



# THE MAIL BAG

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

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JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH 2017

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

## Editor's Note

Spring in February? At press time, this month is ending its run of historically-high temperatures. On Friday the 24th, it was 78F here in Western Pennsylvania, and we've had many days in the 60s all month. From here north, grackles and the other blackbirds are 2-3 weeks early, I saw my first-ever February ground hog on the 22nd, and some birds never left. Forsythia and crocuses began blooming this past week, daffodils were on their way, and silver maples were budding. Not to get political, but this does not bode well for anyone or thing, plant or animal.



We're working to load up our calendar year with interesting events with even more interesting speakers. The Early Spring Meeting will have taken place before you receive this issue, but we had Katie Fallon present a program on vultures there, and BBC member and Highlands Conservancy award-winner Cindy Ellis spoke on what the WVHC is doing to help preserve the state and the birds.

In October, we will have a special Fall Reunion for our club's 85th anniversary, and our keynote speakers at this Oglebay Park event will be Lang Elliott, bird song genius that we know from the Stoke's audio guides, and BBC member and Birdwatcher's Digest editor/publisher Bill Thompson III. We hope that you can make this wonderful event in late fall.



We also hope to see everyone at Foray. Plans are being made, and it should be a very interesting place to visit. The birding should be quite good, as Hardy County has been known to have Barn Owls, Loggerhead Shrike, Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Grosbeak and more. For anyone who is skeptical as to whether the birds are as good as usually advertised, your Editor has been flooding the regional market with stories of our great birding luck last year in Tucker County, where we had over 130 species. We will have plenty of people to help out first-timers, and all of us are constantly learning throughout the week of Foray. Come join us!

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JAY BUCKELEW

The first two Brooks Bird Club forays were held at Lost River State Park in Hardy County, West Virginia, in June 1940 and 1941. Since then, we have held three Forays in Hardy County, in 1977, 1985, and 2004. This summer, we will return to the Lost River Retreat Center, June 9 through June 17. Past Hardy County forays have yielded many interesting birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. "Weed pickers" saw fabulous plants in the shale barrens, many orchids and a large list of ferns. In the past, Foray participants have focused on butterflies, moths, and fungi. Interesting fact: Timber Rattlesnakes have been found at every Hardy County Foray.

This June, we are hoping that many BBC members will return to Hardy County to help lead bird walks and participate in breeding bird surveys and singing male bird census studies. We will try to repeat two of the original Lost River State Park singing male censuses run in 1977, 1986, and 2004. We hope to train enough new census takers to cover the four singing male censuses in 2018 that we started in Pocahontas County in 1944 and have run every five years since then. Parents, bring your children. We have plenty of scholarships.

– Albert R. Buckelew, Jr., BBC President

## BBC IN BWD

Check out the Mar.-Apr. Birdwatcher's Digest, run by BBC members Bill III and mother Elsa Thompson. You'll find an long article on our Foray history, written by Ed., to promote our unique event through stories and photos. Buy yourself a copy and pass it along!



## 12TH SOUTHERN WV EAGLE SURVEY

On January 7, 2017, thirteen participants found 50 Bald Eagles (12 adults, 2 sub-adults, 3 4th year, 5 3rd year, 3 2nd year, 1 1st year and 25 immatures) and 1 Golden Eagle (immature). The breakdown is as follows:

**Mouth of the Bluestone River** - Sharyn Ogden, Julie and Corey McQuade. 23 BAEA\* (3 adults, 2 sub-adults, 4 3rd year, 3 2nd year & 11 immatures)  
Also one Peregrine Falcon

**Rt. 20 Overlook** - Brian Hirt & Doug Sisung. 6 BAEA (2 adults, 1 3rd year, 1 1st year & 2 immatures)

**Bellepoint** - Jim Phillips (compiler). 1 BAEA (adult), 1 GOEA\*\* (immature)

**Mouth of Madams Creek** - Rodney Davis. No eagles

**Brooks Overlook** - Sam Richmond. 2 BAEA (1 adult, 1 immature)

**Rt. 122** - Leigh Prince, David & Jim Shrewsbury. 16 BAEA (3 adults, 3 4th year & 10 immatures)

**Red Sulphur Springs** - Rodney & Julie Bragg. 2 BAEA (adults)

\* BAEA = Bald Eagle \*\*GOEA = Golden Eagle

Conditions - 12-22 degrees, 10-100% cloud cover, NNW wind 0-8 mph, visibility 2-10 miles and light flurries with 2-3" snow on the ground.

Next survey will be March 4, 2017.

## 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:

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## 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

## 2017 AMERICAN BIRDING EXPO IN PHILLY

September 29-October 1, 2017 • [www.americanbirdingexpo.com](http://www.americanbirdingexpo.com)



Managed by Bill Thompson III from Birdwatcher's Digest, the American Birding Expo is designed to provide bird watchers and nature lovers an opportunity to connect with birding-related companies and

organizations, including optics manufacturers, tour companies, bird feeding stores, birding festivals and clubs, destinations, travel agencies, and more. The Expo is the largest and most diverse shopping experience available to bird watchers in North America. In 2016, a grand total of 41 countries and 42 states were represented among exhibitors, attendees, and sponsors.

Participants are welcome to attend keynote presentations by Scott Weidensaul and Julie Zickefoose. Informal bird walks will be held each morning before Expo hours around the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center property and John James Audubon Center (1 mile away from Expo Center). Also, one can attend birding workshops that will be held throughout the event. Costs look to be \$10 per day to enter the venue.

## 2016-17 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

100 Species!!! The Morgantown Area Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 17, 2016. For the first time in the history of the Mountaineer Audubon Christmas Bird Count, participants identified 100 species of birds in a week time period and 91 species on count day. Thanks to William Johnson who reported the 100th bird, a Brown-headed Cowbird at his feeders during count week. The ninety-ninth bird was a Ruffed Grouse, found on Snake Hill Wildlife Management area at the last hour of daylight on the last day of count week. Two new species for the count this year were shorebirds: Derek Courtney found a Greater Yellowlegs at White Park, and I spied a Spotted Sandpiper on a mud bar on the Monongahela River by the sewage processing plant.

Another highlight of our count week was a "fall out" of waterfowl on the first day, December 14. Thanks goes to Mike Slaven, for alerting area birders about this event. Terry Bronson, an avid area birder reported, "it turned out to be a record WV day for me."

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

The 45th Pipestem Area, WV Christmas Bird Count took place yesterday, December 17, 2016. Nine participants found 67 species in the area. Highlights include 9 Tundra Swans on Mt. Valley Lake, a Wilson's Snipe in Bluestone State Park a record 108 Common Mergansers and 11 Red Crossbills in Pipestem State Park.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV

The 2016 Charleston-Kanawha area CBC was conducted on Saturday, December 17th. Conditions ranged from 38 degrees F and drizzling rain to more than 65 degrees F and wind gusts of up to 10 mph through the afternoon. There were fewer species observed overall, but we had some special, first-time reports on this year's list: Bald Eagle and Common Raven. Other highlights included large numbers of Gadwalls (77), Black Vultures (36) and sightings of Northern Shovelers (4), Peregrine Falcons (2), and Pine Siskins (2). One team had a sweep of all seven species of woodpeckers! And thanks, too, to our owling team who located 4 Barred Owls to add to the tally.

– Doren Burrell, Mink Shoals, WV

We had completed the Ona CBC today Sunday December 18, 2016, with 18 hearty participants. It was cold and drizzly with persistent rain most of the am with temp's starting out at 57 and dropping to 33 degrees with some sleet and snow showers. We had 72 total species. The rarity of the day was the finding of a Common Yellowthroat at Greenbottom WMA. Other highlights included the following: Snow Goose (1); Ross's Goose- (1); American Black Duck (48); Northern Shoveler (3); Redhead (24); and Northern Harrier (4).

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

We had the Raleigh CBC scheduled for Sunday Dec. 18, but with heavy rain and high winds, we postponed it until Monday Dec. 19th. It turned out to be a great decision. We had a beautiful, but cold day with some awesome unusual species. Our total was 55 species. I counted 13,600 crows at the roost in Beckley. Their roost spot is under construction for the bypass, so there was a lot of movement by the crows. They continue moving most of the night. We had flyovers of 3 and 4 Sandhill Cranes. On Lake Stephens we found Redhead, Common Mergansers, Surf Scoters, Bald Eagles, Common Loon and Horned Grebe. Jim Phillips found a Golden Eagle for us as well.

– Mindy and Allen Waldron, Surveyor, WV

The Pendleton County count on Dec 20, 2016, started out cold (in the low/mid teens), clear, and calm. It warmed up to the mid/upper 30's. In part of the count circle it remained sunny all day. In other parts, very light snow flurries popped up in the afternoon. Eight birders in 6 sectors, and 15 feeder watchers, found fewer birds than usual. There were almost no berries on the trees and no Cedar Waxwings or Yellow-rumped Warblers were found. This berry-scarcity could also explain the lower than usual numbers of robin, bluebird, mockingbird, Hermit Thrush, and starling. We tallied 62 species, and no new species were added to our 39-year cumulative total of 115 species.

Significant misses included Killdeer, Great Horned Owl, Cedar Waxwing, Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, and White-crowned Sparrow. We tallied new high counts of Canada Goose (517), Green-winged Teal (3), Turkey Vulture (171), Black-capped Chickadee (154), Tufted Titmouse (272), White-breasted Nuthatch (143), Brown Creeper (12), and Winter Wren (13).

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV

The Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count was held December 17, 2016. What started out as a rainy, icy, slick road adventure turned out to be a rather nice day for the bird count. We ended up with the highest number of species for the past ten years. We had a good collection of ducks – 15 species – some individuals and some in good numbers. There were lots of Mallards and Canada Geese.

Highlights were a Winter Wren, and Snow Goose on count day and an Ibis species (Glossy Ibis ?) for count week. Wild Turkeys were out in force – the highest count for 10 years. Mourning Doves were also abundant.

On the negative side, the woods birds were hiding, especially Eastern Towhees. They were nowhere to be found. We ended up with 76 species overall, another 10 year high. Thanks to all who participated. If you have any comments or suggestions let us know.

– Dick & Jeanette Esker

## 2016-17 CBC RESULTS (CONT.)

*During the 117th Huntington CBC on January 2nd, there were 12 participating individuals and there were 70 total species. We had high counts on Horned Grebes, Black and Turkey Vultures, Northern Flicker and Chipping Sparrow.*

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

*The 24th Canaan Valley Christmas Bird Count was held on December 26, 2016. The weather was warm (40s) but in the damp air many observers reported slow birding. We found 57 species plus 4 more for count week. Julie and Ken Dzaack hosted an Evening Grosbeak, the first appearance for this species in four years. New highs for the count were 9 Red-tailed Hawks, 4 Barred Owls, 8 American Kestrels, 83 White-breasted Nuthatches, 79 Tufted Titmice, 27 Eastern Bluebirds, and we tied for the most Hooded Mergansers (8, found by Rodney Bartgis and Becca Ferry) and Eastern Screech-Owls (3).*

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

*Here are the results of the McDowell Co. CBC conducted on January 2, 2017. There were 4 participants for the count, and we ended up with 33 species and 559 individuals.*

– Allen and Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV

*The Dec. 23, 2016 Athens/Princeton CBC had 10 participants and there were 49 total species. We had high counts of Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red and White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, Brown-headed Cowbird, and American Goldfinch. These were due in part to having more observers in the field, so the meaningful high counts were mainly just Red-breasted Nuthatch (irruption from this past fall) and Eastern Towhee and Field Sparrow.*

– Ron Canterbury, Cincinnati, OH

*New Years Day's Buffalo Creek CBC was a re-scheduled date, as our original 12/18/16 count day was cancelled due to flooding conditions. Originally, we had around 38 field birders lined up, but that number changed to 28 for the 1/1/17 count, with additional 8 feeder watchers. Even being stretched a little thin this year we pulled in some great numbers! 66 species and 7,969 individuals were counted.*

*We had many record-high species (Mute Swan, Wild Turkey, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Common Raven, Song Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal) and also added two new species never recorded on the count (Horned Grebe and Black Vulture). January 1st turned out to be a great day birding and a nice way to start 2017.*

– Larry Helgerman, Wheeling, WV

## FIRST WV BIRDS OF JANUARY 1, 2017

*I stepped out on our deck about 6:30 am this morning to listen for any sounds of birds or animals. The first sound was that of a red fox that had taken up residence at the edge of our subdivision. The second sound I heard was a Great Horned Owl welcoming in 2017. Since my first bird of 2017 was an owl, I hope that means I will be wiser this year. Happy New Year and good birding to all.*

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette WV

*My first bird of 2017 is a Dark-eyed Junco. I thought I heard their chips, but then one flew to the ground beneath the feeders. A snow bird seems very appropriate though the snow is already melting. Have a good year.*

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV

*Our first bird of the new year was a tufted titmouse. Happy New Year everyone!*

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

*My first bird was a male downy woodpecker.*

– Wendy Perrone, Summers Co., WV

*My first bird of the year was a Tufted Titmouse.*

– Bev Delidow, Huntington, WV

*First bird: Great-horned Owl. Listened longer and heard a 2nd one respond.*

– Cindy Ellis, Red House, WV

*My first bird if the year was a lone junco, scratching under the feeder.*

– Shannon Burner, Keyser, WV

*First bird was a Carolina Wren. Tried for owls at midnight, but no luck*

– Paul McKay, Wheeling, WV

*First bird for 2017 was a black vulture coming off the roost beside our home and heading for WV a half mile to the N. The roost houses some 25-200+ black and turkey vultures every night, unless some unknown threat forces them to move about 1/2 mile S to another woodlot. Happy New Year to all.*

– Bob Dean, 1/2 mile S of Berkeley Co., WV

*Saw my first bird on the tray outside the kitchen window as I was getting my first cup of coffee. It was a female Cardinal.*

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV

*First 2017 birds this morning were two Carolina Wrens fussing.*

*Happy New Year.*

– Laura Ceperley, Fayette and Kanawha Counties

*The Black-capped Chickadee was my first bird of 2017.*

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

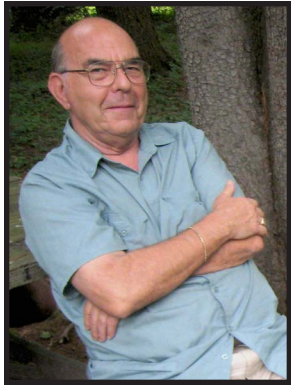
*I awoke to my first bird, a Carolina Wren, singing cheerfully at dawn. He must have known it was going to be a beautiful day.*

– Heather McSharry, Eastern Panhandle, WV

*First birds of the year were 2 singing Carolina Wrens at dawn.*

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV

## JIM DENHAM PASSES



James H. Denham, 83, of Bridgeport, Ohio, died Sunday, November 27, 2016 at Wheeling Hospital.

He was a veteran of the U.S.

Army, Director of Oglebay Institute's Brooks Nature Center, as well as being affiliated with OI's Stifel Fine Arts Center and Mansion Museum. Jim was a member of the Rock Hill Presbyterian Church, Oglebay Institute, Brooks Bird Club, and National Imperial Glass Collectors' Society, Inc., for which he was co-chairman of the "Big I".

His hobbies included working with stained glass and stepping stones. A Memorial Service was held on December 17, 2016 at the Rock Hill Presbyterian Church, Bellaire, Ohio with Rev. David Demarest officiating.

## MARTHA GIFFEN

Martha Stratton Giffen, 77, of Barnesville, died Sunday, December 4, 2016, at her home.



Martha was born on November 17, 1939, in Flushing, Ohio, to the late Howard Ephraim and Mabel (Whinnery) Stratton.

Martha attended Kent State University where she received a Bachelor of Education and went on to Ohio University where she earned a Master Degree and worked for 37 years in Ohio Public Schools teaching elementary education. She was a recorded minister for Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends- Conservative and a member

of Stillwater Monthly Meeting of Ohio Yearly Meeting since 1976. She was a member of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and led a Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in Great Britain with her husband, Randy and they attended the World Council in Japan. Martha belonged to the Brooks Bird Club of Oglebay Institute, Belmont County Farm Bureau High Ridge Council, Rock Hill Grange, National Trail Quilters Guild, was a former 4-H advisor for Rock Hill 4-H Club and a member of the Old Iron Power Club.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, James Randall Giffen; and sister-in-law, Alice Jean Hall. She is survived by her husband, Fred Duane Wickham, Sr.; five children, 12 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and three siblings. Following Martha's wishes, her body will be donated to Ohio University where she will continue to teach even into death.

A memorial service, after the manner of Friends was held on Saturday, December 10, 2016, at 10 a.m. at Stillwater Meeting House in Barnesville, Ohio.

## ELEANOR BUSH

July 1-1913–January 8-2017

At 103, Eleanor was probably the oldest surviving decedent of Zackquill Morgan who founded Morgantown. She spent most of her life in Phillippi, WV, the home of her beloved husband, Kyle. From her explorations of Barbour County A Checklist of the Flora of Barbour County, West Virginia was published in 2004 at the age of 91. This was the result of many, many trips throughout Barbour County and WV. She was a life member of the West Virginia Native Plant Society, with a membership going back to the founding of the society, and was a long-time member of the Brooks Bird Club of WV. Among her many roles she served as president (or chair) of the West Virginia Garden Clubs, and the WV chapter of the Nature Conservancy where she was a founding member. She was instrumental in two major TNC projects, Cranesville Swamp on the WV/



border and Hungry Beech, north of Charleston. In her younger years she was a frequent field companion of Charlie Baird, Bill

Grafton and others of WV field botany lore. She is survived by her daughter, Caroline Esposito, who is a psychologist in Morgantown.

## GRADY MCRAE

H. Grady McRae, M.D., 89, of Bluefield, WV, died at home on Thursday December 1, 2016, following a long illness.

The only child of the late Henry Grady McRae, Sr. and Louise (Leake) McRae, he was born June 5, 1927 in Burkburnett, TX and grew up in Corpus Christi, TX.

He was a pediatrician, having graduated from the University of Texas, Class of



1954. Completing part of his pediatric residency in Honolulu, HI, he returned to the Corpus Christi Naval Base where he served four years in

the Navy as a doctor. He then continued his pediatric medical career practicing in Hazard, KY, Beckley, WV, in Bluefield, WV at Bluefield Sanitarium, and finally in Matoaka, WV, at Bluestone Health Clinic for a total of 44 years in practice.

He is survived by his wife, Anna; daughter, Ella Louise McRae-Borkholm and husband Clay of Dade City, FL, and other extended family.

Grady and Anna belonged to the Bibbee Nature Club and the Brooks Bird Club of West Virginia.

## NEW OHIO BIRD CHECKLIST

*(This was made available recently on the Ohio ListServ.)*

A new Ohio Birding Checklist is now available, and it includes:

All bird species that are currently on the official list of Ohio birds, as of December 31, 2016.

The taxonomic order and nomenclature, within each section, based on the Fifty-Seventh Supplement (July 2016) to the AOU Checklist of North American Birds.

Three separate species groupings/ explanations for: Easier To See (203 species), Harder to See (93 species), and Ohio Review List Species (132),

A 'difficulty code number' for each species that may be most helpful to younger or beginning birders, not yet familiar with which Ohio birds are more common or expected.

The two direct links of this most recent/current revision are:

[http://ohiobirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Ohio-Birding-Checklist\\_NoLines.pdf](http://ohiobirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Ohio-Birding-Checklist_NoLines.pdf)

[http://ohiobirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Ohio-Birding-Checklist\\_Lines.pdf](http://ohiobirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Ohio-Birding-Checklist_Lines.pdf)

Good Birding to everyone!  
– Dan Sanders (Central Ohio)

## NEW BIRD SONG TRAVEL BOOK

Join bird song expert Donald Kroodsmas on a ten-week, ten-state bicycle journey as he travels with his son from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lingering and listening to our continent sing as no one has before. Beautifully illustrated throughout with drawings of birds and scenes, the book features QR codes that link to audio bird song, taking you on a travel adventure unlike any other--accompanied on every leg of your journey by bird song. These audio files can also be downloaded free of charge at [www.listeningtoacontinentsing.com](http://www.listeningtoacontinentsing.com)

## POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY ATTEMPTS TO "RAISE THE ROOST" FOR CHIMNEY SWIFTS

During 2016 PVAS began a campaign to protect Chimney Swift habitat on Shepherd University campus. The project began when concerned community members learned that one of the West Virginia's largest roosting sites, Sara Cree Hall, was set for demolition spring of 2017. Upon raising awareness and reaching out to local stakeholders, PVAS initiated a mitigation effort to ensure that Chimney Swifts would continue to have roosting habitat on Shepherd University campus.

In November 2016 Knutti Boiler Hall, a previously popular roosting site, was uncapped for Chimney Swift habitat. In addition, PVAS is looking to "RAISE THE ROOST" and build an additional roosting structure near the storm water retention area on University Ave, an area with abundant food availability that will not be developed in the future.

How can you support the swifts? You can make a difference:

- Join annual bird counts
- Leave chimneys open, or uncap them
- Build a faux chimney tower
- Raise awareness in your community
- Donate to PVAS and help RAISE THE ROOST!

PVAS members have monitored Chimney Swifts in our region for decades. We have identified several habitats that Chimney Swifts occupy and are always looking for more. Join us every August and September during the "Swift Night Out" events, where we monitor roosts and count Chimney Swifts! The data collected will contribute to nationwide surveys and databases, for use by researcher and ongoing conservation efforts. Review the "additional information" provided at the bottom of this page to learn more.



### Project Status (updated 1/24/17)

PVAS is in the preliminary stages of the "RAISE THE ROOST" campaign. Harpers Ferry Job Corps has agreed to help with the construction of our roost tower and we are finalizing our engineering plans. Simultaneously we are working to procure other materials (brick, cement and rebar) needed for the construction. The partnerships and community support surrounding this project confirms what a remarkable community we have in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

If you are interested to learn more, get involved and support the "RAISE THE ROOST" project please contact Bridget Tinsley at 304-261-6016 or send an email.

## XENO-CANTO.ORG, A WORLDWIDE BIRD SONG WEBSITE

Your editor ran across a phenomenal bird song website recently, Xeno-Canto.org. Xeno-canto has a number of basic principles. Everyone can make a valuable contribution, by adding recordings, but also by sharing opinions, solving mystery recordings, programming, offering advice or experience, and by spreading the word.

Recordings are shared under BY-NC Creative Commons licenses to allow dis-

tribution provided recordists are credited and provided no commercial proceeds are sought. Any recording is welcome. If you want to add your recording, of whatever quality, it is welcome, and will remain in the collection provided the identification is 100% correct. Recordings can be searched, collated, mapped, listened to, viewed (as sonograms), rated for quality, etc.

All recordings can be downloaded, sorted by location or bird species, and much more. As of publishing, there are 344,627 recordings of 9,703 species, by 3,504 recordists utilizing 5,091 hours of recording time. A truly wonderful resource.

## CORRESPONDENCE

*I received this reply to a message I'd sent some time back, trying to make sure folks got some signs.*

*"Gosh, just saw your letter from long ago! We received our signs, and they hang proudly in our private park. Thanks so much! I ordered them from a 1969 Mother Earth News ad, by the way. Glad you still provide them! Save the wildlife! Signed, SJ"*

*How 'bout that?! Still benefitting form Mother Earth News, after all this time!*

– Cynthia D. Ellis

*Congratulations to our own Bill Mead of Bethesda, Ohio, for 30 years of participation in Project Feederwatch. Bill has collected scientific data concerning the winter birds around his feeders since the inception of the continent-wide program in the winter of 1987-88. Project Feederwatch is a cooperative research project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada to monitor the large-scale movements of birds and to collect data about their populations over time. Bill's numerous feeding stations model many different ways birds can be attracted and fed. He received a letter of recognition and beautiful Cedar Waxwing mug from the Cornell Lab. We congratulate Bill on his continuing efforts to support birds by collecting scientific data—a cornerstone of the Brooks Bird Club.*

*Dear Brooks Bird Club,*

*Thank you very much for your donation to the Three Rivers Avian Center. We appreciate your continued help and support very much! We finished last year with the next to highest patient intake in our 26 years: 225 representing 50 species. This year has started off in a rush of new patients, including 3 with lead poisoning. Our educational programs have reached 15,176 people with 74 events, including 15 WV State Parks in the Summer performance series, 18 public schools and 15 TRAC sponsored events.*

– Wendy Perrone, Executive Director  
Three Rivers Avian Center, Hinton, WV

*According to a Christmas card that some of us received, BBC members Zach and Annie Fowler of Morgantown, WV, are expecting their first child in June. Congratulations to you both!*

– Ed.

## ODDITIES IN A YARD IN HEATERS, WV

*Former BBC member Doug Jolley of Heaters, WV, has had some remarkable bird life in his yard this "winter", and even has blooming flowers. Here are a few of his highlights.*



*A Red-shouldered Hawk dispatches a turtle. A turtle in February? On Valentine's Day?*



*A Baltimore Oriole eating peanut butter and black sunflower seeds.*



*A Ruby-crowned Kinglet feeds on suet.*

*Through 1/30, our oriole has appeared every day since late November! Always first in the morning and off and on throughout any day I have to watch. Additionally, I have had a ruby crowned kinglet since sometime in early December too.*

– Doug Jolley

## CERULEAN WARBLER PROJECT COMPLETES FIRST YEAR

**Opportunity to help Cerulean Warblers and other forest wildlife on your property**

In the first year of the Cerulean Warbler Appalachian Forestland Enhancement Project ([http://amjv.org/index.php/private\\_landowners/cerulean-warbler-appalachian-forestland-enhancement-project](http://amjv.org/index.php/private_landowners/cerulean-warbler-appalachian-forestland-enhancement-project)), private landowners from across West Virginia enrolled almost 450 acres to benefit Cerulean Warblers and other wildlife. As we speak, landowners that signed up in year one are embarking on projects that diversify canopy structure by removing low quality trees, control non-native plants to promote native vegetation, and ensure healthy future forests through tree planting. We still have much to do to reach our goal of enhancing 4,000 acres of forestland though. To help reach our goal, we made getting involved easier by removing the requirement to have a forest stewardship plan for your property. That means most landowners who own forestland and are willing to partner with conservation organizations, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, West Virginia Division of Forestry, and National Wild Turkey Federation, are eligible to apply for funding.

To seek funding during the next year, we have one remaining application deadline of May 31, 2017. If you are interested in learning more about the project or for help getting started, please contact me!

– Kyle R. Aldinger

WV Cerulean Warbler

Partnership Coordinator

National Wild Turkey Federation

1550 Earl Core Road, Suite 200

Morgantown, WV 26505

Mobile: 717-557-4835

Office: 304-284-7595

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## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

*I just walked the dog on the Par 3 golf course in Pipestem S.P., I found at least 7 Red Crossbills (three feeding and calling in the white pines & four that flew over). We have had a tremendous crop of white pine cones this season. Last time it was this big we had a group of at least 18 crossbills on the park from mid-June, 2004, to mid-February, 2005.*

Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 11/2/16

*The first official bird walk for the PVAS's newly acquired 12-acre Cool Spring Preserve just south of Charles Town in Jefferson County took place this morning. It was a crisp start in the high 30's but what a great day it turned out to be. The warming of the morning sun gave us a tremendous flurry of bird activity. We were barely out of the parking lot when we had over 10 species of birds and it only got better. We saw a total of 33 species, including a large flock of Rusty Blackbirds; large flock of Cedar Waxwings that seemed to follow us on the trails for some great looks; both kinglets; Winter Wren; Song, White-crowned, White-throated, and surprisingly a Fox Sparrow; Brown Creeper; Red-tailed & Red-shouldered Hawks and Harrier; and the other usuals. We added our birds to the new bird board at the Preserve and said goodbye happy that we saw some great looks at some neat birds!*

– Lynne Wiseman, 11/21/16

*Wow! Cooper's hawks--two days in a row. Yesterday about noon, a juvenile Cooper's hawk made a cameo visit to the top of the suet feeder stand in my backyard. I was able to quickly "scope" the hawk from the living room window, examining its beautiful plumage. It's golden yellow eye was such a contrast to the adult eye color.*

*And then about noon today, I saw a flash of movement from the side yard, while a gorgeous adult Cooper's hawk landed in a tree near the suet feeder stand. With pond water temperatures being warm for this time of year, numerous pond fish were extremely visible from above today. It's possible that their bright orange color attracted the interest of the hawk, who was sitting in a tree near the pond.*

*Raptor City it is here now, as a Red-shouldered hawk just flew slowly through the yard as well. Our resident Eastern Screech-owl has settled in a nest box for what looks like the winter season. The smaller birds have been doing a lot of scattering.*

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 12/1/16

*When I returned home a few nights ago, my wife told me that we had a tiny visitor - an owl. It had been sitting on our fence at the side of the house but one of our dogs caused it to fly off. So, I was surprised when a few minutes later I found it sitting on a plant hook attached to the back deck. It stayed for a while and then flew out to the fence beyond the feeders. Although we have checked to see if the Eastern Screech-owl has returned over the last four days, we haven't seen it again. We have been visited by owls in the yard in the past, but it is always a treat!*

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette WV, 12/3/16

*On the first day of Christmas...South Schoolhouse gave to me, 40 pipits in a black locust tree.*

*Sorry, this song came into my head as I stood gazing at this small bare tree filled with so many birds! Of course, just as soon as I ran past, the pipits dispersed into a cloud and settled into the stubby grass.*

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, 12/4/16

*Around 3:30 this afternoon I (finally) saw the leucistic Red-tailed Hawk that's been reported in the Cheat Lake area of Mon County. Caiden Haines photographed it a few weeks ago near the Ices Ferry Bridge, and a few days ago Cheyenne Carter posted about it on the Mountain State Birders Facebook page.*

*I was driving, and I saw the hawk fly over the Bowers Lane/Sunset Beach Road intersection near the entrance to the Greystone housing development, toward the lake. It was being chased by one of the local Red-shouldered Hawks. I pulled over into the Sunset Beach Marina /Lakehouse Restaurant parking lot and tried to see where the hawk had landed; from the backseat, my two-year old began shouting, "Uppie there! Uppie there!" and pointing. She was right; the hawk was perched uppie there in a tree along the steep bank, very close to the backs of the Greystone houses along the lake. Cool bird! Made my day.*

– Katie Fallon, Morgantown, WV, 12/7/16

*I went to Kathy King's Thursday the 15th as we were going to bird on the next day. The temperature dropped to 10 that night so we birdied from the kitchen window until mid-morning. I wish I could have half the birds she gets. We watched two pileateds, a sapsucker, Fox Sparrow, Purple Finches, and an array of about 13 other "regulars".*

*Our sojourn into the freezing weather wasn't bad either. Among the highlights was at least 45 Bald Eagles, 3 Golden Eagles, a raft of 45 plus Mallards, Great Blue Heron, a big*



*December Surf Scoters in Belle, WV  
– photo by Richard Gregg*



*A Baltimore Oriole on the wrong side of the calendar – photo by Doug Jolley*



## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

*flock of Horned Larks, a flock of 12 or more Killdeer, at least 15 red-tails, several Kestrels, and lots of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows. We just hope the birds are still around when we have the count in two weeks.*

– Jane Whitaker, Hardy Co., WV, 12/17/16

*This morning about 8:15, there was an adult Lark Sparrow feeding on some ground seed with some White-throated Sparrows and other birds. It was only there for a few minutes before being scared off by a couple of noisy Blue Jays coming in for a landing. I have not seen it again since.*

*The first time I had a Lark Sparrow in the yard was February 5th of this year and it was seen off and on during the first part of February and one last time for a brief visit on March 20. I hope the one I saw today will come back and stay around for awhile. It is such a beautifully marked bird and an unusual visitor for here.*

– Carol Del-Colle, Summit Point, WV, 12/20/16

*On my way home from the Pendleton Christmas Bird Count I stopped at the 90-degree turn on Houghlin Lane west of Petersburg in Grant County. Fred Atwood's trifecta of field birds reported yesterday were still there in the newly-plowed field. 135 Larks, 4-5 Snow Buntings, and 1 Lapland Longspur. A juvenile Northern Harrier was near the Route 28 intersection.*

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 12/20/16

*The large stick nest in a sycamore on my neighbor's property is indeed a new eagle's nest. My neighbor stopped by yesterday afternoon and asked if I'd seen it lately. If not go look at it. They had seen eagles flying around and actually saw one depositing a stick to the nest. I just came back from there and sure enough, a gorgeous Eagle was on the nest soaking up the sun. I'm thrilled that the eagles picked this location because my neighbors are super excited about it and recognize how special it is. What is neat is that the nest is almost at eye level when you are on their front lawn because the sycamore is in the floodplain meadow leading to the Shenandoah.*

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 12/27/16

*What a problem to have! Counting eagles in southern WV. We stopped in at the mouth of the Bluestone River this evening and met Brian Hirt who had been watching eagles over Bluestone Lake with Sharyn Ogden. The estimate had been 18 bald eagles but with a possibility of a golden or two.*

*We were there for about 45 minutes and feel confident that we had at least 16 bald eagles and one golden for sure but maybe two. The birds were very active, coming and going in sight so it was difficult to count them. Again, what a problem to have.*

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 1/8/17

*A three falcon day. Saw a kestrel south of bridge and peregrine sitting on bridge at New Martinsville. Then went to Proctor. As I was parking by water department saw what looked like a kestrel fly up into tree and shake water off. When I got bins on it looked all dark. Got scope out and sure enough a Merlin. As I watched it another bird flew up from a standing pool of water closer to me. Another Merlin landed a few tree down from the first one.*

– Wilma Jarrell, Wileyville, WV, 1/21/17

*Mike Griffith and I birded the usual Rte 2 spots this morning, stopping at Green Bottom WMA, Ashton, Robert C. Byrd Locks & Dam and Gallipolis Ferry. At RCB&LD, we were rewarded with four goose species. In addition to the Canada Geese that are normally present at the locks, we found Snow Geese, Ross's Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese. An Eastern Phoebe at the Guyan Creek Bridge on Rte 2 was also a nice surprise.*

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV

– *Sightings taken from  
WVBird ListServ*

## CHEAT LAKE WATER BIRD FALLOUT

First, thank you, thank you, Mike Slaven, for the alert about this fallout. I think it turned out to be a record WV day for me.

Most of the totals below are rough estimates. The huge rafts of distant ducks, with almost all the females looking the same, made it very difficult to count and to assign to species. I did my best.

The grand totals include 50 geese, 12 swans, 12,034 ducks, 1 loon, 26 grebes, 1 eagle, 10 coots, and 286 gulls. According to eBird, these include a new state record for Northern Shovelers and a tie with the previous state record for Redheads.

Here are the species totals:

Canada Goose - 50

Tundra Swan - 12

Wood Duck - 3 seen by Mike.

Gadwall - 190

American Wigeon - 29

Northern Pintail - 10

American Black Duck - 37

Mallard - 450

Northern Shoveler - 110

Canvasback - 190

Redhead - 900

Ring-necked Duck - 4

Scaup species - 7,500. Huge rafts with many other species mixed in. Some

Greater and Lesser seen, but historically, 99% should be Lessers.

Bufflehead - 1,878

Common Goldeneye - 25

Long-tailed Duck - 2. I saw a male. Mike saw a female before I arrived.

Hooded Merganser - 46

Common Merganser - 2

Red-breasted Merganser - 8

Ruddy Duck - 650

Common Loon - 1

Pied-billed Grebe - 19

Horned Grebe - 7

Bald Eagle - 1

American Coot - 10

Ring-billed Gull - 285

Herring Gull - 1 seen by Mike.

– *Terry Bronson  
Morgantown, WV, 12/14/16*

## CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

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Mary Jacobs – 513-816-9935

Joe Jarrell & Sue Westfall –  
Home – 304-982-5467  
Cell Joe – 304-926-0900

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

### BIBBEE CHAPTER

**April 22, 2017** – Time TBD. Ramp Dinner and Festival at Camp Creek State Park. We will be involved in bird and flower walks at Camp Creek State Park. Contact Allen and Mindy Waldron, awaldron@suddenlink.net.

**April 2017** – Time and date TBD. Bird and wildflower walk near Camp Brookside. Near Brooks on NPS site. Contact Mindy Waldron (above).

**May 13, 2017** – Century Day Bird Count. All day or the part of the day you can be involved. We count total species for the day, covering the Pipestem CBC Circle. Tally at the Hinton DQ afterwards. Contact Jim Phillips, jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

**April or May 2017** – Date and time TBD. Walk on the Trail in Princeton, WV, with Jim Phillips for birds and all things natural. Contact Jim (above).

### HANDLAN CHAPTER

**March 20, 2017** - March Meeting at South Charleston Library, 6:30pm. Paul Wallace will discuss a Panama trip.

**April 17, 2017** - April Meeting at South Charleston Library, 6:30pm. Steven Wilson of the WV DNR and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will discuss the Cerulean Warbler Forest Enhancement Project.

**May 15, 2017** - Annual Potluck Picnic, 6:00pm at Coonskin Park.

**HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER**

**March 21, 2017** – “Mystery Birds” by Jay Buckelew.

**April 18, 2017** - “Bruce Peninsula” by Larry Helgerman and Mary Grey. “Bring a friend to the meeting” night.

**April 22, 2016** – Raccoon Creek SP in PA. Joint outing with the 3 Rivers Birding Club of Pittsburgh. 9:30 at Picnic Area West. Covered dish lunch; bring place settings, drinks and one dish. Contact Ryan Tomazin, wwwarblers@hotmail.com

**May 16, 2017** – Middle Wheeling Creek Shelter picnic. There will be a walk/exploration for birds and wildflowers 4:30pm, covered-dish supper at 6:15. If you cannot make the walk, there will be plenty of things to see near the shelter.

**MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER**

**March** – *Shirley Radcliffe*  
**304-428-8520**

**Mar. 16, 2017** – Seneca Lake, Ohio, 8:00am. Meet at the WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV, bring lunch.

**Mar. 23, 2017** – Middle Island area, 8:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch

**Mar. 30, 2017** – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am. ORINWR Parking Lot.

**April Coordinator** – *Jeanette Esker*  
**304-863-8765**

Apr. 6, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

Apr. 13, 2017 – Elberfeld’s Farm, 8:00am Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Apr. 20, 2017 – Johnson T Janes Park, 8:00am. Parking lot, east end of 27th Street, Parkersburg.

Apr. 27, 2017 – Birds & Flowers, Newell’s Run, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, bring lunch.

**May Coordinator** – *Nina Ott* **304-863-6020**

**May 4, 2017** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**May 6, 2017** – North American Migration Count.

**May 11, 2017** – Ohio Birding Route Trail, 8:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**May 13, 2017** – Pat Collins farm, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown.

**May 18, 2017** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**May 25, 2017** – Hocking Hills, 7:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**June Coordinator** – *Jon Benedetti*  
**304-295-8945**

**June 1, 2017** – “The Wilds”, Ohio, all-day trip, 7:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, bring lunch.

**June 3, 2017** – Birds & Breakfast, 7:00am. McDonough Log Cabin “A”, bring finger food and drink.

**June 8, 2017** – Crown City Wildlife Area, Ohio, 7:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7, bring lunch.

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**NATURE HAPPENINGS  
AROUND THE STATE****POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON**

**Mar. 20, 2017** – Spring Bird Walk at Shannondale Springs, 8:00 AM. Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area

**Mar. 29, 2017** – Harpers Ferry Bird Walk: Virginius Island, 7:30 AM - 10:30 AM.

**April 26, 2017** – Bird Walk at Harper’s Ferry National Park, Murphy’s Farm, 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM.

**May 09, 2017** – Celebrate IMBD! Bird Walk at Grabill Farm, 7:00 AM. Meet at Shop and Save, 147 Roaring Lion Dr., Hedgesville, WV.

**May 11, 2017** – Celebrate IMBD! Bird Walk at the historic Claymont Mansion property, 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Claymont Mansion outside of Charles Town.

**May 14, 2017** – Celebrate IMBD! Mother’s Day Nature Walk at Stauffer’s Marsh, 7:30 AM - 10:30 AM. Stauffer’s Marsh Nature Preserve, Berkeley County

**CANAAN VALLEY NWR**

**Mar. 11, 2017** – Lion or Lamb Bird Walk, 8am. We never know what early March will bring us in the Valley. Join Casey Rucker for a tour of the Freeland Boardwalk to see if there are new arrivals, lingering winter visitors, and the usual suspects. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center.

**Mar. 25, 2017** – Beginning Bird Walk, 7:30am and 10am. Can we tell birds of a feather apart? If we can tell differences like male from female or older from younger birds, when we see them interacting we may be able to infer distinctive behavioral characteristics of a species or common behaviors shared across species. We meet in the visitor’s center parking lot of the Wildlife Refuge, and we have binoculars to loan.

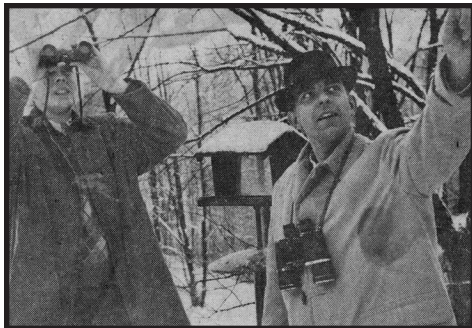
**WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS****CHIEF’S CHALLENGE OF 2017** –

Back by popular request, Go Hike! is the 2017 outdoor challenge. The chief of parks, Sam England, is challenging all ages to hike 100 miles (or more) on a trail at a West Virginia State Park or State Forest in the calendar year 2017.

The hike challenge invites participants to hike 100 miles in 2017. In those 100 miles of hiking or walking, please include participation in 17 miles of hike/walk/strolls conducted at a state park or forest by a state park naturalist or activities coordinator is requested.

Each person accepting the Chief’s Challenge is asked to enroll individually. Registration is only required one time and sooner is better, but anytime is welcomed. Enrolling doesn’t mean you have to complete the challenge, but it sure gives some motivation to get outside and walk or hike at a state park or forest in 2017.

A Chief’s Challenge hiking log sheet is available to download at [http://www.wvstateparks.com/Hikes\\_Walks.html](http://www.wvstateparks.com/Hikes_Walks.html).



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### **A Sad Season**

*– In a very short time span,  
we lost four long-time members.*

*Above, Headquarters Chapter  
member Jim Denham birds  
in Oglebay in 1964 with Carl  
Slater, current HQ president.*

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