe was a World War II Veteran having served as a lineman with the U.S. Army 89th Field Artillery in Japan. Joe was especially proud of the recognition he received for an innovative device he created to improve the way his unit laid communications wire.

Mr. Rieffenberger was a two time graduate of the University of Illinois receiving his BS degree in 1951 and his MS in 1953. He began his illustrious career as a Wildlife Biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) on August 10, 1953 and retired November 30, 1999. Joe conducted research on wood ducks, woodcock, and other species throughout his WVDNR tenure. However, he was best known as “The Bear Man” for his research that restored the population of the black bear, our West Virginia state animal. Some say Joe spent so much time on the bear project that he assumed the bruin’s personality!

Joe was also known for his intellect and his unique wood working skills that ranged from his custom truck consoles and Rube Goldberg-like contraptions to his chainsaw bear sculptures. Joe was an active member of several environmental organizations; among them



Joe with the bear we identify with him

were The Brooks Bird Club, The Highlands Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy. Joe supported several philanthropic endeavors including the local Arts Bank. He also sponsored so many third world foster children over the years that he lost count.



Joe Rieffenberger was a legend in Brooks Bird Club; I met him there. Joe was like no other. With salty language, and a seemingly gruff manner, he shared outdoor news with birders. In his prime he was West Virginia’s leading supervisor of black bear population. When we birders were really lucky, we could tag along to the retrieval of a bear in trap, captured by the DNR for research. Joe obviously kept the critter’s wellbeing topmost, and he snapped out plenty of “hells” and “damns” with directions for the sedating and study process. We were told that the traps were most successfully baited with donuts! A video tape was produced for educational TV; it showed a moment of Joe’s softer side as he cuddled two cubs while the female was fitted with the tracking collar. I can’t quite remember the names of those bears...but I’ll never forget Joe.

— from Cindy Ellis, BBC Handlan Chapter member, writing for The Highland Voice, September, 2016. More can be found on Joe in this issue.

2016 TYGART LAKE FALL REUNION REPORT

Tygart Lake State Park hosted the BBC for the first time in years in October, and we were not disappointed. Though the lodge had recently lost its in-house food service staff, they found a local caterer to feed us. The lodge itself was in great shape. This reunion also allowed the BBC Board of Directors to hold meetings important to the club and to the good of the order. They got a lot accomplished.

There were good programs, too. On Friday evening, Bill Beatty showed a slide program and discussed his new book, *Rainbows, Bluebirds and Buffleheads*. We learned about who and what made Bill who he is, and there were great stories involved.

On Saturday evening, many of us caravanned to Valley Falls State Park to visit Joey Herron’s saw-whet owl banding station. There were no owls, as there was a near-full moon, but we were educated in what it takes to run a nighttime banding station.

The weather got warmer each day, topping out with 80 degrees on Sunday at noon. This led to a comfortable outing at Prickett’s Fort, where we met up with member Terry Bronson. He led us around to see wetland birds, and at lunch, we viewed raptors and vultures above us.

We ended the weekend with a very good birdwalk (Common Merganser, White-throated Sparrow, Blue-headed Vireo). 55 total species of birds were seen, and included Black Vultures, a late Spotted Sandpiper, Common Raven, both kinglet species, a late Blackpoll Warbler, and a number of Purple Finches, both at Tygart Lake and Prickett’s Fort.

JOHN DUKTIG PASSES

Carl and I were saddened to hear of the death of one of our BBC members who was part of our “extended” family back in the day when our children were very young and we were giving support to some college kids who were also active with the Oglebay Institute Nature Camps. One of these students was John Duktig whose home was in Berea, Ohio. John and his wife, Karen, lived in Lilburn, Ga., and both worked in the environmental field. Several years ago, they joined us on the Eastern Shore Trip. Although because of their location, it was difficult to be active with the Club, they were a silent contributor to the program. Our sympathy goes out to Karen.

— Juanita Slater

GARNET RUTH BOBLETT BYRNE - 1938-2016



On July 8, Garnet went back to her beloved place with nature. She was a native of Richwood WV, and resided in Kent Ohio since 1974. She was a well known

and respected teacher at Stow-Munroe Falls High School. Anyone who may have had the good fortune to have had her in class will no doubt remember her excellent teaching skills and personable attitude she had with her many students.

Her 4 ft. 9 inch frame was consumed by love, generosity, grace and compassion. She was a very loving and kind spirited soul who left an unforgettable impression on those who knew and loved her. She left her mark in so many hearts and was joyfully generous giving so much without want of recognition to people, places and institutions she loved. She always had a soft spot in her huge heart for her hometown Richwood, WV.

She was a high academic achiever who was valedictorian of the RHS class of 1957, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Glenville State College, WV, and went on to obtain a masters degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

She was a nature enthusiast and an advocate for environmental preservation and conservancy. Garnet was an avid birdwatcher which she did with great passion and joy, and she enjoyed travel to see and be with those who shared this passion. The birds will sing a sweeter song, the trees will grow a greener green, the butterflies will be a more brilliant yellow knowing their loyal friend has been returned to them.

Garnet is survived by her companion of 20 years Karl Liske of Kent Ohio, her daughter Kim Gaffney of Land O' Lakes Florida and her brother Randy Boblett of Sweetwater, Tennessee. She was preceded

in passing by her husband John Byrne of Gassaway, WV, her parents Ivan and Audria Boblett, her brother Bill Boblett and sister, Joyce Boblett Peeling. She will always exist in the memory of those who knew, loved and cherished her in life and be a permanent part their heart and soul.

– by *Randy Boblett, brother*

Please know that Garnet died on July 8th, with her family and friends at hospice care attending to her needs. Her last words were, "We can make it!"

These words epitomize the spirit of a most positive determined and generous native of West Virginia.

I am auditing a local flora course at Kent State University which reminds me of all the botanizing and birding and nature study in the field (streams, woods, caves) that the Brooks Bird Club offers. Plus, the rich friendship and association with the highest quality of humankind. What a gift!

– Karl Liske

CORRESPONDENCE

I am a biology professor at James Cook University in Australia. My main areas of scholarly expertise are ornithology and avian behavioral ecology. In addition to my other responsibilities, I have recently added a new section to my website under the title A Traveller's Guide to Feathers. Each week, I summarize the key points of a newly-published paper concerning birds from a scholarly journal. It seems to me that most bird enthusiasts rarely have access to the newest and most exciting finds from the world of ornithology. A Traveller's Guide to Feathers is meant to remedy that. All of the content with none of the jargon.

Many thanks and sincere best wishes from Down Under.

– Glen Chilton, Ph.D.

Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change, College of

Marine and Environmental Science
James Cook University
Townsville, Queensland, Australia
www.glenchilton.com

MOTHER JONES AKA CINDY ELLIS

The Mother Jones Award is the WV Environmental Council's highest honor. Mother Jones came to be known as "the most dangerous woman in America" because of her effective organizing and unrelenting fight for social justice for coal miners and their families. Remembering Mother Jones as someone who may have "prayed for the dead but fought like hell for the living" the WV E-Council annually bestows this award on an individual who embodies the fighting spirit of Mother Jones. The 2016 Mother Jones award was given to WV Highlands Conservancy president Cindy Ellis.

Cindy is a retired school teacher and active volunteer, a veteran surveyor for state and national counts of wild birds, and a past president of Brooks Bird Club, and of the Charleston Chapter of that club. She supervises the Brooks Bird Club Sanctuary Sign program wherein the club sells metal Wildlife Sanctuary signs nationwide. For 34 years she has conducted seasonal bird population surveys for the Fish & Wildlife Service, Cornell University, and the WV DNR. And Cindy worked with the Army Corps of Engineers and hunting dog trainers to affect a compromise at the Winfield Locks & Dam so that migratory birds would not be disturbed by dog training activities.

Feeling it was not enough to study, count, and enjoy birds, Cindy wanted to help with their conservation and that of their habitat. She accepted a position on the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Board of Directors to engage in opportunities for helping with an even wider variety of issues. She attends rallies, hearings, protests; represents the organization by setting up tables of displays and sharing information at events, and has helped with stream sampling in coal extraction areas. She served on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Beech Ridge wind facility, and pressed that operation to permit her to witness their raptor survey process. And much, much more!

And finally, Cindy's own acceptance remark: *Never not a birder, never not an activist.*

– from **The Highland Voice**

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT THE NEW BBC WEBSITE

Brooks Bird Club
Birding is for everyone!

HOME ABOUT US EVENTS PUBLICATIONS AFFILIATES CONSERVATION EXTERNAL LINKS

Photo Credit: Neal J. Hohman and Matt Orsie

Welcome to the NEW BBC Website!
Our new site is loaded with information about the Brooks Bird Club past and present. Please enjoy all the photos, slideshows and useful birding and nature related information.

Bibbee Nature Club
The Bibbee Nature Club is dedicated to the observation and study of the natural world near our homes in South eastern West Virginia

Headquarters Chapter
The Headquarters Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club meets monthly. During the fall, winter and spring we meet at the Schrader Environmental Center in Oglebay Park the third Tuesday of the month. During the summer we meet at different members homes or parks monthly.

Handlan Chapter
Handlan Chapter is Charleston's oldest and only organized group dedicated to the study and enjoyment of wild birds.

Visit Visit Visit

Mountwood Bird Club
Members are located around the Parkersburg WV area. Mountwood is a very active chapter with events and outings almost weekly through out the year!

Pocahontas Nature Club
Members of the Pocahontas Nature Club are located around the Marlinton, WV area, the heart of the Monongahela National Forest!

With our chapters & affiliates we are birding WV and beyond!

History of the Brooks Bird Club

Formed in 1934 the BBC has a long history with many members over the years. To read an in depth account of who some of the founding and past members were and to learn more about the early years of the BBC check out the historical timeline at the bottom of the page.

Enjoy our historical slideshow

The Brooks Bird Club Founders

George Flourer, Tom Shields, Russ West, Harold Bergner, Chuck Conrad, James Handlan & Clyde Upton, A.B. Brooks, Charles Doeppen, Marie Bleynay, Marjorie Coffield, D. Cunningham, George Devinnay, Helen Howell, Sarah Dill, Leo Tighe, Helen Tighe, Nell Bergner, Bertha Quantz, Rena Wagner, Pauline West, Ralph Bergner, Polly Handlan, Karl "Mike" Haller

The club was founded in 1934 by John Handlan and a group of enthusiastic young people, including Charles L. Conrad. Mr. Handlan led the group on weekly bird walks in Oglebay Park, Wheeling West Virginia, with A. B. Brooks, a well-known West Virginia

Just in case you haven't visited it yet, brooksbirdclub.org is our new dynamic website that makes it much easier to connect with whichever bird club activity that suits you.

(Top left) You begin with a comprehensive home page with drop-down menus, a beautiful color slide show and lots of pertinent information.

(Top right) Link to our chapters and affiliates to learn what is going on in their part of the state

(Middle left) Plenty of history, as well as current officers and contacts is under the 'About Us' tab.

(Middle right and bottom left) Publications such as checklists, the Redstart and the Mail Bag may be downloaded in PDF format.

(Bottom right) A color-coded calendar with all club, chapter and other pertinent dates are listed and are updated regularly.

(continued on page 7)

Field Checklists

West Virginia Birds
Field Checklist

West Virginia Ferns
Fern Checklist

West Virginia Butterflies
Butterfly Checklist

Volume 82 Issue 4 October 2015
10/1/2015
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Download File
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Volume 82 Issue 3 July 2015
7/1/2015
2015_redstart_vol_82-3_color.pdf
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Volume 82 Issue 2 April 2015
4/1/2015
2015_redstart_vol_82-2_color.pdf
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Volume 82 Issue 1 January 2015
1/1/2015
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Redstart
Editor: Albert R. Buckelew
After almost a 40 year reign our editor A. R. (Jay) Buckelew is retiring.

Starting 2017
Our new BBC Redstart Editor: Casey Rucker

Archives
October 2015
July 2015
April 2015
January 2015
October 2014
July 2014
April 2014

BBC Calendar of Events

Brooks Bird Club

Today | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31

Events shown in time zone: Eastern Time

A LOOK AT THE NEW BBC WEBSITE (*cont.*)

There are online forms for most club events, and Paypal options for online payment for membership, Foray, the spring and fall meetings and more.

Much of this has been made possible by the hard work of Larry Helgerman and his nephew, web designer Thomas. Any information or ideas for additional content can be emailed to brooksbirdclubweb@gmail.com.

Please visit the website often to get the most out of your BBC experience. The calendar of events operates from Google calendars, so you can link your smart phone to the BBC calendar and get regular updates.



10 YEARS WITH THE BELL BIRD CLUB

The Ralph K. Bell Bird Club of Greene County, PA, celebrated their 10th Anniversary on October 29, 2016. They are a BBC chapter.

Polo style shirts in sandstone color with a commemorative motif in rust are being made for the occasion; they will be by pre-order only at a cost of \$20. Make checks payable to:

Ralph K. Bell Bird Club
149 Preachers Road
Waynesburg, PA 15370



MAIL BAG PHOTO NOTE

High resolution (and even medium res.) photos can be used and wanted for the Mail Bag and the BBC Archives. Send to the Editor at wvwarblers@hotmail.com.

WV SUMMER SAW-WHET STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

We are wrapping up our Northern Saw-whet Owl research in the highlands for the summer. Overall we attempted to capture NSWOs at 60 sites in the highlands using 2 mist nets and playing their call for about an hour. Our sample locations ranged from Cranberry Glades area to the south to FR 92, FR 27, FR 235 between Huttonsville and Durbin, and up to the Canaan Loop Road/Blackwater Falls area and Dolly Sods. Of these 60 sites, 53 of them were surveyed for the presence of NSWOs last year, and 7 were not surveyed (e.g., new sites). We attempted to band the owls in what looked like appropriate habitat (at least mixed forests with hemlock, fir or spruce) based on the results of last year's survey, but also including sites that had no owls last year to check for site fidelity. The purpose of this year's study is to characterize their trophic webs (what they are eating), watch for more on that later when we finish our analyses. Here are some interesting highlights from this year that I can share at this time:

- 27 sites we sampled this year had NSWOs present during the 2015 survey and 11 of those sites (40.7%) had NSWOs again this year.
- 26 sites we sampled this year did not have NSWOs present during the 2015 survey and 8 of those sites (30.8%) had NSWOs this year.

These differences from year to year indicate the owls are either not being detected well during our surveys or that the owls are moving around within the range of appropriate habitat in the highlands, likely in search of good food resources or to evade competitors/predators, or some combination of these factors. Due to the quiet nature of the species, I am always concerned about false negatives during the surveys. However, the fact that 16 sites where we had them last year during 30 minute surveys ended up with no detections during at least an hour of basically the same method this year (but with nets) leads me to believe the owls are moving around quite a bit from year to year. A potential confounding factor is that 9 of the sites where we detected NSWOs last year but did not detect any this year had Barred Owls show up at the site sometime during the sample event. We never captured any NSWOs at any of the 16 sites where we detected BDOWs and only heard NSWOs at two of those sites (before the BDOWs started vocalizing). Barred Owls may have displaced the NSWOs or simply scared them away from the sample site.

We sampled 7 new sites this year and detected NSWOs at 3 of those sites.

Overall we detected NSWOs at 24 of the 60 sites we visited and captured 17 NSWOs, plus one of those was recaptured about 0.6 miles away from its original banding site about a month later.

Four of the NSWOs we captured were young of year. Two of those young were captured together at a site along Canaan Loop Road (one of those was also the local recapture 0.6 miles away a month later), another one was at Dolly Sods and the fourth was at Cranberry Glades.

Weather and BDOWs proved to be our biggest problems with capturing the NSWOs. As I am sure you noticed the months of July and August were pretty wet and we cannot band birds in those conditions so most nights were cancelled due to weather. Then, as noted, if we detected a BDOW at what looked like good NSWO habitat, we weren't going to catch any NSWOs even if they were there.

– *Ross Brittain, PhD, Dean, College of Science, Technology & Mathematics
Alderson Broaddus University, Philippi, WV 26416*

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

8/18 - After the muggy heat and rain of Charleston the last eons, Canaan Valley in Tucker County is delightfully dry, cool and breezy. First bird in the Valley was a handsome Green Heron (Timberline treatment ponds) among a few Wood Ducks, followed by a very cooperative Savannah Sparrow (FWS parking area on Cortland Road). It patiently posed for us as we frantically leafed through our field guide to verify it's ID. Eight kingbirds were the Walmart greeters at the Freeland Boardwalk, along bluebirds, phoebes, and a sulky catbird escort. Also studied a raptor that was unfortunately backlit, and very hard to ID, but sure looked like a Merlin, I hope I hope.

8/20 - Another beautiful (and rain-free!) day in Canaan, with beautiful gorgeous clouds. We saw a brown female harrier near the nature center at CV State Park, and a brilliant grey/white male harrier from the Freeland Boardwalk. Also, confirmed a Merlin near the boardwalk-- nice views of it diving among the trees. And great to see a few monarchs, even a caterpillar on swamp milkweed -- almost all the leaves were eaten off of 20 plus plants. That's a hopeful sign! Several Black-throated Greens, phoebe, kingbirds, a lone meadowlark, catbirds and lots and lots of Cedar Waxwings. Lesson for today was a largish sparrow with some streaking on its white breast and no wing bars. Oh--flashed white outer tail feathers as it flew off with several black and white sparrows -- a-hah, an immature junco!

– Laura Ceperley and Martha Hopper, Charleston, WV, 8/18-8/20/16



Black Terns seen at Harris Riverfront Park in September.
– photo by David Patick

I stumbled upon one of the most magnificent things I have ever seen this morning in Grant County. The only reason I got to see it was I took the wrong exit and had to stop. Thousands (yes, plural thousands) of Tree Swallows were migrating through the area and I was lucky enough to run into them (not really familiar with the names of the mountains). From the top of the mountain heading east before the Maysville exit I started noticing large numbers of birds, couldn't really tell what they were and nowhere to pull over. I took the next exit and realized it was WRONG as soon as I got off. Headed north on Knobley Road toward Greenland Gap that is where it happened!!! Double power lines full of Tree Swallows for a quarter of a mile in both directions !! The trees were FULL, too. Every tree within a hundred yards of the power line was saturated with swallows. Just an amazing sight. When I left and headed east on Corridor H it was all the same through the valley and to the east side of the next mountain. Tree swallows everywhere!!! Oh yeah, the Baird's Sandpiper is still at the location on the upper end of the pond, next to a tire...But, that is old news...Also had 3 Bald Eagles in one tree, got a photo of 2. I knew as soon as I backed up they would start taking off...and they did. What a GREAT morning.

– Randy Bodkins, Norton, WV, 9/16/16

There were 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches scouring the tree limbs and pine cones around the parking lot at Nash Farm this afternoon. It looks like it's going to be another one of those winters (their winters).

A loud commotion just now in my backyard: I counted 42 Fish Crows quacking away and gathering in an even larger group, babies among them whose nasal cry sounds more like a 'wah!' It doesn't seem to matter what time of year it is, the Fish Crow's unique squawk is often the first to greet me each morning.

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, 9/19/16

Sorry for the delayed report. It was a fun weekend.

On Saturday I drove straight to Bear Rocks of Dolly Sods from Fairfax County VA to see what migrants I could detect flying by. From about 8:15 to noonish I saw lots of warblers, a good number of Cedar Waxwings, a small number of Purple Finches, a few Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Red-headed Woodpeckers, a couple Merlins and not very many Broad-winged. Then I explored Stony River Dam Rd. Lake, New Creek Lake (Oakdale Rd.), Thorn Run Rd. Lake, Belle Babb Lake, and my cabin on Knobbly Mt. in Cabins. On Sunday AM I did a nocturnal flight call survey hearing lots of Swainson's Thrushes, a dozen Gray-cheeks, Veery, Wood Thrush and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Then before heading back to VA I checked out Hogueland Rd., Royal Glen Rd., and South Mill Creek Lake.

Highlights of my 100 species: 1 Great Egret; 1 Green Heron; 1 Pectoral Sandpiper (but no Baird's); 4 Red-headed Woodpecker flybys at Bear Rocks; 2 Merlin at Bear Rocks, nice close flybys; 29 phoebes; 1 Fish Crow at Hogueland; 1 Horned Lark; 1 Cliff Swallow; 1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, my FOS; 12 Gray-cheeked Thrushes; 60 Swainson's Thrushes; 12 mockingbirds; 291 Cedar Waxwings (250 flybys at Bear Rocks in flocks of 5-30); 1 Blue-winged Warbler; 16 Tennessee Warblers; 1 Nashville Warbler; 24 Cape May Warblers; 49 Bay-breasted/Blackpoll/Pine Warbler flybys at Bear Rocks; 220 warbler sp. flybys at Bear Rocks; 1 Grasshopper Sparrow; 36 Field Sparrows (24 at Hogueland); 1 White-throated Sparrow, my FOS; 28 Indigo Buntings; 13 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; 31 meadowlarks; 650 grackles; 8 Purple Finches; and 147 Goldfinches.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, Grant Co., WV, 9/27/16

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

Yesterday a late Blackpoll Warbler visited the yard (after the last-seen date in Hall), and today my first Dark-eyed Junco appeared at the feeders, right about on time.

Separately, I wonder if any listserv participants can help with a Purple Finch query. I have seen references to Purple Finches breeding in conifer plantations at lower elevations in West Virginia, but have not found a single actual record. If anyone can point me to relevant information, I would be most grateful.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV, 10/13/16

I spent a couple of hours this morning at Green Bottom WMA trying to find a few of the birds (Marsh Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird) reported yesterday by David Patick, but without any luck. I did manage to flush a Sora and found a Common Yellowthroat. But the highlight of the morning was two flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese migrating along the Ohio River. The first flock had 44 geese in it and after passing overhead, continued down river toward Huntington. The second flock, which also had over 40 geese, flew over about 30 minutes later, but this group turned south and flew away over a hill in that direction. In all, the two flocks comprised about 90-100 Greater White-fronted Geese, the most I have seen in West Virginia.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 10/16/16

At Spruce Knob Lake, an Osprey plunge-dived and caught a fish, which it carried away. About 30 minutes later, I saw it again, also carrying a fish. But this time it was attacked by an adult Bald Eagle, which pursued it for about 2 minutes with much wheeling around, swooping, and general harassment. Finally, the Osprey dropped the fish, whereupon the eagle dived after it, missed catching it, then got it on its second attempt before it hit the lake.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 10/20/16

A thrill late this afternoon. We saw a Golden Eagle from our deck. I got a quick view of a suspected eagle and called to my wife. She came right out but the bird was not in sight. It reappeared low enough to see the golden color the side of it's neck when it turned and the white area at it's wrist. A first for sure our yard, though once before I had what I suspected was one. And a life bird for my wife.

– Paul Saffold, Inwood, WV, 10/23/16

Our visiting Great-blue Heron is back at its antics trying to get the fish in the pond. My hubbie watched it eat 3 smaller fish this morning before flying off. It slept near the pond last night, and looks like it will do so again tonight. We are probably the only people who welcome herons to our pond. They keep the fish population healthy, and keep the numbers down. It's a great photo opportunity too. The bottom line is that if the heron cleans out the pond, (which would be a miracle due to all the rock shelving and numerous safe hideouts for fish), we would gladly love to instead provide habitat for frogs and toads to breed.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 10/24/16

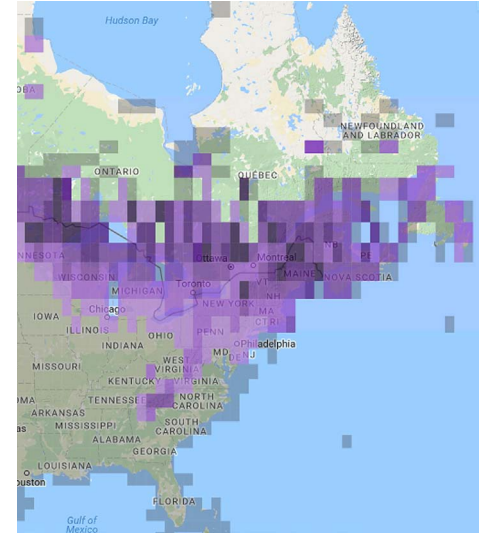


Piping Plover at Gallipolis Ferry Pit.
– photo by David Patick

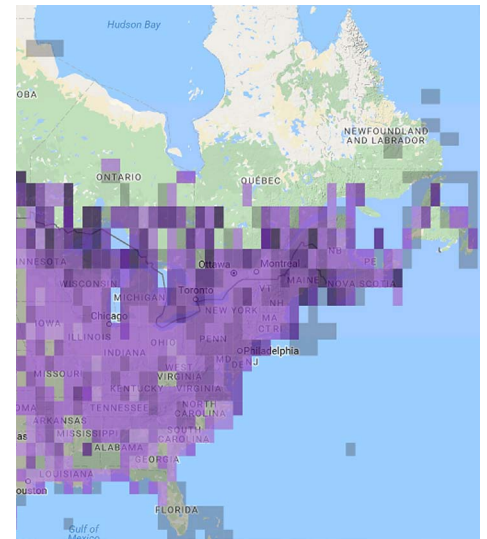
– Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH WINTER PROGNOSIS

There has been a fairly good movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches. Compare this June-July 2016 map:



With the August-Sept. 2016 map:



– posted to WVBIRD by
Jim Stasz, North Beach, MD

(As you might see, there is a lot more action moving further south. For a more comprehensive look in full color, check out the Mail Bag on www.brooksbirdclub.org.)

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

Zach & Annie Fowler,
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Adam Webster & Family
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ADD MEMBERS

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TELEPHONE CORRECTION

Johanna Sholder
412-341-4465

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

Contact Mindy for information at mwaldron@suddenlink.net

Jan. 7, 2017 – 10:00-2:00 PM. Meet at Hinton DQ for tally. Winter Eagle Survey. You can join a group to look for eagles. Locations along Bluestone Lake, New River and Greenbrier River. Contact Jim Phillips at jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

Feb. 17-20, 2017 – Great Backyard Bird Count weekend.

Feb. 4 or 11, 2017 – 12:30-3:30 PM. Time and date to be determined. We will spend a couple of hours at the Pipestem State Park Nature Center watching birds at the feeders. We'll have snacks and drinks to keep us warm.

March 4, 2017 – 10:00- 2:00 PM. Meet at Hinton DQ for tally. Spring Eagle Survey. Locations along Bluestone Lake, New River and Greenbrier River. Contact Jim Phillips.

HANDLAN CHAPTER

Jan. 9, 2017 - 6:30pm, meeting at South Charleston Library. Lauren Miller, Americorp volunteer at the Canaan Valley NWR, discussing phenology and the national date collection effort.

Feb. 20, 2017 - 6:30pm, meeting at South Charleston Library. Doug Jolley on year-round gardening for birds.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

Jan. 17, 2017 – The program will be by Mick Brown, a falconer from Ohio.

Feb. 21, 2017 – The program is by Larry Helgerman, The title of Larry's program is... "It's a Mystery."

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

Dec. – Lucine Wright 740-373-6230

Dec. 15, 2016 – Ohio River, Little Hocking area, 9:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Dec. 29, 2016 – Middle Island area, 9:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77; bring lunch.

Jan. – Pat Collins 304-375-2309

Jan. 5, 2017 – Ohio River Eagle Watch, 8:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77; bring lunch.

Jan. 19, 2017 – Duck Route, Muskingum River, 8:00am. Big Sandy Superstore; bring lunch.

Jan. 26, 2017 – "The Wilds", Ohio, all-day trip, 9:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

Feb. – Gene Hilton 304-428-8641

Feb. 1-3, 2017 – Killdeer Plains, Ohio - overnight. Details to come.

Feb. 9, 2017 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am. Boat ramp, Northwest Pipe Drive.

Feb. 16, 2017 – Middle Island area, 8:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77; bring lunch.

Feb. 23, 2017 – Ohio River, Little Hocking Area, 9:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Mar. – Shirley Radcliffe 304-428-8520

Mar. 2, 2017 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am. Boat ramp, Northwest Drive.

Mar. 9-10, 2017 – Funk / Killbuck, Ohio - overnight. Details to come.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

Remember to check these websites for lots of great outings in the eastern panhandle and around the state:

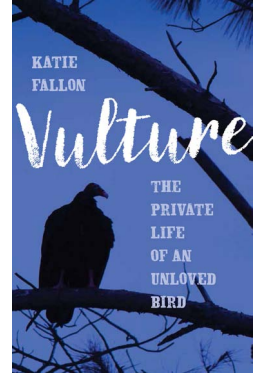
www.potomacaudubon.org
www.wvstateparks.com/calendar.html

BROOKS BIRD CLUB EARLY SPRING MEETING

MARCH 3-5, 2017

NORTH BEND STATE PARK

The Early Spring 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. Katie Fallon will be presenting a program on vultures on Saturday night, in support of her new book (cover image at right). Friday night program to be announced.



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 annual membership meeting will be Sunday morning.

Deadline for reservations is January 31, 2017

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



...

Here we were!

*– Where were you? More on an enjoyable Fall Reunion at Tygart Lake State Park
Story on page 4*

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