



# THE MAIL BAG

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

VOL. 78, ISSUE 1

JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH 2021

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

## Editor's Note

2021 will continue to see a modified schedule and makeup of the Brooks Bird Club events, as have other aspects of our lives. Hopefully, everyone has gotten through winter (and 2020 overall), and spring is on the way. Unfortunately, but necessarily, the 2021 Foray has been cancelled for the safety and security of all, and most other club and chapter outings and meetings are still suspended.

While the Early Spring Meeting also fell under the ax, the Board of Directors held our first-ever Zoom meeting and accomplished a lot (see Page 4 for details). We hope to hit the ground running next year with many things to keep members in touch and in nature together. Stay safe, stay smart, and get to 2022 healthy!



The fall and winter had plenty to keep people on their toes worldwide, but so many people had great birds in their local patches to help take the stress off day-to-day life. Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were found in many locations across the state. I'm sure that a number of birders got them as lifers, and there were a lot of good photos out there from feeders and fields. The further north you went, the more of each. Here in the Pittsburgh region, we got to enjoy a very reliable flock of grosbeaks in North Park, and for a few days, a flock of twelve redpoll were fifteen minutes away!

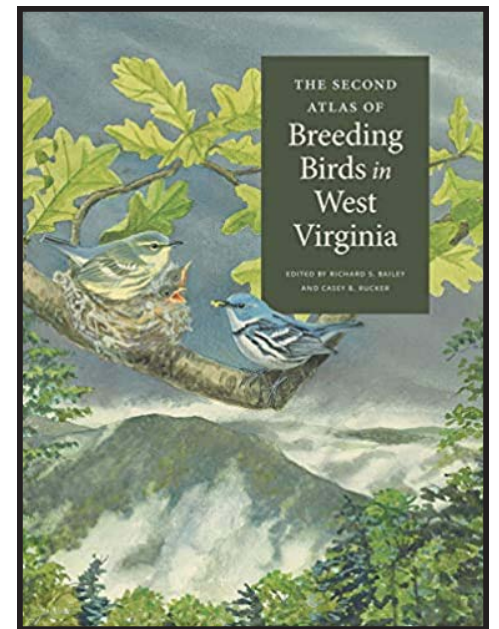
## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, CINDY SLATER

"An interest in nature leads you into a kind of enchanted labyrinth. You wonder from corridor to corridor; one interest leads to another interest; one discovery to another discovery. It matters little where you begin." – Edwin Way Teale, *Circle of the Seasons*

If you love reading and love nature, you may enjoy the travels and adventures of Edwin Way Teale. His perspective and observations of nature are quite interesting. He may even inspire you in some way. Reflecting back through 2020, I got to see some pretty neat nature things up close and personal. From the family of woodcocks that shared my campsite; observing the most beautiful song of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet for the first time and trying to commit it to memory; to watching a pair of Bald Eagles raise a family. All things considered, 2020 went bye in the blink of an eye. 2021 begins with the promise of a fresh start, as does waking up in the morning to a fresh new blanket of snow. To keep you in practice until we can all be together safely, maybe you would want to sign up to do a feeder watch project or just start keeping a list of birds around where you live. Don't just list them, observe them. What makes them unique? What do you notice that you didn't before? The birds definitely seem more vibrant already this year to me for some reason. Maybe that is just the contrast against the typical gray days we have here in Pennsylvania. I am very optimistic and hopeful for a better calendar of events that we can all enjoy this year. So put on your masks, bring your binoculars, bird book, hand sanitizer, and let's go do some birding together. Social distance style of course.

– *Your BBC President, Cindy Slater*

## NEW WV BREEDING BIRD ATLAS TO BE AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER



The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia is due to be published on June 8, 2021. At 568 pages, it features up-to-date information for 170 bird species and hundreds of beautiful color photographs—nearly all of which are identified by county locations—and almost 700 maps. This book is considered the most comprehensive description of bird life ever written for West Virginia.

At this point, the BBC is considering purchasing a number of books for sale to club members. There is discussion of a couple of means of selling them, and there should be more information in the April Redstart. For now, we hope you are considering buying this wonderful work, which is the pinnacle of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and editors Richard Bailey and Casey Rucker.

## MARTHA SHEARER PASSES AWAY



Martha Frances Shearer, age 91, passed away on January 6, 2021.

Born on October 28, 1929 in Charleston, WV to the late Harry and Christine (Cooper) Moore, she was a resident of Annapolis, MD since 2015 and was previously of St. Albans, West Virginia. Retiring from C&P Telephone Co. after 21 years of service, she was an active member of the St. Albans Church of the Nazarene where she played piano.

In 1951, she married Donald Shearer. They had one daughter, Donna Rae. Martha enjoyed traveling. She visited all fifty states and six continents. An accomplished birder, Martha was a member of Brooks Bird Club for over 50 years, contributing to annual bird counts and attending many summer Forays. One of her warmest memories was her 2007 trip to Greece and Turkey with her husband, daughter and the BBC.

Preceded in death by her husband Donald of 67 years; sisters, Maxine Hendershot, Elizabeth Stanley and brother Bill Moore; Martha is survived by her daughter, Donna Rae and son-in-law, Ed Johnson of Harwood, MD; grandson, Nick and granddaughter-in-law, McKenna Johnson; sister, Carolyn and brother-in-law, Morton Estep; as well as other family and many friends.

A private inurnment will take place at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Brooks Bird Club, P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

## OHIO BIRDING GREAT BILL WHAN PASSES

*A note from the Ohio Ornithological Society. Bill and I had corresponded a few times over the years about his interest in past members of the BBC and its history.*

In January 14, 2021, Ohio saw the loss of a great member of the birding community, Bill Whan. As a founding member of the Ohio Ornithological Society, editor of *The Ohio Cardinal* from 1997-2008 and serving several terms on the Ohio Birds Records Committee, he was an integral part of Ohio birding for many decades.

For many years he was a passionate guardian of Ohio bird records. His passion for the historical records kept him combing through the archives in every nook and cranny in the state and beyond. The countless hours he put into museum and archive research piecing together Ohio birds and birding history may be unparalleled. And his contribution to the accuracy and preservation of bird records for our state should not be forgotten. You can find some of the results in *The Ohio Cardinal* archives on the OOS website. Also, for inspiring remembrances, go to Ohio Listserv.

His brother, Pete, summed it up: "Our world is going to be a poorer place without his wise counsel, advise and compassion."

Our deepest condolences to Bill's family and friends. Ohio's birding community has lost a true "legend".

•••

I lost my best friend last night. My brother Bill died after a tragic fall. His injuries cascaded into a series of medical tragedies killed him. I will miss every little oddity, foible and mostly his honor. Beyond my friend, he was a conscientious objector, a marcher in Selma and Montgomery, a mental health counselor, a wood worker, an expert birder, an expert editor, a scholar and a victim of nasty social media. He was a very honorable man. Our world is going to be a poorer place without his wise counsel, advise and compassion.

– Pete Whan, brother

## CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

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



## CORRESPONDENCE

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

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

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

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



## 2020-21 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Mountaineer Audubon had another successful Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 19. We had 31 observers in the field and 19 people watching their feeders. The weather was overcast with temperatures ranging from 26 F to 36 F. Highlights were 17 species of ducks including Ross's Goose, Cackling Goose, Tundra Swans and Common Goldeneye. 42 owls of six species were found. Northern finches of Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches and Common Redpolls were seen. A very cold Virginia Rail was found. Eleven species of sparrows were identified. We finished the COVID-safe count with a Zoom Tabulation Meeting.

Thanks to all who made the count successful! A special note of gratitude to Derek Courtney who was a great help this year and sector leaders who help assure coverage of our circle. Draft of the report follows with species and numbers recorded.

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

16 participants participated in the Ona Christmas count on 12/20 and we managed to see 72 species. We had record highs for Red-shouldered Hawk, Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The owl numbers were down due to the rainy weather in the early am. The highlight of the count was the observation of 24 Sandhill Cranes seen flying over the Ohio River by the Greenbottom boat ramp seen by Mike Forman, Janet Keating and Ted Boetner.

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

Two days after the storm dumped about 8" of snow on Pendleton Co we had a remarkable day counting birds. Because the snow covered the ground in the woods and fields, the road edges were literally covered with flocks of juncos and sparrows, far surpassing previous count records. Pipits, Horned Larks, Killdeer, snipe, and meadowlarks, all of which are scarce most years, were found in good numbers this year, probably for the same reason. Some of the pine woods were bursting with Red-breasted Nuthatches, again smashing the previous highs in this irruption year. One pine tree was observed with 10 Red-breasted Nuthatches in it. We also had our first Evening Grosbeaks since 1998. Waterfowl numbers were mostly a little below average, except for Hooded Mergansers which set a new high. Some of the ponds were frozen and others were open, as were the rivers. Fruit-eaters such as robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Yellow-rumped Warblers were relatively low in numbers this year. Despite the big numbers of siskins and Purple Finches noted in the fall, we had only average numbers of these species. We did not do any nocturnal birding this year, so only one owl was reported.

Many thanks to everyone involved for the amazing job they did in diligently counting every bird they could find. And many thanks to Mary Lee Ruddle for organizing 11 feeder watchers. This CBC was dedicated to her sister Carolyn who ran this count for many years and who passed away this year.

The numbers below are compared with highs of the previous 42 years of the count, and with the averages of only the previous 12 years. The number of years noted (out of 43), does not include count-week-only birds.

No new species were found this year but the 77 species we tallied was a new record for the count circle.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, WV

The 49th Pipestem Area Christmas Bird Count took place on December 19, 2020. We had 57 species, 2189 individuals, and 15 participants.

Highlights included Bufflehead (8), Hooded Merganser (14), Common Merganser (36), Bald Eagle (8 – 5 adults, 3 immatures), Red-shouldered Hawk (8), Eastern Screech-owl (2), Great Horned Owl (4), Barred Owl (4), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8), Winter Wren (6), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Eastern Bluebird (87), Hermit Thrush (2), American Tree Sparrow (1), Field Sparrow (8), Fox Sparrow (4), and Eastern Meadowlark (1).

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV

The Raleigh Co. CBC was held on Dec. 20, 2020. We had great birding help this year. Weather cooperated and we had a good day with several record numbers of birds. Our total

species was 57. Total number of birds was 21,185 with the crow roost that can stretch across the city of Beckley. Thanks to the people who helped make this a great count for 2020.

Highlights included Wood Duck (8), American Black Duck (2), Hooded Merganser (11), Ruddy Duck (1), Pied-billed Grebe (11), Red-shouldered Hawk (8), Barred Owl (5), Red-headed Woodpecker (1), American Crow (18,500), Winter Wren (13), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Hermit Thrush (5), Field Sparrow (1), Fox Sparrow (1), Swamp Sparrow (11).

– Allen Waldron, compiler, &

Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV

The 2020 Charleston Christmas Bird Count took place on Saturday, December 19th. With 22 observers in the field and four people submitting feeder reports, we tallied a total of 65 species, which is a typical number for our annual counts. It was mostly cloudy all day and it began very chilly, but we had teams in the field almost continuously from 7:30 AM to 9:00 PM.

This was our first count in several years with a successful owling venture.

This year we did not have any particularly remarkable species seen or record numbers, but we did have above average numbers of bluebirds (73) and Hermit Thrushes (5). There were many species that were notable in their absence from the count: no gulls, no Red-headed Woodpeckers, phoebes, or Red-breasted Nuthatches.

We also had sightings of a Peregrine Falcon and a raven as count week birds.

My thanks to all who participated!

– Doren Burrell, Mink Shoals, WV

16 people participated in the Huntington Christmas Count on January 3, 2021, with persistent rain and temp's 39-43. We tallied 70 species. We had tied for the highest numbers for Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon.

We had record firsts for Palm Warbler, Gray Catbird and Red Crossbill. We also had a Brown Thrasher.

The Red Crossbills were the highlight of the day as we found 7 of them at the

**(continued on Page 4)**

*(continued from Page 3)*

Cemetery in Beech Fork State Park. There is only about 7 records of them in Cabell County and this was the first for Wayne County. The last sighting in Cabell County was in 1986.

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

The Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count was held on January 2, 2021. It was very interesting birding. A little different because of COVID-19 but we had a great turnout – 32 participants. We had 77 species, which is a near record high for the past ten years, in spite of the scarcity of ducks. The weather was a little chilly and cloudy with showers in some spots.

The highlight for the day had to be the Sandhill Crane found by Dawn Hewitt and Kyle Carlsen at Civitan Park in Belpre, Ohio. Other high lights were a Short-eared Owl and Mute Swan on the Butcher Bend route, 41 Black Vultures in Vienna and lots of Brown Creepers. Although overall ducks were scarce, we did have record high Green-winged Teal and Common Mergansers. Also a good count for owls, Red-shouldered Hawks, White-crowned Sparrows, Rusty Blackbirds, Purple Finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches.

– Dick & Jeanette Esker,  
Washington, WV

The 28th Canaan Christmas Bird Count was held on December 20, 2020. It was a success, with two species new to the count, Common Merganser and Lincoln's Sparrow. Other good birds included Northern Goshawk, Short-eared Owl, 163 Evening Grosbeaks, and Common Redpoll. Many thanks to the surveyors who contributed to this effort.

There were a number of species with record totals, including Mourning Dove 220, Red-shouldered Hawk 6, Downy Woodpecker 35, Hairy Woodpecker 17, Blue Jay 121, Winter Wren 3, Carolina Wren 57, Hermit Thrush 3, Field Sparrow 14, White-throated Sparrow 40, Song Sparrow 72, Red-winged Blackbird 67, Northern Cardinal 106

Total species were 57 + 1 cw, total individuals were 2,986.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

## BBC Board meeting Highlights from Friday March 12, 2021 via Zoom.

**Administrator's report** – Foray will be scheduled for Camp Galilee in 2022. It was mentioned that the color BBC brochures have not been updated for the new membership rates. News from the Schrader Center is that the Director is seeing increased visitors. At the Stemple Ridge property, the Army will be doing maneuvers on March 8 and April 1.

**Redstart** – The Bartley Award goes to Jane Whitaker for her article on WV Bees. It is the first article that identifies WV native bees. Casey Rucker is always eager for articles. The 2<sup>nd</sup> breeding bird atlas of WV goes on sale to the public from Amazon June 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Website** – A motion passed to create a website editorial committee. Another motion was passed to secure the BBC website.

**Conservation and Sanctuary Signs** – The BBC is looking for one or two individuals to take on this role.

**Old Business** – For the Chimney Swift Tower projects, a motion made and passed to have signs printed so they can go out to towers and finish this project in memory of Stu Robbins. A new committee formed to give a BBC scholarship to someone in BBC to attend other Birding camps or events with the hopes to drive membership and promote the BBC.

**New Business** – Calendar of Events (There are some this year. Yea!). Wildflower Pilgrimage, Foray was voted to be cancelled this year, annual meeting, Eastern Shore Trip and Christmas Bird Counts will be events to add to your calendar.

**Mailbag** – A motion was passed to change printers for the Redstart and Mailbag to reduce cost for the BBC.

**Good of the Club** – William Hicks is requesting assistance with bird counts at Bethany. These are counts previously done by Jay Buckelew.

*If you have any questions or want to know more please do not hesitate to call or email.*

**Cindy Slater, your BBC President**

## BBC Calendar of Events 2021

**Wild Flower Pilgrimage** – May 6-9

**Fall Meeting North Bend State Park** – Oct. 22-24

**Eastern Shore Trip** – Nov. 17-21

**Christmas Bird Counts** – Dec. 14-Jan. 5

## Wanted:

The Brooks Bird Club is seeking a vital volunteer to handle the position of **Sanctuary Signs**.

**Requirements:** Storage space of 3-4 Feet. Activity level varies depending on requests. (The biggest year consisted of 33 sales.) It is not a difficult position but a very important one. **If interested please contact Cindy Slater for more details [mountaingirl127@gmail.com](mailto:mountaingirl127@gmail.com) or 724-570-8502.**

## CORRESPONDENCE

*I want to give you an update on my activities. My wife and I moved from our house of 32 years in Huntington to South Charleston. We made the move to a smaller house where we can live on one floor and be closer to our daughter and son. I also closed my office at Marshall University so I'm now in "full" retirement. Thanks to Cynthia Ellis, our new address (989 Harmony Lane, South Charleston 25303) has been added to the BBC records. Birding is a bit more interesting at our South Charleston location. For the first time ever, two Evening Grosbeaks (male and female) visited my feeders on November 18. I'm continuing to work on the state amphibian and reptile atlas and the second edition of the state amphibian and reptile book. I'm also finishing a monograph describing my 40 years with the Cheat Mountain Salamander. In addition, I look forward to attending meetings, etc. of the Handlan Chapter of the BBC after COVID.*

Thomas K. Pauley, PhD  
Professor Emeritus, Biology Department  
Marshall University  
Huntington, WV 25755

## CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

### NEW MEMBERS

Emilee Ellison  
2816 Jesterville Rd.  
Parkersburg, WV 26105  
Tel: 304-893-3849  
Email: emileevirginia@yahoo.com

EJ Regula  
476 Hopwood Fairchance Rd.  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
Tel: 724-322-1814  
Email: ejregula@mail.com

Daniel C. Olexia  
1159 Skyway Dr.  
Annapolis, MD 21409-4902  
Email: colexia@comcast.net

Michael Juratovac  
106 Jackson St.  
Belington, WV 26250  
Tel: 304-621-2026  
Email: basservw@yahoo.com

Roderick & Donna Marcinko  
8 Woodland Park Dr.  
Parkersburg, WV 26104-8047  
Tel: 304-893-2889  
Email: rod.marcinko52@gmail.com

Dan Walker, Jr.  
3850 Meredith Dr.  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Tel: 571-778-8187  
Email: LA7765@aol.com

Adam Webster & Family  
353 Sanford St.  
Morgantown, WV 26501  
Tel: 304-400-1266  
Email: webster.adam@gmail.com

### CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

Jay & Susan Buckelew  
135 Mayhurst Ave.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
Tel: 304-374-6229  
Email: jbuckelew@bethanywv.edu

Joann & Bill Chambers  
807 Maplewood Ln.  
Springdale, OH 45246

Paulita Cousin  
2527 Mackeyville Rd.  
Hambleton, WV 26269  
Tel: 304-621-0072  
Email: rangertitmouse@gmail.com

Michael Jones  
1280 River Bend Dr. #104  
Kingsport, TN 37664

### TELEPHONE CHANGES

Aubrey Bartman  
614-813-3756

John M. Boback  
304-276-2365

Dana Buckelew & David Scruggs  
404-643-7738

Shannon Burner  
304-813-8638

Michael Corley  
304-667-8484

David & Mary Davenport  
919-215-2146

Mariah Fowler & Family  
304-694-2187

Michael & Carol Gillespie  
724-772-3853

Mary Grey & Larry Helgerman  
304-377-8026 (Cell)  
304-412-0321 (Cell)

Joey Herron  
304-203-5251 (Cell)

Jean & Dwight Masters  
304-481-2813

David & Joan Schroeder  
330-224-1917

### EMAIL CHANGES

Aubrey Bartman  
bartmana@gmail.com

John M. Boback  
j.boback@yahoo.com

Michael Corley  
mcorley@bccappas.com

Andrea Dalton & Family  
andreadalton64@gmail.com

David & Mary Davenport  
marydave@email.com

Chris Gatens  
decodon89@gmail.com

Sharon Hanse  
sharontoucancallegraphy.com

Wil Hershberger  
wil@natureimagesandsounds.com

Jerry & Marjorie Howard  
birdwatcher108@comcast.net

Kimberlee & Lee Miller  
kmiller1781@gmail.com

Thomas & Nancy Moeller  
thosj47@gmail.com

Lenny Muni  
lmuni@cox.net

Cindy Conrad Peters  
cindycpeters@gmail.com

Margaret Straley  
msstraley@suddenlink.com

James F. Triplett  
jtrippy@gmail.com

Joan Wildpret  
wildpretbj@gmail.com





## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Over the last month, I've been delighted to see returning winter birds, but also some late season summer/fall birds: "Best wet feet" goes to four Northern Pintails, although the four shovelers also get an award for being the most recognizable because I can id them even in bad lighting with their llllooonnnng bill. "Best song" goes to a White-crowned Sparrow (at Winfield L&D in Putnam Cty). Even though info on Cornell's "All About Birds" site says that their song is the most studied bird song, I've never heard it before now. Beautiful. "Getting Accustomed" award goes to Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers — I seem to be seeing (and hearing) them almost every time I get out. "Best costume change" goes to a young male Red-winged Blackbird — beautifully streaked like his mom, but a hint of his dad's orangish-red epaulets when he flew. "Most reliable" - the two proud adult Bald Eagles in the exact spot Mr Marmet (Rick Gregg) said they'd be. "Biggest surprise" goes to today's Common Yellowthroat working in the leaf litter with Song Sparrows, also at Marmet L&D, at least a month late. I can just hear its friends fussing when it finally catches up to them... "didn't you realize we had all left like WEEKS ago? You need to look around every once and awhile for your own species."



Juvie Red-shouldered Hawk on the deck  
— photo by BIRDMOM

Finally, I've been watching a roost of vultures growing near Memorial Hospital (CMAC) in the Kanawha City area of Charleston — first one huge sycamore tree, then two and now at least three, containing over 150 birds. I think most are Turkey Vultures, but I saw at least 15 Black Vultures flapping over the K. City bridge. Last week I noticed 30-ish birds actually roosting on the roof the hospital, a very grim sight indeed. So, tell your friends that don't believe the science or the health experts, believe the vultures! Wear a mask!

— Laura Ceperley, Kanawha County, WV, 12/6/20

Last night, we had a Short-eared Owl calling around our subdivision. It was mainly calling near a 3 acre lot and woods in the back of our neighborhood, moving from the wooded hillsides to woods adjacent to the lot.

This is the first time we have had a Short-eared Owl in our area that I know of. However, this is the sixth owl species to visit our subdivision since 1995, when we moved into Rolling Hills subdivision (E. Screech-owl, Great Horned, Barred, N. Saw-whet, Long-eared and now Short-eared Owl).

— Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 12/12/20

An odd day at the feeders.

1st. A remarkable, stunning even, number of chickadees. Yeah, yeah, sure. There are always chickadees here. But not like today. And not like yesterday. And not like any time before. Whole flocks. Growing up in Morgantown, they were always Black-capped until somebody got the idea they weren't anymore. I've had to take their word for it. I was never sure I could see the difference. Although, I had a friend who claimed she could. She described a difference in which the bib met the throat.

Here at the farm they sing Black-capped. Only once have I heard a Carolina song and I suspected that was a Black-capped getting it wrong. Today, looking carefully at the greater coverts because of the unusual numbers; I have both. And perhaps predominately Carolina.

2nd. There are no juncos. No Mourning Doves!

— John Jacobs, Independence, WV, 1/3/2021

I've had the good fortune of having a Brown Creeper here off and on all day long for about a month now. An adult and immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker often show up as well. They and the Brown Creeper have been more plentiful this late fall, early winter, both in my yard and in the neighborhood when I walk my dog.

Actually it turns out to be two creepers, something you have no way of knowing unless they are near each other on the same tree. They are early risers because I can spot them going up the walnut tree in semi darkness on a gray morning. Yesterday a male Pileated was on the suet and I was hoping I could get him and the creeper in the same frame. Not the greatest photo but a size comparison.

Of the two suet cakes that are side-by-side on the walnut tree, the Peanut Suet Dough is definitely the favorite. It costs about 30 cents more but so worth keeping the creeper happy, right? Reminded me of something an old neighbor would tell his wife to justify keeping a stray cat or dog that showed up: "A dog like that don't eat much."

The highlight of part two of our Christmas Bird Count was finding some male and female Evening Grosbeaks at someone's feeder. What a surprise that was! These folks had a number feeders and suet holders out but what I noticed was a group of spruce(?) trees coming from the house to the road, creating a windbreak for the yard. The trees lower branches reached the ground. In front of these trees were four ground platform feeders. Lots of activity



A lifer male kestrel in Frenchton, WV  
— photo by Judy (Knorr) Griffin

**INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)**

*A surprise Snow Goose in traffic*  
– photo by N. Wade Snyder

with a variety of birds going from the feeders into the trees and back again. Such a perfect arrangement.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 1/5/21

I continue to have Pine Siskins in my backyard feeding on shelled sunflower seeds. A flock of about 40 siskins were feeding on the porch and feeder tray, when a juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk arrived on scene. The siskins made a very fast exit as the hawk decided to land on the porch railing. I happened to be eating breakfast at the kitchen table that looks out to the porch, and was able to watch the spectacle play out. The juvenile hawk has been around a number of times to check out the feeders this winter. It was interesting that it faced the house, rather than the feeder stand, when it landed. It may have been hoping it would be camouflaged if its back faced the feeders. That didn't go over well, as all quickly birds escaped unharmed. The hawk stayed long enough for me to snap a few photos at ground zero. I added 2 photos to my checklist below.

“Screechie” the Eastern Screech-owl, is still here nightly, but his visitor hasn't been seen in a while. Never a dull moment here.  
– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 1/9/21

I will never fuss about sitting at a red light again! This evening as I waited at the intersection of Country Club Road and Rt. 340, a distinctive white looking bird caught my attention. It was flying in a westward direction towards Charles Town from that point. Fortunately, I had my camera riding shotgun and was able to quickly snap

photos before the light turned green. A blue morph Snow Goose!

– N. Wade Snyder, Shenandoah Junction, WV, 2/5/21

There were large numbers (for in the mountains) of water birds this morning at the Mill Creek ponds (only one not frozen). Most birds flew off when work crews began plowing lanes by the ponds but some were returning when I left. Over 200 Canada Geese, 5 Tundra Swans, 3 Mallards, a male Northern Pintail, 2 male Green-winged Teal, 74 Canvasbacks, 11 Red-heads, 15 Greater Scaup, 14 Lesser Scaup, 8 Long-tailed Ducks, 9 Buffleheads, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 13 Ruddy Ducks, 1 Horned Grebe, 1 Bonaparte's Gull, and 68 Ring-billed Gulls, and more geese blocked from view by topography.

We continue to have Evening Grosbeaks. They've been at our house almost everyday since November 1st (high count 75).  
– Rodney Bartgis, Valley Bend, WV, 2/11/21

I've gotten used to seeing one or the pair of Brown Creepers on the suet all day long. They are early risers, often being the first bird I see at dawn. Today before 8:00 I noticed a third one at the base of the walnut tree. Next thing you know another one shows up. Never in my life have I seen FOUR of them within feet of each other on the tree trunk. Took my breath away.

The immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker also made his appearance late afternoon. He really blends in with the tree bark, especially since he moves less than the creepers.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 2/17/21

– **Sightings taken from  
WVBird ListServ**

**CHAPTER HAPPENINGS**

**All upcoming meetings and events throughout the fall for the Headquarters, Handlan, Mountwood and Bibbee chapters/affiliates are cancelled due to COVID-19 safety measures.**

## BETHANY COLLEGE HONORS PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF BIOLOGY

BETHANY, W.Va. – Bethany College recognized the contributions of a professor emeritus of biology with a digital ceremony on Dec. 8, 2020. Dr. Albert “Jay” Buckelew taught biology at Bethany for 42 years before retiring in June 2011. During his career, he served as department chair and faculty adviser for Phi Kappa Tau.

He co-directed the first West Virginia breeding bird atlas project and often guided aviary walks for Bethany students. He also served until 2020 as the secretary of the Bethany Sanitation. He was a past president of the Brooks Bird Club and served as the editor for the club's journal, The Redstart.

A new path in the Bethany College Trail System is named in his honor, and the Buckelew Trail was dedicated during a private ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday. Kenn Morgan, the Jennie Steindorf Renner Chair of Fine Arts and professor of fine arts at Bethany, presented Buckelew with a painting of the trail.

Buckelew and his wife are moving from Bethany to Colorado.

“It's wonderful that not only will students of the future know Dr. Buckelew's name and lasting influence on the College, but with this painting, Dr. Buckelew can bring a bit of Bethany with him to Colorado, as well,” said Dr. Anna Edlund, current Chair of Biology.

Upon his retirement from Bethany, the college set up the Buckelew Fund to pay for technology upgrades in the Biology Department.

The Bethany College Trail System covers two miles through the Old Growth Forest. Most of the interconnecting paths are named after renowned Bethany faculty or alumni.

*Article excerpted. For photos and videos of the ceremony, including the full article, go to <https://www.bethanywv.edu/about-bethany/bethany-college-to-honor-professor-emeritus-of-biology/>*



...

**Much deserved!**

*– 2020 ended on a great note up at Bethany College as Dr. Jay Buckelew received deserved recognition for all of his efforts with the college. Read more on page 7.*

---

## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

Editor's Message .....	1
Message From Our President.....	1
New WV Breeding Bird Atlas Available This Summer.....	1
Martha Shearer & Bill Wahn Pass.....	2
2020-21 Christmas Bird Count Results .....	3-4
BBC Board Meeting Highlights .....	4
BBC 2021 Calendar of Events .....	4
Wanted: Sanctuary Sign Volunteer .....	4
Correspondence .....	4
Changes In Contact Information.....	5
Interesting Sightings Around The State.....	6-7
Bethany College Honors Dr. Jay Buckelew .....	7