



THE MAIL BAG

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

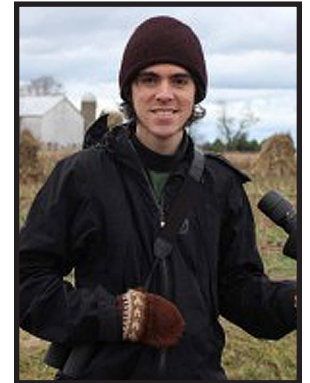
Editor's Note



We (including our speakers) are excited for the BBC Fall Reunion at Blackwater Falls State Park in October. Check the form on page 11, or use the BBC website to sign up.

Our speakers will be Nathan Pieplow, author of the new Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds, and Frank Izaguirre, writer for the ABA and enthusiastic birder from the Pittsburgh area. We encourage everyone to come and enjoy fall in the beautiful Tucker County mountains and valleys.

Also keep in mind that the Eastern Shore Trip is raring to go to the New Jersey shoreline. This is an affordable trip that is sure to get you a life bird or two, along with many peeps and 'pipers. See page 10.



Foray in Randolph County went very well this year, with plenty of rare birds, lots of good programs and field trips, and generally good weather. Thanks so much to Twan Leenders and Greg Miller for being such active participants and speakers. We had many new members, including Harold and Norm from Ontario, Canada, and they brought so much to the week. Best birds had to be the Sandhill Cranes that breezed through one morning. Next year's Foray will be in Preston County on Terra Alta Lake, and we're already planning a fun and educational time for all.

I'd also personally want to give condolences to Jeanne Barnes, wife of the wonderful Mike Barnes. Mike passed away suddenly this August, to everyone's dismay. Mike was such a warm, friendly, humorous man, and we will all miss him!

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JANICE EMRICK

Scott and I recently went out west to visit our son Andrew and his girlfriend Hallie. We did some birding in Nebraska and Wyoming, including the Grand Tetons, on our way to his house in Idaho. Then we took Andrew and Hallie with us up to Glacier National Park in Montana for 3 days.

One thing that stands out for me when traveling out west is the lack of birds seen compared to here. Out west you really have to hunt for birds because they have such a larger amount of land that they can fly to which we cannot get to easily. After we came home, I noticed again that just about every road we go on here there are always birds flying across the road and I know what the majority of them are. Out west it was driving me crazy when a bird would fly across the road and disappear out of sight and I couldn't name it. The same thing held true with the bird songs. I don't know the western bird songs. I guess I will have to go west more often to learn them!!!

The wildflowers were in full bloom and that was another thing driving me nuts that I could not identify many of them. I bought three books and took plenty of pictures, so maybe this winter I can look them up and put a name to them. They sure were beautiful.

This leads me to believe that I will be more empathetic to those beginners who are struggling to learn the birds and flowers in the east. It's not easy!

– Janice Emrick, BBC President



Everyone was enjoying the perfect weather, great birds and wonderful company up on Bickle Knob at the 2019 Foray.

MIKE BARNES PASSES UNEXPECTEDLY



Dr. J. Michael "Mike" Barnes, of New Martinsville, WV, died unexpectedly of natural causes at his home on August 20th. He was born November 14, 1947. He is preceded in death by his parents, J. Randall Barnes and Mary Ann Barnes as well as his brother, William "Terry" Barnes. He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Jeanne K. Barnes, daughter, Dr. Carrie Barnes-Mullett (Jeff "Mooch") and two grandchildren Ben and Evie.

A graduate of Magnolia High School, he served as class president, and

was a member of the baseball, track and basketball teams in addition to being a member of the 1964 championship football team. He completed his undergraduate degree at WVU and received his DVM at The Ohio State University School of Veterinary Medicine.

He was a beloved veterinarian to many furry friends at the Riverside Animal Clinic, which he opened in June of 1977. He was a long time member of the local Rotary Chapter and the Brooks Bird Club. He enjoyed being outdoors: going on hikes, fishing trips, bike rides or sitting outside for happy hour with his special cat "Six". Most Wednesday evenings Mike and Jeanne could be found enjoying the weekly wine tasting and many other evenings during Happy Hour at Baristas with a loyal crowd of friends.

A LETTER FROM OLD HEMLOCK FOUNDATION

Dear President Emrick,

On behalf of the Old Hemlock Foundation Directors, I would like to thank you, officers and board of directors for the generous gift of \$250 to be used to further the bird research at Old Hemlock studying the production and survivorship of neo-tropical migrants. This year I have recaptured two male Hooded Warblers that I banded the first year of the program in 2016. The data is shared with the United States Geological Survey – Banding Lab and the Institute of Bird Population in Point Reyes, CA.

Each year Old Hemlock Foundation continues to advance its mission of furthering the legacy of George Bird Evans through our programs of working with community groups, open houses, tours for civic groups, tours for elementary and middle school students, and work with college students. We have seen many gain knowledge of GBE's philosophy of hunting. The resources donated by your members will increase the amount of funds that we can donate toward medical scholarships, local high scholarship to post high school education and the Bruceton School arts and literature education.

The goal of the Old Hemlock Foundation is to continue to make a difference in the community through support of education and educational scholarships. With the help of supporters such as Brooks Bird Club, we further our mission to help educate the public by understanding and studying various ecological systems and natural resources through the preservation of our 230 acres. Our banding station in combination of the others stations provides important data in the health of our birds in WV, United States and North America

Thanks again for your generous support of our efforts to the foundation.

Sincerely,

LeJay Graffious, Director

Old Hemlock Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the legacy of George Bird Evans and Kay Evans. It is located in Bruceton Mills, WV.

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

2019 RANDOLPH COUNTY FORAY DAILY REPORTS

Fri., June 7 – Sat. June 8, 2019

Twenty-two campers arrived on a sunny late afternoon at Pioneer 4-H Camp. We were greeted by the song of a vireo and chatter of bluebirds.

We registered and had dinner before an evening introduction to the Foray week ahead. There were two new attendees who came from London, Ontario: Norm Corrin and Harold Ford.

At 5 a.m. the next morning, folks gathered to depart to two twenty-stop breeding bird surveys and one singing male census survey plot. An overcast, warm, windy day.



Aphrodite Fritillary - Ryan Tomazin

No preset programming was arranged for the day. Several groups went to Bickle Knob via Memorial Drive and hiked up the fire tower in the afternoon. We found a large chicken-of-the-woods mushroom on our walk by the fire tower. Norm and I gave it to Yan Tomazin after bravely descending a steep hillside and picking it.

The evening program was on West Virginia Wetlands by Elizabeth Byers. – *by Johanna Sholder*

Sun. June 9, 2019

Mostly cloudy and a light breeze at 6 a.m. Went on the morning bird walk with Janice Emrick. We IDed 25 species of birds, the most noteworthy being Red-tailed Hawk, bluebird, Killdeer, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink and Northern Mockingbird.

At about 9:15 a.m., a butterfly program was presented by the Diener/Sidlo family, showing butterflies being raised in Florida at Dick's place.

Afterwards, a walk down around the ponds was taken. Martin Tingley found



Auggie Sidlo catching bugs - Ryan Tomazin

a water snake with a rubber band around it. I saw Depford Pink, Bur-reed, Grey Field-speedwell and a Green Heron. In the afternoon, Tom and Dawn Fox did a fern drive up Files Creek Road. The ferns we saw included Bracken, Cinnamon, Interrupted, Christmas, Broad Beech, Sensitive, Maidenhair, New York, Hay-scented, Northern Lady, Silvery Glade and Intermediate Shield. The vascular plants that we saw were Blue-eyed Star Grass, Lousewort, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Solomon's Seal, Hog Peanut, Tall Meadow Rue, Aniseroot, Bishop's Cap, Mandarin and Poison Ivy.

We had a total of 96 bird species for the day. Some of them were Osprey, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Eastern Kingbird, Hermit Thrush, Louisiana Waterthrush and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.



Ruffed Grouse chicks - Jim Triplett

Twan Leenders of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute did the evening program. He told us about Peterson's early years and how the book series got started. He also told us about Jamestown, New York, which is Peterson's hometown and where the institute is located. He discussed the institute's mentoring programs and work that he himself did in South America.

The weather overall was light to heavy winds, mostly cloudy and cool. – *by Pete Rykert*

Mon. June 10, 2019

Monday's trip to Bickle Knob and Stuart Knob put the BBC's collective range of knowledge to the test. The forest displayed its variety of flora and fauna on a spectacular geological stage. Resisting the temptation to stop for wildflowers along the road, we arrived at Bickle Knob. Our guide, Ashton Berdine, of the West Virginia Land Trust and the bird club, pointed out the area where the BBC's support helped transition land from private ownership towards eventual inclusion in protected forest.

The vista of mountains over Shaver's Fork was even more impressive for the group that climbed to the top of the fire tower. Accompanied by Pete (Rykert's) dog "Pokey", the camp's mascot, we went eyeball to eyeball with the birds. We lingered a while before returning to the vehicles, where Janice's discovery of a junco nest with four eggs added a memory of the day. More birds and plants awaited us at Stuart Knob. Pete's discovery of rare Running Buffalo Clover was a highlight.



Ashton Berdine leads trip to Bowden Cave - Ryan Tomazin

Our midday stop at Bear Heaven dispersed the group among the massive jumble of boulders. Individually and in small groups, everyone sought out a dining venue, choosing tables or rocks according to taste and/or agility. After a leisurely meal and time to contemplate nature's glory, we carried on. At Bowden's Cave, we visited an entrance to miles of

(continued on Page 4)

tunnels and chambers. An impromptu rescue mission followed discovery of dozens of Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars that were determined to cross the road towards a large growth of pipevine. The BBC provided TLC.



Pipevine caterpillar - Ryan Tomazin

After supper at camp, Wil Hershberger's program of sounds and photos was much appreciated. Preparing for bed, mention of the program elicited the word "fabulous"!

– *by Steve Hartmann*

Tues. June 11, 2019

The day started out with a clear, crisp morning. The Mount Porte Crayon trip had been cancelled due to poor road/trail conditions. Cheat Mountain was substituted and it turned out to be wonderful. Rodney Bartgis was full of interesting information and history about the area and how it supports the most extensive spruce forests south of the Adirondacks. We learned about hobblebush and mountain cranberry being the original understory plants. The view from our first stop was spectacular. There was absolutely no haze so we could literally see forever.



Rodney Bartgis explains geology at the Mower Tract - Ryan Tomazin

Rodney also took us to an area where the forest floor was covered in a deep, soft blanket of moss. What a magical spot that was! Like something from a fairy tale. There was one fallen tree with its root circle perpendicular. He pointed out that



Chris Tingley enjoys the Mower Tract View - Ryan Tomazin

Winter Wrens are often concealed among the upturned roots of a fallen tree.

Some of the interesting trees were Mountain Maple with its upright flowers, Striped Maple with its huge, soft leaves and Fraser Magnolia with its distinctive leaves with earlobes at the base. Poke Milkweed was also pointed out.



Strings of toad eggs - Ryan Tomazin

In addition to birds one of the participants found a beautiful Red-spotted Newt on the mossy roadside. A less colorful but fun find were salamander eggs and a string of toad eggs in a water-filled tire track.

The great weather held the whole day making this trip all the more comfortable and enjoyable.

– *by Bruni Haydl*



Connor McMillan poses - Ryan Tomazin

Wed. June 12, 2019

Wednesday morning started off with BBS routes and a study plot in the chilly fog of Randolph county. With fair numbers of birds and highlights of cerulean

warblers the morning went on quite nicely. The morning bird walk enjoyed looks at Savannah Sparrows in the fields beside camp. After breakfast the group enjoyed a presentation by on the invasive plants, pathogens, and fungi that are wrecking havoc on our state. We learned the toll they're taking on the environment and ecosystems they attack.

Later in the day after lunch the group gathered and headed for Kumbraw State Forest. We toured the forest and learned about the regeneration of forest habitats after timbering. We visited the same location that we saw five years ago right after it was timbered to understand the regeneration process. That evening we enjoyed dinner at camp Pioneer followed by a camp fire. A good day was had by all.

– *by Orion Metheny*



Rob Talman with logging and park leaders at Kumbraw - Ryan Tomazin

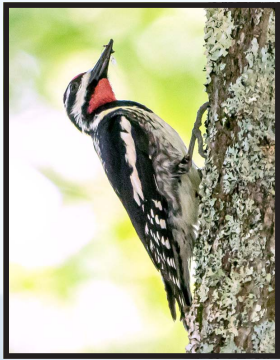
Thurs. June 13, 2019

It wasn't raining when I left the men's dorm around 4:15 a.m., but a mist began falling by the time I got a cup of coffee from the dining hall and got in my truck. Others might be sleeping in, but a light rain was not going to interrupt my trip since I don't get up to the mountains of Randolph County all that often.



Sandy Farkas & Greg Miller - Jim Triplett

Although they haven't been found there recently, I was going out on the chance that a Golden-winged Warbler might be singing in one of the grazing allotments along Forest Road 91 between the Stuart Recreation Area and the Bickle Knob Observation Tower. This would be a life bird for me.



Sapsucker - Jim Triplett

I enjoy being a part of birding groups with some of the excellent birders who attend these forays, but I also like exploring on my own. The areas around Bickle Knob are beautiful, and by myself, I can set my own pace and soak in the sights, sounds and smells around me. This morning, however, what I mostly soaked in was a rain that fluctuated between a light drizzle and a steady shower.

Least Flycatchers were calling at the first place I stopped as it was just starting to get light enough to see. Later, I heard a Cerulean Warbler singing from the trees beyond the field. Ceruleans seem to be less common here than they are back home in the Kanawha Valley. After watching a Chestnut-sided Warbler, the rains got heavier and I retreated back to the truck.

At the Bickle Knob overlook, fog shrouded the view we had from the day before. The Mourning Warbler was still singing from the clearing and a Common Raven croaked from nearby. It was



Yan Tomazin gets over her fear of snakes with a copperhead - Ryan Tomazin

a beautiful morning, even without Golden-winged Warblers.

Instead of returning to camp, I decided to drive to the Spillway Bridge on Georgetown Road near Elkins where a Pied-billed Grebe had been seen earlier. This bird was considered to be quite the anomaly for this time of year. The rain had let up and Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows and Cliff Swallows were flying all around, but no grebe was to be seen. A female Wood Duck was spotted way off in the distance and Cedar Waxwings, which seemed to be everywhere we went, were catching insects like flycatchers.



Black-and-white Warbler with cowbird chick - Jim Triplett

I stayed out too late and missed breakfast, but was back in time to hear most of Greg Miller's presentation of birds from Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. He was supposed to do a photography workshop, but the rain had returned and had forced them inside. It was interesting to see the photos of the birds from these places and hear the stories of his group's travel adventures.

The silent auction ended at noon. Can one have too many books? Perhaps, but the auction, which raises money for camp scholarships, is a way to add to one's library at a fraction of the cost of buying new books. Or, if you are one who is donating items to the auction, a way to clear out some things and let someone else enjoy them for a while.

After lunch, the rain had let up and while some went with Michael Jones to search for fossils, I joined eight others who were driving out to check some places where Golden-winged Warblers had been found in the past. At one stop,

we searched a site that appeared to be a good habitat, but it was windy and rather quiet. I wandered off to look elsewhere and when I returned, I was informed that a Golden-winged had been seen and heard. Curses! Foiled again! Follow-up searches failed to re-find the bird.



A jaunty Yellow-rump - Orion Metheny

The rest of the day was highlighted with Sandhill Crane sightings (which I also missed), a rather severe thunderstorm with high winds, and Greg Miller giving the evening presentation on listening devices for birders with impaired hearing.

Despite the rain and my missing my targeted species, it was another wonderful day at foray.

- by Kevin Cade

Fri. June 14, 2019

This morning was the coolest start we'd had during the week. The previous evening saw strong winds, heavy rain and a dip in the temperature. However, by mid-morning it was bright and sunny. After breakfast, everyone split up to go on their own mini forays.



Pokey, enjoyed sunshine - Orion Metheny
Norm Corrin, Harold Ford and I headed south to Seneca Rocks in Pendleton County. Many birds were seen and heard along the trail and down by the river foraging amongst the mulberry trees.

A beautiful five-foot-long Black Rat
(continued on Page 6)

CORRESPONDENCE

The Thompson Family thanks you for the heartfelt tributes in the current issue of The Mail Bag. The mourning process continues, along with the administrative demands that accompany that process. I'm not sure I can sum up how much the Brooks Bird Club has meant to the Thompson Family, but I would say that, along with the early help lent to us by Roger Tory Peterson, the mentorship provided by BBC Members helped steady our flight into publishing Bird Watcher's Digest. Names like Glenn Phillips, Ralph Bell, Chuck Conrad, Ken Anderson, Chan Robbins and later friends like the Slaters and Fox Family. This isn't a comprehensive list, and Elsa and Bill were more connected than I was. We wanted to be credible to the leaders of the bird watching fraternity; we stood in awe of their skills, and we learned at the feet of some of the best in the business. We took great comfort in those early morning singing bird surveys; the absorption of wisdom in natural history that was abundant and accessible at Foray; hot chocolate and hot coffee and doughnuts before the crack of dawn; and sing-a-longs around the campfire at night. Many funny stories about who snored and who didn't! What could be more perfect? The warm welcome we received won't be forgotten ever. We are grateful to those like the Emricks, who sustain the organization. The last few months have been filled with sorrow, but nevertheless, we hold so many happy memories of the great friendships formed thanks the Brooks Bird Club, and are grateful for your many years of support to our family and our magazine.

– Sincerely, Andy Thompson



To the Brooks Bird Club: thank you for choosing Camp Pioneer for your Foray! We are looking forward to seeing you again in five years.

– Sarah Cunningham, manager of Camp Pioneer in Beverly, WV

BILL HANK OF THE BIBBEE CLUB PASSES



William James Hank, 92, of Hinton, passed away, on Wednesday, June 5, 2019, at Main Street Care in Hinton.

Born, January 7, 1927, at Meadow Creek, he was the son of the late Andrew Coleman and Esta Gwinn Hank.

Mr. Hank retired in 1987 after 44 years of employment with C&O railroad. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and served during World War II. He was the last surviving member of his family. In younger, healthier years, he was known as the neighborhood handyman, and fondly called Hank by the children on the block. He was a charter member of the Bibbee Nature Club, where he supported his wife's love of bird watching. He was a member of the Central Baptist Church.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a son James Russell Hank, and a daughter-in-law Linda Hank, and two sisters, Beulah Leslie, and Jean Hank.

Those left to cherish his memory are his loving wife of 68 years, Margaret Campbell Hank, and a son Mark Hank, of Reading, MA. In addition he has two nephews Jim Leslie, Coleman Leslie, and a niece, Deloris Brandon, as well as numerous nieces and nephews on his wife's side of the family, who were very fond of him.

2019 FORAY (cont. from Page 5)

Snake made a nice showing, inching up a small dead tree close to the trail. It was an exquisite specimen!

Alice Frick went to Spruce Knob, all on back roads up and back. She saw more birds than she'd ever seen, including a nice Ruffed Grouse.



*Mike Jones at a geological site
- Orion Metheny*

Michael Jones and Claudette Simard found some rock outcroppings of which Michael had not previously been aware. He'd been planning a geological field trip for another group and was pleased to make this find.

Deb, Martin and Chris Tingley went back to Kumbrabow and saw a huge tree that had come down during the previous night's heavy wind. Thankfully, someone was in the process of sawing it up and moving it off the trail. They also went to the falls and discovered a few adolescents of the human variety splashing around in the cold stream.

Tom and Dawn Fox, Don and Sara Creamer and Jim and Bev Triplett went to Helvetia. Greg Miller and Sandy Albrecht also went along and had lunch at the Hutte Restaurant. Odds are they sampled some tasty cheeses there.

Scott and Janice Emrick, Wilma Jarrell, Sally Eagan along with Ryan and Yan Tomazin drove up Scott's Run. They heard a Kentucky Warbler, a Blue-winged Warbler and many more. They saw a Ruffed Grouse with two babies, and Ryan finally got to see the elusive and long sought-after Golden-winged Warbler. YEA!!!

All-in-all it was a wonderful way to wrap up the last full day of birding in and around beautiful Randolph County.

– *by Mary Murin*

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

Sept. 21, 2019 – 10-3 PM. Hawk Watch on East River Mountain in Mercer County near Bluefield, WV. Contact Jim Phillips at jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

Oct. 5, 2019 – 5 PM, location TBD. Annual Dinner, Hinton, WV. Contact Mindy Waldron at mwaldron@suddenlink.net.

Oct. 12 or 13, 2019 – 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. Contact Mindy Waldron.

Nov. 23, 2019 – We'll be out for most of the day looking for waterfowl around Hinton and the New River. We'll join with the Buchanan Co. Bird Club. Areas will include Bluestone Lake, Mountain Valley Lake and Sandstone Falls. Contact Mindy Waldron.

HANDLAN CHAPTER

Sept. 16, 2019 – 6:30 pm, annual fall ice cream social at South Charleston Library.

Oct. 21, 2019 – 6:30 pm, regular meeting at South Charleston Library. Program TBA.

Nov. 18, 2019 – 6:30 pm, regular meeting at South Charleston Library. Program TBA.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

Sept. 17, 2019 – Picnic/outing at Barkcamp State Park. Meet at the beach pavilion at 5:00 pm. Dinner will be 5:30. Bring a covered dish, drink and lawn chairs.

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

Oct. 15, 2019 – Program TBA

Nov. 19, 2019 – Program on WV Christmas Bird Count.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

Sept. – Jeanie Hilton 304-428-8641

Sept. 19, 2019 – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00 am, ORINWR parking lot.

Sept. 26, 2019 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00 am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. – Barbara Hobman 740-374-5548

Oct. 3, 2018 – Business/Planning Meet-

ing, 9:00 am, ORINWR Conference Room. Come at 8:00 for birding before the meeting.

Oct. 10, 2019 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton 8:00 am, Kroger wetlands parking lot.

Oct. 12, 2019 – Big Sit, Ohio River Sunrise to sunset, ORINWR parking lot, Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Come anytime; stay as long as you like.

Oct. 17, 2019 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00 am, McDonough parking lot.

Oct. 24, 2019 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00 am, boat ramp, Northwest Pipe Drive.

Oct. 31, 2019 – Program, 6:30 pm, Vienna Public Library Meeting Room. Bring finger food

Nov. – Sandy Albrecht 740-373-8994

Nov. 7, 2019 – Devol's Dam to Civitan Park, 8:00 am at Big Sandy in Parkersburg or 8:30 am at Warren's IGA parking lot.

Nov. 14, 2019 – Middle Island area, 9:00 am, Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch.

Nov. 21, 2019 – Seneca Lake, Ohio, 8:00 am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV, bring lunch.

Dec. – Lucine Wright 740-373-6230

Dec. 5, 2019 – Christmas Luncheon. Details later.

Dec. 12, 2019 – Ohio River, Little Hocking area, 9:00 am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

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

This afternoon I took my run around a local loop that included Nash Farm, and there I got stuck for the next hour trying to sort through the multitude of warblers. It was worthwhile. I got great looks at Tennessee, Blackpoll, N. Parula, Redstart and plenty of Cape Mays. Also heard Blackburnian and Black-throated Blues. My eyes caught the beauty of a male Scarlet Tanager amidst the blooming tulip poplar. Wow. Besides the warblers, which included mostly Yellow-rumped, there were a few dozen cedar waxwings mingling in the treetops. What a party! I had to force myself away.

– Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, WV, 5/11/19

This morning during a fairly quiet walk through White Park in Monongalia County, I was shocked to hear the piercing song of a Swainson's Warbler rise up from the understory. I didn't believe it until I was able to watch the bird as it sang its heart out for several minutes. It was in a small gully that runs into the reservoir not far from the parking area along Mississippi St. The last eBird record for SWWA in Mon county was in 2010, and before that in the 1970's!

– Gordon Dimmig, Morgantown, WV, 5/16/19

This morning I went to Beech Run in Preston County to try for Henslow's Sparrow. I was shocked to see that all the grass in the fields is dying. The farmer has sprayed some sort of chemicals in the fields to kill the grass. One of his neighbors stopped and told me the farmer plans to till the fields and plant corn. The habitat where Henslow's Sparrows have bred for years is now destroyed.

– David Daniels, Masontown, WV, 5/19/19

Almost at any time throughout the day light hours and some times at night, I'm hearing three different chats singing in my front yard. We have always had several chats here at the farm, but this year they are so close the house. I'm hoping that means their population is on the rise, but could just be that they have better habitat closer to the house now. I consider myself so lucky to be able to walk out on the front deck and be serenaded by so many birds, not just the chats.

– Willa Grafton, 5/24/19

This morning well before dawn I encountered an Eastern Whip-poor-will on A-Frame Road on my way to Canaan Valley NWR. On my way back from a survey I passed a sizeable beaver pond near the northwest corner of Middle Valley Trail, which had two pairs of Wood Ducks and an American Bittern.

On Friday there was a Ruffed Grouse on Timberline Road, and yesterday afternoon, a Broad-winged Hawk made a sally at the flock of Mourning Doves at my feeders. It's unusual to see a buteo hunting here - it's usually accipiters.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV, 6/3/19

I've been a bit concerned for the last week or so as I have not been seeing the pair of ravens that live near me. I normally see them at least twice a day as they fly over or perch at the edge of the field. They never fail to speak to me, nor I to them.

I was thrilled to see them, yesterday afternoon, along with FIVE youngsters, fly over the yard. Seems they have been quite busy!

– Shannon Burner, Keyser, WV, 6/16/19

While a group of us ladies were in the parking lot of the Ellenboro VFD this afternoon, waiting for the truck bringing our co-op order, we were entertained by a male Killdeer repeatedly performing his distraction display. I finally realized we were standing about 8 feet from a female on her gravel nest.

I was lucky enough to have my camera in the car, and got some shots of both birds.

Cynthia Burkhart, Cairo, WV, 6/21/19

We spent Tuesday through Thursday camping at the beautiful, secluded Holly River State Park. During the two days, we heard Wood Thrushes almost everywhere we went. They were the first bird I heard when awakening in the morning and almost the last in the evening. They seemed to sing most of the day. Veeries were also present down at the campground as were Acadian Flycatchers and both Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos.

Wednesday evening when sitting at our campsite, I saw something large fly into the Holly River. I thought it was likely a heron until it flew up and perched on a log over the stream. It was a Barred Owl. It sat there for at least 10 minutes looking around and down at the water. Finally, it flew down to the stream again. I walked over but could not locate it. I assume it flew off. It really seemed like it was hunting and/or fishing but never caught anything that I could see.



A Little Blue Heron in July at Marmot Locks & Dam – photo by Rick Gregg



Female Killdeer on her nest – photo by Cynthia Burkhart

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

We saw another Barred Owl Tuesday evening when we went up to the Upper Falls of Fall Run. We were alerted to its presence by American Robins scolding high up in a tree by the parking lot. It soon flew off being harassed.

It was good to be in a place where I heard Cerulean Warblers in a number of locations. The other warblers included Ovenbirds, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Hooded and Black-throated Green Warblers. The chickadees there seemed to be Black-capped though I expected Carolina. Their songs were typical of Black-capped songs though I know that alone is not a reliable criterion.

It was a good two days with very few people around. We were the only ones in our campground section. It made it better for the birds and me.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 6/28/19

A couple weeks ago Jim Phillips was commenting on how fortunate we were to live in WV. I can't agree with him more. Here are some comments on this year's breeding season in Barbour County, more specifically my immediate neighborhood.

Great Blue Heron nest fledged at least one young and one more about to go. I've never had them nesting in the immediate area that I know of.

American Kestrels nested close by and the two young stayed very close to our house until they finally took off about the second week of July. They usually nest much further from occupied dwellings. The five Barn Owl young at the neighbor's silo are doing fine.

We usually have several bluebirds and Tree Swallows nesting in our boxes but for some reason the Tree Swallows were brutal on the bluebirds. One time I watched as seven swallows went after a bluebird on the ground. Now that the swallows are gone, the bluebirds are trying again. At least they were successful at the neighbors boxes.

We had a robin and Mourning Dove nesting about a half meter from each other at the same time and both nests were successful.

We watched a crow predate a Chipping Sparrow and a robin nest. Both nests still managed to fledge one young.

As of July 16th, two woodcock were still in the field/wetland behind our house.

The House Wrens are on their sixth nesting. There were four nests earlier in the season.

We put out crushed egg shells mainly for the Barn Swallows but other birds like flickers and mockers also eat them. It's curious to see the butterflies "chase" the swallows as they are swooping around before coming in to the shells and keeping right up with them.

While at Watoga State Park, I watched a phoebe fly-catching the flies on the tame deer. It even sat on the deer's back waiting for more. The deer stood very still appearing to appreciate the relief from the biting flies.

So yes, I do definitely agree with Jim. WV is a great place to live. With all our public lands and relatively few people compared to neighboring states we are fortunate.

– Donna Mitchell, Barbour County, 7/28/2019

– **Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ**



A baby Barn Swallow, about to fledge –
photo by Cynthia Burkhardt



Young Least Bittern –
photo by Josh Holland

NESTING LEAST BITTERN IN MASON COUNTY, WV

6/6/2019 - Amy & Rennie Talbert, Bryan Smith and I got great, but brief looks at the male Least Bittern that has been spotted recently at the goose ponds at R.C. Byrd Locks in Apple Grove.

After the Talberts left, we hung around until sunset to check the rest of the pond. We listened to the male cooing for several minutes, then a female flew into the cattails and perched. The female then retreated back into heavy cover. We continued to hear the male calling 30 yards away from where the female landed.

This pair could be late migrants. BLORV species accounts has information from G. Hall in 1983, who believed that this species nested regularly in the area, but there are no confirmed nesting records after 1969.

6/20/2019 - I have checked the ponds at the Locks for the past couple of weeks. The birds were last seen by David Patick on 6/11.

Today I finally heard the male calling from dense cover on the south end of the pond. I listened for close to 20 minutes before the bird flew to a more difficult-to-access area on the southeast side. I watched longer and saw the male come out and perch in the open, though heavy winds quickly pushed him back into cover. No sign of the female this time as I suspect she is on the nest.

Based on the nesting pattern information I have been able to find, I expect to potentially see some young birds soon. My feeling is that the adults have been busy on the nest and more difficult to locate. Hearing the male calling today is a good sign that their initial nesting duties may be finished. We could see fledglings any day now.

6/21/2019 7:51 p.m. - I found one fledgling this evening in the same spot the adult male flew to yesterday evening. The young bird was pretty good sized already. I watched it stumble along the cattails for a couple of minutes before it ducked down into cover. An adult was heard calling intermittently near the southern dead end path, but no visual.

– **Josh Holland, Huntington, WV**

2019 EASTERN SHORE TRIP

NOVEMBER 6th-10th

Well, here we go on another never-to-be-forgotten Eastern Shore Trip. Wednesday, November 6th will be our travel day to Spray Beach, a few miles south of Ship Bottom on Long Beach Island. We will visit some of our long-standing favorite birding spots, including the Barnegat Lighthouse, Brigantine Wildlife Refuge, the Avalon Sea Watch and all that Cape May has to offer. This year we will be exploring some new birding hot spots including Tuckahoe (McNamara) Wildlife Management Area and a stretch of salt marsh & tidal bays that border the coast, separating mainland New Jersey from the barrier beaches of Cape May County.

Not only are we updating our field trip exploration, we will also be staying at the same lodging all four nights. Our first visit to the Spray Beach Hotel was in 2017, a most satisfying experience. The thinking is ride-sharing might be desirable since we will be able to leave some of the cars daily at the hotel. Everyone will be on their own for dinner. Depending on your arrival time, you can either eat on the way or check into the hotel and eat some place in the vicinity.

Price includes Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sat. nights lodging (double occupancy); Thurs., Fri., Sat, & Sun. breakfast; Thurs., Fri., & Sat. sack lunch, and banquet dinner Sat. night. Your reservation will be acknowledged when received.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 18, 2019

**Make checks payable to Juanita 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 @ \$425.00 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? _____

BBC REUNION & ANNUAL MEETING

BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK, WV – OCTOBER 18-20, 2019

Blackwater Falls, WV, will be BEAUTIFUL this time of year with its majestic hills and wonderful fall foliage! The dates for the BBC reunion are **October 18-20, 2019**. To attend the weekend please fill out the application below. The event will be held at Blackwater Falls State Park West Virginia.

Plans include a Friday board meeting in the Davis Room at 3:00 p.m. Registration will begin at 4:00 p.m. in the Lobby where friends can gather, go for short walks, view the falls, or just visit until we all meet for dinner at 6:00 p.m. A program given by Frank Izaguirre (from Pittsburgh) "Field Guides and the Shaping of Environmental Awareness in America" at 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room.

A bird walk around the Lodge will be held Saturday morning with breakfast to follow in the dining room. After breakfast, we will pick up our sack lunch (*don't forget to bring your lunch tote souvenir from FORAY!*) and go out on our all day field trip. Lunch arrangements may also be made in the main dining room for those who do not wish to go on the field trip. The Saturday night banquet will be at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room with Nathan Pieplow scheduled to speak at 7:30 p.m. on "End of the World: Capturing Siberia's Wildlife on Video."

After breakfast Sunday morning a Reflection Service will be held at 9:30 a.m., followed by the BBC's Annual Meeting for the membership of the Club at 10:00 a.m. After the meeting we will go over the Bird List and for anyone wishing to have Lunch before heading home that will be on your own in the dining room. Can't wait to see you there!

BBC FALL RETREAT RESERVATION DEADLINE IS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

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

Cindy Slater at 2310 Cowling Road, Scottdale, PA 15683

Telephone - 724-570-8502.

Cindy's Email: mountaingirl127@gmail.com

or use the BBC website

You must be a BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBER TO ATTEND any of the weekend events.

PLEASE CALL CINDY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

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

COMPLETE WEEKEND: _____ No. Attending @ \$189.00 Double Occupancy \$ _____

(Includes Fri. & Sat. night's lodging; Friday dinner & program; Sat. & Sun. breakfast buffet; Sat. lunch, activities; Sat. banquet, and program.

_____ Single Room Supplement @ \$282.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Sunday Reflections and Annual Membership Meeting.)

Saturday Lunch Option: (must have your selection at this time)

Ham _____ Turkey _____ Swiss Cheese _____ or Dine in Lodge _____



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A wayward traveler

– A rare Trumpeter Swan was found in Cabell County in July, photographed here by Jim Triplett.

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