



THE MAIL BAG

A PUBLICATION OF THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB OF WEST VIRGINIA
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RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note



In just a few short months, the BBC will celebrate our 85th anniversary, in style, as it were, at Oglebay Park, ensconced amongst rolling green hills (Shakespeare is on the TV; allow me my artistic liberty). We hope to have many join us to enjoy programs by Lang Elliott (left), noted voice of Stokes birding CDs and much more, and Bird Watcher's Digest editor and co-publisher Bill Thompson III. There will be food, drinks, bird walks, educational programs, the Membership meeting and more! Join us in Wheeling, WV, from October 20-22.



Many thanks to all of the participants, speakers and field trip leaders at this year's Foray in Hardy County. It was a pleasure to have everything run so smoothly for so many people. We are encouraged by all of the new members who chose to make this their first appearance at Foray, and it was fun to show them the ropes. For my part as a co-director, I am really looking forward to next June, when we look to visit the wonderful mountains of Pocahontas County.

RIEFFENBERGER GIFT TO FUND MARIETTA COLLEGE LIBRARY EXPANSION

Marietta College President Bill Ruud and West Virginia Highlands Conservancy president Cindy Ellis accepted checks totaling \$2,250,000 donated by David Goldenberg on behalf of the Mary Moore Adams and Joseph C. Rieffenberger estate.

Mary Moore Adams Rieffenberger passed away at age 93 in 2012 at her residence in Elkins, W.Va. She was a 1939 graduate of Marietta College, majoring in library science. Along with her husband, Joseph C. "Joe" Rieffenberger, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 89, Mary Moore, was remembered at a reception. The family presented a check for \$1.5 million at the home of Marietta College President Bill Ruud.

"Today we celebrate their generosity...it's just absolutely exciting," said Ruud. "The gift is broadly for academic programs for the Legacy Library and we will be able to use this gift for a long, long time."

Ruud explained that Mary Moore and Joe were great proponents of literacy and saving the earth. Two other organizations were also presented with donations, the Na-

ture Conservancy and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia's oldest environmental advocacy group, which will turn 50 this year and was founded in part by Joe Rieffenberger.

"We're just speechless," said Cindy Ellis, president of the WVHC. "This is just monumental and we will be able to do so much for our organization, of which Joe Rieffenberger was a founding father. They parented our group...it was like their child."

– *paraphrased from The Parkersburg News and Sentinel, 7/11/17*

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JAY BUCKELEW

It looks like my last duty as BBC president will be to preside over our 85th anniversary meeting this October 20th to 22nd, at Oglebay's Wilson Lodge in Wheeling. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at this event. The club is subsidizing this meeting to make our 85th as economical as possible for our members to attend. The fine program planned for this meeting, described elsewhere in this issue of THE MAIL BAG, should attract many. Please register as soon as possible so that we can make plans for the big crowd expected.

I want to thank Janice Emrick and our MAIL BAG editor, Ryan Tomazin, for running, this summer, one of the best BBC Forays I have ever attended. The Hardy County Foray programs were excellent, and the participants were enthusiastic and helpful; the birding was terrific. Bald Eagles everywhere! Yes, and rattlesnakes, too.

– *Albert R. Buckelew, Jr., BBC President*

CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHANDLER S. ROBBINS

Contributed by Sally Egan

Six BBC members, LeJay Graffious, Sally Egan, Carol and Fred McCullough, and Jane and Stu Robbins, joined with many others, at the Patuxent Research Refuge National Wildlife Visitor Center on June 23, 2017 to celebrate the life and contributions of Chandler S. Robbins. Many photos and mementos filled the large, open space of the center. Some of the interesting items on display included his large 1962 tape recorder, Chan's 3 foot sonogram of a Winter Wren's song, 1947 log sheets of spring arrival dates of birds at Patuxent, and an eclectic assortment of items from the cabinet in Chan's office. Seven invited speakers, as well as others with "Chan" stories, gave those in attendance a peek into his warm, humble personality and many accomplishments.

Here are some short quotes from those who spoke: *feeling a lot of love here today; Chan - a consummate team leader, greatest teacher ever; icon; achieved so much without telling anyone what*

to do; never gave up on any field studies; 82 years of continuous involvement in the Christmas Bird Count, compiling 207 CBC reports; first to enter the CBC data on-line; established one of the longest running bird monitoring programs in Latin America leading to protected areas; the Chandler Robbins Biological Station is almost built in Guatemala; started Breeding Bird Survey in 1965 with 35 participants; 10,000 participants in BBS routes over the years with 5,000 routes in US, Canada and Mexico; both a scientist and advocate of citizen scientists.

Chan's daughter, Jane Robbins, related about finding her father's teenage doodles where he had drawn musical notes including $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ notes to denote the song of birds. Chan had a big heart for young people, telling them to dream

big with their sharp eyes and ears, stating that there are worlds to conquer.

A letter written by Chan was found at the Smithsonian referring to the last sighting of the Bachman's Warbler in Lorton VA on 5/11/54. In Chan's notes, he compared the song to that of the Northern Parula, Golden-winged Warbler and Prairie Warbler, but unmusical.

Jim Priest gave an emotional recollection. He was a 20 year old Navy Sea Bee on Midway in 1964 who was assigned to assist in albatross research. Chan treated him like "family" and gave him the nickname "Bloody Fingers Jim" for his work with Chan on petrels. When Jim had the opportunity to visit Chan 45 years later, Chan remembered him and called him by his nickname.

George Robbins said that as a child he was sworn to secrecy about the Bachman's Warbler. He went wherever his dad went and when people asked George how he knew so much

about birds, he would say, "I learned from the best."

The Friends of Patuxent Chandler S. Robbins Memorial Endowment, requested by the family, is inspired by Chan's lifelong love of birds. Specifically, one project is to develop an interpretive sign about Chan's work and the research he inspired related to identifying, monitoring, and studying birds and their habitats. The sign will be located near the Patuxent Visitor Center. Contributions may be made to Friends of Patuxent for the Chandler S. Robbins Memorial Endowment, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708.

This celebration of Chan's life can be viewed online at <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/robbins/>

CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

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CHARLES TEETS PASSES

Charles Curtis Teets of Eglon, WV, passed away on May 17 at Garrett County Hospital after a long bout with an autoimmune illness that affected his lungs. He had been enjoying the Brooks publications for some time. He had been an avid bird watcher since early childhood. He was a graduate of West Virginia University and was employed by the Federal Government as a soil scientist. He returned home to operate the family farm in the 80s and retired as a dairy farmer.

His passion for birds never wavered throughout his life. He found great joy hiking to remote areas and sitting for hours with his binoculars observing the birds. When his eyesight started failing him in his later year, he expanded his bird knowledge so that he knew most of them by sound so that he could continue to enjoy the beauty of his feathered friends.



LeJay, Carol, Sally & Fred flank Jane (Chan) & Stu Robbins – photo by George Robbins

2017 TUCKER COUNTY FORAY DAILY REPORTS

Fri., June 9 – Sat. June 10, 2017

Reconnecting with old friends and making new ones were a big part of the first evening and first full day of Foray. After a good meal, a group meeting was held to work out logistics for the multitude of activities occurring during the week. The evening closed with a serenade of Whip-poor-wills who sang throughout most of the night.

Fourteen birders, including youngsters Auggie and Maya Sidlo, accompanied leader, Janice Emrick, on an early morning bird walk. Twenty-one species were seen or heard. After breakfast, young Luke Whitaker told us about seeing an immature Bald Eagle eating a dead possum.

Following lunch, time was allocated to explore nearby territory. It was “National Get Outdoors Day” with free admission to the Trout Pond Recreation Area of the George Washington National Forest. Many of us enjoyed walks around Rockcliffe Lake and Trout Pond. Others went to Kimsey Lake and Dam and saw an active eagle’s nest, female Common Merganser with young, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Worm-eating Warblers, ravens, and a kestrel. A fossil trip led by Michael Jones found Crinoids and Trilobites. A Northern Bobwhite was heard at Parker Hollow Lake.



Baby Barn Swallows - Darrell Good

Following dinner and the bird list, Wil Hershberger of Nature Sounds Co. presented a very fascinating program on the songs of the Vesper Sparrow. Wil has nearly 2,200 recordings at the Macauley Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Songbirds learn songs from males in the area that they will nest the following year and they learn during a sensitive period that lasts less than 18 months. The

Vesper Sparrow is a breed of the grasslands and is disappearing from the East. It is at 1% of its 1996 population. This sparrow can have 90 possible syllables in its lexicon. One can tell them apart by their differing arrangement of syllables which can change from year to year and they can have up to 6 different songs. Pesticide exposure makes their songs more like that of a juvenile. Neighboring males share more syllables than non-neighbors. They also have a “flight” song at the end of the season with some different syllables. The first full day of Foray ended with much to ponder!

– *by Sally Egan*



Lost River Resort - Ryan Tomazin

Sun. June 11, 2017

The caravan left camp after breakfast and traveled north on Rt. 259 and west on Rt. 55 to the first stop at Parker Hollow Lake. We observed an active Bald Eagle nest with two immature birds. At the boat dock, we found an immature Common Merganser, Belted Kingfisher, Tree Swallows working the water’s surface for insects and a family of Killdeer playing in the Teasel. Leaving the lake, we spotted an Osprey on a snag north of the water and a Great Blue Heron overhead.

We continued to Moorefield via Rt. 48 we scoured the disturbed area behind Walmart for Blue Grosbeak. Sightings here included Indigo Bunting, Fish Crow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Black Bird, cardinal, and goldfinch. The younger birders enjoyed scaling the mounds of dirt and gravel.

Jane let us to the barn in Old Fields, where Barn Owls have been seen regularly. We had a picnic lunch at Brighton Park and planned strategy for the afternoon.



Many beautiful farm views - Ryan Tomazin

Some travelers left for the swimming hole at Rock Cliff Lake where they enjoyed a cooling swim with a healthy population of Red-spotted Newts.

The rest of the group crossed the South Branch of the Potomac to meander along back roads with Walnut Bottom Road as our goal. Walnut Bottom Road offers a variety of habitat as it winds through farmland, scrub and edge, eventually climbing to old woods where it joins Rt. 48. Sightings included Red-tail Hawk, Barred Owl, kestrel, Eastern Kingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker and Cerulean and Worm-eating Warblers.

Highlight was the discovery of a fledgling Scarlet Tanager hopping about in the road way. Parent birds were flitting back and forth across



B.W. Hawk - Darrell Good

the road, bringing insects to the chick.

Dick Diener dutifully inventoried plants. Notable finds for the day included Pennsylvania Pellitory (a member of the nettle family), Viper’s Bug Gloss, Early Saxifrage and, new for the area, Proliferous Pink.

– *by Jenny Eaton*

Mon., June 12, 2017

The morning began with Jay Buckelew having a Barred Owl covering prey in the middle of the road on the way to his study plot. Both study plots and BBS routes

were ran that morning. The highlight of the morning being a Yellow-Breasted Chat found on the McCullough's run. After having a wonderful breakfast we went over the plan for the day which would begin with Jay Buckelew's tree workshop. We explored the variety of species within the camp boundaries. Another group also went in search of the chat from earlier that morning.

We returned to Camp for lunch and discussed the morning findings. After lunch Claudette Simard led a group on a geology field trip to the western end of the county along Corridor H to see the geology that the construction had unveiled. Several other groups went out in search of birds or plants in the local area.

After dinner, Michael Jones led a program on avian fossils and the research going on to explore their stories. To end the evening, Ryan Tomazin, Zanon Sines, and Darrell and Nevin Good went out in search of Barn Owls and other night birds. They first stopped at the Walmart in Moorefield in search of Blue Grosbeak, but got a Grasshopper Sparrow singing instead. Shortly before dusk they went to the farm where the barn owls were expected to await them. At dusk they heard the barn owls hissing and one flew into sight. As the evening went on multiple owls were calling, hissing and flying in and out of the barn. A life bird for many in attendance. They also heard three Willow Flycatchers calling at night in the valley below the barn. On the way back to camp they heard a Yellow-breasted Chat, Whip-poor-will, Eastern Screech Owl and Barred Owl. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the numbers and diversity of the evening.

– *by Orion Metheny*



Barn Owl in silo - Ryan Tomazin

Tue., June 13, 2017

We awoke to a beautiful cool morning, perfect for birders to do their morning activities. All then convened to a wonderful breakfast of scrambled eggs, pancakes and chopped strawberries. Ryan shared a barn owl video obtained when he and others went out the night before. Some who camped said they heard a bobcat screaming during the night. After breakfast we packed up and assembled on the front porch.



Jim Bowen talks chestnuts - Ryan Tomazin

Most of us went to the Great North Mountain Trail wilderness area to look at a special chestnut tree. The American Chestnut has all but died out because of the chestnut tree blight. We went to see a tree that has stayed alive for many years and displays healed cankers. Jim Bowen (pictured above) from the West Virginia Department of Forestry was our guide. On the trip to see the chestnut tree a discussion ensued about a plant called Turkey's Neck, which the plant guide said was on average 15 decimeters tall. We determined this to be 59.06 inches. Some used their actual brains to do this calculation; another used her phone. While out in the field we also saw some Bowman's Root with white pink flowers. We all returned to camp for a lunch of sloppy joes, fries, slaw and cookies. The temperature at late morning was in the low-to-mid 80s.

For the afternoon Claudette and Mike organized another trip to look for trilobites. The rest of us went to the classroom to hear Rich Bailey, a state ornithologist from the WV DNR present an excellent slideshow on the endangered loggerhead shrike. Folks scattered thereafter to wander, go boating and nap until

the dinner hour. After a dinner of noodle casserole, the bird count ensued.

The day's formal proceedings wrapped up with a bee talk by Sam Droege, "Your yard as bee observatory: who needs to watch birds?" One of the take-home messages was in support of native plant cultivation: *Lose the plant- lose the bee*. For more information one can Google Sam Droege or email him at sdroege@usgs.gov.

– *by Adrienne Salm*

Wed., June 14, 2017

Wednesday started as usual with the Breeding Bird Survey and the Singing Male Censuses at around 5:00. The first Swamp Sparrow of the week was found on the early morning bird walk at 6:30. After breakfast, everybody split up. The majority went with Sam Droege to study native bees and plants found in shale barrens. The three of us that were left went with Jay Buckelew on a hike in Lost River State Park.



Jay B. and Nevin G. hiking - Adrienne Salm

We started at the administration building to get maps to plan our route. At about 10:00 we set off on the trail towards the Cranny Crow Overlook. Along the 1.6 mile hike, we identified many different species of wildflowers such as Viper's Bugloss, Venus's Looking Glass, Red Columbine, and birds such as Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Towhee, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow and many more. The overlook offered a spectacular view of Hardy, Pendleton, Shenandoah, Rockingham, and Augusta counties. At around 2:00, we were back at camp.

The shale barrens expedition started at Kimsey Run Lake. While there, the participants saw mostly honeybees and



Rare May Blue-winged Teal - Darrell Good
lots of different kinds of native bees. The highlight birds at the lake were a Blue-winged Teal and a Merlin. From Kimsey, the group went to the shale barren near Lost River State Park where they caught more species of bees and saw blooming Prickly Pear Cactus. Then they had lunch in the park and caught Seal Salamanders and crayfish. After this, the group went to Misty Valley Hardware for ice cream where they saw Red-Eared Sliders in a nearby pond. Then they went to another shale barren near Wardensville. There they caught leaf-cutter bees, many more native bumblebee species, and grasshoppers.

The drive back to camp was more bird watching than bee catching. Along Squirrel Gap road they saw a wide variety of birds including, but not limited to the following: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Northern Parula, Turkey Vulture, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Prairie Warbler. They also found a Common Raven who was feeding its young. After they returned to camp, there were severe rain storms and nearly everyone stayed indoors until evening.

– *by Nevin Good*

Thu., June 15, 2017

Thursday June, 15 dawned cloudy/dry, all early jaunts proceeding. These included Scott's loblolly pine singing male census and Jay's singing male census with Martin's able support. The 10-mile run crew (McCulloughs and Foxes) encountered fog but heard Yellow Warbler, Wood Thrush, Field and Song Sparrows and more. Wilma Jarrell led the 6:30 AM bird walk up Moonshine Hollow Rd. Wood Thrush greeted us as we entered this glen carpeted in ferns (Hay-scented, Christmas, and Interrupted). Scarlet Tanager sang from a tall tulip

poplar. Ascending, we heard phoebe and pewee and watched the Acadian utter his explosive "Pizza!" We passed red lacquered shelf fungus on a snag pitted with pileated hammering. Chris Tingley, along with Nevin and Gideon Good, spied dozens of red efts underfoot. Chris spotted a movement in the dark trees ahead: two recently-fledged Barred Owls and an adult gave us great views! The morning's list also included Louisiana Waterthrush, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-eyed Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, robin and catbird. At breakfast, the meadow tenters reported a bobcat-spotting.

The morning program speaker, Heather Walsh, a PhD candidate working with USGS, presented the hard facts regarding fish health. Chemical contaminants create a scary scenario of compromised immune function, troubling mortality, and genetic disturbance. Reproductive issues result even more from agricultural herbicide spraying than from waste water carrying actual hormones. Alternate morning activities included a return to Tuesday's chestnut tree workshop site—yielding good looks at a Blue-headed Vireo and Black-throated-blue Warbler.

Janice awarded prizes at lunch for the following Mug Contest winners: Juanita for the prettiest, Jane W. for the best Grandma mug, Martin the finest Unmug, Darrell Good for most unusual mug, and a tie between Carl and Hans for the best owl mug. Among other morning reports, Jay gave explicit directions to where a possible Kentucky Warbler sang.

Following lunch, Missy Braham presented the latest activities from Trish Miller's Telemetry study of Golden Eagles (Foray programs 2006 and 2013). Data show that eastern and western Golden Eagles are genetically distinct, though they are not yet labeled as subspecies. The eastern birds migrate through the northeast to winter in the Appalachians, traveling updrafts. Telemetry data show 80 % of this eastern Golden Eagle population breed in the Gaspé Peninsula. As the eastern goldens move northward in August they leave the sat-

ellite transmission range, continuing to collect data which is finally retrieved in December when their southward journey reenters satellite range. Major threats to eagles include leghold traps/snares, wind turbines, and habitat loss.

Later afternoon expeditions included a Whetzel Hollow Road orchard stop with abundant cherries and mulberries yielding superb views of Red-headed Woodpeckers as well as Cedar Waxwings and Baltimore Oriole.

The Good family singers, Cecelia and sons Darrell, Nevin, and Gideon, royally entertained us after dinner on guitar, banjo and bass (minus sister Samantha on the fiddle) with memorable gospel songs (I'll Fly Away, How Great Thou Art...) and a Johnny Cash favorite. A very special treat.



Fledgling Barred Owl- Darrell Good

The day capped at dusk with a Barn Owl panorama against a backdrop of flashing fireflies. Dusk deepened. We waited. Soft restless grunts arose within the silo. Then parents sailed forth on silent wings and beckoning calls. Finally, fledglings tumbled into the sky, spiraling, keening. At last catching the air, they soared straightaway, 'yipeeing'. Janice's video on Facebook captures this drama.

– *by Jane Robbins*

Fri., June 16, 2017

12 people went out on the morning walk. And 42 species of birds were heard. Bob Dean took us on a morning adventure up to Poplar Hollow, a gated road in the George Washington Forest. It was an upward grade for some distance. Plenty of oven birds were heard along the way. Lots of plants to ponder. On the top of the mountain, Chris Tingley came face to

face with a good sized rattlesnake, Both scared each other and retreated away. Rain started coming down right after lunch. Most people went on their own adventures for the afternoon.

The Emricks, Jane Robbins and Wilma Jarrell explored the river road south of Moorefield. Where they saw a Spotted Sandpiper, Wilma saw a Pine Warbler on the nest.

The evening program was brought to us by Wade Snyder. He is a Photographer and also works for USDA, where he grows and tests varieties of Blackberries and Strawberries. While on the job he took some wonderful pictures of kestrels in a nest box, Killdeer and their gravel nest, and a Baltimore Oriole pulling string for a nest. Great pictures! Of course, couldn't end camp with out charades and ice cream.

Saturday morning, we had a great breakfast and said our good-byes, Left camp the way we found it.

Another great Foray!
– *by Deb Tingley*

Addendum

I spent a fun two days with members of the Brook Bird Club on their annual Foray -- this year in Hardy County at the Lost River Retreat Center. It was great learning about golden eagle migration routes and offsetting loss of chimneys for roosting swifts. And of course, there are great birds in Hardy County...

Best of show --- the Barn Owl family living in an old silo north of Moorefield, although I would have thought such handsome birds could make more majestic noises. They started their show on time, and flew overhead for all to see, hissing and cackling and making a multitude of scary noises, including the one or two hissing chicks left inside the barn. (We watched four flying around the barn and silo for about 15 minutes, maybe the two parents and two hatchlings).

Best bird (at least for me)-- a Worm-eating Warbler -- finally! Sitting "still" at eye-level singing his heart out for 5 minutes -- vibrating his tail with every trill.

Best view -- my favorite is Kimsey Run Reservoir. Both adult Bald Eagles



Gigantic Sulphur Shelf - Chris Tingley

flying around the nest with two or three "chicks" thinking about flying. Plus several Great Blues, Mallard families, Tree and Barn Swallows, singing Field and Song Sparrows, and a male Blue-winged Teal. Lovely.

Thanks to the organizers.
– *by Laura Ceperley*

IN MEMORY OF EULA LORAIN ELLIOTT

Eula Loraine Elliott, 89, of Parkersburg, WV passed away on Wednesday, July 19, 2017, at her home. She was born on January 8, 1928 in Calhoun County, WV, a daughter of the late Alva and Clara Haught Elliott.

She was a graduate of Calhoun County High School and Mountain State Business College. She retired from the Parkersburg Division of the Internal Revenue Service as secretary to the director. An avid bird watcher, she was a member of several bird clubs and enjoyed many trips around the country with her birding friends.

As a member of the Ohio Valley University Stepping Stones, she volunteered at their thrift store. She was a member of the Friends of Blennerhassett and did volunteer work at the Blennerhassett Museum and Island. Eula also volunteered at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

She is survived by sister-in-law, Ella Elliott, and several nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Melba and Avis Elliott and two brothers, Hulbert (Helen) and John Elliott.

CORRESPONDENCE

This past winter I had as many as 37 turkeys at feeding station. This spring, I saw Brown Thrashers for first time. Had three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, but no Baltimore Orioles so far (as of June 15). On May 19th, I counted 7 Bald Eagles here. Other people saw more. There is still one nest on Wills Creek Road. They have nested there for several years. Sorry I miss you at Seneca Lake; Sundays are busy times for me at Church.

– Fred McGee, Senecaville, OH

PROPOSED NURSERY BOTTOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Cheat-Potomac Ranger District is developing a management plan for the Parsons Administrative site, known locally as Nursery Bottom, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program and the Northern Research Station. This management plan will help guide us in the best use of the site for three main purposes: high quality visitor services, and that the recreational needs of the local community and Forest visitors are met.

The Nursery Bottom serves as the administrative site and information center for the Cheat portion of the Cheat-Potomac Ranger District. It is also home to the Timber and Watershed Laboratory of the Northern Research Station, headquarters for the Fernow Experimental Forest (established 1934). The site also has a rich history as a federal tree nursery and a Civilian Conservation Corp camp in the 1920-30s.

During the 1985 flood, this lowland flat along the Black Fork of the Cheat River was reshaped by floodwaters. Today, the site provides an access to the Allegheny Highlands Trail and visitors can walk along a modest system of mowed paths that follow the boundary of the site.

You are encouraged to send your ideas for the site as we begin this early stage of the planning process to Jon Morgan, Deputy District Ranger for the Cheat Potomac District, at (304) 478-2000 or jrmorgan@fs.fed.us; or Northern Zone NEPA Specialist Elizabeth Tichner at (304) 257-4488 or etichner02@fs.fed.us.

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

Contact Mindy for information at mwaldron@suddenlink.net

Aug. 26, 2017 – 8:00 AM to ????. Trip to Bluestone WMA for birds, plants, butterflies and all things natural. The area

at this time of year never disappoints for great wildflowers and birds. Meet at Bellepoint Park in Hinton to travel to the area.

Sept. 23, 2017 – 10:00 to 3:00 PM. Hawk watch on East River Mountain. East River Mountain, off of Rt. 460 near Bluefield, WV. Contact Mindy Waldron, Jim Phillips.

Oct. 7, 2017 – 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Annual Dinner and planning meeting. Hinton, WV.

Oct. 14, 2017 – BIG SIT! An all-day birding event. We begin at daylight and go until dark. Mountain Valley Lake in Summers Co.

Nov. 2017 – Date to be determined. Waterfowl around Hinton and the New River with the BCBC from Virginia. Meet at pull-off along Rt. 20.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

Aug. 19, 2017 – Picnic/outing, 2:00p.m. Hosted by Janice and Scott Emrick, Jerusalem, OH. Bring a covered dish, drink and lawn chairs.

Sept. 2017 – (Picnic/outing) – We are working on a morning bird outing/picnic lunch; check website soon.

Meet at the Schrader Environmental Center in Oglebay Park at 6:30 p.m. for Oct. & Nov. meetings.

Oct. 17, 2017 – “Eastern Shore Trip” by Janice and Scott Emrick.

Nov. 21, 2017 – “Denali” by Scott Pendleton.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

Aug. – Dick Esker 304-863-8765

Aug. 10, 2017 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am, boat ramp, Northwest Drive.

Aug. 26, 2017 – Annual Picnic, 5:00pm, McDonough Log Shelter “A”, bring covered dish, drink & service.

Sept. – Jeanie Hilton 304-428-8641

Sept. 7, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 9, 2017 – Mountwood Park, 8:00am, Beach area (near torpedo),

bring lunch.

Sept. 14, 2017 – Lake Hope, Zaleski forest, Ohio, 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Sept. 21, 2017 – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am, ORINWR Parking Lot.

Sept. 28, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. – Barbara Hobman 740-374-5548

Oct. 7, 2017 – Big Sit, Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Sunrise to sunset, ORINWR Parking Lot. Come anytime; stay as long as you like

Oct. 12, 2017 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton Nature Trail, 8:00am, Kroger wetlands parking lot.

Oct. 19, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. 26, 2017 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am, Boat ramp, Northwest Pipe Drive.

Nov. – Sandy Albrecht 740-373-8994

Nov. 2, 2017 – Program, 6:30pm, Vienna Public Library Meeting Room, bring finger food.

Nov. 9, 2017 – Devol’s Dam to Civitan Park, 8:00am, Big Sandy in Parkersburg or 8:30am at Devol’s Dam parking lot.

Nov. 16, 2017 – Middle Island area, 9:00am, Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch.

Nov. 30, 2017 – Seneca Lake, OH, 8:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV, bring lunch.

HANDLAN CHAPTER

Sept. 18, 2017 – September Meeting at South Charleston Library, 6:30pm. Annual Ice Cream Social.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

See the following for more great info: www.potomacaudubon.org.

www.wvstateparks.com/calendar.html

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Last weekend, we were watching a group of eight Turkey Vultures circling over the mouth of the Bluestone River. At one point, two of the birds grabbed feet and tumbled several times before parting. We have often seen eagles do this but never Turkey Vultures.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 5/5/17

I observed more first of the season birds today while working at the Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Bardane. There were at least seven male Bobolinks vocalizing while perched in a nearby brush pile on the edge of one of the fields. Periodically they would fly into the grasses only to return to their perches. While watching the Bobolinks, a male Blue Grosbeak made an appearance fanning his tail for a show. I also saw an Osprey fly over around 2 p.m. headed in a southern direction.

– Wade Snyder, Shenandoah Junction, WV, 5/5/17



Blue Grosbeak – photo by Wade Snyder

I walked the USFS Nursery Bottom area in Parsons and the adjacent rail trail this afternoon for a couple cool and drizzly hours. Things were kind of routine till the bonanza of beauty in the last half hour, when I saw Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Two interlocked male American Redstarts tumbling through the air, followed by a lot of chasing; Male and female Baltimore Orioles; Male Orchard Oriole; Scarlet Tanagers, 3 males; Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, 4 males; Chestnut-sided Warbler; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; and Common Yellowthroat. These were accompanied by the lilting song of a Wood Thrush.

– Mimi Kibler, Parsons, WV, 5/6/17

There are certain birding experiences that one does not forget. One happened for me on Friday during a Wildflower Pilgrimage tour to the Fernow Experimental Forest near Parsons. I saw a bird perched in a tree at a distance. It was somewhat smaller than a robin. I thought it was a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. About the time I thought I had it figured out, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak landed beside her on the branch confirming my identification. After a few pleasantries, they mated and he flew off. It was over before I could close my mouth.

– Herb Myers (and Sarah), Harman, WV, 5/7/17

Birding between the snow squalls in Canaan (Tucker County) today had some great moments -- Spotted Sandpipers, a creeper, a Green Heron, great views of Common Yellowthroat, two handsome catbirds, and two pairs of flickers doing all their calls. Plus, two Great Blue Herons flapping and landing and harassed by 4 red-wings -- why are red-wings mobbing herons?

But the best bird.....is that a thrasher hopping in the grass and stubble on the Beall Tract? It's the correct profile with a long, long bill and long, long tail and sulking in the brambles. But greyish brown back and NOT rufous, and a clear buffy breast with NO spots. And a dark, reddish eyes. And a black bill. AND flashes of white on the tail. All the field markings of a Black-billed Cuckoo! First time I've seen and entire one -- my few sightings have been a little itty bit of a tail or foot or....

– Laura Ceperley with Martha Hopper and Karen Bess, 5/7/17

My annual Whip-poor-will quest tonight, which happened to be the Full Moon, paid off far beyond my expectations. I had 11 Eastern Whip-poor-will, the majority--6--were along Mountain View Road, the north end of which is in Monongalia County and the south end of which is in Preston County. 4 were along Boy Scout Camp Road and 1 along Gum Springs Road; both those roads are wholly in Monongalia County. Also had 5 Barred Owl. Boy Scout Road had 3; Mountain View Road had 2.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 5/10/17

I checked my nest boxes this morning and had a first time experience. A few days ago one of the Tree Swallow nest had 6 eggs. When I looked I couldn't see any eggs and was very disappointed. As in many of the tree swallow nest, there were several feathers. I gently felt for the eggs and sure enough, under some of the feathers there they were. Then the "feathers" moved and I realized the swallow was still sitting on the nest. I gently closed the door and left her in peace.

– Paul Saffold, Inwood, WV, 5/14/17

The Eagle has landed! Late afternoon on Sunday I was checking the plants in the bed out front when I heard this loud ruckus. I looked up and saw the eagle lifting off the ground with the dead rabbit in its talons. The crows were not pleased at losing their meal and did their best to get it back. No such luck. A quick check on the eagle nest was in order. Sure enough, the adult was in the nest feeding her offspring. It was not possible to see what she had but judging by the plucking movement of her head and what floated off in the air she had the rabbit.

I never expected to see an eagle on my lawn. This happened right between my house and the Tree Swallow nest box facing it. If the swallow was home she certainly got a front row seat to observe the action. She finished laying and is on the nest right now.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 5/16/17

This morning on the Murphy Farm bird walk for Beginners, I led the local library patrons - and it was wonderful. The small group of 6

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

beginners got to see a Scarlet Tanager, a pair of brilliant Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Buntings and a Great-crested Flycatcher gathering nesting material. An immature (2nd or 3rd year, very mottled) Bald Eagle flew off from near the overlook. Two pairs of Brown Thrashers gave us great views, one set scratching around fallen logs and leaves. As the walk came to a close at the parking area, a Blackpoll Warbler sang for us. What a perfect walk to draw in a new set of birders. Mission accomplished!

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, WV, 5/20/17

We spent part of the day at Stonewall Jackson Lake today, looking into all of the Osprey nests in the area. All 4 nests (Curtis Run Road, Skin Creek Road, Pen's Run access, and Oil Creek Road had females incubating and/or brooding with the male in the same tree or nearby, except Pen's Run where the male was fishing about a mile north of the nest.

As Nancy and I were eating lunch, the Pen's Run male returned, silently, and we observed one of the adults tearing apart a fish and dropping small chunks into the nest. When I got my scope on it, I discovered that the chunks were being gobbled down by 3 very small nestlings! The largest and darkest bird seemed to get the lion's share, a lighter-headed bird got several chunks, but the third bird--probably the youngest--got only 1 chunk while I watched, so unfortunately it may not survive.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 5/23/17

Had a great day kayaking yesterday at North Bend Lake near Harrisville, WV, with some paddling friends. We thought we were in Red-headed Woodpecker heaven. We saw at least 20 of them, some of them seemed to be in a pair. Many were seen going into their holes in dead trees in the lake and along the shore. Heard their calls, as well. It was a real treat.

– Sally Egan, Bridgeport, WV, 5/24/17

Yesterday, we saw a Great-crested Flycatcher pulling fur from a road killed gray squirrel. It did it twice while we were watching. Couldn't tell if it was taking it to a nest hole. On two other occasions, I have watched a White-breasted Nuthatch pull hair from a road killed possum and fly to a nest hole.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 5/31/17

It is always a pleasure visiting Chip Hussion's Purple Martin colony located outside Charles Town, WV. Chip has 26 nesting cavities for the martins on 3 separate poles, as well as other nesting cavities for Tree Swallows, bluebirds and wrens. As of today, he had 77 beautiful white Purple Martin eggs and 4 hatchlings. If you are entertaining the idea of establishing your own colony, Chip can mentor you through the process.

– Bird Mom, Jefferson County, WV, 5/31/17

Last Sunday I was shocked to hear a Kentucky Warbler singing in a recently-logged, early-successional, and wet area of Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV 6/15/17

On Wednesday, June 14th, Steve Kimbrell and I were in Parsons near the mill pond by the baseball field. The habitat includes the weedy pond, the Shavers Fork River, fields, and brushy edges. Across the river is steep forest. We got a thrill as one at a time, three Short-eared Owls flew up from near the ground and glided out of sight heading towards the river. It was a first for both of us, but the pattern on the wings was distinct. They didn't vocalize and we didn't get to see them circle the field hunting prey. We saw other birds, but nothing as notable!

– Mimi Kibler, Parsons, WV, 6/17/17

6/25/17 – There are THREE Merlin in the vicinity of Manor Rd and the part of CVNWR that surrounds that last ridge before the valley floor. Saw all 3 (THREE!!!!) simultaneously this afternoon, flying, calling and perching in the tippy tops of some of the big spruce in my neighbors' yards. Even managed to get some photos. Will post a link if any of them turned



A May Ring-necked Duck near Huntington
– photo by Rick Gregg

out ok. Very pleased with the sighting(s)!

7/16/17 – My husband and I confirmed 4 Merlin (Merlins?) and finally saw the male today, perched improbably on a neighbor's split rail fence. He was supervising the two juvies who were on the ground. The youngsters flew, somewhat unconvincingly, low over our heads. It's been absolutely thrilling to watch these birds!

– Sarah Anderson, Canaan Valley, WV

– Sightings taken from WV Bird ListServ

On May 29th, more than forty people took part in a walk for young birders, held at the West Virginia Botanic Garden near Morgantown and sponsored by the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia. Young birders ranged in age from a few months to middle school. The walk was led by Katie & Jesse Fallon (of the ACCA and Mountaineer Audubon), Erin Smaldone (of the WV Botanic Garden), Scott Cavallaro (from the Morgantown Wild Birds Unlimited store), and Ruth & Mike Bergen (of the ACCA).

For a few years now the ACCA has been working on getting a **West Virginia Young Birders Club** started. Our plan is to run the club as a project of the ACCA. We haven't worked out all the details yet, but we thought some casual walks to gauge interest was a good place to start. And it seems like there's definitely interest! If you're interested in helping get the club started, please send me a message. Also, "like" the Facebook page we started for the club (www.facebook.com/wvybc/).

– Katie Fallon, katie@ACCAWV.ORG

2017 EASTERN SHORE TRIP

NOVEMBER 8th-12th

It's been two years since we've done the northern end of our annual sortie and that's where we'll begin. The hotel we stayed at last time will be closed for the year so we will meet some new people at the Spray Beach Hotel, a few miles south for the first two nights. This will allow us easy access to Barnegat Lighthouse and other areas of interest on Long Beach Island.

Stops at Brigantine and Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Refuge; the Avalon Sea Watch; and Cape May will still get us to the Lewes Ferry in time to cross the Delaware Bay and check into the Atlantic Sands which is located on the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach for nights three and four. After last time, with the Ferry filling up and the long wait we had for the "in the dark" crossing, I think reservations are going to be in order for everyone. The van will be reserved and everyone driving their own vehicle should make their own reservations. Reservations cannot be made before October 1st for the 3:00 p.m. crossing on Friday, November 10th. Phone number for reservations is: 800-643-3779.

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

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

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

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 27, 2017

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

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ Name of person sharing room _____

(2 people per room) If you need a roommate, we'll get you one

_____ people @ \$385.00 each \$ _____

Single room supplement, additional \$220.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Are you interested in traveling in the van? Yes _____ No _____

What bird would you like to get this trip? _____

BROOKS BIRD CLUB 85TH ANNIVERSARY RESERVATION FORM

OGLEBAY PARK, WHEELING, WV – OCTOBER 20-22, 2017

The 85th Anniversary of the Brooks Bird Club Inc. will be held at Oglebay Park’s Wilson Lodge, as was the case for the 50th and the 75th celebrations. The Oglebay location is where the club began in 1932 and it is fitting that this should be the place to celebrate 85 years of working together for the study of birds as well as all other forms of nature.

Reservations include Friday night’s reception and dinner, then the program given by Bill Thompson III of Bird Watchers Digest at 7:30 PM. On Saturday after breakfast, a memorial hike will be held on the Brooks Nature trail located behind the Schrader Environmental Center at 10 AM. Lunch and paper sessions will be held in the afternoon, followed by the President’s Reception with cash bar, then a banquet dinner at 6:00 PM. Our guest speaker will be Lang Elliott of The Music of Nature. Sunday breakfast will be followed at 9:30 AM by the BBC’s annual Membership meeting before everyone packs up and travels home.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

Make Checks Payable to Brooks Bird Club, Inc. and mail to:

Cindy Slater – 2310 Cowling Road, Scottsdale, PA 15683

Tel: 724-570-8502

Email: Mountaingirl127@gmail.com

or use the BBC website.

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ Name of person sharing room _____

(2 people per room) If you need a roommate, we’ll get you one

Complete Weekend:

Includes Fri. & Sat. Nights lodging, Friday night Hors d’oeuvres, dinner & program: Sat. & Sun. breakfast buffet; Sat. Lunch Buffet, paper session, banquet, and program at the Lodge

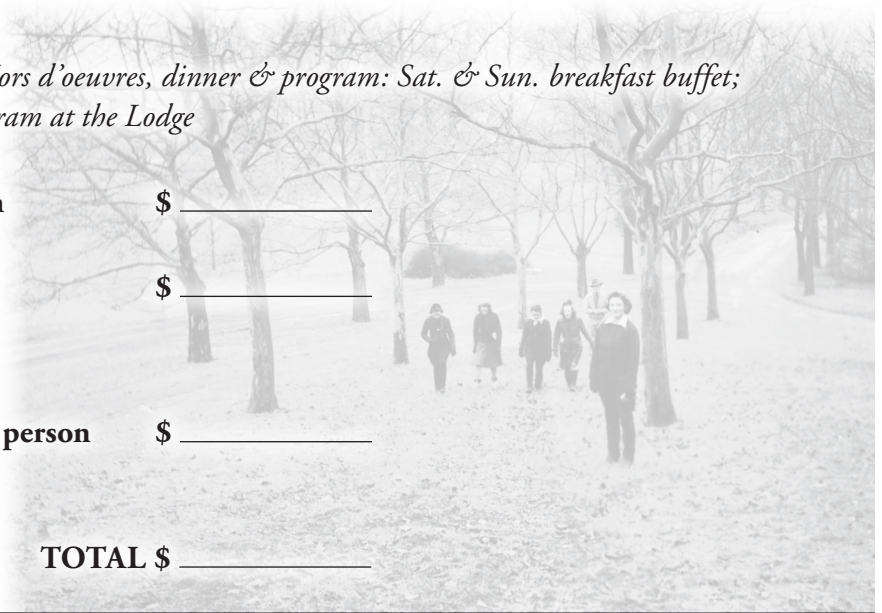
_____ double room @ \$225.00 per person \$ _____

_____ single room @ \$345.00 per person \$ _____

_____ alternate reservation @ \$85.00 per person \$ _____

No Lodging or Breakfasts

TOTAL \$ _____





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**“Catching” Up With This
Year’s Foray**

*– Luke Whitaker, grandson of
Jane, attended and enjoyed
his first Foray.
Story begins on page 3*

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