



# THE MAIL BAG

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

## Editor's Note

There are times of great happiness when we are enjoying life and our places in the natural world, and of course, there are great sorrows. These two instances have merged, as the Slater family, the Brooks Bird Club, and indeed the world itself has lost the love and companionship of Carl Slater, our friend, our Fearless Leader, our club administrator. The first instance we feel is our great sorrow at the departure of someone who has been so much a part of so many of our lives. Whether you knew him as a father, a leader, a champion of the BBC, all will feel pain to some degree.

However, there is also a great happiness that we all may experience, as Carl, who suffered so long in silence with the results from a car accident long ago, now flies with the birds that he taught so many of us to enjoy. Intermingled with the songs of returning migrants and the blooming of wildflowers will be the voice of Carl, that wonderful baritone, speaking to us and teaching us, pushing us to learn and to be better.

Tears may fall as I write this, and assuredly they may fall again in the future, but they are not bitter. So many of us had so many years of friendship and enjoyment with Carl, whether at Foray, at the Club Room in Wheeling, or on trips all over the world. His warmth of spirit, his peaceful demeanor, his wit, all will outlive his earthliness. Many of us inwardly can see Carl at a campfire with Chuck Conrad, Doc Hutton, Max Thacker, cousin Jim Denham and many more old friends. They are laughing and talking about birds and remembering old stories. That happiness, and the rebirth of the spring season, may carry us all through to future sunrises, with days full of discovery in the world that he shared with us.



## MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT, CINDY SLATER

Happy New Year all! Is it really 2020? As a child, I might have been lying in a snow bank at the bottom of our wonderful plowed sledding track, also known as our driveway, staring up at the big puffy white clouds on a sunny winter day, dreaming or wondering what life would be like in 40 years. At the time that seemed so far into the future it certainly never crossed my mind I would be writing a letter like this for the Mailbag.

Yet, here we are. As I reflect on years past and what might be in the future for the BBC, I can't help but wonder why someone thought I should become President of the Brooks Bird Club. The Presidents before me were some really awesome, iconic people who did remarkable things. They were an eclectic group of passionate friends that enjoyed birding, nature and getting together often to have fun. I feel like I am stepping into a pair of shoes that are about a million times too big, yet I feel honored at the same time.

With a new year comes new traditions, new resolutions, and remembering old times with great friends and family. New things and changes are good, but maybe we should take some time and step back and spend more time outside with nature and each other. If you have any ideas of places you want to go or something new that strikes your fancy let me know. No doubt the club is going to go through some pretty big changes and getting together at club events, whether it is with a new person that just joins the club or with some of our best friends, let's put on our most comfortable shoes, grab our binoculars and go make some very happy birding memories together. Thank you for the honor of being your BBC President.

– *Cindy Slater, BBC President*

Before you know it, the 2020 Foray Notice will be in your hands. We hope you strongly consider coming, whether for just a couple of days or for the whole time. Dates are June 5-13. There will be field trips to great natural spots, lots of interesting speakers and presentations, and of course, all of the participants, friends and 'family' from all over.

The location? Camp Galilee, on the shores of pretty Lake Terra Alta in Preston County. There is very good birding and botanizing to be had at our front door. There is ample camping, and 3-4 bed cabins for everyone.

The area is mainly higher elevation, with some bog land, some riversides to explore, and plenty of quiet. We also will be enjoying the company of Oglebay's Mountain Nature Camp, who have arranged their schedule to have a day or two with us. From far and wide, JOIN US!

## CARL SLATER, LONGTIME BBC ADMINISTRATOR PASSES AWAY AT 80



Carl Allan Slater, 80, from Bellaire, Ohio, passed peacefully Thursday, December 5, 2019 surrounded by family. He was born July 25, 1939

in Martins Ferry, Ohio to Joseph Henry and Elsie Mae (Postlewait) Slater.

He was a graduate of Martins Ferry High School and attended Kent State and Ohio University. He was a member of the Rock Hill Presbyterian Church. Past employment includes Oglebay Institute Nature Center, Valley Office Equipment, career in radio advertising, The Aquarium, and owner/operator of Gus Industrial and Specialty Wood. He was a member of the Ohio Valley Naturalist, Administrator and past president of The Brooks Bird Club, a member of Oglebay Institute, past president of the nature committee, St. Clairsville Jaycees, and Wheeling Breakfast Kiwanis. Carl led birding tours in the Continental U.S., as well as many European Countries. He had over forty years of leading waterfowl birding trips to the Eastern Shore.

Carl is survived by his wife of 54 years, Juanita Elizabeth (Filcaske) Slater of Bridgeport, and children Christine Louise Slater-Jones (Michael) of Plain City, OH, Cynthia Marie (Christopher Wisniewski) Slater of Scottdale, PA, Eric Allan (Amy) Slater of Bellaire, OH, grandchildren, Elizabeth Marina Files, Samuel Benjamin Files, Brittany Nicole Slater, and Cody Joseph Slater.

Memorial contributions can be made to The Brooks Bird Club, Inc., P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003 or the charity of your choosing.

## CAROLYN RUDDLE PASSES AT 90



Carolyn Catherine Ruddle, 90, of Franklin, WV, passed away Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at Sentara RMH in Harrisonburg, VA.

She was born January 24, 1929 in Ruddle, WV and was the daughter of the late Newton Decatur "Dick" Ruddle and Mary Dunkle Ruddle.

Miss Ruddle was a much loved elementary teacher at Franklin Grade School and a devoted member of Franklin Presbyterian Church. She is survived by three sisters, Mary Lee Ruddle of Franklin, WV, Joann Rinaldi of Adamstown, MD, and Nancy Walker of Vienna, VA; a brother, Maurice Ruddle of Bassett, VA; thirteen nieces and nephews; and eighteen great nieces and nephews. Preceding her in death were sisters, Helen McGhee and Eloise Richard and brothers, Newton Decatur Ruddle, Jr. and Stanley Ralph Ruddle.



Carolyn Ruddle of Franklin ran the Pendleton CBC for many years and was extremely helpful to me when I started to run it when she could no longer do so several years ago. During the recent years she organized the bird feeder watchers for the CBC, and she was always interested to hear what we had seen. She was a wonderful caring woman.

May she see and hear many new birds in heaven.

– Fred Atwood

## 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  
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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



## Stories of Old Fearless – Tributes To Carl Slater

“Hey. We oughta go birding.”

That began a number of conversations between Carl and me. Whether it was him telling me, or me mimicking him. Now, I need new words, a new phrase, as our future birding trips will only include him looking down on our old haunts as I bird alone.

I met Carl and Juanita when I attended Junior Nature Camp with ‘son Eric’, as he’d refer to his children. For a while, he was only ‘Eric’s dad’. I had no idea that a few short years later, he and Juanita would bring me into the BBC, and he would seem to take the role in my life of first a birding mentor, and later a dear friend and father figure.

In those early days, we birded Egypt Valley in Ohio, where he showed me my first Rough-legged Hawk. He had me ride shotgun in a van headed for Michigan for his Kirtland’s Warbler trip in 1996. He drove us to the Eastern Shore in 2006, where Yan and I got married on a BBC trip, and where I suspect he had a hand in getting us upgraded to the honeymoon suite.

As the years passed, he worked, sometimes perpendicular to my eagerness, to shape my future with the BBC, and to give my sometimes-wordy announcement and speeches some direction. He wasn’t afraid to do this honestly and straightforwardly, but it was always done with love.

There are a million remembrances, many thousands of birds (including 123,999 of the 124,000 Snow Geese in Delaware in 2003), a wealth of jokes and humor. All of these percolate through my memories like so much of his coffee (black, and a smell I will always relate with him), and will drift closer and further like cigarette smoke (same as above).

There was, and is, so much more to say, but as Carl would tell me, “Try to keep it short.” If you knew Carl (and I’m still learning more all the time), you can understand the depths of where I’m coming from. If you didn’t know him, or didn’t get to spend much time with him, just understand that his warmth and care

was meant for everybody. I might feel like I am so close to the Carl I knew, and I was, but he was close to each of us, in our own way, and his ‘way’ and care is what made all of the difference.

– Ryan Tomazin

Carl has been my closest friend for 50 years. Our families have also been close for most of that time. I am godfather to Carl’s son, Eric. I was out of the country when Carl died. I didn’t know about it until two weeks afterward. I’m sorry I wasn’t here to help his family. But for a couple of personal reasons I’m glad I wasn’t. I would have been a sad mess at the funeral. Because I missed the funeral I don’t have closure. I still think I can pick up the phone and talk to him. For the last few years that was our main method of contact. I would call him or he would call me and we would talk about little or nothing. But afterward I would feel better.

Over the years we spent a lot of time together, eating, drinking, gardening, making boxes and much more; but especially birding. I often went with him on his sales calls. Those days were basically birding trips broken up by a few minutes of business calls. One year we went to the “Eastern Shore”. The next year we asked Glen Phillips and George Breiding to go with us. The following year we asked the BBC to go and they still go every November. I don’t know how to put into words what our friendship was like. I’ll just relate a few incidents.

Carl was many things, husband, father, grandfather, leader and dear friend. He was also a scamp and often tried to tease me. We had this ongoing argument about Bob Evans sausage gravy. One day I



Carl and Greg Eddy on the 2015 Eastern Shore Trip

– photo by Rosie Campbell

said I liked it very much. Carl said it was terrible and tasted like glue. This argument went on for years. One day we were returning from Sortie when we spotted a “mom and pop” diner with a sign in the window for sausage gravy. We had to try it. That gravy was one of the worst meals I ever had. Of course Carl said it was great and many times better than Bob Evans. A few years later he told someone, and it got back to me, that he agreed with it was horrible gravy. But that did not end the Bob Evans gravy argument.

He tried to kill me. At a Sortie we were sleeping on cots in a large open room. When we woke in the morning and were getting dressed Carl, whose cot was three cots from mine, called me. He asked me to toss his shoe to him. I asked “why is your shoe by my cot?” He said “I threw it at you last night to save your life”. That shoe was a big heavy field boot. It may not have killed me but it would have done some damage. Carl’s story was that mild mannered Gene Hutton was upset by my snoring. He grabbed his cane started toward me saying “I’ll put a stop to that”. Carl threw the shoe at me to get me to move and stop snoring so Gene Hutton wouldn’t kill me. I will admit that Hutton was in great pain from his replacement hip. He went home soon after this. But until Carl admits that Bob Evans has good sausage gravy I

will say Carl tried to hurt or kill me with his shoe.

This is an incident that Carl liked to tell. On our first trip to the “Eastern Shore” we had an ocean facing room on the fourth floor. In the morning I woke up first and made motel room coffee and setup my scope next to Carl’s bed. I woke him, told him to sit up, handed his coffee and told to look through the scope. That is how Carl added Gannet to his life list.

If you knew him, you also have stories and reminisces.

I’ll leave with this: Carl hated change. To many of us his leaving is one of the biggest changes in our life.

P.S. His grandson just got a job at Bob Evans.

– Greg Eddy

I think it’s going to take a while for the loss of Carl to sink in. He was an important part of all of our lives in the BBC. He was our “fearless leader.” I remember wonderful conversations before dinner at forays and weekend BBC meetings. Always Carl was concerned with the quality of BBC events, the future of the club, and giving everyone a chance to see the best birds he could help them find.

– Jay Buckelew

My friendship with Carl and the rest of the Slater family has meant a great deal to me, as it has my Mead brothers (Bill and Ed). We were privileged to go on several of the fine trips lead by the Slaters, and opportunity that probably would never have come our way, had we not joined the bird club.

Carl’s capabilities and his great sense of humor made our time with him always



*Hardcore coffee drinkers, Spain 2013;  
Carl, Rosie Campbell & Ed Mead  
– photo by Rosie Campbell*

fun. Carl taught us a lot about birds and took us where we could learn about other nature-related activities, including Foray, Bonus Birding weekends and more.

His booming baritone “Wake Up” song started many of our fun days off well. He was our Fearless Leader, “taking us where other birders fear to go.” He will be MISSED!

– Rosie Campbell

Carl Slater was a man with character and fortitude that we will never forget! We first met Carl in the early 80’s when we joined the Brooks Bird Club and attended Foray. He was Administrator during our terms as Presidents of the BBC and was always supportive, encouraging and congenial with our efforts to lead the Club. We have fond memories with him of Forays as Director with Juanita and many wonderful Eastern Shore trips as our “Fearless Leader”. He enjoyed traveling with his friends on BBC trips and planning them. He never quit teasing me about sitting on his expensive hat on an Eastern Shore trip! His great humor, wit, and funny stories were infectious. While sharing these, he would give out a loud “Ha” which made one laugh. Carl also had a soft “radio” voice that could charm you as it did Juanita. He enjoyed teaching others about birds and their songs. I saw and heard my first Vesper Sparrow with Carl.



*Working at the Headquarters in Wheeling  
– photo by Cindy Ellis*

Carl truly dedicated his life to the BBC! He learned from early BBCers as Chuck Conrad, Glenn Phillips, and many others and carried on the BBC traditions. Memories of Greg Eddy and him as good friends, birding together

and sharing their knowledge with others are special. We have been blessed to have known him and appreciate the influence he had on us and our sons. He truly was a dear friend and he loved his family dearly. Our Club must carry on this legacy!

Blessings to his Family,

– Tom, Dawn and Fox Family

The BBC always needed strong leadership and Carl provided that for many years. I hope that younger people, people younger than me, will pick up on that and carry it forward.

– John Jacobs

When I first met Carl Slater, he introduced himself as a volunteer in the Friends of Schrader group, which works to support the mission of the Schrader Environmental Education Center. To say he was a friend of the Schrader Center, however, is just the tip of the environmental iceberg. Carl first became involved in our programming as a young camper attending Junior Nature Camp from 1952-1954. His interest in the natural world led him further down the path to Mountain Nature Camp in 1955, which he continued to attend and cherish for decades after. Soon after his first experience at Mountain Nature Camp, he started working at the center (known as the Brooks Nature Center at that time), which started him “on a lifestyle that carried throughout the rest of my life.” The Schrader Center is built on a strong history of passionate, intelligent, caring individuals who have worked tirelessly to shine the light on environmental education, and Carl will be remembered among them as one of the best.

– Molly Check, Director,

*Schrader Environmental Education Center*

In moments like these I miss to be more fluent in English trying to find the right words...however I will leave that my heart talks instead of my mind. I feel that Carl and Juanita have been two of the most special people in my life. The Slaters and the first BBC members who came to Spain in 2002 were of a great support in the beginnings of a project called Spainbirds. We spent three fan-



tastic weeks together and then I realized how wonderful the life could be having the opportunity to share my life with people like you. That encouraged me a lot, believe it or not, in the bad moments (which I had of course!), and over the years, I met very nice people from all over the world. During that three weeks I felt that you were different and special. I must admit that I only cried twice in my 20 years guiding (already!!!); after saying bye-bye to my groups, and when Juanita and Carl were in front of me in both occasions. Unfortunately, the long distance between our homes forced us to not have much contact during the years; however I felt that you were always close to me somewhere there out. All who met Carl will miss him, although he will always stay in a special corner of my heart and in my memories, same with Juanita, and you gave me only good and positive things! I wish I had had the chance to chat with Carl at least once more. I would have heard him laughing, as he had (nearly) always a smile on his face. You gave me love and an a forever friendship in spite of the distance, and I will always love you both.

– *Santi Villa, Spainbirds Nature Tours*



*In Spain with tour leader and good friend Santi Villa*

Carl Slater was a gentleman and a gentle man. He was low-key, friendly and diligent at whatever he undertook. His long and effective leadership of the Brooks Bird Club speaks for itself. We will not see his like again.

– *Bob Rine*

(Brother) Stu would be writing a book of Carl memories. Carl mentored Stu in countless ways, particularly by ex-

ample and with ready confidence. Like Chuck Conrad, he was both Dad and kindred spirit.

Carl filled the gaping hole Chuck left—with wisdom and tireless energy. He could bring a clash of minds to heel with a fresh perspective or a bit of wit. A gentle giant who walked humbly, pioneering and filling gaps, Carl will long be remembered.

– *Jane Robbins*

We met Carl in the early 1990s at Blue Bend. Eleanor and Kyle Bush suggested that we attend a Brooks Bird Club activity. When we walked into the room, everyone had their hand raised, weaving them enthusiastically. We turned around, thinking we had stumbled onto a revival group. Helen Conrad raced after us and explained the BBC way of clapping. Helen Conrad, along with Carl and Juanita Slater gave a most warm cordial welcome, making us feel at home. Over the years, we found Carl to be kind and helpful, wanting to teach us all that he knew. He was always trying to keep a harmonious atmosphere between club members and making sure everything ran smoothly. He was totally dedicated to the Brooks Bird Club, offering positive input over the years. We also admired him for never complaining about himself or others in the club. We will miss him greatly.

– *Jim and Beth Bullard*

As teenagers, my sister, Sara, and I attended the Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp at Camp Giscowheco near Wheeling, where I got to know the three Slater kids and their parents. For two weeks in late summer, it was a magical place where we learned botany, ecology, birding, and geology. We went on creek hikes, played in the pool, took our turns with camp chores, and made lots of friends. After a day of those activities, we gathered at dusk for a campfire down by the creek.

During the day, Carl was a quiet and benevolent presence, but at the campfire, he was in his element. Whenever Carl rose to lead our songs, it was guaranteed to be a fun and rowdy time. He

would lead us on a thrilling Lion Hunt, or march us up and down the hill with the Grand Old Duke of York. He would assign sections to shout the various parts for Old King Cole. I can still picture him walking around the fire, his face lit by the firelight, laughing and singing, surrounded by all of us.

Thank you for the songs, Carl. Miss you.

– *Dana Buckelew*



*Birding the Pacific NW with Ed Pitner  
– photo by Sally Egan*

Scott and I first met Carl in March of 1989 over at Seneca Lake. We were birding on our own and ran into Mabel Edgerton, who told us about the Bird Club and that they were there that day also birding Seneca Lake. We eventually met up with them and were introduced to Carl and Juanita, along with others. I remember how welcoming Carl was and what a great birder he was. He helped us with many of the birds that day, and told us about Foray. He gave us a membership brochure which we sent in, and the rest is 30 years of history of birding with Carl and the Brooks Bird Club.

We were always impressed with the knowledge of birds that Carl possessed, and how he could see as many birds sitting in one place that we saw while afield. He was always such fun on the Eastern Shore trips and at Foray. He always had a smile on his face and a song in his heart. We will miss you, Carl.

– *Scott and Janice Emrick*

Words cannot adequately express the love and admiration I have for Carl. His kindness, charm and folksiness mixed in with his intellect and wit are a few of his outstanding characteristics. He bright-

ened every encounter whether at a BBC meeting or on a trip or chatting while imbibing a beverage. Thanks for the memories, Carl. BBC events won't be the same; I miss you very much.

– Carol McCullough



Carl with Fred & Carol McCullough, 2006 Foray – photo by Jim Triplett

Carl was steeped in tradition. As a budding birder in 1976, Carl was one of the Brooks members who was most helpful to me. He was especially instructive in helping me learn the shorebirds and waterfowl on Eastern Shore trips.

As I progressed through the offices to trustee, Carl was the historian of procedure and traditions. He was tutored by the founders of the club and knew all the ins and outs of the club's administration. Therefore, it was a no-brainer for him to assume the administrator's role when the time came. He and Juanita were a team who steadied the course of the club and were the backbone of many of the club's activities. My work never allowed me to travel abroad with the club on their planned adventures, so I was always envious of those who attended when I read the reports in the Mail Bag.

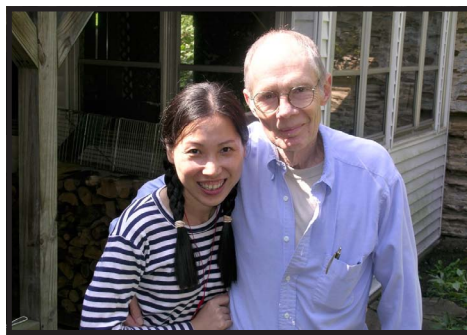
Most of our birding experiences were in a group setting. I have one memorable day that he and I birded the Las Vegas area. The weekend coincided with the BBC Tygart Lake Park meeting. Helen Ann and I could not attend due to her attending a medical conference in Las Vegas, NV in which I intended to accompany her to go bird watching. I emailed Juanita to ask if I could do anything to help with the meeting since I would not be in attendance. The surprising response was, "Do you want to go to Eric's wedding?" By coincidence, Carl would

be attending his son's wedding on Saturday in Las Vegas and asked if I wanted to bird with him Friday. Of course I did. He kept our plans secret from his family. He and I had a pleasant day of seeking dessert birds and in conversation. We felt like family the next day at the wedding and reception.

As new West Virginians, Carl welcomed us and helped open the window to a life-time of birding. Our lives are richer for having crossed paths with Carl.

– LeJay Graffious

When I was in China, I had already heard Ryan talk about Carl and Juanita, his second parents. In September 2006, I moved to US, and the first time I met them on their farm, I was so nervous and felt weird. The culture of US is so different from Chinese. I followed Ryan to call them Carl and Juanita. In China, it is not proper to call seniors by their first names. I should call them uncle or auntie Slater. Also, we are not used to joking with our elders as with people our same age. But soon, their smiles and gentle, warm voices made me relax and forget the line between our two generations. I started to talk and joke as a friend.



Carl with Yan Tomazin on his farm, 2006 – photo by Ryan Tomazin

Two months later in November, Carl led us bird club members on the Eastern Shore trip. Ryan and I got married on this trip in Chincoteague. It is a beautiful memory. I started to know so many new friends, and all of us followed a great leader: Carl, slowed by his body, but always with his calm smile and intelligent, strong mind. He drove a van, taking us to those birding places with the map in his mind. We had no need to worry

about anything; Carl took care of the whole team very well. We just enjoyed the birding and the trip.

Later, I used to see Ryan and Carl always birding together. Those years, every Christmas bird count, they would stand under a traffic bridge in Bridgeport, Ohio, counting thousands and thousands of crows. It usually is very cold, and I always snuck back to the car to wait. They stood in the cold wind side by side, counting those crows as they flew by like a cloud. Those drivers who were driving past in front of them always looked curiously between them and the sky with expressions of "what's going on?" It's funny, they were looking at crows, but I was looking at those confused drivers.

Carl always showed good humor. Every year, the Headquarters Chapter has a Christmas party, and everybody who attends the party will bring a gift to trade. One year, I had a mischievous idea. I wrapped a bottle of soap bubbles, the kind that kids always like to play with, as my party gift. Carl was really "lucky"; he picked this gift. When he opened the wrapping paper, we all laughed. Cindy joked with Carl: "Dad, you can stay home to blow bubbles for Christmas." Carl was the host of party that night, and he stood in front of the gift table to officiate. When he called the number of a person to pick a gift, he showed the bubble bottle and "begged" that person, "Hey, do you want my bubbles?" His eyes full of childish hope, but nobody wanted them. His "disappointing" face made us laugh again. After the party, I felt guilty and told Carl, "It's me that brought the bubble bottle, just as a joke. I would like to trade back for it." Carl smiled and said, "It's okay, my grandson Sam may like to play with it."

So many happy memory with Carl. Last year in September, just before he took ill, Ryan and I visited him and Juanita at their house. We had a nice chat and lunch. Before lunch, I asked Carl how to sing the meal prayer song of the bird club. Because English isn't my native language, I am not able to remember the lyrics without reading the words. So, when we sing the song at bird club meet-



ings, I just follow other people humming “huuuuu...ahhhhh...Amen!” I asked Carl to teach me the song. He sang it with his charming deep voice. I always thought his voice sounded like those professional singers. But I never realized that’s my last time to hear his singing, his voice. It’s my last sweet memory.

Someday, when I look to the sky and find a sun dog, I maybe will fantasize that it’s Carl blowing soap bubbles in heaven, and I will hear his voice in my heart: “Hello, children!”

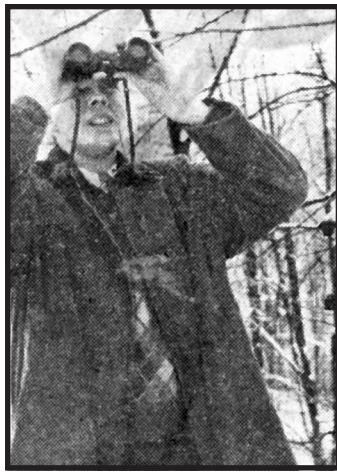
– *Yan Tomazin*

The Parallel -

Carl Slater was introduced to the Conrad Family approximately 65 years ago. He was a little on the wilder side but our dad Chuck Conrad saw something very special and unique in Carl. Dad had a love of nature at a very young age and that love turned into the Brooks Bird Club. Dad was 19 at the time. He saw that same love and energy in young Carl. Quickly he became like a son to Dad. Their difference in ages never seemed to be an issue. After Carl’s horrific accident, Dad understood the impact that this nightmare could have on Carl because Dad too had suffered a terrible accident. Both men were champions when it came to dealing with pain because they never complained of their discomfort. They were grateful to be alive! Carl went on to carry out our father’s legacy by continuing the Brooks Bird Club and fully stepping into Dad’s shoes. Carl took the Club to new heights as Administrator with Juanita by his side just like mom was! Dad may have been a mentor to Carl but Carl was equally the same to him. There are no words that can do justice to what Carl meant to this family! Carl’s suffering is permanently over and there is no doubt that Carl and Dad are enjoying the awesomeness and beauty of heaven!!!

We were so blessed to have Carl and Juanita as dear friends!!!! We shared many wonderful times together. Thank you for all the beautiful memories that we will always cherish! God bless this very special Slater Family and guide them on this new journey in life!

– *Love, The Conrad Girls, Joan & Cindy*



*Carl birding in the 1960s*

I met Carl in the mid 1980’s when I joined both the Brooks Bird Club and the Oglebay Institute’s A.B. Brooks Nature Committee, now called Friends of the Schrader Center. Carl was involved at an early age with both the Brooks Nature Center, and the Terra Alta Mountain Camp, run by Oglebay Institute. I have read old notes from the “early years”, and Carl’s name is everywhere in them! He and I shared a commitment to the continuation of the Terra Alta camp, and I am happy to say that it continues to this day. His devotion to the BBC was even greater. I always marveled about how much he did for the club and the Headquarter’s Chapter. He was one of the most charismatic people I have ever met; so witty and quick with a joke. I will miss him.

– *Mary Grey*

A fixture, that’s what Carl was in the Brooks Bird Club. Outings, events, meetings, you would always know Carl would be there with a smile and a handshake. In a rare case, when he was not at a BBC event, the first thing members would say is, where’s Carl, did you see Carl?

Carl knew the BBC inside and out, and without a doubt, he knew birds. What would make anyone stay involved with an organization for over six decades, other than love.

Carl is one of those rare BBC members that will live on indefinitely. As new BBC members join the club in the future, they will most definitely hear stories, and learn about Carl. So, in a way, Carl will

live forever here in the organization he loved so much.

They say time flies when your having fun; I know this to be true. When I’m in the field birding, time surely does seem to fly. The sixty-plus years Carl was in the bird club must surely have flown by for him, like the birds we all love to watch.

– *Larry Helgerman*

I just hope Carl had some BBC brochures with him when he moved on.

I never saw him meet a “stranger” and not fish one of those out of his pocket and welcome him/her to join the group. Walking along on a trip he dropped totally memorable details of bird identification or parts to notice, song associations; all these were so valuable to a mature but still beginning birder. The subtle smile and wit, eye sparkle, beautiful bass voice singing “You’re always behind, just like the old cow’s tail” or “...a Chestnut-sided Warbler who had laid an egg...,” the well organized and low key tour leadership that delighted and educated many of us, are all a lasting legacy that we will hang on to and be thankful for. Bravo, Carl, Yay. Godspeed.

– *Mary and John Gordon*

Birds—singing happily to a group of BBC’ers—at breakfast?

Not exactly warbling birds. Rather, our fearless leader Carl, crooning a lyrical melody to his oatmeal devouring “children,” as he called us, at our early morning meal. Carl’s morning music sung in his serenely soothing voice always seemed to portend a day of excellent birding and finding awesome birds—wherever in the world we happened to be.

My avian and geographical memories include such delights as turquoise hued Bee-Eaters, Rollers, and Blue Rock Thrush in Greece and Turkey, Hoopoes at the Acropolis in Athens, ptarmigan and Northern Hawk Owl in Alaska, Wandering Tattler on the Oregon coast, and Atlantic Puffins in Maine. And I must mention those delicious lobster rolls we had in Nova Scotia on the dock before boarding a ferry boat on the Bay of Fundy. Wow. Faraway places, fabulous

birds. Sound like “magic moments?” They were, those special trips that Carl and Juanita led to rare world-wide birding spots we’d never access on our own.

Closer to home, the Eastern Shore trips-- featuring New Jersey and Virginia on alternate years-- were some of BBC’s most popular trips. My understanding is that Carl and Greg Eddy were among the “founders” of this excursion as they were birding in those areas and felt the Club should offer annual Eastern Shore trips. Now some of us have enjoyed those trips for over 20 years and could point out the exact location where we saw the Least Bittern, and where we watched a flame-colored sky as thousands of Snow Geese flew against the sunset before settling down for the night. Thanks, Carl and Juanita.

These Eastern Shore trips will continue, with our new fearless and great birder leader—Cindy Slater.

In addition to his birding, crooning, and organizational skills, Carl could enliven a long and tiring trip in the van with a mob of birders by cracking some very spritely jokes.

Carl’s sense of humor also included telling a joke on himself. This is one of my favorites. Carl drove one of the vans on our trips. The vans were packed with noisy and impatient birders dressed and ready for field work-- lively but not lovely. At a routine traffic check, the van was pulled over and a friendly but weary officer asked Carl to show his driver’s license. Carl got out his wallet and started thumbing through his multiplicity of cards—when he remembered. He had forgotten to renew that darn driver’s license. Carl was a pretty quick thinker. Rather than admit to the law what he’d forgotten to do, he kept slowly thumbing through his cards pretending to search for what he knew he didn’t have.

Impatient grunts from the van’s rowdy birders cajoled Carl to “hurry up and find that “blikety-blank license.” Well, the nice officer looked at placid Carl slowly shuffling through his stuff, and then at the bevy of binocular and scope bedecked rabble in weird hats and slouch clothes in the back of the van. The officer

gave up. “O, just drive on,” he grumbled.

Carl smiled and obliged. Thus began another great day of birding. Minus the traffic tickets!

Carl is no longer with us. But those wonderful memories of great birding and shared friendships remain with us all.

Submitted with high regards to the Slater family.

– *Norma Jean Venable*

What comes after a “Fearless Leader” I don’t know, but hopefully Carl will offer some guidance and inspiration from the next level to whoever is tasked with filling those awesome shoes.

Carl was a man of such obvious sincerity and humility that when in his presence for any length of time one was treated to a spontaneous lesson in how to live a good life. All you had to do was listen and watch. And both were a pleasure.

I recall often and fondly being at foray in Wetzel County and missing a field trip departure (I can’t imagine how). As I birded my way around camp there was Carl near the entrance with binoculars in hand, focused on what was to be the second summer tanager I’d ever seen; and it had been a lot of years since the first. This one sang a number of times and really offered a sense of what a summer tanager is; unlike my lifer who was a fleeting migrant; silent and pausing only enough for me to make the ID.

It will always be considered a blessing to have spent some time with just Carl and the summer tanager; getting to know each a bit better. I was only in Carl’s presence a few times, but it was all I needed to know that he was a special soul.

No doubt Juanita and Cindy will miss Carl more deeply than the rest of us, but with Carl’s guidance they will surely turn their grief into a celebration of a life well lived.

– *Bob Dean*

I first met Carl at Foray, but got to know him much better when he’d regularly drop by Bird Watcher’s Digest during one of his sales calls in our area. Carl always had a story or joke to tell; what

made him a great salesman also made him a solid leader for Brooks Bird Club.

Now it’s just me left from our original bird watching “team” of Elsa, Billy and Andy. I’m sad that I can’t check my recollections against theirs. But we enjoyed the company and leadership of Carl and Juanita on many occasions. My involvement abated after the early 90’s, but Mom enjoyed her time on the board, and club events that Carl helped plan and lead.

One time, my baby daughter Annalea chided Carl about smoking; he admitted that he had struggled to give it up, but Carl always wore a welcoming smile. Like so many club elders we’ve lost, he’ll be greatly missed; his legacy lives on in his family, but also among the many people he mentored during his years of service. May he Rest In Peace, and May God comfort the Slater family during this holiday season.

– *Andy Thompson*

Carl was always helpful, whether it be identification of a bird, a ride, or a roommate for trips.

I really enjoyed his entertainment at campfires and singing on road trips, with an occasional story or joke thrown in.

– *Wilma Jarrell*

Carl Slater was the Director of the Foray when I first attended at the age of 13. Year after year I was one of the youngest people there, and a bit of a wild child to put it mildly. What I remember about Carl was how, unlike some of the other “old people” at Foray, he did not get irritated with me when I was disruptive. He would just laugh off my childish antics in his calm, welcoming, and downright hilarious ways. As a kid, that made an impression on me. It made me want to listen to everything he had to say. And I did listen when Carl passed his knowledge of birds and history down to me during field trips and conversations around camp. I also listened to all of his jokes after dinner!

Another fond and vivid memory I have of Carl was the time he asked ME a question about snakes. Those of you that



know me know that I can and will talk endlessly about reptiles and amphibians. I had caught a Milk Snake with another kid at Foray and we were posing with it for some pictures. Carl came up to me and asked if I was sure that it wasn't a Copperhead. I told him yes, I was sure. He asked me how I knew, and then listened intently as I rambled on about all of the characteristics and differences between the two species. In retrospect, he may or may not have already known those things. Either way, it made my day and my Foray to have a respected elder like Carl ask me a question about nature. Moments like that helped foster my love of the BBC and the wealth of knowledge I have learned over the years attending Forays. I have only great memories of Carl Slater. He will be missed.

– Luke Head



*Mrs. & Mr. Fearless, Greece 2007*  
– photo by Martha Shearer

Our favorite memory of Carl was on a trip in 2007 to Greece/Turkey. This picture was taken on the boat coming back to Greece from a few days sight seeing in Turkey.

It always amazed us despite the day, the getting in and out of cars/vans, sunny or poor weather you never once heard Carl complain. He always had a sly smile and that dry sense of humor to get you through the day. Our birding highlight for that trip was the Pink Starling. It had been an all day chase and we had almost given up but as usual persistence paid off. Carl was loved by his birding family and it is our hope that this love sustains Juanita and family moving forward.

With warmest thoughts.

– Martha Shearer and Donna Rae Shearer Johnson

I have many fond memories of Carl beginning when I was just a kid and he, Frank Hembert, Jay Stein and Bruce Hubbard were working at the Nature Center and the little zoo and snake pit which were there. That would have been in the late 50s/early 60s.

Carl seemed larger than life to me then. MUCH larger! His quick smile and easy manner made him fun to be around.

Later in my life I became re acquainted with Carl and met Juanita and the kids for the first time. I still remember that night. I showed up unannounced at the St. Clairsville house and was immediately treated like one of the family. That carried over when the move to the farm was made. I remember doing farm chores with Bob Hostottle and Fran Kiselica and then all of us sitting down to a delicious meal, often with Jim Denham there and sometimes my Dad. One big happy family. That is how it felt.

Carl, like my dad and others from that era, spread the gospel of nature study and love of birding. And Carl seemed to effortlessly fill Chuck Conrad's shoes, keeping the BBC on a steady path.

For everything you did Carl, I thank you.

– Mike Breiding

It is with a very sad heart that I say goodbye to Carl. Such a kind and friendly person and a very knowledgeable birder. We met over 40 years at a BBC event and attended many more after that with our families. The kids are grown now but their favorite event with BBC was always the Eastern Shore trip with Carl and his family. Memories we will never forget.

– Patty Hogan Arrington

“Well, children...” and “your fearless leader...” – two sweet phrases that will always bring Carl to our minds and define the place he holds in our hearts. He earned that place leading us on memorable BBC field trips around our country and abroad. Special people come along now and then in one's lifetime. You don't forget them. Carl is one of those people.

– Gordon and Connie Knight



*Carl with Connie Knight on the shore*  
– photo by Gordon Knight

It's impossible for me to recount all of the things which Carl has done for Neal and I and for the Brooks Bird Club. I could never express how special he was. Instead I decided to list the things I will most miss about our “Fearless Leader”.

The first thing which comes to mind is Carl coming into the breakfast room each morning when we were on trips and singing his warbler song. I so loved to hear his wonderful voice.

Secondly I will miss sitting and talking with him on those same trips because neither of us could walk the trails. We didn't mind sitting instead of walking because we usually had as good or sometimes a better list of birds than the walkers. I will miss his (and Juanita's) careful planning of the trips we went on. They were such enjoyable adventures. I could never understand how he kept his good humor at times.

When we are on Eastern Shore trips each November, I will think of his sheer joy when thousands of Snow Geese flew over, or when we found an American Bittern or any rail. He knew all of their calls and many more. I will remember his calm when a Nor'easter decided to visit the places we were staying. Houses swayed, streets flooded, and the ducks swam down the street, but he never panicked and we had an adventure to remember.

There are so many more things which we will miss about Carl. I suspect that we don't even know what they are yet, but these are the ones which come to mind today.

– Barb and Neal Hohman

As Fearless Leader of numerous Brooks Bird Club Forays, Carl helped open the door to a vast amount of knowledge about the plants, animals, and landscape of WV for me and my brothers and sisters. Becoming part of the BBC Foray family was a big part of my life, and Carl's immense kindness was a big part of that. I can still hear Scott Emrick shouting "Hi, Carl" to get everyone to pay attention. Thanks in part to Carl, I also know how to caravan properly—always wait for the car behind you, follow but don't try to keep up with the car in front of you.

– Zach Fowler

Some of my special memories of Carl include his warm and gentle spirit, his deep voice singing corny songs at breakfast, his vast knowledge and love of birds, his total dedication to the BBC, planning so many wonderful birding trips including historical/cultural aspects, his sense of humor, making me feel welcome as a new member in 2008 and later supporting me as an officer. Carl was the "heart and soul" of the BBC and will be sorely missed by all!

– Sally Egan

Since I learned of Carl's passing back in December, and was asked to write something for The Mailbag, I have thought about it a lot: Carl is not an easy person to sum up in a few sentences. I first met the Slaters when Nevada Laitsch brought me into the bird club in the mid-1980's. Carl was welcoming in a quiet, reserved way. I soon learned that he was an accomplished birder, and liked nothing better than sharing that love with others. Since I live rather far from everything, Carl and Juanita welcomed me into their home, enabling me to ride with them to Forays and Eastern Shore trips. I treasure the memory of that wry smile and mischievous laugh.

– Gordon Vujeric

Carl tried to get me to join the BBC for years and years. His love for nature, birds and the BBC was boundless. He wanted everyone to enjoy these things as much as he did. Long ago he encouraged me as I was struggling with a warbler at TA.

I never have learned all the warblers and maybe never will but will always remember that day. And I am glad I finally took his advice to join his beloved BBC.

– Mary Edith Sambuco

My first memory of Carl Slater is of a late May morning in 1964 when I was working my summer job of caring for the trail-side wildlife cages and popular snake pit at Oglebay Park. I was taking a break when a tall form approached me wearing the khaki shirt and pants appropriate for the park and bearing a name plate that read Carl, Park Naturalist. He sat down on a favored park bench in the shade of several great London plane trees. I casually hauled my can of animal waste that I had been raking up, over towards the bench, hoping to start a conversation with him. But then he lifted his finger in a gesture of silence, his eyes fixed on the distance. He was a warm, inviting person by nature, yet his intensity demanded that I sit obediently in silence.

"There it is," he snapped. "Did you hear it that time?"

I shook my head and listened intently, not knowing for what.

In a few seconds his still-upraised finger stabbed sharply toward the forest.

"There – do you hear it now?"

Frustratingly, I still heard nothing.

"I don't know what I'm listening for," I responded with timidity.

"It's a Hooded Warbler! I've never heard one from here before. Along the far side of Brook's Trail, yes, but never from here. Listen now. His song is quite conspicuous. Sort of a *we-o, we-o, WE-TO*. Watch my finger."

I watched his finger for the signal, my ears straining to hear the song. Perhaps a half minute passed until an unmistakable series of short bird notes seemed to perfectly mimic his verbal description, coming from somewhere in the forested valley beyond. Carl thrust his finger as a conductor might his baton. My eyes swung to his in acknowledgement that I had heard the Hooded Warbler. We listened to it several more times.

"Do you know that one?" he asked, pointing with his free hand in a new di-

rection: "*Tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea,*" he described it with a dip of his finger affirming the timing. "That's the Carolina Wren," he said.

"Can you recognize most of these birds just from their songs?" I asked.

"Not most – all of them! And so should you."

"Really?" I responded in some bewilderment.

In the next few minutes I was introduced to the presence of a Cerulean Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, American Robin, Carolina Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Wood Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush and a Yellow Warbler. All were identified from their voices alone. The paraphrases he used were of enormous assistance in sorting them out, and I scribbled notes on all of it for fear of forgetting anything.

Carl Slater had just become my mentor. He introduced me to a career alternative – that of spending my life as a naturalist. No-one else could have done that for me. He encouraged me to pursue my natural history and ecology studies at West Virginia and later at The Ohio State University and set me on a momentous path.

I received my Ph. D. in Parks and Nature Interpretation from the University of Washington. I worked as a park naturalist with Ohio State Parks, and was Chief Naturalist for the Parks of Kentucky and later for the parks of Alberta, Canada. I have worked for and with a number of prestigious organizations, from the National Audubon Society (as Director of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary) to the World Wildlife Fund International and I.U.C.N. (for whom I travelled as a consultant to every continent of the world). I wrote fourteen books and served most of my career as a Professor of Wildlife, Park Interpretation and Conservation Biology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, where I still live. I have advised Prime Ministers, Kings and Presidents and birded with Prince Phillip and Prince Charles; and I owe this whole career to the inspiration and encouragement of Carl Slater.



But there is more. During my thirty-plus years as a university professor, all the accomplishments of those I taught and inspired can also be credited to Carl, who inspired me. That is how it works. That is the blessing of a teacher. Some inspiration was more direct -- one of my students (now a Vice-President of Yukon University) heard and glimpsed his first Wood Thrush and Yellow-breasted Chat at Carl's farm.

Over the years I looked forward to spending time with Carl, either while teaching at Terra Alta Nature Camp, or when visiting him at his farm and showing my slides of far-off adventures in his living room. Sometimes Carl, Dr. Greg Eddy and I would slip off to a birding day at Egypt Valley or shoot clay pigeons at his farm. And next fall I intended to fly down to Wheeling to join his annual birding trip to Chesapeake Bay, just to have some more time birding with him in the field. Carl's ear for birds remained sharp well into his old age. He and I had met for lunch at Generations Pub on one of my recent visits to Wheeling, and as we were getting into our cars to depart in the parking lot beside Big Wheeling Creek, he called to me and pointed. "Did you hear the song of the Yellow-throated Warbler?" It took three more turns before I finally heard it myself.

Carl was a fine naturalist of the old, classic school with his breadth of natural history knowledge. He was my mentor and a dear friend whom I admired greatly, and I owe him much gratitude and deep thanks. Now that I approach seventy-four years of age (only seven years separated us), I hope that we may yet once again share an adventure in the next realm.

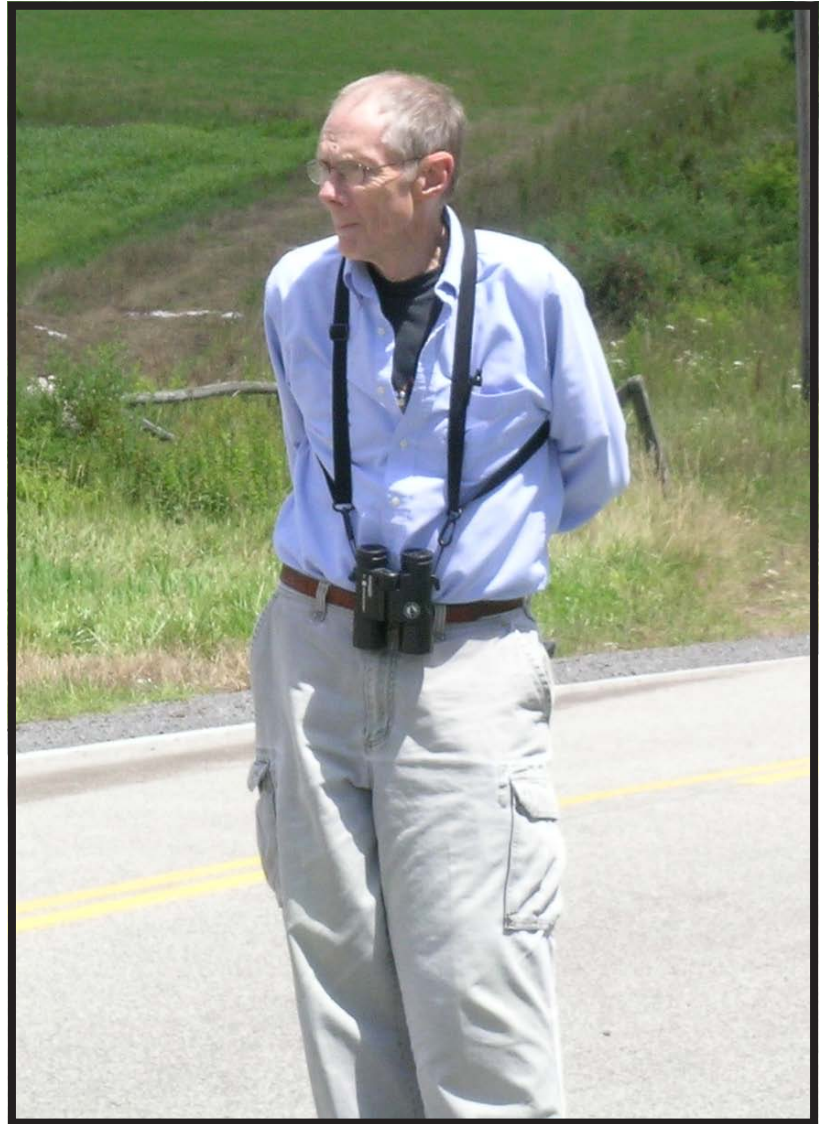
- Jim Butler, Edmonton, Alberta

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*Your light's reflected now  
Reflected from afar  
We were but stones  
Your light made us stars.*

- E. Vedder

## *Travel well, our Fearless Leader!*



Bonus Birding Weekend in Terra Alta, WV, 2007 - photo by Yan Tomazin





## 2019-20 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

*The 48th Pipestem Area Christmas Bird Count had 65 species, 2,107 individual birds, and thirteen participants. Highlights included: Long-tailed Duck, Ring-necked Duck (20), Bufflehead (21), Hooded Merganser (44), Common Merganser (77), Black Vulture (23), Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle (14), Eastern Phoebe, Common Raven (14), Winter Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3), Hermit Thrush (14), Field Sparrow (7), Fox Sparrow (4), and Eastern Meadowlark.*

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 12/14/19

*Mountaineer Chapter of National Audubon held their annual Christmas Bird Count on December 14. Twenty-five birders tallied 85 species during the rainy day. Highlights included 10 species of sparrows, 2 warbler species (Yellow-rumped and Pine), a pair of Indigo Buntings, and four species of owls. Our species count was down basically due to the lack of waterfowl on our lakes and rivers.*

*Another highlight was a WV Young Birders CBC lead by Katie Fallon. Great to have children participate. We ended the day with a tally/recap dinner together.*

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

*The Ona CBC was held yesterday. It was raining throughout most of the day with west northwest winds at 5-10 mph. Thirteen people participated and 3 groups did some owl-ing. We recorded 63 species. Josh Holland's group observed a Merlin and that was the only the fifth time that it had been seen on the Ona count. The weather contributed to the low count and scarcity of waterfowl and Gulls. Some highlights included seeing 4 Bald Eagles, 63 Rusty Blackbirds, 4,000 Common Grackles and 3 Eastern Phoebes.*

– David Patick, Huntington, WV, 12/15/19

*Hi all, a full list is still incoming, but we had the below 5 uncommon species either count day or count week, all in Pocahontas County: Rough-legged Hawk, White-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (rare for the mountains), Gray Catbird, and Common Redpoll (6 individuals mixed in with a flock of goldfinches in the Lobelia area).*

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV, 12/16/19

*Yesterday thirteen birders helped with the first CBC in Point Pleasant in over forty years. Point Pleasant doesn't have many (if any) birders, so I appreciate the folks that traveled from Marietta, OH, Teays Valley, and the Huntington area to participate. The weather was great for birding. Temperatures were just below freezing before daylight and rose into the 50's by mid-day as the overcast skies gave way to the sun. Smaller ponds across the count circle were universally iced-over. Unfortunately the only open water available for waterfowl were the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers, a small portion of Krodel Lake, and the Gallipolis Ferry Sandpit.*

*We had 81 total species (75 + 6 cw), 6,722 individual birds, and 13 participants. Notable birds included Merlin, Greater White-fronted Goose, Gray Catbird, Cackling Goose (cw), Brown Thrasher, and 3 Peregrine Falcon.*

– Josh Holland, Huntington, WV, 12/22/19

*The Pendleton County CBC on December 19, started out a wicked cold, and fortunately windless, 12F. Many of the ponds that were open the day before were largely frozen, but there were some good numbers of waterfowl present in the little bit of open water. It was a wonderful day of birding.*

*Many thanks to the 12 observers in 7 teams who found 72 species on this frigid, but beautiful day. This ties our previous count-day high. In addition, we had a count-week Ring-billed Gull. Many thanks also to the Ruddles for organizing the 14 feeder-watchers.*

*We had record-breaking numbers of Common Merganser (29), Hooded Merganser (25), Black Vulture (159), Bald Eagle (43), American Kestrel (19), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (27), Hairy Woodpecker (26), Black-capped Chickadee (162), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (6) and Swamp Sparrow (4).*

*Screech Owl (10) and Carolina Wren (105) tied their previous high counts.*

*No new species were found this year, but we found 5 species that have been found less than 5 times in the previous 41 years of this count: American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, and Savannah Sparrow.*

*Other good finds were a Barred Owl, a Great Horned Owl, 2 Buffleheads, 11 Red-headed Woodpeckers, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, 4 Golden Eagles, 3 Chipping Sparrows, a Tree Sparrow, and our only northern winter finch of the winter, 1 Pine Siskin. The tree sparrow was the first in over ten years on this CBC. 11 White-crowned Sparrow was the second highest count in the last ten years.*

*The following species seemed relatively low compared to our most-recent 10-year average. At least three of these were probably lower because the cedars have practically no fruits at all this winter. Cedar Waxwing (66), Robin (31), Yellow-rumped Warbler (1), European Starling (651), American Crow (182), House Finch (26), House Sparrow (46), Fox Sparrow (2), and Great Blue Heron (3).*

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, Grant Co, WV

*Many thanks to all who braved the weather in search of our feathered friends on December 14th! In spite of often-heavy winds and chilly temperatures, intrepid Tucker County birders found 55 species, well above average for the count. New to the count were Killdeer and Merlin, as well as a count week Long-eared Owl and Tundra Swan (24). New high counts were Mourning Dove 187, Golden Eagle 2, Bald Eagle 9, Hermit Thrush 2, Swamp Sparrow 3, and Red-winged Blackbird 13. A Rough-legged Hawk was also listed.*

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

*The Pipestem CBC was conducted on Saturday December 14th. It was a yucky, rainy, day. But as birders often say, "a great day for ducks". And in our case it was. Alma Lowry, Allen and I had our usual route of Forest Hill to Bertha (Bluestone WMA). As we entered the Bertha area, we heard a Bald Eagle, then saw it flying up from the New River. We had lots of cardinals, cedar wax-*



wings, woodpeckers, 2 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and others. When we finally made it to the river, in front of us flew 9 Bald Eagles of varying ages. It was awesome. I've seen more than 10 eagles at a time, but not 50 feet in front of me. We of course spent time there looking for the eagles, which had flown up, down, and across the river. Then we saw all the Canada Geese, Mallards, Common Mergansers, Hooded Mergansers and Black Ducks. We thought we might have had more than 10 eagles, but we didn't have more than 10 in view at one time. The other groups for the count had great days as well.

On Sunday Dec. 15th, we conducted the Raleigh Co. CBC. It was a very nice day weather wise, and therefore, not such a great day for birds. I believe we had about 49 species. Allen and I went back to Beckley to count the crows going to roost. We started counting and watching them gather in the trees along Ragland Rd. Then all of a sudden, off they flew. It was nearly too dark to see them. WE LOST THEM. We checked several locations, but couldn't find them. We did locate a few hundred at the Beckley Walmart, but didn't find the main flock. I asked myself, "How do you lose thousands of crows?" That's what makes it so tough. You think you know where they are, and then suddenly they take off. I know they don't spend the night in the area where we see them right before dark. We estimated the we saw about 7,800 crows. That number is very low from past years.

– Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV

Eighteen volunteers ventured out on the first day of winter to survey birds in the Charleston area on December 21. The day began rather frosty, but the sun soon warmed things up to a comfortable 50 degrees. In all, we tallied 62 different species for the day. Sightings of particular note included Black Ducks, a Merlin, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a Wood Thrush (verified by photo). Diana Green concluded the day's efforts with her observation of a Great Horned Owl shortly before midnight.

– Doren Burrell, Mink Shoals, WV

The Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count was Saturday, December 28. We had a good day. This was our 40th anniversary. The first count was December 29, 1979, organized by Brent Bailey.

The weather cooperated. One new bird was added to our list – Common Raven. Several uncommon ones were found – Great Egret, Cackling Goose and Merlin. Ducks, gulls and White-crowned Sparrows were low. Flickers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens and Brown Creepers were plentiful. Owls were also high, probably because of the increase in owling hours. Common Loon was a count week bird. Thanks to all who participated.

– Dick & Jeanette Esker, Washington, WV

Our Huntington CBC was held yesterday and 22 brave individuals persevered thru the rainy cool weather. We observed 70 species. We had tied the high for Ruby-crowned Kinglets at 19. For ducks, we saw 2 Wood Ducks, 2 Gadwall, 222 Mallards, 2 Ring-necked Ducks, 6 Hooded Mergansers and 2 Pied-billed Grebes. We also had 2 Wilson's Snipe. We had 10 screech-owls, 3 Great Horned Owls and 3 Barred Owls. The highlight of the count was the finding of an Orange-crowned Warbler in Proctorville, Ohio, by Josh Holland's group.

– David Patick, Huntington, WV, 1/5/20

## FIRST WV BIRDS OF JANUARY 1, 2020

My first bird of the year was a tie with Song Sparrow and American Goldfinch. They were sitting side by side on the feeder. Just below them were Dark-eyed Juncos and Tufted Titmice.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV

Happy New Year, Birders! My first of the year bird was a Downy Woodpecker, heard not seen. First seen bird(s) were two Blue Jays flying in to the feeder tray.

– Shannon Burner, Keyser, WV

Pileated Woodpecker and 16 American Goldfinches. Good birding to all in 2020!

– Cynthia Burkhart, Cairo, WV

My FOY bird was Hairy Woodpecker and Judy's was Blue Jay. Happy New Year!

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

My FOY birds have been, in order, Purple Finches, Mourning Doves, a pair of Downy Woodpeckers, a White-crowned Sparrow and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. These all at my feeders outside my window. Great start to a new year.

– Sharyn Ogden, Peterstown, WV

My first two birds sitting next to each other were a Dark-eyed Junco and a Carolina Wren. The birds certainly took their time showing up this morning. Hadn't seen a single one by 7:00 AM.

– Bruni Haydl, Jefferson Co., WV

FOY birds here are juncos, Mourning Doves and a Downy Woodpecker.

– Wendy Perrone, Brooks, WV

First bird of the year - Dark-eyed Junco

– Kim Kazmierski, Hurricane, WV

My "first of year bird" was the American Robin. How patriotic for the New Year!

This morning was looking out the kitchen window on the deck where we have a meal worm platform and two heated bird bath bowls. I saw 6 robins all together in one heated bird bath, and the other had a lone leucistic robin drinking water. So it was a great start to 2020 for it to be one of my first robins sighted.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV

My FOY bird was a Belted Kingfisher at Coonskin Park in Charleston! Lots of other birds out there this morning - including Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, and many others!

– Laura Frazier, Middleway, WV

First I heard a Carolina Wren, then saw both the wren and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Love the way my 2020 birding year has started.

– Willa Grafton, Heaters, WV

My and Amy's first of the year was a couple of Canada geese flying over the house.

– Rennie Talbert, Barboursville, WV

Of course my first bird of the year was a House Sparrow.

– Joey Herron, Fairmont WV

Cont. on Page 15

# PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE EASTERN SHORE TRIP 2019

*Contributed by Lee Miller*

This was my first trip to New Jersey shore in thirty years. When I went to Atlantic City thirty years ago, I had no knowledge that nature study or birding even existed. Boy, it's been an amazing journey learning about nature in the last seven years! The trip to the Eastern Shore was a fantastic journey with lots of new, interesting things to learn, see and do. Kim and I got to meet lots of new friends. Everyone should do this trip!

The adventure began on Wednesday, November 6, 2019, when we loaded a fifteen-passenger Ford Van with luggage, spotting scopes and eight people heading for the Eastern Shore. We started our trip in Morgantown, WV, at 8 AM. It took all day for the van to travel to the Spray Beach Hotel in New Jersey. I kept Cindy Slater, our tour host and driver, occupied on the trip by asking her if we were there yet! The new people in the van became friends as we all helped with a crossword puzzle, counted license plates from different states, talked and watched for birds. The snacks people had brought for the trip were wonderful. Thank you all! I think the snacks helped keep me out of more trouble ("Are we there yet?"). Around lunch time we stopped at a great place called the Chesapeake Grill at Havre De Grace, Maryland.

By 5:00 PM we got to the Spray Beach Hotel and I got to see the beach on the Atlantic Ocean side of the barrier island. I dropped everything to go and try to see some birds before nightfall, but the only things I saw on the beach were sand and salt water. We got settled in at the hotel and then jumped back into the van to get dinner at O Daddy's with our birding friends. The food was good and I enjoyed the local beer from Beach Haven. We talked and listened to the birders. I met another new friend – Michael, a retired professor of geology. His interesting talk about fossils caught my attention. He does volunteer work at Gray's Fossil Site in Tennessee. The evening went by fast and soon we headed back to the hotel to get some sleep for the next day.

I was so excited about the birds I might see the next day that this felt like the day before Christmas, so I had a hard time sleeping that night. On Thursday, I was up before daylight to head out to the beach to see the sun rise and, hopefully, to find some shore birds. There were some shorebirds, but the sunrise was so amazing that I didn't watch them much. By 8:00 AM the birding group loaded the van with ten people and their spotting scopes. That day we went to Barnegat Lighthouse State Park for our first day of exploration. I took lots of photos of birds, plants, boats and birders around the lighthouse. Then we went to the Cedar Bonnet Island Environmental Trail in Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. The island – once a former dredge dump site – has a trail that is a one-mile walking path with views of Atlantic City, Long Beach Island, coastal marshes, Barnegat Bay, and lots of wildlife along the salt marsh shore. There were lots of birds to see and identify as we hiked the trail. This very windy, cool and dry day may have been our best day for birding. The next stop was a driving tour in a different part of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. As we stopped and had a picnic with our bag lunches, I wished we could have hiked the wildlife refuge instead of driving through. There were birds everywhere! The exciting day went by fast and back to the hotel we went to get ready for dinner. We went to The Black Whale for dinner. It was another great place to eat and try more local microbrews. The night ended back at the hotel for a nightcap and talking with some birding friends.

Friday started early for me once again at the beach. I was hoping for more birds and to see the sun rise, but clouds from overnight rain made the sunlight a pale orange. Instead of watching the sunrise, I watched gulls, plovers, loons, dunlins and gannets plunging into the sea. This was a truly WOW moment for me! After breakfast we began the convoy trip to Back Bay Birding for a pontoon boat ride with Captain Bob. ("A two-hour tour" -- my mind kept thinking of Gilligan's Island and the S.S. Minnow.) It was a great trip on the inland waterways to see cormorants, herons, loons, American Oystercatchers, plovers, brants, Hooded Mergansers and a Lapland

Longspur – a good variety of shore birds and many more.

After the boat trip ended, off we went to the Cape May Lighthouse for more birds. The weather was cold, cloudy and windy. We got to see another lighthouse on the beach and I walked on a boardwalk near the lighthouse. The observatory platform at Cape May was a great place for birders to be. We watched birds from the platform and got to see a rare bird: a Eurasian Wigeon! Fred and Carol McCullough found the wigeon with a scope and they showed it to me. They said it was a special bird, but I guess "special" didn't register in my brain because rather than staying to watch the unusual bird, my "squirrel" brain took me off on another adventure. On the beach I found a World War II bunker which I explored as much as I could. At Cape May we got to see a Bald Eagle, a Golden Eagle, swans, Canada Geese, American Wigeons and many more birds. When we stopped at the Cape May Bird Observatory Center for a little shopping, we saw even more birds: a Northern Flicker, a Hermit Thrush, an American Robin and chickadees. The last stop was Higbee Beach, just across from the Cape May Lewes Ferry. This 1.5-mile strip of sand along the Delaware Bay is a popular place for birders especially during the spring and fall migration seasons. I learned that the beach was used until 1999 as a nude beach, but only for swimming. I saw horseshoe crab shells and gulls.

On the long trip back to the hotel for dinner, we passed Atlantic City and got to see hawks. The sunset was fabulous on the way back to the Spray Beach Hotel. The evening started off with happy hour at the hotel with new and old friends exchanging our observations of the day. This is where Kim and I took Cindy's recommendation to try a new drink called a Ginger Mule, a very pleasing beverage.

Before dinner I was introduced to another renowned birder I knew from the book, "Rainbows, Bluebirds and Buffleheads". Greg Eddy, a former professor of geology, has helped guide my friend,



Bill Beatty, to be a better birder. It was very nice to talk with Greg and his friend Barbara. Then the group jumped into the van and cars to meet at Buckalew's Restaurant and Tavern for dinner. It was a great evening of food and friends.

My Saturday walk on the beach came early and it was colder that morning. I saw lots of gulls and fishing boats in the ocean. I found out that many of the boats were from a Striped Bass fishing tournament running that weekend. After breakfast, we loaded the van and went back to Barnegat Lighthouse State Park for more birds. While most were birding on a 1,000 ft. concrete walkway along the inlet jetty, my "squirrel" took me on another adventure to the top of the lighthouse. Several of us climbed the 217 steps to the top of the lighthouse. Since the lighthouse starts at 172 feet above sea level, it ended up being a very frightening height. The top of the lighthouse was cold and windy that day.

When we all got down from the lighthouse, some of us went for a walk on a short nature trail looking for more birds. This forested area, dominated by Black Cherry, Sassafras, Eastern Red Cedar and American Holly, is a remnant of the forest that covered most of the barrier island before development began. We saw a Blue Jay, a Hermit Thrush, a Dark-eyed Junco, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler that day. The next stop was Manahawkin Wildlife Management Area, a 1,642-acre wildlife management area which was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1976. There we saw the "bridge to nowhere", which is known as a good birding spot. We saw even more birds at the Wawa gas station that day when we got gas and coffee. I was amazed to learn that they pump your gas for you in New Jersey! Finally, we went south on Beach Haven to the Wildlife Refuge to see more gulls, sand and dolphins.

The day ended early because of the banquet at the hotel that evening. Dinner was good. After eating, we counted our bounty of birds that we had found on the Eastern Shore. The group had identified 111 species. My own list on eBird had 56 species that I had identified. This was our

last night at the Spray Beach Hotel.

Sunday morning it seemed that the cold weather had made the shore birds begin moving south. But it was time for us to pack the van and head for home. We enjoyed our five days on the Eastern Shore. I did not want to leave the beach, but I had taken lots of pictures to help me remember the trip. The journey home went by fast enjoying all the new friends we had shared the Eastern Shore with!

This is a great event with lots of fun, birds, food, and friends! We met many new fantastic people from the Brooks Bird Club. Everyone was great to talk to and very helpful in identifying the birds we saw.

Thank you, Cindy Slater, for the work you did in setting up the event and driving the van round trip and thank you, Jan Runyan, for helping me with my grammar and managing those squirrels in this story! Kim and I had a lot of fun at the Eastern Shore and I had fun writing this story!

## CORRESPONDENCE

(This is in response to a query from Ed. about remembrances of Carl)

*I never met Carl Slater, although I probably saw him from a distance at some event a long time ago. I know that the Slaters have done much for the BBC*

*It occurred to me that I have been a BBC member for 60 years now. I joined with my parents in 1959, and we certainly had some great times at BBC events in the early 1960s. They became very active in the club, with my Dad serving a term as President of the BBC, and my mother, who was a hardcore bander, spending a lot of time on that famous hill with Ralph Bell and George Hall. My wife and I moved to Los Angeles in 1964 so that I could go to grad school at UCLA, and we weren't able to attend very many BBC events of Forays after that. The regular appearance of The Redstart in our mailbox reminds us of our friends from days past and the wonderful birdlife in 'em 'ere hills.*

*I have tracked your recent, enthusiastic involvement in BBC affairs, and I am grateful to you for your efforts.*

Best regards,  
Lloyd Kiff, Ornithologist, Clinton, WA

## FIRST 2020 BIRDS

*Cont. from Page 13*

*FOY bird is a young male cardinal who has decided tapping on our window daily is his lot in life. It was been interesting watching him molt from a Hatch Year bird to his current full red plumage.*

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

*My first new year sightings were the two vulture species as they departed the roost beside our home. I've been assured by others that they weren't coming for me!*

– Bob Dean. Near Whitehall, VA

*Happy New Year! First of year was the elusive starling followed by an American crow. Ended the day with 24 species in the Berkeley, Jefferson County region.*

– Roy Boyle

*My FOY was an American Goldfinch and 4 House Finches on my nyger seed sack.*

– Bill Telfair

*It was interesting to learn about all the FOY birds that birders in WV saw/heard on New Year's Day. Mine was an Eastern Towhee found in the German Ridge area near Huntington.*

*Perhaps the more interesting find of the day happened after some of us spent the morning and part of the afternoon birding along Rt. 2 from Green Bottom WMA to Pt Pleasant and then along Rte 817. During the day, we found 55 species of birds including winter wren and Fox Sparrow at GBWMA; two adult Bald Eagles, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, Northern Harrier, Canvasbacks and Ruddy Ducks at Robert C. Byrd Locks & Dam, and Peregrine Falcon at Pt. Pleasant. It was a very nice ay to be birding.*

*As my wife was getting dinner ready around 6:30 pm, I noticed a feather on the kitchen table. I have no idea where it came from, nor did she. So, I walked out to the back yard deck to let the feather float out into the yard and was greeted by a Barred Owl calling! My last bird of New Year's Day! If it hadn't been for the appearance of the feather, I wouldn't have heard the owl. But I'm still not sure how the feather appeared when it did.*

– Gary O. Rankin, Lavalette, WV

## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Yesterday afternoon, we were on our way home from Hinton when we noticed a large kettle of vultures over the mouth of the Bluestone River. We stopped and started counting. We had 74 Turkey Vultures, 43 Black Vultures and a Cooper's Hawk at one time. The birds headed toward the south east. Right behind them came the storm. The rain reduced visibility to just a few feet and the wind was a steady 13-17 mph, gusting to 21 mph.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 11/1/19

Went to Moncove Lake S.P., Monroe County today hoping for waterfowl from the Halloween storm. Saw two Belted Kingfishers and one Common Loon. As we looked at the loon through the scope we noticed it looking straight up. Turned out there were 2 immature Bald Eagles circling above it. Also, saw an adult Bald Eagle.

We kept a roadside raptor list, plus ravens - total was: 30 Common Ravens, 99 Turkey Vultures, 8 Black Vultures, 9 Bald Eagles, 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 16 Red-tailed Hawks, 3 American Kestrels and 2 unidentified accipiters.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 11/3/19

I pulled into the fish hatchery at Robert C. Byrd Locks & Dam this morning just before 9am and saw a large flock of sizable white birds rising up from the river. At first glance I assumed Snow Geese, gulls or Tundra Swans based on the size at a distance and reports from Ohio birders that swans were spotted moving south from Lake Erie.

Once I got my bins on the group they were clearly American White Pelicans. In a panic I reached for my camera and realized I had conveniently forgotten it at home on the charging adapter. So I began counting the birds, reached 50 halfway through the flock and scrambled for the scope to hopefully get some documentation shots. Around 100 birds.

– Josh Holland, Huntington, WV, 11/4/19

Late this morning, my backyard was teeming with life. A flock of about 40 Cedar Waxwings found the winterberries on one of my bushes. The waxwings were also bathing 7 or 8 at a time in the pond waterfalls, utilizing fallen leaves in the waterfalls to bathe on. They were using the wet leaves like big birdie washcloths.

A Yellow-rumped Warbler, 4 Chipping Sparrows, a group of 5 American Robins, Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Chickadees also joined in the water festivities. The Chipping Sparrows seemed a bit late for my yard, although about 8 years ago, I had one in my yard around Christmas.

Once the pool party was over, a Northern Flicker was on the tree which housed one of 3 owl nest boxes. We are currently housing a gray morph Eastern Screech-owl in that nest box, which has been there the last 3 days. Screechie popped its head out of the box and remained visible for about one hour. A few chickadees were also harassing the sleepy owl during that time.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 11/5/19

Today we enjoyed the visit of three new birds for this autumn. Late this morning, a Winter Wren explored the area where we have our feeders. Shortly after the wren flew up into the woods, a male Purple Finch landed amongst the House Finches on our platform feeder.

Late this afternoon, Sarah called, "Come check out this sparrow." She thought she might have seen a Fox Sparrow. She noted that it was reddish. I couldn't see anything except White-throated Sparrows for awhile. I assumed she had seen one of our well-marked Song Sparrows. However, she was right. I finally found a truly reddish Fox Sparrow scratching below the feeders. I knew I should trust her!

I was excited on our group's Wednesday morning walk yesterday when we found a male Red-winged Blackbird along the Tygart River. I thought they had all gone. I was really excited when we found a lone Brown-headed Cowbird in a tree on the opposite side of the river - which turned into a Rusty Blackbird. It had yellow eyes.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 11/7/19

I went out to check on the farm's water and couldn't help but take a walk, sun just coming up and 14 degrees with beautiful layer of snow. An impressive number of robins, quit counting but everywhere, hundreds. Lots of Cedar Waxwings too, all because of the huge amounts of grapes still on the trees. One little corner had 5 Pileated Woodpeckers, along with flickers and Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers. As I was watching the volunteer fire alarm went off in the distance and to my left a couple of coyotes began to howl.

– Paul McKay, Ohio County, WV, 11/13/19

It was a great birdy morning. The temperature held even at 37 degrees, and the clouds hung low. There was a fine misty rain falling. The starlings put on a show for us over at North Schoolhouse Ridge. Thousands of them streaming together in a huge band. When a car



Rusty Blackbird in Richie County  
– photo by Cynthia Burkhardt



Starling with an abnormally long bill  
– photo by Richard Gregg



**INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)**

passed along the road, they formed a black liquid cloud over it following it for a little while. So entertaining to watch.

The sparrows were active in the upper field, more Savannahs than I have seen so far this fall - probably close to twenty, clinging to the taller grass stalks and flying up from the fence and ground.

When we headed downhill towards the parking lot, I noticed a larger bird with reddish tail - Hermit Thrush? No, perhaps a Fox Sparrow. I found the Fox Sparrow profile on the Sibley app to show my husband, and played their song. Sure enough, a pair of curious Fox Sparrows moved into the top of the black locusts, beautiful against the dreary sky. - Deb Hale, Harpers Ferry, WV, 11/18/19

I went up to Lake Stephens Wednesday and observed a Pied-billed Grebe and Common Loon swimming about 100 feet from each other. The grebe was just swimming along doing his thing and the loon gracefully dove under the water. After about a minute the grebe suddenly seemed to explode out of the water. At that same instant, the loon shot out of the water directly under the grebe sending it into the air! I assumed that upraised bill poked the grebe in his belly, hence the reason for his sudden flight. The loon then proceeded to flap his wings and dance high in the water in what I would term a victory dance!

All of this certainly brought a laugh for me. Don't you just love bird watching? - Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV, 12/19/19

Today, we encountered a group of 41 Black Vultures with six of the birds having red wing tags with numbers on them. They were on the state line, near Glen Lyn, VA where Rt. 460 leaves Mercer County, WV and enters Giles County, VA. We sent the information to [vulture.tag@gmail.com](mailto:vulture.tag@gmail.com). - Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 12/27/19

I spent Tuesday and Wednesday birding in SE WV. Late Tuesday afternoon I spent almost two hours looking for the Eurasian Collared Doves at Union. Around 5 pm, I spotted 8 of them in the top of a bare tree where US 219 heads south out of Union.

*That is the highest number of these doves I have seen in Union at one time.*

Wednesday morning I drove up to Cranberry Glade to look for Red Crossbills. It was 5 degrees, but I wasn't disappointed. I parked at the Nature Center around 8:15 am and almost immediately 10-12 crossbills flew into trees across the highway before flying over the center and down the hill. Later (~9:30 am), as I was leaving the area, I saw over 50 Red Crossbills getting grit from the highway in front of the Nature Center! In between, I walked the boardwalk and stopped along the road to the glades. I was treated to more crossbills working on cones, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Ruffed Grouse, and a few Dark-eyed Juncos.

Bluestone Lake yielded ~130 Common Mergansers, 18 Hooded Mergansers, 19 Ring-necked Ducks and 14 Bufflehead. Two Bald Eagles (1 adult and one 2nd year) we're flying near the lake. I also stopped at Pipestem State Park and found 3 Purple Finches. A nice day.

- Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 1/24/20

### - Sightings taken from WVBird ListServ

### Black Vulture Sightings Needed

I am working with the WV State Office of USDA Wildlife Services on a state-wide research project looking at the movements of Black Vultures. Wildlife Services has been tagging Black Vultures with red patagial tags on both wings at locations throughout the state. We are investigating movements to better understand how these birds use the landscape of WV and beyond and better characterize their movement patterns.

If you see a tagged black vulture, please report them to either [vulture.tag@gmail.com](mailto:vulture.tag@gmail.com) or to the Bird Banding Lab ([www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)). The later is especially useful if you were able to read the code on the tag. The Bird Banding Lab will notify researchers that placed the tags on birds. Thank you for your help.

### Adam Duerr

Director of Research, Sr. Wildlife Biologist  
Conservation Science Global, Inc.  
Adjunct Faculty of Wildlife and  
Fisheries Resources, WVU

## 15<sup>TH</sup> WINTER EAGLE SURVEY

The Eagle Brigade of Southern WV (including Three Rivers Avian Center, Bibbee Nature Club, Hanging Rock Migration Observatory, Pipestem State Park & guests), scouted for eagles on January 11, 2020.

**Bertha** - Bob Dameron, Allen & Mindy Waldron. BAEA\* - 29 (5 adults, 3 2nd year, 4 3rd year, 1 4th year & 16 unidentified age).

**Mouth of the Bluestone River** - 38 participants. BAEA -11 (2 adults, 6 1st year, 1 2nd year, 1 3rd year & 1 4th year).

**Bluestone State Park** - Judy Phillips, Josh Parks, Jessica Brown, Beth Nelson & Casey Witt. BAEA - 6 (2 adults, 4 1st year).

**Rt. 20 Overlook** - 5 participants. BAEA - 7 (4 1st year, 1 2nd year, 1 3rd year, 1 4th year) & 3 unidentified eagles.

**Bellepoint** - 8 participants. BAEA - 8 (4 adults, 2 1st year & 2 2nd year). GOEA\*\* - 1 (immature).

**Brooks Island Overlook** - Ron & Wendy Perrone, Jessy Perrine & Kathy Payne. BAEA -1 (adult).

**Lower Greenbrier River** - Doug Wood, Dianne Anestis & Roslyn McAllister. No eagles.

**Red Sulphur Springs** - Kermit Stover. No eagles

**Rt. 122** - Leigh Prince & David Shrewsbury - BAEA - 3 (1 adult, 2 3rd year & 2 unidentified age).

**Hans Creek Valley** - Maury Johnson, Bob Carter. BAEA - 4 (1 adult, 2 2nd year & 1 3rd year). GOEA - 1 (immature).

70 participants located 71 Bald Eagles (16 adults, 16 1st year, 9 2nd year, 9 3rd year & 3 4th year & 18 unidentified age), 2 Golden Eagles (both immature) and 3 unidentified eagles.

**Conditions** - 55-73 degrees, 70-100% cloud cover, winds 0-25 mph and no precipitation. Jim Phillips, compiler.

\* BAEA = Bald Eagle

\*\*GOEA = Golden Eagle

## CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

### **BIBBEE CHAPTER**

**April, 2020** – Ramp Dinner and Festival at Camp Creek State Park. Bibbee Nature Club will lead bird and flower walks. Walks will probably start around 8 AM. Contact Mindy Waldron for more info at mwaldron@suddenlink.net

**May 3, 2020** – Spring Migration Bird Count (NAMC). We count bird species for the day. There are many events this time of year, so Jim has picked a Sunday to get more people involved. Come join us in the Pipestem CBC Circle. We can use your help if you live within this area. Please consider counting the birds you see around your house. We will meet for a tally at Hinton DQ. Contact Jim Phillips for more info at jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com.

### **HANDLAN CHAPTER**

**March 16, 2020** – Laura Ceperley will give a presentation about some of her recent trips to exotic places.

**April 20, 2020** – Donna and Ron Graham will show some of their bird photos from some of their trips.

**May 18, 2019** – 6:30pm. Annual Picnic at Coonskin Park. End of the year business meeting and annual picnic.

### **HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER**

**March 17, 2020** – Western Wildflowers and Birds by Jay Buckelew. Bring a covered dish, place settings and drink. 6 PM for mingling, dinner at 6:30.

**March 22, 2020** – Duck Outing. We will be heading to Seneca Lake in Ohio. We will meet at 11:00am at the Seneca Lake fish hatchery. Please pack a lunch with drinks. We will eat our lunches at the picnic area.

**April 12, 2020** – Warblers/Wildflowers/Herons. Meet at Middle Creek Elementary School Parking lot on Middle Creek Road at 9:00am.

**April 18, 2020** – Raccoon Creek Outing in Pennsylvania. This is a joint outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club.



Meet at Picnic Area West in Raccoon Creek State Park at 9:30am.

**April 21, 2020** – *Seeing without seeing, hearing without hearing* by Ryan Tomazin, covering more holistic and realization techniques for birding. Bring a covered dish, place settings and drink. 6 PM for mingling, dinner at 6:30.

## MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

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

**March 19, 2020** – Ohio River north. 8:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV, bring lunch.

**March 26, 2020** – Ohio River Islands NWR. 8:00am, ORINWR Parking lot.

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

**April 2, 2020** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

**April 9, 2020** – Washington Works trail. 8:00am, Washington Works trail parking lot.

**April 16, 2020** – Elberfeld's Farm. 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**April 23, 2020** – Birds & Flowers, Newell's Run. 8:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

**April 30, 2020** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

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

**May 7, 2020** – Ohio Birding Route Trail. 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch

**May 9, 2020** – Kroger Wetlands. 8:00am, Kroger wetlands parking lot, Broughton Nature Trail.

**May 14, 2020** – McDonough Wildlife Refuge. 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

**May 21, 2020** – Waterloo/Lake Hope/Zaleski. 7:00am Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**May 28, 2020** – "The Wilds", Ohio. 7:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

**May 30, 2020** – McDonough. 8:00am, McDonough parking lot, Wildlife Refuge.

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

**June 4, 2020** – Hocking Hills, Ohio. 7:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**June 11, 2020** – North Bend State Park. 8:00am, Kroger, 7th St. Parkersburg; bring lunch.

## NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

### POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

**'Third Wednesday' Bird Walk at Cool Spring Preserve** – Wednesdays, March 18, April 15 and May 20 @ 7:00 am - 10:00 am. This event is free and open to the public; however, registration is strongly encouraged. Please register below.

Join Beth Poole on her regularly scheduled 'Third Wednesday' bird walk at Cool Spring Preserve. The trails at Cool Spring Preserve have a lot to offer! From well maintained foot paths to gorgeous views, the preserve's 12 acres is home to much wildlife.

Please meet by 7:00 a.m. in the front parking lot of Cool Spring Preserve. The walk will last a couple of hours. Anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills.

If you have questions or would like more information, contact Krista Hawley at [adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org](mailto:adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org) or 681-252-1387.

**Apr.-May 2020** – Birding 101. Classroom Sessions: Thursday evenings on April 9, 16, 23 & 30. Field trips on Saturday mornings on April 11, 18, 25 & May 2.

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 Hospice of the Panhandle's Education Center on four consecutive Thurs-

day evenings (April 9, 16, 23 & 30). The field trips will be held at various locations around the Panhandle from roughly 7 a.m.–12 noon on the corresponding Saturdays (April 11, 18, 25 & May 2).

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 681-252-1387.

**Apr, 11, 2020** – Spring Bird Walk at USGS Fish Health Lab, 10:30 AM. USGS Fish Health Lab, 407 Reservoir Road. Free to the public. Registration info above with Krista Hawley.

**More PVAS outings at [www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/category/bird-events/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/category/bird-events/).**

### 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.

**April 18, 2020** – Prickett's Fort Annual Bird Walks. Celebrate the joys of spring with a Saturday morning bird walk beginning at 8:00 a.m. The staff of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will lead the public on this annual rite of passage. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring binoculars if you have them. Free to the public.

Learn more at [www.prickettsfort.org](http://www.prickettsfort.org) or by calling 304-363-3030.

**April 18, 2020** – Osbra Eye Memorial Wildflower Walks. One of WV's premiere spring wildflower walks! Multiple hikes and leaders. Register at 8:30 a.m. at the nature center (swimming pool location). Minimal fee. Door prizes. Walks begin at 9:00 a.m. Event includes a variety of guided hikes and walks.

Walks assisted by Division of Natural Resources, Handlan Chapter Brooks Bird Club, Mary Ingles Trail Blazers, and the West Virginia Native Plant Society. Call 304-558-3500 for information.



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### **Our Fearless Leader**

*– Much of this issue is dedicated to the memories of Carl Slater, who passed away in December. It is a sad time for the BBC, but many people have contributed wonderful stories.*

*(Photo by Mike Breiding)*

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## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

Editor's Message .....	1
Message From Our President.....	1
Carl Slater & Carolyn Ruddle Pass.....	2
Tales of Old Fearless - Tributes to Carl Slater .....	3-11
2019-20 Christmas Bird Count Results .....	12-13
WV First Birds of 2019 .....	13, 15
Lee Miller's 2019 Eastern Shore Report .....	14-15
Correspondence .....	15
Interesting Sightings Around The State.....	16-17
15th Winter Eagle Survey .....	17
Changes In Contact Information.....	18
Chapter Happenings/Nature Happenings.....	18-19