



THE MAIL BAG

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

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JULY–AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2018

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note

The BBC had a wonderful Foray this year. The flooding rains preceded us by a day, and we had mainly clear skies and comfortable temperatures all week. We'd like to thank Greg Miller and Bruce Beehler for being part of Foray, and for each staying on an extra day to participate and to lead other programs. We also would like to thank all of our great speakers, field trip leaders and workshop presenters. Everyone learned a lot, and the speakers, in turn, got a lot out of their time with the BBC. It was fantastic to show up to Foray and see so many new faces, and throughout the week, those new participants turned into valuable members of our data collection and overall experience. It is one of my goals every year to get new people to Foray, and to increase participation from the existing membership, and that happened again this year, with nearly 70 people joining us.

Next year, Foray will be at Camp Pioneer in Beverly, just south of Elkins, in an area full of beautiful farms, wide river valleys and surrounding mountains. This Foray has a lot of species diversity, due to all of the elevation changes. Lodgings are quite nice there (the dorms have a/c and attached showers, for those who have not been to many Forays), and the city is convenient for those in need of one. We hope to see everyone there next year, and we'll plan a fun program.



Here's a reminder to always try to get outside as much as your time allows. There is plenty to keep people down, and many distractions, but a good time outdoors, away from cell phones and the media machines can really spark your day. Bonuses include such things as finding rare birds (Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Stork in WV come to mind); picking berries, apples, mushrooms and more; and getting vitamin D in its original form. There's a whole wide world out there!

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JANICE EMRICK

When I started to bird seriously in 1989 when I joined the Brooks Bird Club, I started with one bird field guide. Since that time I have added many more bird and other nature guides to my collection. Some are good because of the pictures, some are good because of the illustrations, some are helpful because of the range maps, etc. While I still go to these field guides for help, I find myself using Apps on my smartphone more and more. And just like the field guides, I sometimes need more than one app to help me find my information.

My most used app for bird identification is the one for Sibley Birds, followed by Merlin Bird ID. I have also used iBird Pro. The great thing about these apps is that they can be updated without paying more (most of the time), and I can carry all of these with me in my pocket, which I certainly could not do with individual books. Other nature apps on my phone are eBird, iNaturalist, Flora of Virginia, Dragonfly ID, Bird Codes, and Leafsnap. All of these come in handy at one time or another. One note of caution if you purchase any of these apps: sometimes if your phone updates their operating system, the apps no longer work. This literally just happened to Leafsnap: The app is no longer available in the App Store, so it won't load on my phone anymore. Usually it is because the manufacturer of the App doesn't update their app to work the new operating system. This happened to quite a few of Audubon apps that I had but can no longer use. So buyer beware! But it still beats carrying all those books with you at the same time.

– Janice Emrick, BBC President



Maya Sidlo shows off a butterfly at Foray. It was good to have children and teens there that were interested in nature.

FINGER LAKES TRIP

June 30-July 4, 2018

DAY 1 - From daughter Susie's home in Pittsburgh, we headed up I-79 to Erie, then east into New York state, across the broad Lake Chautauqua to Jamestown, our first stop. It's the birthplace in 1908 of Roger Tory Peterson, the foremost ornithologist and naturalist of his time, maybe all time. His research, lectures, field guides and paintings of birds gave thousands of people an interest in the natural world and enriched their lives.

We went to the Peterson Institute of Natural History, an imposing stone and frame building surrounded by woods with nature trails, of course. On display are more than 100 of his color paintings of birds, unique and outstanding, as well as other memorabilia, including the outfit he wore on his trip to Antarctica. Then we were off to the Southern Tier Brewery in nearby Lakewood and back to the motel for some TV and then to bed.

After a good buffet breakfast of oatmeal, scrambles, sausage and fruit (included), we made a brief stop at the nearby Audubon Community Nature Center. We heard a musical song which we didn't recognize (should know the songs better), couldn't get a good look through the leaves, decided on Chipping Sparrow. We also got phoebes, Purple Martins and the usual Blue Jays, sparrows and robins.

Next it was Allegany State Park and driving by Quaker Lake we got an Osprey. They nest often on high man-made structures with enough flat area for a nest, and near water, as they're fish eaters. And there he was, sitting comfortably on the nest.

We had a lunch snack in the town of Cuba, then visited the Pleasant Valley Wine Co. Driving away, a mockingbird, with its colorful wings, flew in front of us. Bonus! After we got settled in, we headed for Ithaca, dinner and bed.

Native American folklore holds that the Finger Lakes were formed when God placed his handprint on some of the most beautiful land ever created. There are actually 11 finger-shaped lakes, named for the tribes of the Six Nations of the

Iroquois. Before breakfast, we sat on the porch, sipping our tea and coffee and enjoying the morning bird song.

Then to Robert Treman State Park, where we took a short walk to the waterfall, drove around the park and then moved on to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which I'm a member of. There are 400 acres, with a beautiful water lily pond which you see through the large glass windows in the main room. There are fascinating displays, especially the sound studio, where you can bring up birds on the screen, in color, and then get their call. We got the Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Green-wing Teal. We could have got hundreds of others. There's a small movie theater with a variety of films. We watched "A World of Birds" and loved it.

One big wall has paintings of more than 100 birds and you can bring them up on the computer screen one at a time, for info. We took a short walk through Sapsucker Woods. It was mid-day, so the birds were quiet, except for a Common Yellowthroat in the distance. The Lab is certainly worth a visit, especially for birders. And it's all free.

Next was the nearby Ithaca Falls, a 150-foot vertical drop, 200 feet across. But the white water doesn't drop straight down, it cascades over about 20 rock ledges. An impressive sight.

Then we went to Taughannock State Park, where we walked the mile to the Lower Falls. It's a beautiful 250-foot drop in a narrow flow, reminding us of Bridal Veil Falls in Yosemite National Park.

About 5:45 we drove into a heavy thunderstorm while driving and pulled off to wait it out. Lightning brought down a large tree across the road which would have hit us if it had fallen our way. Then the sun came out and there was a lovely rainbow. It was still there after dinner, about 8:30, with another one, not quite as bright. A heavenly touch.

It was another eventful and delightful trip, thanks to Susie's thorough planning. Where to next?

– *Contributed by Bob Rine*

CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

Ryan Tomazin
348 Station Street, Apt. 7
Bridgeville, PA 15017
412-220-9726
wwwarblers@hotmail.com



CORRESPONDENCE

We would love to hear from members of the BBC. What have you been doing? Have you taken recent trips? What interesting birds or plants have you seen in your locality or backyard?

The Club looks forward to little notes on Christmas cards and dues notices, but feel free to get in touch with us at other times of the year too. Even just a line or two would be of interest to our readers, especially if we haven't seen or heard from you in a while.

Correspondence may be mailed to: Juanita Slater, Corresponding Secretary, c/o BBC, PO Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

For those of you who prefer email, correspondences may be sent to: jslater1120@yahoo.com

2018 POCAHONTAS COUNTY FORAY DAILY REPORTS

Sun., June 3 – Mon. June 4, 2018

Our 2018 Foray began Sunday afternoon with the arrival of many regular yearly attendees, along with several newcomers to Foray. Janice Emrick helped everyone get registered and find a place to stay. Following registration and a hearty meal, Ryan Tomazin discussed the schedule of activities that were planned and elicited various volunteers to help get things running smoothly.

The next morning, June 4, the very early risers took off with Ryan Tomazin and Orion Metheny around 4:30 a.m. They headed down Back Mountain Road to do a breeding bird survey. Chestnut-sided Warblers were the predominant species heard that morning. Also going out very early were a group led by Carol and Fred McCullough. They drove up Snowy Mountain Road to do a breeding bird survey. Many birds were reported, including one Bald Eagle, a couple of Belted Kingfishers, Bobolink, White-eyed Vireo, Veery and ravens.

After lunch, various groups went out to explore the area. Bob Pickett found three snakes: a Red-bellied, a Northern Water, and a very interesting-looking Earthworm Snake. Mike and Betsy Breiding reported an encounter with some



Female grouse - Ryan Tomazin

Wild Turkeys that left them a little shaken up. They had come across a clutch of many small chicks that scattered like ants when discovered. The mother soon returned and decided she was having none of this and promptly flew at Mike, claws “a blazin’”. Betsy intervened before Mike became the recipient of a severe clawing.

After dinner and the daily bird count, Bruce Beehler gave a wonderful presentation on the 100 days he spent

documenting the trip that migratory birds take from Louisiana, up the Mississippi River to its headwaters, and on up into Ontario, Canada. He has written a book that documents this migration, entitled *North On The Wing*.

By the end of the evening, everyone was ready to bed down for a good night’s sleep and happily anticipate the next day’s adventures.

– *by Mary Murin*

Tues. June 5, 2018

The day started off with the usual BBS routes and singing male census at the early hours of the day. A little while later at a more reasonable hour the morning



Attacking Red Squirrel - Darrell Good

bird walk was lead by Janice Emrick. The group gathered back together for breakfast before heading out on an all day trip.

First stop was the Blister Run Swamp near Gaudineer Knob where Mourning Warbler, Northern Waterthrush and Canada Warblers were the highlight. At the top of the Knob in the Virgin Spruce the group had a happily singing Winter Wren, along with lunch.

After wrapping up lunch we all headed to the Mower Track to learn about the restoration that is taking place and the great effort to return the area to its natural flora. A fly over of an American Kestrel was the highlight bird during our time spent at the Mower Tract. Once the adventures ended and all returned back to camp we had dinner and the bird list.

Following the bird list we had a wonderful talk by Tom Pauley on Herpetology. It was filled with great stories and abundant information. A great end to a wonderful day.

– *by Orion Metheny*



Uncommon Snowshoe Hare - Darrell Good

Wed. June 6, 2018

I do not think anyone found Wednesday boring. For me it provided an absolute smorgasbord of new species as well as quite a few learning opportunities. From birding the Mower Tract in the morning, to Blister Pine swamp in the afternoon, to owling at the virgin forest at Gaudineer knob, we packed Wednesday cram full of activities.

At 4:30, my alarm went off. As it was still early in the week and I still had plenty of adrenaline left, it did not take too long to wake up. But it still took plenty of effort to roll out of bed, get dressed, grab

my stuff, and then head down to the kitchen to grab a granola bar and apple before the morning BBS run. Before 5:00, Gerald Maravanyika, Orion Metheny, Ryan Tomazin, and



Pete Rykert with accidentally-hit raven - Ryan Tomazin

I headed out to do a new route along the Mower Tract where we had visited the day before. In past years, bad road conditions had prevented anyone from gathering BBS data there. The forest service had improved the road significantly as part of the restoration of the Mower Tract. But we missed our road. In the fog we drove past the entrance, and had to keep going quite a ways before we found a spot to turn around.

(continued on Page 4)

However, though we did get a slightly late start, the run was incredible. We found a plethora of birds, especially warblers and thrushes. In addition to the Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, and Blackburnian Warblers singing abundantly along the route, we found a Northern Waterthrush, and, more surprisingly, a Mourning Warbler and SIX Canada Warblers! Veeries and Hermit Thrushes sang periodically, but we heard Swainson's Thrushes at almost every stop. What a treat! Another highlight was a singing Vesper Sparrow, a new species for the week. We barely made it to breakfast after we stopped in Durbin for some common species, including a Willow Flycatcher.

Technically, after breakfast was a "free" morning, but there was so much happening I had a hard time deciding what to do. A small group went out driving and ended up seeing some pretty neat species like Orchard Oriole, Bobolink, American Kestrel, and Northern Mockingbird. A larger group went on a fern walk and discovered over ten species just around camp. I had no idea there were that many around! But I opted to go with Jim and Bev Triplett, Dawn Fox, Carol McCullough, and some others back to the Mower Tract to try and relocate the Mourning Warbler and Vesper Sparrow and to photograph them if possible. We saw and photographed both, but not before Mr. Triplett gave me some valuable advice on how to show others birds instead of simply saying I saw it. And though I did not find any more new species, (allowing Nevin and Gerald to get ahead in our friendly competition), I did have a lot of fun photographing and helping others find the semi-rare birds I had



Mower Tract reclamation - Ryan Tomazin

seen/heard that morning. For the second time that day I came in late to mealtime.

And I did not have much time to eat either. Immediately after lunch the whole group caravanned out to Blister Pine Swamp. And though we did get lost on the way, we eventually made it to the swamp, where Ashton Berdine met us and showed us around. The rolling expanse of grassland around the swamp amazed me, and I found a Savannah Sparrow in addition to the Swamp Sparrows and my



Ashton Berdine leads trip to Blister Pine Swamp - Ryan Tomazin

first ever Alder Flycatcher singing in the swamp. While at the swamp, Chris Tingley caught a garter snake which, upon capture, regurgitated its latest meal; a whole earthworm. Gross, but very cool. And though I would have loved to stick around longer and try to find the Bobolinks others had heard, we did eventually have to camp for supper.

Katie Loucks gave the evening program; a fascinating report on the status of Golden-winged Warblers in WV, and the recovery programs in place to protect them. Golden-winged Warblers need early successional forest, and Ms Loucks explained some of the tactics and details about creating such habitat. She also talked briefly about a similar program for Cerulean Warblers.

But the day was not over yet. After dusk, Orion, Ryan, Nevin, some others and I headed out to the virgin Red Spruce forest at Gaudineer Knob to look for Northern Saw-whet Owls. We heard a Barred Owl at Blister Swamp on the way there, but we never heard a hoot out of the Saw-whets. We did hear some odd rustling sounds which most of us attributed to "squatch", but of course we never saw

him. By 11:00 o'clock or so when we got home, I could barely keep my eyes open.

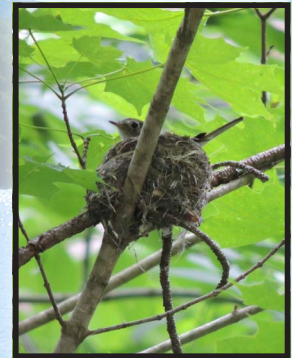
Even though we did scratch on the Saw-whets, Wednesday gave me nothing to complain about. I learned a lot, traveled quite a bit, and saw a bunch of new species. Four lifers in one day (Swainson's Thrush, Canada Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, and Alder Flycatcher) make Wednesday a day I will not soon forget.

– *by Darrell Good*

Thurs. June 7, 2018

Ryan Tomazin went on a Breeding Bird Survey with three others on Burner Mountain Road. Despite five dead end roads, they were able to identify 38 species. Fred and Carol McCullough left before their results could be recorded.

Martin Tingley did a singing male census on Gaudineer Knob with four others and noted among others, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green and Magnolia Warblers, and Winter Wren.



Least Flycatcher on nest - Celia Good

Scott Emrick led the other singing male census on the Upper Cherry River and identified among others, Veery, Ovenbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Magnolia and Black-throated Green Warblers, and a Hermit Thrush.

After breakfast, the group travelled to Spruce Knob where numerous birds were identified including Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green and Magnolia Warblers, Winter Wren, Common Raven, Dark-eyed Junco and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Lunch was had at Spruce Knob Lake, followed by a visit to the Sinks of Gandy where a number of field birds were identified including Bobolink, Vesper, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows, Bald Eagle,



19" Hellbender from river - Darrell Good

Black Vulture, and Cliff Swallow. A number of adventurous members chose to go through the Sinks. Lots of Cliff Swallows were nesting at the entrance with a Pickerel Frog inside. Karen and Megan led a chorus of songs as the intrepid crew eventually found their way out the other end.

– *by Bob Pickett*

Fri. June 8, 2018

Friday started as usual with the Breeding Bird Survey and the Singing Male Censuses at around 5:00. A few people went with Martin Tingley to Gaudineer Knob for a Singing Male Census and chanced upon a flock of Red Crossbills around the parking lot. On the BBS route we found huge numbers of Turkey Vultures and Common Ravens, as well as Black Vultures and Bald Eagles feeding on a carcass. We also encountered huge sheepdogs who seemed to be protecting a nearly newborn fawn beside the road.

After breakfast things started to get busy. Greg Miller led a photography workshop around camp. He discussed the importance of selecting the right camera for the job, how to align photographs, and techniques for taking excellent photos with an iPhone. Then they took pictures around the creek with Greg instructing. A few people, including myself, took a trip down Back River Road. There we found the first Mallard of the week, an Osprey, and a House Finch. We also visited the sewage settling ponds of a nearby campground and found Wood Ducks, Canada Geese, and more Mallards.

Sue Olcott gave a presentation on Monarch Butterflies after lunch. In it she addressed the importance of conserving habitat for these butterflies. When the program was over, everyone split up. A

few went to Gaudineer Knob, some went on local trips, and some to catch Hellbenders in the nearby river. Even though they are a threatened species, we managed to catch two of the monstrous salamanders. On one of the local trips the group found a Yellow-breasted Chat and a White-eyed Vireo.

For the evening program, Cindy Sandeno presented on the Forest Service's management plan for developing habitat for a larger variety of species. After the program, there was a game of bird charades with much laughter and fun for all. When the game of charades was finished we went outside and looked at the moths, mayflies, and other insects that were around and on the sheet and light which Sue Olcott had set up outside. Then my family and I (the Goods) played a few songs to close out the evening before everyone went to bed.

– *by Nevin Good*

Sat. June 9 – Sun. June 10, 2018

On Saturday morning, we awoke to a beautiful morning which included a morning bird walk. Near the camp's entrance, we were serenaded by a Mourning Warbler and observed an Acadian Flycatcher on the nest with young. We also observed fishermen by the stream catching Brook Trout. A great country breakfast awaited us which filled us up for the morning. The cooks have done a great job this week with their meals and have aimed to please us! After breakfast and announcements, we sang to seven departing campers.

The morning plans included different groups choosing to go to different places to explore. Michael Jones, a retired geologist, took a small group to a fossil site near Elkins and excited the group with finding many small fossils. Ryan Tomazin and a group chose to do an all day trip within the territory to see what else they could find. Our group, Scott and Janice Emrick, Wilma Jarrell, Tom and I ventured to Cheat Mountain Club Road and heard the beautiful song of the Swainson's Thrush, as well as the Black-throated Blue Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch and others. After lunch, our

adventures took us to the farmlands of Snowy Mountain Road and Route 17 to look for sparrows and a Golden-wing Warbler. We did see a Red-headed Woodpecker on Route 17! That was a treat!

Michael did an afternoon class of Gollith fossils and told about his volunteer work with them at Tennessee University. It is very interesting the research that is being done there.

After supper, we did the bird list with a total of 125 species. The evening program was by Martin Tingley who has grown up in the club and now works for West Virginia Forestry. He gave a nice presentation with photos of the flooding along Williams River Road in Webster County and the Greenbrier River and the work that Forestry has done to correct the damages. Later, we played cha-



*Janice & Scott Emrick with Greg Miller
- Ryan Tomazin*

rades, a tradition, which is always fun. Tom Fox and Pete Rykert were our observers. It was a pleasant night to end the day and go off to dreamland.

Sunday morning, we arose to a sunny day and a good breakfast but saddened that camp is already over. It always goes so fast! It was a good week reconnecting with dear friends and meeting new ones. It is so heartwarming to spend time with people who also enjoy the wonders of nature. I miss our old friends who are no longer with whom we have wonderful memories. Camp was tidied up and campers packed up and after many goodbyes and hugs, we headed home reminiscing. We are all anxious for next year. Thank you Janice and Ryan, Foray Directors, for a job well done!

– *by Dawn Fox*

BIBBEE NATURE CLUB REPORTS

Our 47th Pipestem WV Area/Bibbee Nature Club Century Day Bird Count was a very good day. It took place on May 12, 2018, and 11 participants found 103 bird species. My highlight was finding the Amish Bakery with the amazing doughnuts and breads. Definitely worth a trip if you are over in the Forest Hill area on a Friday or Saturday. We found white shooting star (a flower) on the road down to Bluestone WMA. There is a very large area of this beautiful flower. We also found another patch on the Wolf Creek side. Alma, Bob D. Allen and I had spectacular looks at an adult Bald Eagle at Bertha (Bluestone WMA) as it flew straight towards our car, in the middle of the road. It then landed around 30 feet in front of the car. Bertha is always good for an eagle or two. Jim Phillips did the compilation for the day after we all met at the Hinton DQ. We also had a few good birds out of the windows at the DQ. Twenty species of warblers were found, as well, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was a new bird for the count.

– Mindy Waldron



Jim Phillips has finished his eagle nest survey, with the help of many people, for the season and it looks like the birds were very successful. Our area is indeed a location for nesting Bald Eagles. We can hope people will help them out by cutting down on the use of lead fishing bait and bullets. Lead poisoning may become the new DDT as a killer of raptors. It's certainly taking a hit in our area. Thanks Jim, for including Bibbee Nature Club. Also he includes the dates for next year's eagle surveys.

2018 Bald Eagle Nesting Success for Three Rivers Avian Center and WVDNR, compiled on June 21, 2018

WV nests:

Beury - 1 young

Brooks Island - 2 young

Bluestone - 2 young. Abandoned old nest, built new nest in next white pine upriver.

Bull Falls - 1 young. Blown down, built

new nest in white pine a few trees downriver.

Barger Springs (Lower Greenbrier 1) - blown down, rebuilt just downriver.

Fort Springs (Lower Greenbrier 2) - no activity.

Alderson (Lower Greenbrier 3) 1 young.

Indian Creek 1 (Greenville) - not checked, was inactive in 2017.

Indian Creek 2 (Red Sulphur Springs) - 2 young.

Meadow River - inactive

Bellepoint – nest blown down, rebuilt.

Chick status unknown.

Thanks to nest monitors from Three Rivers Avian Center, Bibbee Nature Club and Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory. 2019 Eagle Surveys will be January 12, 2019 & March 2, 2019!

CORRESPONDENCE

Hi all, surveyors in WV and PA are noting a substantial scarcity of common yellowthroats on routes and point counts this year, building on declines in recent years. This is a species we take for granted as common, but I'd like to ask that birders pay particular attention to the species and don't overlook it in reporting to the listserv and elsewhere. When reporting common yellowthroats, I ask that you give a little additional detail as to location/habitat etc than you might otherwise do. Thanks!

– Rich Bailey, WVDNR, Elkins, WV

ERRATA

In the latest Mail Bag, an article about the Purple Gallinule at Green Bottom says, "The last West Virginia sighting was "collected" at McClintic Wildlife Management Area in 1983." That's incorrect. On April 10, 1997, Jon Benedetti found a Purple Gallinule just south of Parkersburg, at Washington Bottoms. Cory Gildersleeve and I went to see it the following day. It was easy to find, blaze purple against the mud. We watched it through a scope for a long time on the far side of some wide water, but it never moved, so after a while I stripped down to my tightie-whities and waded across, retrieving the dead

bird. Cory took the specimen to the FebWS headquarters to put in the freezer; Dick Esker told me today that it's not there any more.

– Bill Murphy

The photo on page 1 of Vol. 75, Issue 2 Mail Bag should have been credited to member Dallas DiLeo. – Ed.



SPOONBILLS FOUND IN WV

Above is a picture of Roseate Spoonbills found during Mountain Nature Camp in Terra Alta, WV, on June 13th. This is the first record of this species in the state.

This picture was taken with a phone camera through a spotting scope at twilight. Many photos were taken by many observers.

The birds were originally found by our camp cook, Bob Hauger, on the morning of the 13th. Most of the camp was already on an all day field trip, after we returned and heard about the sighting, a couple search parties went out after dinner to look for the birds. Mary Edith Sambuco relocated the birds while walking along Terra Alta Lake Road. Most of the camp participants were then able to observe the birds. The birds were not relocated the next morning.

Also of interest, a male Gadwall was in the same area (a rare WV bird in June) and continued to be present the rest of the week.

– Contributed by Larry Helgerman

FOSSIL RESEARCH MATERIAL

Member Michael Jones needs waterfowl gizzard material for a research project at the Gray Fossil Site and Museum in Tennessee. Contact Mike at mikeljones@hotmail.com for all the details.

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Sarah Walker
P.O. Box 286
Marlinton, WV 24954
Email: smwalker@smcm.edu

Judy Benner
115 Abbington Ct., Apt. 302
Bunker Hill, WV 25413
Tel: 304-616-2811
Email: jdbenner1967@gmail.com

Shannon Burner
182 New Creek Hwy.
Keyser, WV 26726
Tel: 304-788-3201
Email: shannonann66@gmail.com

Rebekah Perry
3355 Harvey Rd.
Huntington, WV 25704
Tel: 304-638-3277
Email: perry.rebekahm@gmail.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

Robert Pickett
2394 Middle Mtn. Rd.
Bowden, WV 26254
Tel: 304-636-8571

John Fichtner
1230 Allentown Rd.
Gay, WV 25244
Tel: 304-373-5611

Mack W. Frantz
60 Bassel Addition Rd.
Clarksburg, WV 26301
Email: mwfrantz@mix.wvu.edu

ADD MEMBERS

Gerald Maravanyika
8807 Crandall Rd.
Lanham, Md. 20706
Email: gmmaravanyika@gmail.com

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

*Contact Mindy for information at
mwaldron@suddenlink.net*

Sept. 2018 – Date TBD, 10-3 PM.
Hawk Watch on East River Mountain in

Mercer County near Bluefield WV. Contact Jim Phillips at jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

Oct. 2018 – Come and go as your schedule permits. Big Sit! An all-day birding event. We begin at dawn and go until dusk. Join our group the “DAM SITTERS”. Mountain Valley Lake in Summers Co. near Jumping Branch, WV

Oct. 20, 2018 – 5 PM. Location TBD. Annual Dinner, Hinton, WV.

Nov. 2018 – Date TBD. Looking for waterfowl around Hinton and the New River, Bluestone Lake, Mountain Valley Lake and Sandstone Falls.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

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

Oct. 16, 2018 – Program by Dr. William Hicks ~ Power generation, comparing coal, gas, wind, solar, etc. to see which is best and worst for our birds.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

Sept. – Jeanie Hilton 304-428-8641

Sept. 6, 2018 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 8, 2018 – Mountwood Park, 8:00am, Beach area (near torpedo), bring lunch.

Sept. 13, 2018 – Lake Hope, Zaleski forest, Ohio, 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339 / Rt. 7, bring lunch.

Sept. 20, 2018 – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am, ORINWR Parking Lot.

Sept. 27, 2018 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. – Barbara Hobman 740-374-5548

Oct. 4, 2018 – Business/Planning Meeting, 9:00am, ORINWR Conference Room. Come at 8:00 for birding before the meeting.

Oct. 11, 2018 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton, 8:00am, Kroger wetlands parking lot.

Oct. 13, 2018 – Big Sit, Ohio River. Sunrise to sunset, ORINWR Parking

Lot at Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Come anytime; stay as long as you like.

Oct. 18, 2018 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. 25, 2018 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am. Boat ramp, Northwest Pipe Drive.

Nov. – Sandy Albrecht 740-373-8994

Nov. 1, 2018 – Program, 6:30pm, Vienna Public Library Meeting Room. Bring finger food.

Nov. 8, 2018 – Devol’s Dam to Civitan Park, 8:00am, Big Sandy in Parkersburg or 8:30am at Warren’s IGA parking lot,

Nov. 15, 2018 – Middle Island area, 9:00am, Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch.

Nov. 29, 2018 – Seneca Lake, Ohio, 8:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV, bring lunch.

Dec. – Lucine Wright 740-373-6230

Dec. 6, 2018 – Christmas Luncheon. Details later

Dec. 13, 2018 – Ohio River, Little Hocking area, 9:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

CANAAN VALLEY NWR

June 23, 2018 – It may still feel like summer, but migration season is well underway. We’ll take stock of who is lingering, who has departed, and who’s passing through. Meet at the Refuge visitor center for a walk with Casey Rucker. Binoculars will be available.

POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

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

WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

See the following for more great info:
www.wvstateparks.com/calendar.html

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Hi all, intensive fieldwork over the last 2 weeks revealed 12 Loggerhead Shrikes in Greenbrier and Monroe counties. 6 nests were found and all females were in the process of laying clutches. My current estimate for the breeding shrike population in WV is 10-20 pairs. We trapped and banded 7 birds. A friendly reminder that any observers of shrikes within WV and anywhere in the east should take the time to look at legs for color bands.

Also, I had a great sighting of an active raven nest placed on the mounting brackets of an exterior silo vent pipe about 3/4 the way up the silo. The site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural lands and the silo was directly adjacent to a farm yard with almost certainly high human and animal traffic. I flushed an adult off the nest as I drove past in my vehicle, revealing 2 feathered nestlings whose beaks were still light in color.

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV, 5/3/18

We stopped in at Bellepoint Park at the base of Bluestone Dam yesterday morning. Two birds took to the air high above the trees and began jabbing each other with their beaks and claspng feet. Unable to stay in flight, they plummeted toward the ground and crashed on the seat of a park bench. After a few seconds of recovery, the two then went to the ground and the larger bird continued to thump the smaller bird. Now, we could see that the Red-eyed Vireo was beating the male Cape May Warbler. The vireo flew off and the warbler remained on the ground with one wing pointing at an awkward angle for nearly a minute. Then, it flew to the lowest branch of the nearest tree (about 10' off the ground). It remained there for about another minute or so, seeming to preen and arrange itself. It continued to hop/fly upward to the next branch and eventually flew off. It was an amazing sight that gave us the best look ever at a Cape May Warbler. Just glad we didn't have to rescue him.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 5/6/18

I got a call from Janet Keating around 4:30 pm this afternoon indicating that Mike Griffith had let her know that terns and a pair of Dickcissels had been seen at the marina area of Beech Fork Lake. I immediately drove over to the marina and found four Forrester's Terns on trash and a buoy near the fishing platform. I checked them out with both binoculars and my scope. Mike showed up about that time and we both agreed that the terns were Forrester's Terns. Eventually a group of seven Forrester's Terns were seen flying over the marina area.

Janet arrived shortly after I did and she, Mike and I went looking for the Dickcissels. After an hour of searching around the administration building area, we were about to leave for home, when Janet spotted them in a small bare tree on the hillside that drops back toward the lakeside trail. Both the terns and Dickcissels were FOYs for me.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 5/6/18

Martin Powney saw a male Dickcissel while driving north towards the maintenance area this morning. By coincidence I was walking past on the trail that is very close to the road at that point. There is a bench and sign and a cutover trail connecting the main trail to the road. The bird was about 100 feet or slightly more south of that bench in the direction of the bridge.

By the time we walked back the male was no longer there, but we did see a female foraging at the very edge of the road. We also saw it an hour later when we left. Only other birds worth noting were a dull Savannah Sparrow and a heard-only Yellow-breasted Chat.

Early in the morning I checked Proctor in Wetzel County for the Snowy Egret reported yesterday by Wilma Jarrell, but it was not there.

– Terry Bronson, Vienna, WV, 5/9/18

I stopped by the Wardensville Wastewater Ponds and the adjacent boat launch this afternoon, and was surprised to find a Cliff Swallow (WV lifer) perched on a power line. After looking around a little, I found more down by the river and discovered a couple of active nests on the Rt. 259 bridge. I know we didn't find any Cliff Swallows at Foray last year, and there are only a few eBird records of nesting Cliff Swallows in Hardy County.

– Darrell Good, Baker, WV, 5/13/18

Yesterday, May 14 in the morning I heard three Swainson's Warblers while running my pre-BBS route checks. All were in Boone County. Two males in overlapping territories along the east side of Coal River at the mouth of Bull Creek between Ashford and Emmons. One male further downriver near a yard less than one mile upstream of the mouth of Fork Creek, between Emmons and Olcott.

Other interesting observations yesterday, while I'm on the subject of birds named after the naturalist Swainson: I heard two Swainson's Thrushes at each of two locations, one in Boone Co. and one in Lincoln Co. Total of four Swainson's Thrushes, undoubtedly migrating northward.

This morning, May 15 at 4:03 I heard a Great Horned Owl double-hooting to the



One of many state Dickcissels –
photo by N. Wade Snyder



Mississippi Kite in the Eastern Panhandle
– photo by N. Wade Snyder

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

south of our house on Coal Mountain in Putnam Co. I had never heard a Great Horned Owl emit a series of low-pitch double hoots before, so I did some digging into the variety of vocalizations of the species. We rarely hear Great Horned Owls here due to extensive forested habitat, with only a scattering of openings.

– Doug Wood, Coal Mountain, WV, 5/15/18

This evening after work I heard a Dickcissel calling and singing from an apple tree as I was exiting the orchard.

Earlier in the day I had checked on the resident Red-tailed Hawk nest site and observed three chicks peering over the edge of the nest. While watching the nest one of the adults flew in with a branch with green leaves.

Upon leaving the parking lot of the station I decided to take a quick drive over to Burr Industrial Park Ponds in hopes of spotting some more shorebirds. Instead I was treated to an overhead aerial show from a Mississippi Kite dining while in flight. I just did not have time to stop my truck and get set for better photos. However I did manage to get a few for documentation of the Kite. It is kind of interesting that I had seen a Mississippi Kite two different days a couple of weeks ago while visiting my son in South Carolina. I never thought I would be seeing one here in WV.

– N. Wade Snyder, Shenandoah Junction, WV, 5/16/18

Hi all, while conducting a BBS route, I was quite surprised to hear a male Swainson's warbler singing repeatedly in forested floodplain habitat with a well-developed woody understory about 5 miles south of Parsons along the Shaver's Fork. I listened to ~15 identical and stereotypical songs over the course of several minutes. The species is known to overshoot, and it was a pleasant surprise...

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV, 6/1/18

Gary Rankin, Mike Griffith, Janet Keating and I did some birding this am along Rt. 2 in Cabell and Mason County. Some of the highlights include the following: one Immature Little Blue Heron at Greenbottom WMA; one Great Egret and one Hooded Merganser at Ashton Ponds; one Ross's Goose at Gallipolis Ferry; and one Common Loon at RCB Locks.

– David Patick, Huntington, WV, 6/2/18

This afternoon I encountered a very confident singing male on a power line in excellent habitat near Organ Cave in southern Greenbrier County. Shrike surveys last year yielded several Dickcissel records in Greenbrier and Monroe counties. It appears the species does currently breed in the Greenbrier Valley in very low densities.

Additionally, my BBS route in southern Pocahontas County in the Hillsboro area have revealed ever greater numbers of Bobolinks over the last several years. Shrike surveys this year have found Bobolinks on territory as far south as the Alderson area of Greenbrier County.

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV, 6/7/18

6/7/2018, 6:04 PM

I spent three delightful days at the Brooks Bird Foray in Pocahontas County (and so glad I threw a turtle-neck in my suitcase at the last minute). So many beautiful birds, it's hard to pick the winners but...the "best timing" award goes to the junco who arrived just as the FS and DNR staff explained the "junco effect" (juncos advance the restoration of old strip mines by hanging around the brush piles and "planting" early successional species, like fire cherry). Best-dressed goes to the numerous Chestnut-sided Warblers — all so beautiful.

Best of show goes to the Magnolia Warbler who sat so nicely for the group, in a Fraser Magnolia! How cool is that?

Thanks to the many organizers for another great Foray.

– Laura Ceperley, Charleston, WV, 6/7/18

6/20/2018, 7:30 AM

This time of the year, we keep a list of fledglings that we encounter around our place. So far, this is what we have for 2018 - European Starling, House Finch, Mourning Dove, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Great Horned Owl, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Downy Woodpecker, Gray Catbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Northern Cardinal and Common Grackle.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

This AM I heard the Chuck-wills-widow at North Mill Creek Rd as reported by others. It called about a dozen times just as the sky started to lighten.

From there I went to Dolly Sods Bear Rocks where everything was as normal. There were 19 yellowthroats (13 singing) at Bear Rocks and the nearby boggy area.

Then I decided to explore the meadows along Ridge Rd and Brick School Rd between Maysville and Hogueland Rd.

Along Ridge Rd between 42 and Hogueland Rd I found another Dickcissel singing. Also six Blue Grosbeaks scattered at most of my stops along the road and an adult Bald Eagle flying overhead.

I had been hoping for Vesper Sparrow, but was disappointed until I checked out Brick School Rd where I found three Vesper Sparrows singing in the same spot.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV, 7/8/18

This evening Danny Carpenter found a young Wood Stork in the Williamstown Marsh behind DaVinci's Restaurant in Williamstown, WV. Nancy Cornes let us know about it. Several folks got to see it and some photos were taken. It was still there at dark.

– Jon Benedetti, Wood Co., WV, 7/27/18



Williamstown Wood Stork –
photo by David Patick

– Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ

2018 EASTERN SHORE TRIP

NOVEMBER 7th-11th

Here we go again on one of our favorite sorties to the east coast! Ocean breezes, good food, beautiful accommodations, good friends and, oh yes, great birding. We haven't been to the southern Assateague/Chincoteague part of the trip for two years and so that's where we'll begin.

We will start at Chincoteague where we'll arrive on Wednesday, check into our nice motel, have dinner at one of the many good restaurants and perhaps try out the indoor pool or health spa before heading to bed. Thursday, after a full breakfast at the hotel while we check out the marsh from our private deck, and picking up your bag lunch, we'll bird the south end of Assateague Island and surrounding areas. Dinner at one of Chincoteague's fine eateries and a quick dip in the pool and bed. Friday we'll do the breakfast-lunch thing again then check out of the hotel and head north, ending in Rehoboth Beach and our ultra plush, ocean front hotel. Many birding spots along the way and maybe a walk along the beach before or after dinner and we'll be ready for bed.

Saturday morning's breakfast buffet and box lunch pickup will get us started up the Delaware Bay Coast with stops at various refuges and birding areas ending, of course, at Bombay Hook and all those beautiful Snow Geese. After we get all the geese settled down for the night, we'll head back to the motel. Sunday morning, during breakfast, we'll go over the final bird count before heading home. We will again have a van leaving Wheeling and making pick up stops along the way for anyone not wishing to drive themselves.

Price includes Wed., Thurs., Fri., and Sat. night's lodging (2 per room); Thurs., Fri., Sat., and Sun. morning breakfast; Thurs., Fri., and Sat. lunch; and all the fun you can stand. A full itinerary complete with phone numbers, addresses and maps of where we'll be staying and birding will be sent to everyone who signs up.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 23, 2018

**Make checks payable to Carl Slater and send along with your reservation to
56249 Hospital Road, Bellaire, Ohio 43906**

=====please cut here and return=====

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 FALL RETREAT & MEMBERSHIP MEETING TYGART LAKE STATE PARK, WV – OCTOBER 19-21, 2018

It has been two years since we visited Tygart Lake and I am sure we will enjoy not only the facility, but also the beautiful fall colors. On Friday, we'll check into the Lodge mid-afternoon, get settled and spend some time seeing old friends and new ones. There will be a Board Meeting at 3 p.m. for board members only. Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. After dinner, Jeffrey Hall will do a program entitled "Down the Shore: Winter at the Jersey Coast".

On Saturday after breakfast, we will pick up our box lunch and see what we might find flying around chipping at us. We will return to the Lodge in time to clean up for our banquet dinner at 6:30 p.m. After the banquet, Greg Grove, from Penn State University, will present a program on the Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey program, which has been run by volunteers across the state for 20 years.

On Sunday morning after breakfast, we will have our Annual Membership Meeting. There will be some interesting topics on the agenda which we will be discussing. For anyone wishing to have Sunday lunch before heading home it will be on your own in the dining room.

BBC FALL RETREAT RESERVATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

Make checks payable to Brooks Bird Club, Inc. and send with your reservation to:

Janice Emrick
52713 S R 800
Jerusalem, OH 43747
or use the BBC website

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ EMAIL _____

Name of person sharing room _____

(2 people per room) If you need a roommate, we'll get you one. Roommate will be assigned if no preference given

Cost (full time – all meals, lodging and registration included; contact Janice Emrick with any further questions)

_____ double room @ \$145.00 per person \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____



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**The group that DIDN'T
go in the Sinks**

*– Larry Schwab photographed
those who chose the dry sun-
light over the dark cave at
Gandy during Foray.
Story begins on page 3*

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