



# THE MAIL BAG

A PUBLICATION OF THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB OF WEST VIRGINIA  
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JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH 2018

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

## Editor's Note

Spring in February? Again? Like a broken record, I repeat my point from a year ago. Just three weeks ago, it was 78 F in Pittsburgh, and a steamy 82 F in Wheeling. Today, in mid-March, it is 30 F and snowing. However, the flocks of grackles returned three weeks early, and the Red-winged Blackbirds never completely left. Woodcock were early, all the geese available to us were more common than is usual, and high rivers kept the ducks inland.

Foray is on its way, and in one of our favorite locations. Details will soon be in your mail boxes and online, and with a shorter Foray (6 full days), the price is very good. Invite friends, family, BBC members who don't usually go, and whoever else you may find, to enjoy this wonderful array of birds, mountains, plants and overall beauty of Pocahontas County, June 3-10.

As the Brooks Bird Club continues to move forward, we attempt to keep everyone informed, entertained and educated. This is being accomplished in a number of ways. Getting the word out is the most imperative, and between the robust new website, a very popular Facebook page and old-fashioned word-of-mouth, we've seen a rise in attendance at all events. We've worked to get great speakers and programs to entice more participants, and this has the two-way effect of enthusing the speakers themselves, gaining us a wider reputation. We have recently had nationally-renowned people like Scott Weidensaul, Lang Elliott and Bill Thompson participating with us, and more are in the works for our Fall Meeting at Tygart Lake (October 19-21) and hopefully for Foray in June. When people enjoy the program, it makes everyone's life easier and happier.



*Everyone scanned for eagles at French Creek, but came up with 18 Wood Ducks  
– Photo by Jeffrey Hall*

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JANICE EMRICK

Hello! For those who don't know me, my name is Janice Emrick. I have been interested in birds from an early age thanks to my mother who was also a great lover of birds. Thanks to her, I became a member of the Brooks Bird Club in 1989 after a trip to Seneca Lake, Ohio. I am a retired educator, having taught Kindergarten for 35 years. I have been a Board of Trustees member many times, as well as secretary for the club, before making my way up the ranks of officers to become President. I am also co-director of the BBC Foray, which I urge everyone to attend this year in Pocahontas County June 3-10.

Did you know that this is the Year of the Bird? This is a joint partnership of over 100 organizations, led by Cornell, to celebrate the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This is a great time to pledge to do one thing per month to help birds. One thing you can do is take note of the birds around you each day and do a short entry on eBird. Or pay it forward and help others learn about the birds around them. A great way to help birds is to grow native plants. You can find these and other ideas on the Cornell Lab website at [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org).

*– Janice Emrick, BBC President*

## REMEMBER THE BIBBEE CLUB!

The Bibbee Nature Club, based in the Pipestem area of West Virginia, could use more members and participation. For a number of reasons, included the passing of members and the overall business that overtakes all of us, they are down to a 'skeleton crew'. This year is their 40th anniversary, and there are plenty of trips and bird counts that everyone can be a part of.

If you would like to know more about the Bibbee Club, which is an affiliate of the BBC, contact Mindy Waldron at [mwaldron@suddenlink.net](mailto:mwaldron@suddenlink.net), or check the BBC website for a list of scheduled activities in their area of the state.

## EARLY SPRING MEETING QUITE A SUCCESS

On March 9-11, 2018, the BBC held our Early Spring Meeting at the usual haunt of North Bend State Park, east of Parkersburg. Snow flurries on the trip in gave way to sunny skies and warmer temperatures in the region, and set the table for a pleasant weekend.

The first item on the weekend's agenda was a board of trustees meeting, where much was discussed and voted on for the good of the Club. New President Janice Emrick ran a smooth and efficient meeting, and we were soon out to enjoy time with seldom-seen friends before dinner.

Dinner both evenings was presented banquet-style, and we all ate well. The tables were supplemented by decorations and treats, thanks to Jeanne Barnes and crew, and everything was beautifully done. Our after-dinner speaker on Friday was Jeffrey Hall, a former member who grew up in West Union, very close to NBSP. Hall, now retired, lives in the Franklin, PA, area, where he travels the region's many beautiful parks and natural areas. These were highlighted in his program using his terrific photos. Everyone was impressed with his presentation.

Saturday began chilly and with frost, but that did not subdue the local Pine Warblers and Pine Siskins, both of which were quite visible around the lodge. Many will carry the memory of the sun striking the rich golden yellow on the Pine Warbler's chest forever. As we waited to leave on the field trip, a Merlin buzzed right through the parking lot, to our amazement, and landed in a tree.

Dick Esker again led us on a driving tour through Cairo onto Parkersburg and the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. While the river remained quite unproductive throughout the day, hawks and kestrels were numerous. 3-4 Red-Shouldered Hawks were found, and I counted seven kestrels. A Field Sparrow sang behind the ORINWR visitor's center.

Willow Island Dam added Rusty Blackbird and a number of cormorants on the riverside light posts. French Creek was highlighted by many Wood Ducks and a Common Merganser. At Middle Island, we had five Horned Grebes on the river, a



*Pine Warblers sang around the park lodge and provided superb views*

Fox Sparrow in a tree and a snipe.

Newell's Run had few ducks in it, but a Black Vulture flew over. We only had two eagles noted all day. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were found at the boat launch in Harrisville.

Those who didn't take the day trip hiked over and under the hills around the state park, and enjoyed their day.

Saturday's evening program was by Scott Weidensaul, nationally-renowned author and naturalist, who spoke to us about Project SNOWstorm, which has been closely monitoring the recent Snowy Owl irruptions. High-tech tracking devices capture the every movement of dozens of owls, and Scott's slides showed us some of the amazing results. Everyone enjoyed the program, as well as having Scott birding with us all day.

Sunday morning included a membership meeting, where everyone gets to see the inner workings of the board. Good byes were wished, and we all await the next visit to North Bend, March 8-10, 2019.

*written by Ed.  
photos by Jeffrey Hall*



*A Fox Sparrow made a quick appearance on Middle Island after lunch*

## 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: jslater1120@yahoo.com

## 2017-18 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

*Thirty-one birders recorded 6704 birds of 94 different species on Mountaineer Audubon's 2017 Christmas Bird Count on December 16. As of 12/17 one additional count week species, a Cackling Goose, has been added. Other count week species can be added through Tuesday, December 19 at midnight. The 94 species surpassed 2016 high of 91 species on count day. New species for the WVMO count were Dunlin and Short-eared Owl. The alert birders on Todd's Schnopp's Team 1 spied the shorebird in the Cheat Lake area. This is only the second state record for December in WV. Derek Courtney added the Short-eared Owl. We were pleased to be joined by young birder and kindergarten student, Laurel Fallon. Thanks to all to supported this birding adventure.*

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

*In order to increase participation and interest in the Christmas Bird Count, I thought I would try a different approach this year. Rather than completing a sector or part of a sector of the circle, I conducted a public bird walk that could last all day if someone was interested in doing so. I chose two ebird hot spots within the Charles Town circle. It was a lot of fun, and hope it inspired new people to join the Christmas Bird Count next year.*

*There were 13 birders that participated in the Claymont historic mansion property walk on December 16, 2017. We walked 3.5 miles of trails, and found 36 species. The highlights for me were watching a Cooper's Hawk try to catch a songbird, but missed, and having a Northern Harrier on our checklist. American Robins were the bird of the day, with a steady stream of small groups flying over us.*

*Then it was off to complete the census of the Cool Spring Preserve. Five birders participated, with us finding 31 different species. Highlights for me were the great looks at a Belted Kingfisher sitting on a telephone wire, and walking quietly along the stream, listening to the calming sound of moving water.*

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV

*A total of 6 groups, which included 17 individuals, participated today in the 118th Christmas Count for the Ona area. Some of the highlights included the following: Palm Warblers - 9 total among 3 groups; Common Raven - 2 (FIRST ever in any of our local Christmas Counts - David Wills has shown me photographic evidence and will be happy to provide later); Tundra Swans - 2 (it has been seen on only 4 of our Ona Christmas Counts) in 2 separate groups; Red-headed Woodpecker - 9.*

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

*14 participants found 65 species for the 46th Pipestem Area, WV Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 16. A record number (227) of Common Mergansers was found doubling the previous record and the Bald Eagle record was beat by two with 12 being found during this year's count. Gadwall and Merlin were present during the early part of count week.*

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV

*The 2017 Charleston Christmas Bird Count was conducted on Saturday, December 16, 2017. The weather was good and the sky was clear for 26 volunteers to spread out across Kanawha County within our defined circle and report all the observations they could make. We tallied 62 species of birds for the day, ending with a Barred Owl heard by Laura Ceperly.*

*This year we had record numbers of Ruddy Ducks (8), Turkey Vultures (259), American Crows (12475), and Palm Warblers (5). We also tied our previous high number for Peregrine Falcons (2). Other species worth noting were an American Pipit, 2 Redhead ducks (only the second time ever for this Circle), and a White-crowned Sparrow.*

– Doren Burrell, Mink Shoals, WV

*9 brave souls persevered the bitterly cold weather today for the Huntington Christmas Count. We recorded 70 species. We had high counts for the following: Ring-necked Duck (31), Hooded Merganser (62), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (15), Winter Wren (8).*

*We had our first record for Northern Shoveler with 10 seen. We also saw 2 Common Goldeneye and 42 American Pipits.*

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

*The Moorefield (Hardy County) count was held Dec. 28, 2017. We had 18 participants. High notes were approx. 2,500 Robins in a flock flying over Moorefield, a mixed flock of blackbirds, and a road kill Long-eared Owl recovered by Kevin Oxenrider (non-game DNR).*

– Jane Whitaker

*Here are the results for the 2017 Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count held December 16. The highlight of the day was getting the Snowy Owl on count day. Other additions to our list were Palm Warbler and Black Vultures. We had a record number of species – 79 plus one (Merlin) count week.*

*We had high counts for Pied-billed Grebes, Turkey Vultures and Ring-billed Gulls. Counts for many of the local residents were down – woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and Northern Cardinal.*

– Dick & Jeanette Esker

*(continued on page 3)*

## 2017-18 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS (CONT.)

Many thanks to the 10 participants who joined me in the Pendleton CBC on Tuesday Dec. 19, 2017. In addition Carolyn Ruddle, who ran this count for many years before it was passed on to me, gathered the results from 14 feeder watchers.

If my math is right, we tallied our highest count of 72 species, plus 5 more during count week. New species to the count were Ring-necked Duck, Saw-whet Owl, Red Cross-bill, and an amazing 3 (possibly 4) Blue-headed Vireos (Casey Rucker), all in the east side of the count circle. Count week birds not seen on the CBC were Wild Turkey, Ring-billed Gull (only noted once before), Savannah Sparrow (only noted once before), Eastern Meadowlark, and Golden Eagle, the latter species apparently arriving later than usual in WV this winter. This was the 40th year of this CBC.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV

Raleigh Co. CBC was held on Dec. 17th. We had 5 participants and found 48 species

McDowell Co. CBC held on Dec. 22. We had 6 participants and found 36 species.

– Allen Waldron, Surveyor, WV

Thirteen intrepid birders participated in our Canaan Valley Christmas Bird Count on January 3. Perhaps the most interesting feature: a temperature range from 21 below zero to 29 above!

Highlights of the count were Joe Hildreth's discovery of a Northern Shrike and a Short-eared Owl, Ross Brittain's 4-owl morning including Northern Saw-whet, and one and likely another Golden Eagle observed by Ross Brittain and Jim and Bev Triplett. Numbers were generally within the average range, although we had many misses including Cedar Waxwing and Purple Finch.

Total number of species: 48, plus 3 count week birds: Brown Creeper (thanks to Ken and Julie Dzaack), Eastern Towhee (thanks to Bev and Jim Triplett), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (thanks to Mimi Kibler). Total number of individuals: 1,478.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

Elkins CBC results 1/2/18 - Despite low temps, we found 59 species and respectable numbers for 17 field observers. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Swamp Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird.

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV

This was one of our best Pocahontas counts, with 66 species detected on 12/16/17. Highlights were a Barn Owl, 6 phoebes, and a large flock of Red Crossbills.

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV

## FIRST WV BIRDS OF JANUARY 1, 2018

Okay, I admit it. I am a wimp. I didn't go outside to see my first bird of 2018. I stood at our back window watching the feeders sway gently in the 5 degree cold as over 8 inches of snow blanket the ground. At 7:15 sharp, a sharp looking male Dark-eyed Junco flew into the tree from which the feeders hang. How appropriate that it would be a snow bird! I suspected that it might be as it is usually them or the Northern Cardinals that are the earliest birds. The juncos have been by far the dominate birds at our feeders this weekend.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV

Since there was a mixed group of birds on the patio there was no "first" of 2018. I counted 17 species within the first 15 minutes. However, the early treat of the day was having a Yellow-rumped Warbler on the bird bath. Good start for the new year.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV

2 Great Horned Owls hooting at 4:30 AM. No I didn't go out, just back to a warm bed.

– Paul Saffold, Inwood, WV

Like a Christmas ornament shining bright on a tree, the Northern Cardinal, my first year bird, was perched near the bird feeder.

– Birdmom, Jefferson County, WV

My first bird of the year was a gorgeous Blue Jay. We also have the pluckiest Yellow-bellied Sapsucker I have ever seen. This first-year female will take on male Red-bellied Woodpeckers and win.

– Wil Hershberger, Hedgesville, WV

My first bird of 2018 was a Dark-eyed Junco.

– Steven Wilson, Summersville, WV

My first bird of 2018 was actually two birds...two dark eyed juncos, hunkered side by side against the trunk of an ornamental cherry tree, trying to hide out from the Cooper's Hawk that has been visiting the feeders and was circling the area.

– Shannon Burner, Keyser, WV

Our first bird of the new year was the American Goldfinch.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

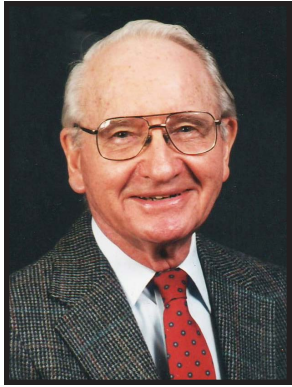
My first bird of the year was 2 Juncos at my feeder. But my first surprise of the year were 2 male pheasants that ran across the road in front of me on Luther Jones Road. They stopped at the edge and watched me as my wife and I drove by very slowly. They were only 6 feet from the car and even my wife could identify them easily. Wonderful full plumage.

– Bill Telfair, Jefferson County, WV

The prize for the first bird of 2018 goes to an Eastern Towhee, which there are lots of this winter. The most exciting bird was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet picking on the azaleas by my front door. I stopped treating these bushes for late-summer fungus/insects a few years ago when I realized that kinglets fed on them in the middle of winter. And today one arrived! What a New Year's treat to watch it's ruby head on it's hyper active body two feet from the window instead of way, way, way up in the tree! The magic of birds.

– Laura Ceperley, Kanawha County, WV

## BBCer KEN ANDERSON PASSES AT 100 YEARS



Kenneth Harvey Anderson passed away and entered the "Church Triumphant" on January 8, 2018, in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Anderson was born in Superior, Wisconsin, on November 18, 1917, to Elmer and Pearl Hagan Anderson. He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Jane Best Anderson; daughter, Carol Rothenberg of Altamont, New York; son, Richard F. Anderson of Nevada City, California; grandson, Leon Rothenberg and wife Jenny Slattery, both of Los Angeles, California; and his brother, Frank Anderson of Bradenton, Florida.

Ken Anderson attended colleges in Superior and Madison, Wisconsin. He was employed as a research chemist for Union Carbide in South Charleston and later had a second career with New York Life Insurance Company.

Ken and Jane met at the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston and were married on October 25, 1944. Anderson served in many capacities at the church and for the Presbytery at the state level.

Ken was a leader in many community groups, including 40 years with Civitans and 25 years in the Boy Scouts, earning the Silver Beaver award - scouting's highest honor for an adult leader.

Ken was an avid naturalist, who completed the Master Gardener courses in West Virginia and North Carolina, and served as Chairman of the Landscape Advisory Committee at Carolina Village. He also contributed many volunteer hours at the Bullington Gardens.

Ken followed his favorite motto: "Keeping moving is what keeps me moving" until his passing.

A memorial service was held at Carolina Village on Friday, January 12.



*Ken Anderson with Kyle Bush and Pete Chandler at a BBC reunion weekend*



*Ken and wife Jane at the 1977 Foray at Camp Anthony*



*Jane, son Richard and Ken enjoy Foray together at Camp Thornwood in 2008*

## SARA LOUISE ALM



Sara (Sally) Louise Alm was born December 3, 1921, at home in Triadelphia, West Virginia. She loved sports from a young age, playing

tennis with her three older brothers on a court they made in the yard of their parents' dairy farm.

A lifelong Presbyterian, she won a scholarship to Monmouth College in Illinois, where she studied English, Spanish, and physical education and spent her free time shooting baskets in her dorm gym. At Monmouth, she met Robert (Bob) Alm and they were married by candlelight in Roneys Point in 1944. Bob joined the war effort and was learning to fly when their first child, David, was born. They had two more children, Kathy and Jim, while Bob earned his doctorate in chemistry at Ohio State and began working at Standard Oil. The family settled for many years in Crown Point, Indiana, where they were deeply involved with church, scouting, and the high school marching band.

A resourceful homemaker, Sally gardened, sewed, planned summer camping trips to most of the 50 states, and listened to Chicago Cubs baseball games on WGN. Sally and Bob later moved to Wheaton, Illinois and remained active in church, folk crafts, gardening, and baseball.

In 1966, they bought a homestead on the Knobs outside Union and spent many summers renovating it themselves, fulfilling Sally's dream of returning to West Virginia. They were active in community service, including the annual hawk counts on Peter's Mountain. In 1993, they moved permanently to the Knobs and, after Bob's death in 1997, Sally maintained her mountain home for over 20 more years with the help of her trusted riding lawn mower.

Sally welcomed friends and family from all over, who mixed easily into holiday celebrations, especially the family's traditional July 4th reunion. She was thrilled to finally see the Cubs win the World Series in 2016 and enjoyed the view from her picture window every day. Sally was loving, generous, determined, and ever-girlish in spirit. She formed deep friendships with people of all ages and will be greatly missed.

Sally is preceded by her beloved husband Bob and two children, Dave Alm and Kathy Disrud. She is survived by her son Jim Alm and his wife Janet Johnson; their two daughters Natalie and Hailey; grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## NOTES FROM ROSIE CAMPBELL

Nov. 30, 2017 – Eight BBCers from Mountwood and four from Headquarters Chapter went to Seneca Lake, OH. At the fish hatchery, we found gulls, Buffleheads, Canada Geese, a kingfisher and one Snow Goose. Small birds were Eastern Bluebirds, yellow-rumps, juncos and Field Sparrows.

Along the lake, we found scaup, ruddies, teal, Mallards, a Mute Swan and a Bald Eagle. Small birds were Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Carolina Wren, the surprise being an immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We enjoyed sack lunches while birding and later had chili or pie and coffee at the Dockside at the marina.

Jan. 19, 2018 – We had news of a Snowy Owl at the grasslands near Cadiz, OH. It was quite cold and snowy, but a few BBCers drove to Scott Pendleton's clinic and on up to the grazing lands beyond. The owl was found sitting at a distance in a tree. We were able to get fair looks at it with 'scopes. A small flock of Snow Buntings were feeding near a cattle feeding area and rough legged hawks flying on the horizon. When the owl flew into a low area, we tried walking along a fence line for a closer look. After a cold trudge in the snow, we weren't much closer, but could see the owl well with binoculars.

Jan. 31, 2018 – Feb. 2 Killdeer Plains. The day after the blue/blood/super moon, the BBC had it's annual winter trip to Killdeer Plains. Along the way we saw several raptors, including a very close look at some Black Vultures. Sixteen of us met at the hotel, then went for lunch.

We all set off to look in the usual small conifer woods for owls. We did not find any and someone said that because of so many people looking for them there, they no longer used this place to roost. There was very little open water, but when we found some there were lots of waterfowl. At any given time, there were skeins of Canada Geese in the air and at the marsh ponds we found a few Snow, Blue and Greater White-fronted Geese and swans. There was much discussion about whether they were Tundra or Trumpeter Swans as we were a good distance away. Later, when we saw closer ones, they were trumpeters. Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, kestrels, Bald Eagles and several Northern Harriers were seen over the marsh.

We stayed late, watching skein after skein of geese come in to water for night; thousands and thousands of them! We enjoyed a beautiful sunset while we waited for short-eared owls. But the area where we found so many last year had been mowed and we in our car saw none. I think someone did see one.

Next morning, we had breakfast at the hotel and picked up sandwiches for lunch, then went birding again. This morning, we drove out into the wide, flat, farmlands, looking across the fields of stubble and good black soil for snow buntings, Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks. We saw several larks.

Back at the Plains, we drove around scanning the lakes and ponds for water fowl. It was bitter cold with wind and very hard to stand outside, but we set up scopes and did see the same geese as yesterday and a few ducks. We ate in the cars at noon, and made a cold pit stop at the park offices. There, we saw a kestrel with a vole, several Bald Eagles, harriers flying and a lively mink in a scrap pile.

The cold drove us in sooner than we wanted; so we made a stop at a tiny place called Killdeer Pizza. Near dusk, we returned to the marsh to look for the Short-eared Owls again. The geese and the lovely sunset were there again, but no owls.

On Groundhog Day, it was still bitter cold and very windy when we drove out to a brushy area looking for a shrike. We saw a few small birds, but no shrike, then began to head home. We stopped at Delaware State Park and saw a few Mallard drakes and a Gadwall at the dam. At Hoover dam, we found several beautiful Northern Shovelers, lots of gulls, a Great Blue Heron and a really pitiful young raccoon trying to fish in the icy water. The remainder of our group broke up there and we all headed for our respective homes. We'd had a cold, but fun trip, together.

## 13TH SOUTHERN WV EAGLE SURVEY

Here are the results of our eagle survey on January 6, 2018, along our 3 rivers, New, Bluestone and Greenbrier. It was a very cold and windy day. 23 brave people endured the weather to look for and find 50 Bald Eagles (8 adult, 42 immature) and 2 Golden Eagles (both immature).

**Bertha** - Bob Dameron, Allen & Mindy Waldron. 4 BAEA, 1 eagle species (1 1st year, 1 2nd year, 1 3rd year, 1 undetermined age and 1 eagle of undetermined age & species)

**Mouth of the Bluestone River** - Sharyn Ogden, Corey & Julie McQuade, Jeff Hajenga, Aaron New & Jim Fregonara. 14 BAEA\* (2 adults, 10 1st year & 2 2nd year) and 2 GOEA\*\* (both immatures)

**Bluestone State Park** - Jerry Gladwell. 1 BAEA (adult)

**Rt. 20 Overlook** (1 mile south of Bluestone Dam) - Kermit Stover, Brian & Tammy Hirt. 3 BAEA (1 1st year, 2 2nd year)

**Rt. 20 Overlook** next to Bluestone Dam - Beverly & Jim Triplett. 4 BAEA (1 1st year, 1 2nd year, 1 3rd year & 1 4th year)

**Bellepoint Park** - Charlie Kahle. 4 BAEA (2 adult, 1 1st year & 1 2nd year)

**Brooks Overlook** - Ron & Wendy Perrone. 5 BAEA (2 adult, 1 1st year, 1 2nd year & 1 4th year)

**Little Wolf Creek** - Rodney Davis. 3 BAEA (1 adult, 1 3rd year & 1 4th year)

**Rt. 122** - David & Gene Shrewsbury. 13 BAEA (11 immature of unknown age, 2 4th year birds)

\* BAEA = Bald Eagle

\*\*GOEA = Golden Eagle

Conditions - 4-20 degrees, 10-75% cloud cover, 0-11mph NW wind gusting to 15 mph, visibility 2-20 miles.



## CORRESPONDENCE

*Roberta Mitchell will be 101 in January, and is living in Cincinnati near us (her son Bruce). She's actually doing quite well. She attends a weekly writing group, and these are some of her writings that are about birds. She thought you might enjoy them and be able to use them in the newsletter. She comes here all the time, and I type up her writings for her. The group enjoys her stories, and she is frequently asked for copies.*

– Jill Mitchell, lapsed member

### Bird Watching Memories

by Roberta Mitchell

At my former home in Colerain, Ohio, I kept field glasses at our kitchen and TV room windows. From both windows, I could see bird feeders and suet.

The kitchen window feeders hung from the gutters on the house so they would allow me to be just about a yard away. The TV room feeders were about 8 yards away.

This snowy winter day, I looked out to see what was feeding on the feeder. Gold Finches ringed side by side, completely around the feeder shelf.

On the ground I saw mourning doves, Juncos, Cardinals, White-breasted nut hatch and Chickadees, and a Fox Squirrel fed right among them. Then, to my amazement, I saw a small animal that I had never seen before.

It had a brown back and head, and a completely white belly from chin to tail, even its feet were white. It had large eyes, pointy conspicuous ears, and a tail so long I couldn't believe it's length as he dragged it behind him on the ground. I wasn't thinking that I was looking through 7 power binoculars making the animal 7 times bigger than it really was.

After searching through some of my nature books, I realized I was looking at a deer mouse. They live outside in fields. Owls and snakes and hawks would use the deer mouse for some of their food.

I want no part of a house mouse, but the deer mouse is so different in color and appearance, I was happy it came to my feeder for food.

## WV LAND TRUST SAVING THE VIEW AT BICKLE KNOB

### Raising money for loan

A fund-raising campaign to permanently protect a 123-acre parcel on Bickle Knob has been launched, with support of Randolph County residents and the West Virginia Land Trust.

“When Coastal Lumber announced that this tract would be sold at auction, we became concerned,” said Ashton Berdine, Lands Program Manager of the Land Trust. Worried that a ‘donut hole’ of private land, surrounded by National Forest just below the Bickle Knob observation tower, might be developed and alter the view and the use of property along Stuart Memorial Drive, the organization responded quickly to submit a closed bid. “Knowing how important this property is to the community, we borrowed money to purchase it, and our bid was the winning one,” continued Berdine, an Elkins resident.

“Bickle Knob tract is such a well-known piece of our local landscape,” said Jim VanGundy, a local volunteer who is helping organize the campaign to raise \$100,000 to pay off the loan. “We’re really fortunate that the Land Trust was willing to take on this project. I hope the Randolph County community will rally to support this cause to ensure that it will be conserved permanently.”

If you would like to make a donation for this campaign, more information is available at [www.wvlandtrust.org](http://www.wvlandtrust.org).

## BBC DONATES TO BICKLE KNOB FUND RAISER

The BBC approved a one-time donation to the West Virginia Land Trust of \$1,000.00 to help defray some of the loan amount for the Bickle Knob land purchase (story above). WVLT Lands Program Manager and BBC member Ashton Berdine thanked the club for its generosity in helping the campaign.

The next time the BBC is at Foray in Randolph County (slated for 2019), the land will be viewed from the top of the Bickle Knob fire tower

## ANOTHER CHEAT LAKE FALLOUT

Wed 11/8/2017, 3:40 PM

The fallout probably occurred yesterday, but no one was there to document it. Anyway, here are highlights of what Mike Slaven and I found this morning.

### South of I-68 bridge:

Tundra Swan - 152. Only 32 were on the water, the remainder flying about in several flocks. Strangely, and this applies to all subsequent sightings this morning, the birds eventually seemed to move northeast and eventually east, rather than south, towards their favorite wintering grounds near Chesapeake Bay.

Bufflehead - 380

Bonaparte's Gull - 1

### North of I-68 bridge:

Tundra Swan - 375. About 200 were on the water in a single flock at one point, the remainder flying around as described previously.

Bufflehead - 265

### Sunset Harbor Marina:

Tundra Swan - 40

### Cheat Lake Park:

Tundra Swan - 566. None on the water, though a local resident indicated there had been many early in the morning. All flying about in many flocks.

Bufflehead - 470

Common Goldeneye - 1 first-year male still molting to adult plumage.

Double-Crested Cormorant - 73. The vast majority were migrating.

Horned Grebe - 15, one of which, at a great distance, looked somewhat larger, but the birds would always disappear before we could get close enough for a better view.

Bald Eagle - 3, 2 adults & 1 first-year bird.

Merlin - 1 female

Snow Bunting - 1 first-year female on the trail just south of the administrative building, later on a picnic table next to that building.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV

# INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

*After hearing word of the fallout at Cheat Lake I tried to hit as many spots around Summersville as I could after work.*

*Phillips Run Road/Old Airport Road (North of Summersville): Snow Goose (1), Canada Goose (109). At Summersville Dam: Mallard (3); Bufflehead (4); Ruddy Duck (24); Common Loon (120); Pied-billed Grebe (1); Horned Grebe (15); Bonaparte's Gull (22); Ring-billed Gull (10). At Summersville Lake, Long Point Overlook: Bufflehead (200). At Summersville Lake Marina: Tundra Swan (57, including 47 in flyover flock)*

– Steven Wilson, Summersville, WV, 11/8/17

*This morning I revisited Canaan Valley and Davis since it is cloudy and raining again. Was there more fallout? The sandpipers seen yesterday are gone except for many Killdeer.*

*I was most excited at the Davis Water Treatment Pond. The first birds I saw were three Bonaparte's Gulls spinning and feeding on the water. Then I noticed a Mallard pair along with six Wood Ducks (2 males and four females). I was about to move on when I saw a rather large white and black duck on the edge of the pond across from me. It was a \*Long-tailed Duck\*! I was able to get some photos to prove it. At the back of the pond, there were six Lesser Scaup (2 males and 4 females) and three Ruddy Ducks.*

*At North or Mallow Lake there were six Buffleheads (2 males and 4 females) and at least 30 Canada Geese. One had an unusual looking head - leucistic, I guess. In the Canaan Valley Resort State Park, there were two Canada Geese on the new ponds on the left when entering the park. On the beaver pond below the lodge, there were 31 Mallards of both sexes and at least 29 Canada Geese. On the settling ponds below the lodge were 6 Wood Ducks (male and female), 3 Northern Pintail, 4 Green-winged Teal and two Buffleheads. It was a wet but exciting morning!*

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 11/9/17

*On Thursday late afternoon 11/9, and Friday a.m. 11/10, on the small 5 acre lake at the Buckskin B.S. Camp, were Gadwalls (11), Pied-billed Grebes (6), Hooded Mergansers (12), Ring-necked Ducks (5), Buffleheads (10), Double-crested Cormorants (2), Surf Scoters (3), and Common Goldeneye (1).*

– Beth and Jim Bullard, Marlinton, WV, 11/11/17

*I refound a Snowy Owl just after 2pm today along Mall Road past the Morgantown Mall in Westover. Continue past Gabe's and the Freedom Hyundai dealer. The bird frequented light poles between the curve where a construction trailer is located and Williams Rd.*

*Interestingly we talked to a construction worker who showed us a picture taken at 1am last night of the owl after it had landed on the roof of his truck while he sat inside! Over 20 birders enjoyed it. Hopefully it hangs around.*

– Joe Hildreth, Morgantown, WV, 11/16/17

*David Patick, Mike Griffith and I spent the morning birding several spots along Rt. 2 from Ashton to Pt. Pleasant and then checked the agricultural fields between Pt. Pleasant and Winfield. We had hoped that the bad weather from last night would have deposited a few new birds into our usual spots. We weren't disappointed. Highlights included two late shorebirds (White-rumped Sandpiper and Greater Yellowlegs) that are late dates for our area, and four goose species. We also noted a hybrid goose. It was seen with the flock of Greater White-fronted Geese at Gallipolis Ferry. It was larger than the white-fronted geese and had white and black mixed on the head, back and near the tail.*

*At Gallipolis Ferry were Greater White-fronted Goose (21) and a Greater White-fronted Goose x ? Hybrid. At Rt. 817 (old 35 south) were Snow Goose (20 -50% blue morph), Ross's Goose (13) and Greater White-fronted Goose (6).*

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 11/21/17

*35 Bald Eagles Parker Hollow Lake in Hardy County right now. 17 adults and 18 immatures!*

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV, 11/25/17

*Mike Griffith and I just found two LeConte's Sparrows at the Goose Ponds at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam. Also a Yellow-headed Blackbird fly by. Lots of Rusty Blackbirds as well.*

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 11/26/17

*This afternoon there was a dark-phase Rough-legged Hawk, two juvenile Golden Eagles and a male adult harrier in the Sinks region of Randolph County. I topped the day off by checking out the Huttonsville Snowy Owl as well.*

– Rodney Bartgis, Valley Bend, WV, 12/1/17



*Nice mixed flock of geese on Rt. 817 in Mason Co. – photo by David Patick*



*The oddity of a swimming Great Blue Heron – photo by Richard Gregg*



## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

Last fall, we put up two screech owl nest boxes in our yard. In April, we noticed a red one in one box and a gray one in the other box. Then, we noticed Red Squirrels going in and out of the boxes and a Great Crested Flycatcher. A House Wren was even seen carrying sticks into one of the boxes. I told Judy, he would probably kill himself trying to fill the box with little sticks. The owls left.

This afternoon, I looked out the kitchen window and noticed several titmice flying around a box, hovering at the hole and looking in. For the next 20 minutes, at least 8 chickadees, 6 titmice & 2 nuthatches hovered and landed and checked out the hole. They were joined by 4 cardinals, 2 House Sparrows and a Golden-crowned Kinglet that jumped around in the tree around the box. Then things settled down, except for a chickadee or titmouse going by and looking in the box. I hoped we had an owl in the box.

When Judy came in from work, I told her about the excitement. She stepped to the window to look at the box and there was a gray screech owl looking out of the hole. Our fingers are crossed!

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 12/18/17

I visited Jefferson County this morning and relocated the large Horned Lark flock from earlier this year on Meyerstown Road. During this encounter I noted both a single Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur within the flock.

– Allen Bryan, Winchester & Richmond, VA, 12/30/17

Sunday was a great day for hawks in Mason County (up Route 35 from Winfield to Pt. Pleasant, then toward Huntington on Route 2), despite the “warm” temperatures (33 degrees and sunny). 1 harrier gliding and hovering around a field, 2 Cooper’s, 8 red-tails, 1 red-shouldered and 6 kestrels. Remarkably, no vultures or eagles. The best birds were two rough legged’s, especially the one who displayed it’s dark “elbows” after flashing its white upper tail.

And after years of squinting at fields in the winter, finally 40 Horned Larks just where they were reported in eBird. And on the farm road, right in front of the car. Way cool.

Finally, did those 5 Eastern Meadowlarks who were pecking around a rare patch of green grass skip the class about leaving town in the winter?

– Laura Ceperley, 1/8/18

Amy and I went to a farm field on Upland Road near Apple Grove this evening, where we were lucky enough to see a couple of Short-eared Owls. When we first got there, Amy spotted one sitting on the ground and I was able to get the scope on it and take some really good looks. After it flew, it met up with another owl that was sitting on the ground also. After a while, they started chasing some harriers that were flying over the field.

– Rennie Talbert, Barboursville, WV, 1/20/18

I set out at 11:30 this morning to bird the pasture edges. Right off the bat I saw 7 flickers fly up from the an area near the barn, one after another. Next there were 2 pairs of bluebirds on the corral fence. A Downy Woodpecker and crow made themselves heard. About 15 doves flew up from the field behind the pond, and a similar number of juncos were in the trees around the pond.

Suddenly, I heard a Red-shouldered Hawk, then a second one...and here they came, flying out in the open over the field. While watching them, I heard still another one, which then made its appearance. So now I was watching (and hearing) 3 Red-shouldered Hawks,

when I saw another large bird, brownish, with a distinctive wing stroke and flap-flap-flap-glide pattern. I had my suspicions, but it took several sightings before I saw the white rump ...a Northern Harrier! When I turned my attention back to the Red-shouldered Hawks, a 4th one had joined them! A red-letter day for raptors at our farm!

This morning there were 95 (yes, I counted them) Pine Siskins at the feeder.

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, WV, 1/28/18

### – Sightings taken from WVBird ListServ



Jefferson County Lapland Longspur  
– photo by Allen Bryan

## BILL THOMPSON INTERVIEW

**What was your spark bird? What is your favorite bird now?** My spark bird was a snowy owl in 1968 or 69 in our front yard in Pella, Iowa. My fave bird now and for a long time is the red-headed woodpecker.

**A particular favorite birding festival?** I love the New River Birding and Nature Festival both because it’s small and friendly and because it’s in WV! Plus Swainson’s, cerulean, and golden-winged warblers—‘nuff said!

**What does the future hold for BWD?** We’re moving into delivering content in person in the form of events like our Reader Rendezvous weekends and the American Birding Expo. We’re also launching a birding optics and gear retail division called Redstart Birding.

**You’re a singer and songwriter. Any favorite “naturey songs”?** I love all music but very much like the organic acoustic genre of Gillian Welch, Neil Young, Woody Guthrie, and others—especially when they sing about birds and nature.

**What place that you’ve never been to would you most like to birdwatch, and why?** Australia because it’s so exotic and interesting, being an island the size of a continent. Also Hawaii, the only U.S. state I’ve never visited.

## CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

### CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

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Larry Metheny  
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Randy L. Miller – 740-572-7938

Herb Myers – 717-475-0969

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

### **BIBBEE CHAPTER**

**Apr. 2018** – Date and time TBA. Ramp Dinner and Festival at Camp Creek State Park. We will lead bird and flower walks. Camp Creek State Park/Forest. Contact Allen and Mindy Waldron at mwaldron@suddenlink.net.

**May 12, 2018** – We will meet for a tally at Hinton DQ around 5 PM. Spring Migration Bird Count (NAMC). We count bird species for the day. Pipestem CBC Circle. Contact Jim Phillips at jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

**May – Aug. 2018** – 6 AM - Noon. MAPS bird banding at Sandstone Falls (Raleigh Co.) and Wolf Creek (Fayette Co.). Day use area beyond the Sandstone Falls Parking Lot. New River Bird Observatory near Oak Hill, WV. Contact the Waldrons.

**May – Sept. 2018** – Second and fourth Saturdays at 9 AM. Join the birding group at the Grandview NPS for a morning of birding. Grandview Visitors and Picnic area. Meet near the Visitors Center. Contact the Waldrons.

### **HANDLAN CHAPTER**

**Apr. 16, 2018** – Rob O'Quinn will speak to our club at our April meeting. Rob is co-owner of Birds, Blooms and Butterflies, a store in Hurricane WV that has "everything you need for the hobby of backyard birding, including squirrel solutions." We will also prepare for our May century week. Regular meeting at 6:30pm at the Village Chapel Presbyterian Church in the Fellowship Hall.

**Apr. 27 2018** – Laura Ceperley has arranged for the Kanawha Trail Club to tour the Three Rivers Avian Center near Hinton WV on Friday afternoon (probably around 2-3 pm), April 27. There are a few slots available for Bird Club members. Please let Laura know if you are interested at lceperley@yahoo.com or 304-389-3562.

**May 21, 2018** – Annual Potluck Picnic at 6:00pm. Location, Coonskin Park.

**HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER**

**Apr. 17, 2017** – Program by a special guest. Spring Birds and Ephemerals. Bring a covered dish, place settings and drink. 6 PM for mingling, dinner at 6:30.

**May 19, 2018** – Picnic/outing hosted by Rosie and Malv Campbell. 61121 S. 26 Rd. Bethesda, OH 43719. Bring a covered dish and drink. Meet at 2:00pm.

**MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER**

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

**Mar. 29, 2018** – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am. ORINWR Parking Lot.

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

**Apr. 5, 2018** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**Apr. 12, 2018** – Elberfeld's Farm, 8:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/ Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**Apr. 19, 2018** – Johnson T Janes Park, 8:00am. Parking lot, east end of 27th Street, Parkersburg.

**Apr. 26, 2018** – Birds & Flowers, Newell's Run, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, bring lunch.

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

**May 3, 2018** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**May 10, 2018** – Ohio Birding Route Trail, 8:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**May 12, 2018** – Pat Collins farm, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown. North American Migration Count.

**May 17, 2018** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

**May 24, 2018** – Hocking Hills, 7:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**May 31, 2018** – "The Wilds", Ohio, all-day trip, 7:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, bring lunch.

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

**Jun. 2, 2018** – Birds & Breakfast, 7:00am. McDonough Log Cabin "A", bring finger food and drink.

**Jun. 7, 2018** – Crown City Wildlife Area, Ohio, 7:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**Jun. 13–15, 2018** – New River Gorge overnight. Details later.

**Jun. 21, 2018** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

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## NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

**POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON**

**Apr. 2018** – Birding 101. Classroom Sessions: Thursday evenings April 12, 19, 26 & May 3.

Birding 101 is tailored for beginning birders. It utilizes both classroom sessions and field trips to teach everything from bird identification to field etiquette to birding techniques and resources. This year the course will be taught by local birding experts Wil Hershberger, Lynne Wiseman, Nancy Kirschbaum and Carol Winckler.

The classroom sessions will be held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center. The classrooms will be announced. The field trips will be held at various locations around the Panhandle from roughly 7

a.m.–12 noon on the corresponding Saturdays (April 14, 21, 28 and May 5).

Class size will be limited to 24 participants. The course is open to people of all ages but children younger than 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required, and a fee is involved.

For questions, email Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or call 703-303-1026.

**Apr. 14, 2018** – Spring Bird Walk at USGS Fish Health Lab, 7:30 AM. USGS Fish Health Lab, 407 Reservoir Road.

**More PVAS outings at [www.potomacaudubon.org/birdcal](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/birdcal).**

**WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS**

As always, [www.wvstateparks.com/calendar/](http://www.wvstateparks.com/calendar/) lists many great programs and walks with nature in mind. Go to the website for more information on events at your favorite park.

**BBC LECTURE SERIES – OGLEBAY**

**March 25, 2018** – Join Mary Ellen Cassidy for a discussion on solar energy at 2pm as part of the Schrader Center's Living Green Lecture Series. Free and open to the public.

**April 29, 2018** – Join Dr. Zachary Loughman for a discussion on new wildlife species of the Appalachian Mountains at 2pm as part of the Schrader Center's Living Green Lecture Series. Free and open to the public.

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## 2018 AMERICAN BIRDING EXPO IN PHILLY

September 21-23, 2018 • [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. 4,000 attendees and over 120 exhibitors are expected for this year's Expo.

A full schedule will be available on [www.americanbirdingexpo.com](http://www.americanbirdingexpo.com). Costs look to be \$10 per day to enter the venue.

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**Remember these people?**

*– A photo of members  
Tom Hurley with his late father  
George during a Christmas Bird  
Count in Charleston on  
December 27, 1960, printed  
last December 17th in the  
Charleston Gazette-Mail*

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