



THE MAIL BAG

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

Editor's Note

Another successful Foray is in the books. We had so many new participants, as well as many returning members, and that made everything run smoothly. Everyone had the chance to learn throughout the week, and the weather didn't keep us down much, other than one rainy morning. Birds were plentiful, mammals and herps were found in good variety, and we covered the botanical aspects as best as could be expected. Much thanks also goes to my codirector partner in all of this, Janice Emrick, for many years of smooth Forays. I am stepping down as a codirector for now, and look to be very ably replaced for next year's Tucker County Foray. Hope to see everyone there (and bring new friends)!



As the seasons and years continue to spin away from us, we give up more members and memories to the great bird walk in the sky. As mentioned in this issue, we found out that Karl "Mike" Haller, an original BBC member, passed away recently, as did Shirley Radcliffe. Shirley, I'd met before, but I only knew Mike by telephone and letters. He did a lot for the BBC and for ornithology in general over his lifetime. Most people only know him as the guy who sent, literally, many cases of stuff to Foray every year for the silent auction. I also learned at press time that one of my oldest birding teachers, Don Altemus, had passed away. He taught me most of my warblers at Terra Alta Mountain Camp, and was known by many in the BBC and at Oglebay.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, CINDY SLATER

You know, time really does fly. I used to love lazy summer days. The kind where you can get caught up on your thoughts, play a lot, and spend time doing the things you love to do. Those things still happen but they seem to pass by quicker. Just like hummingbirds.. How fast does a hummingbird really fly? I know that it varies between species. Take the Ruby Throated Hummingbird for example one of the smallest of hummingbird species; I know they can flap their wings roughly 50 times per minute. They can fly up to 25 mph, and during a dive or courtship they can fly as fast as 40 mph or more. That is pretty incredible for something that is only about 3 to 3.5 inches long.

Why my sudden interest in hummingbirds you ask? Well I think they are going to be the death of me or send me into financial ruin one or the other. I have gone through 10 pounds of sugar already since mother's day. I only have three feeders and have watched nine hummingbirds belly up together many times during the day. I walk out my front door and get dive bombed from a chase going on at a feeder. It is pretty interesting to watch them and take notes of their social behaviors. Until today when I realized I could be seriously injured or maimed by one of these tiny little squirts.

I have a cute story. I was putting my feeders up for the first time this year before the Wild Flower Pilgrimage. When I took all three out to hang on their perspective hooks the first one I reached up and hung no problem. The second and third feeders were sharing one of my hands and as I went to take from the left to the right and hang on its hook, a humming bird darted over, looked me square in the eye, as if to say thank you, and then bolted to the feeder I had already hung in its place. There were three hummers sipping as I hung the remaining feeder and I had to pause not to scare them from their perch. I go off to work and think, Good! That project is done for a few days. I could not have been more wrong. I got home and all three feeders were dry as a bone. So, I make another batch of syrup, I use a ratio of 4 to 1 water to sugar. I have a pink ball cap on this time when I go to hang the feeders and this time

a hummingbird ducks under the brim of my hat and looks me in the eye and then flies off to another full feeder. A few days later I was doing a dry run of one of my tours for the WFP and I was wearing the same pink ball cap. I got out of the car to listen to a great crested flycatcher and low and behold a hummingbird came to my hat and tried to get syrup from a hole in the top! Can you believe that? What fun!

Speaking of fun! Foray came and was a blast this year. It is always great to get out in nature with the advantage of seeing good friends. Then we did a Foray inspection for next years location Camp Horse Shoe in Tucker County. That was absolutely BEAUTIFUL! So make sure you put that on your 2023 calendar. We are planning the 90th Anniversary for the bird club at Hawks Nest State Park. The reservation form for the 90th is in this edition of the Mail Bag, so you'll want to make sure you sign up for that. I hope you all are having a wonderful year so far and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

– *Your BBC President,
Cindy Slater*

FLORIDA BIRDING *Contributed by BBCer Wayne Carey*

These are pictures of the new birds I saw on a trip to Florida in March. The crow and the kites were at Ochlockonee River State Park. The skimmers were at the east end of St. George Island. The parula was at Otter Lake in St. Marks NWR. The rest were at Bald Point State Park. There were five kites preening in a tree. It was a foggy morning. I didn't know what they were at first. The fog lifted; I got a few photos; and they took off. I felt very lucky to see them. There are still Red-cockaded woodpeckers at Ochlockonee and white squirrels. Crossley in his book says skimmers "often in tight flocks that make sharp turns in unison with dramatic effect." They were and it was dramatic. Otter Lake has a large picnic area with lots of old live oaks, Spanish moss, and resurrection ferns. Only a few people were there midweek. For a brown and white bird, the Marbled Godwits were especially striking.



CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

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CANAAN VALLEY, WV, PLUMMETS TO 24.6° F ONLY TWO DAYS FROM THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

Come to Canaan Valley if you want to cool off. Just a couple of days ago we were wearing short sleeve shirts and burning hot. Now, down jackets. Go figure.

- Jim Triplett

(Edited from the official press release) A VA Tech University research weather station in Canaan Valley, WV, National Wildlife Refuge recorded 24.6° F on June 19, 2022. This was the coldest National Weather Service recognized low reading recorded east of Rocky Mountains this morning as verified by the NWS Weather Prediction Center.

This morning's minimum smashed the previous NWS set Canaan Valley record of 31° F for any June 19 by a whopping 7 F! The published NWS stations are located in the higher, more developed southern end of the Valley. The previous all-time June monthly record low

temperature in Canaan Valley's 77-year NWS official published temperature record (starting 1944) was 24° F set on June 4, 1977.

This morning's sub-freezing temperature is especially noteworthy in that it occurred three days after temperatures reached a June 16 record daily high of 86° F.

The low temperatures that Canaan Valley is reporting from the VA Tech station does not suggest it is getting colder. Overall, Canaan Valley is warming at a similar rate to surrounding locations throughout the region. The new VA Tech research station recording these impressive low temperatures is simply in a lower, colder, more remote and undisturbed part of Canaan Valley's northern end that collects cold air drainage exceptionally well on clear, calm, dry nights.

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

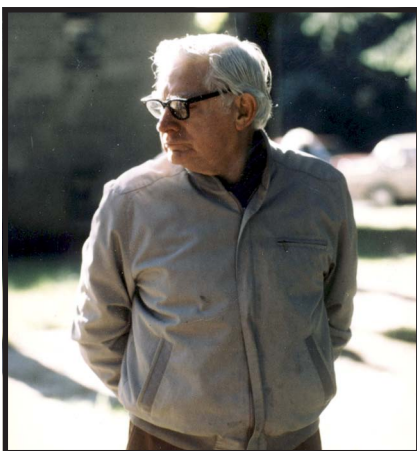
KARL “MIKE” HALLER, LAST REMAINING BBC CHARTER MEMBER, PASSES AWAY

Karl W. Haller, age 105, of Sherman, TX, passed away peacefully at Texoma Health Care, Sherman, TX, on Friday, April 15, 2022. Karl was born on October 12, 1916 in Wheeling, WV to Louis Haller & Eda Conrad Haller. He was a graduate of High School and also had a Master Degree. He loved his country and served his country in the United States Air Force. He retired from the Air Force, then stated his teaching career. He was a very talented, educated man and taught Taxidermy & Biology at Austin College. He will be greatly missed by his son and friends.

Left to cherish his memory is his son; Karl Haller II of Sherman, TX. He was preceded in death by his parents; Louis & Eda (Conrad) Haller, his loving wife; Maria Haller in 2016, one brother and three sisters.



The Great Birdman of Hagerman (NWR)



IN MEMORIAM, KARL HALLER

Contributed by Jack Chiles

Karl was the longest living member of the Brook's Bird Club. He was a member for an incredible 90 years. He was one of the original charter members of the organization started in 1932. He was raised in Wheeling, West Virginia and attended Bethany College. He was a life member and over the years contributed greatly to the organization. He took great pleasure in donating items to the club's silent auction. Among his mentors were George Sutton and Clyde Todd. Karl was an exceptional naturalist and had a vast knowledge of anything related to nature. Karl was my close friend and birding companion for 33 years. He would often fondly recall those bird walks in Oglebay Park with A.B. Brooks, John Handlan and others. Upon retiring from the military he made his home in Sherman, TX, and often frequented nearby Hagerman NWR, where he touched many lives in a positive way.

Following is a post that I made to the Friends of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Facebook page and to my personal, Facebook page:

On Good Friday, April 15, 2022, Karl Haller peacefully departed this life at the age of 105 1/2 years. He was a weekly volunteer at Hagerman NWR for more than 50 years leading a weekly bird census group at the refuge, documenting and counting all of the birds seen and entering those figures into a database kept by him in the form of notebooks that were later entered into the eBird database at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Karl was a valuable asset to the refuge and to the National Wildlife Service and for that he was recognized as national volunteer of the year in 1995. There was a celebration for him at the refuge in March of 2013 where he was presented a beautiful plaque for his 50 years of bird surveys. He drove the van and conducted the surveys into his late nineties.

Karl retired as a major from the United States Air Force in 1965 mak-

ing Sherman his and his wife and son's home. He was employed in September of 1965 as a member of the adjunct faculty and staff at Austin College for 33 years until his retirement in 1998. He served as an instructor in biology and taxidermy, a biology preparator and curator, and a stockroom/laboratory coordinator. During his life he prepared thousands of bird study skins many of which are now at several major universities.

Karl's life was full of accomplishments, including discovering new species of spiders, and a new species of warbler, Sutton's Warbler, a hybrid. But to me his greatest accomplishment was to Texas birding. He was a mentor to many a birder. He paid special attention to young birders and took much pleasure in watching them progress in their knowledge of birds. Many of those young people have gone on to be lifelong birders.

I can speak personally to the enrichment of my life, having had him as a personal friend and mentor for more than thirty years. I was always amazed at his vast knowledge of nature, especially of birds and his cheerful willingness to impart that knowledge to those around him. So when you walk Haller's Haven Trail, named for him, give thought to the "Birdman of Hagerman". He will be missed and fondly remembered by many.

In conclusion, quite a few years ago, upon the heeding of Karl, my wife, now deceased, and I attended one of your forays. It was a most memorable time. Juanita and Carl Slater, along with Carol and Fred McCullough, took us under their wings, so to speak, and made us Texans feel very welcome. We often reflected back to that time at Camp Pocahontas with fond memories. You have an awesome organization.



"Karl's Covey" at Thornwood Foray

2022 MORGANTOWN BIRDING CUP RESULTS

On May 20-21, Mountaineer Audubon and the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia sponsored the third annual Morgantown Birding Cup. Teams were invited to count as many bird species as they could find in a 24-hour period. There were two categories: at-large, in which teams could travel and count birds in any of Mountaineer Audubon's five West Virginia counties (Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor), and at-home, in which teams counted birds within walking, biking, or kayaking distance from where they live. This is a friendly competition to raise awareness about and interest in the West Virginia Young Birders Club, which is operated as an outreach project of the ACCA.

Without further ado: the winners of the 2022 Morgantown Birding Cup in the at-large category were Kyle Klotz and Mike Mosser! Kyle and Mike tallied an impressive 116 bird species between 6pm on Friday, May 20, and 6pm on Saturday, May 21. *Congratulations*, Kyle and Mike. Highlights included Virginia Rail, Horned Lark, and Henslow's Sparrow.

The second place at-large team was the Preston County Migrants (Cheyenne Carter, LeJay Graffious, Amy Hill, and Orion Metheny) with 109 species, all tallied in Preston County. Highlights included a Northern Harrier, Common Loon, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. (Also, the first and second place teams crossed paths while out birding, which proved to be motivating for both teams!)

Third place in the at-large category was the Tolka Family with 74 species. This team was led by young birder Shepard, who got the rest of his family involved in birding. Highlights included American Kestrel and Eastern Meadowlarks.

In the at-home category, first place was HD Birding — Hannah Clipp and Derek Courtney — with 82 species. Their count included three owl species.

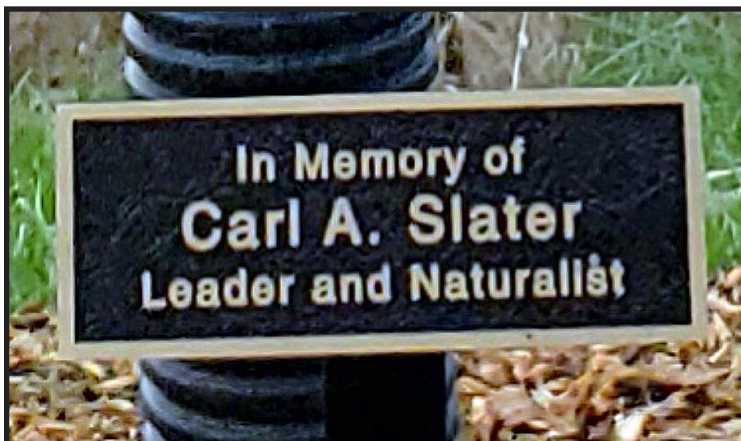
Second place in the at-home category was young birder Zealon Wight-Maier with 72 species, including the first Yellow-billed Cuckoo that he was able to photograph.

Third place in the at-home category was The Downsy Woodpeckers with 65 species. This team included several young birders, and their species lists included Eastern Whip-poor-will and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2022 Birding Cup! We hope you had fun — we certainly did. And congratulations again to the winners in both categories. Mark your calendar for next year's Morgantown Birding Cup - May 19-20, 2023. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Katie Fallon

Executive Director, *Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia*
286 Fairchance Road
Morgantown, WV 26508



15TH SPRING EAGLE SURVEY

The Eagle Brigade of Southern West Virginia conducted the 15th Spring Eagle Survey yesterday 3/12/2022 despite the weather forecast. It was cold, snowy and windy but the roads were mostly clear. We would end up with 20-25 Bald Eagles for the day (waiting for a couple of reports).

Just about as exciting as the eagles were all of the songbirds that concentrated on roads and roadsides that were free of snow. At least 1,000 American Robins were seen in the area, the first of the season Osprey was at the state line, and the folks at the mouth of the Bluestone River in Bluestone S.P. were entertained by a flock of American Pipits.

We traveled along New River on the River Scenic Road(5 miles) from near Glen Lyn, VA to Lover, WV. A conservative count included 20 Tree Swallows, 64 American Robins, 11 Hermit Thrushes, 7 Eastern Phoebes, 24 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 83 White-throated Sparrows, 10 Fox Sparrows, 2 Swamp Sparrows, and 45 Dark-eyed Juncos.

Spent Friday walking the golf course on Pipestem S.P. trying to get Judy a look at a Pine Warbler. Then, we came home yesterday and watched one on a suet feeder outside our kitchen window two feet from our faces.

- Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

NEW CARL SLATER MEMORIAL

The Friends of the Schrader Center gathered friends and family together on Saturday June 18, 2022 at 1:00 PM behind the Schrader Center in Oglebay Park for the dedication of a Black Gum Tree (*Nyssa Sylvatica*) in memory of Carl A. Slater "Leader & Naturalist". Visiting and reminiscing took place afterwards with light refreshments. It was a beautiful afternoon and the entire Slater Family expresses their sincere thanks to everyone involved, and those that participated making this special honor and dedication possible.

NEW ECO TOURS WITH FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER

Friends of Blackwater is happy to announce that we are now offering eco-tours of the Allegheny Highlands! The Allegheny Highlands of West Virginia are a biodiversity hotspot for the entire globe! There are southern species here that reach the northernmost point of their range here as well as northern species that reach the southernmost point of their range! We also have a few species that cannot be found anywhere else in the world like the Cheat Mountain Salamander. We will be leading hikes that will focus on different plants and animals of the region as well as more general ones that will teach you about the watershed and certain ecosystems within it as a whole.

We recently welcomed Aaron Graham to our team as a naturalist. He is a great resource to learn from and really knows his stuff!

Our first tour was a bird & butterfly hike with Aaron on April 22nd, 2022! Aaron's goal was to help the group locate the rare West Virginia white butterfly and he delivered, stating that it was the most common species seen that day.

July 29, 2022 Evening Birding on the Freeland Road Boardwalk - Leader: Aaron Graham. Meet at the Freeland Road Boardwalk parking lot at 6 pm.

Join Friends of Blackwater for what will be a laid back evening of birding along the Freeland Boardwalk which offers an up-close view of one of the numerous wetland ecosystems in Canaan Valley. The boardwalk enables us to view wetland species such as Green Heron, Alder Flycatcher, Yellow Warblers, and Swamp Sparrows that enable the wetland. By this date the snags of the wetland will likely be taken over by hoards of Cedar Waxwings actively hawking insects over the wetlands. The Canaan Fir plantation halfway around the boardwalk often holds interesting birds such as the frequent Purple Finch. The fields across the road from the boardwalk offers good birding as well as Eastern Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, and Savannah Sparrows. We

hope you will join us for what we hope to be a productive evening out!

July 29, 2022 National Moth Week Celebration at Blackwater Falls State Park - Leader: Aaron Graham and Paulita Cousin. Meet at the Blackwater Falls Nature Center at Pendleton Lake at 8:30 till 10.

Join Friends of Blackwater in association with Blackwater Falls State Park to Celebrate National Moth Week through an evening of observing hordes of moths. There will be multiple black light stations set up around the nature center that will draw in moths for us to observe, take pictures, and identify as they land on our backdrops. This is a good way to observe handfuls of moths at one location at once and give you a sense of how many moths can be right around your house!

WV LAND TRUST 2022 HIKING SERIES

WVLT has protected 20+ properties which are designated to be nature preserves and we are working hard to open them to the public. Access, parking, signage, and trail work are all underway.

We are inviting you to visit our properties to get a firsthand view of our important work and how you can help!

Mammoth Preserve (Kanawha County)
August 20, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

Join us for a *sneak peek hike* of this new preserve! At approximately 5,000 acres and located midway between Charleston and Beckley, the Mammoth property is the Land Trust's largest Preserve and offers outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism development in the Kanawha Valley. During our visit, we will hunt for pollinators in the recently restored meadows, explore the recent forest restoration, and look at an example of our non-motorized multiple-use trail system.

We'll go on several short hikes to see a variety of different habitats and scenic views. Participant level is 'beginner'.

Camp Bartow (Pocahontas County)
September 10, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

Join us for a historical hike through this preserve. Camp Bartow was the

scene of the Battle of Greenbrier River in October 1861. The 14-acre property lies in the heart of the battlefield and was a campground of the 31st Virginia Infantry. As part of the first campaign of the Civil War, the battle proved instrumental in the creation of West Virginia in 1863. We will explore the various military artifacts, including camp placements and trenches that characterize the property. Note: We must hike up a steep hill to reach the camp. Distance is 1 mile, Beginner/Intermediate level.

Potts Creek (Monroe County)

October 8, 2022, 11:00 A.M.

Join us for a short / rugged hike to the Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory followed by a *sneak peek tour* of our Potts Creek Preserve! Join the afterparty at Potts Creek and share your favorite birding stories while roasting a marshmallow by the bonfire. Distance is 2 miles, Beginner/Intermediate level.

Piney Creek Preserve (Raleigh County)

November 12, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

Join us for a *sneak peek hike* into the incredibly beautiful and historic Piney Creek Gorge adjacent to Beckley. At over 1,000 acres and containing an extensive system of old roads and trails, our Piney Creek property offers outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism. Distance is 5 miles, Beginner/Intermediate level.

****Sneak Peek Hike:** Property will be open the public once adequate parking and trails are developed. Until then, visits to these properties should be accompanied by WVLT staff.

Register Now! While there is no charge for participating, registration is strongly encouraged! Approximately one week prior to each activity, you will receive an email from with more details about the activity (meeting location, driving directions, packing list, etc.). If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to email Jessica Spatafore at jessica@wvlandtrust.org. We look forward to seeing you in the woods!

SPRING OBSERVATIONS FROM ROSIE CAMPBELL

Stories and photos contributed by Rosie Campbell

A Life Mammal for the Farm! – Several times during this winter, we noticed a disturbance at our pond, usually early in the morning on warmer days. At first, we thought beaver? Muskrat? But no, it was an otter! In my 79 years on the farm, I'd never seen one here, nor heard any of the old folks speak of one. I had heard some were released in Monroe Co. and at Captina Creek.

Watching the otter, I thought of a book I'd read as a child called "Ring of Bright Water," That's what you'd see. The otter would swim very rapidly, making a larger wake than you would expect. It would usually surface for only seconds before diving again, leaving a rippling ring where it had disappeared.

It would come and go through the culvert on the dam that drains the pond, so we couldn't see what direction it came from. It would usually stay about an hour and be gone by good daylight. One day, it stayed most of the morning and I got some photos of it in the water and among the reeds eating a fish and resting.

Bird Watching at the Feeders – For most of the winter, we had few regular song birds. There was so much wild food; bittersweet, wild grapes, nuts, acorns, persimmons, etc., they turned up their beaks at our offerings. We had woodpeckers at the suet and lots of Blue Jays and blackbirds, grackles and starlings; later, cowbirds, and Red-wings. One of the grackles was an exotic-looking leucistic one with a white tail and wing tips.

One of the Red-winged Blackbirds was so keen for the suet that it crawled into one of the little square wire suet feeders and was stuck. By the time I got my coat on to help it out, it freed itself.

In April, we had woodcocks back, a towhee, and a phoebe starting a nest on the front porch. Barn and Tree swallows were zipping over the meadows and pond. Our first hummingbird was on April 24.

During the first week of May, the buckeye trees bloomed and orioles were back. We always see them first when the buckeyes bloom. There were both Orchard and Baltimore orioles at the hummingbird feeders and the suet cakes. The Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came at the same time, and at present we have several coming and going at the feeders everyday. (Some nested here last year.)

A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers and sometimes a pileated joins the gang at the suet.

Our sad news was the bluebird boxes. We'd had trouble last year with House Sparrows and wrens taking over the boxes. This used to happen only if the boxes were too near a dwelling or barns, but now they've learned to use them, the sparrows take over the boxes where ever they are. One box placed far out in a hay field had a bluebird and a Tree Swallow killed in the box, with a messy house sparrow nest built over the dead birds.

Another interesting spring happening was watching for the spotted salamanders to breed. This spring, the wood frogs and spring peepers had egg masses ten days before I saw any salamander eggs. Later, while building fence, we found a large, (about seven inches) marbled salamander. I carefully carried it with some grass to a spot where I could photograph it. (If you pick a Marbled Salamander up, the protective mucus on its skin will stick to your hands, turn dark and be very hard to scrub off. You shouldn't pick up a salamander with bare hands anyway, as their skin is very sensitive.)

Captina Conservancy Wildflower Walk at Barkcamp State Park – On April 23 the Captina Conservancy hosted an all day flower walk at Barkcamp. It was not a led group hike. You could walk with friends, or alone if you liked. Those with binoculars did some birding too.

Many of the flowers were marked and identified with little flags. Most of the common spring wildflowers were seen; Spring Beauties, Trout Lilies, Wild Geranium, violets, (white, yellow and purple), Cut-leaved Ragwort, larkspur, Squirrel Corn, Sweet William, Bloodroot, Jacob's Ladder, Yellow Corydalis, Rue Anemone, and more.



I didn't see trilliums or bluebells there.

Along the Lake View trail, our small group of five saw a huge burl on a tree, the largest I've ever seen.



Flower and Bird Walk at Sunfish Creek – On April 26 a few avid outdoor folks met at Sunfish Creek. It was cool and rainy, but the flowers were splendid in the low light. Twinleaf had already bloomed and was setting seed, but most of the ephemerals were still nice, Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Bloodroot, and others.

There were quite a lot of the red sorts of trilliums; Toadshade, Wake Robin, Sessile, and some lovely White Trilliums in the mossy woods. Blue-eyed Marys, Bluebells, and larkspur were all along the roadside banks; the creek sides lined with big sycamores and red-bud trees in bloom.

Birding was good! We got our first-of-the-spring Baltimore Oriole here, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Warbling Vireos, eight warbler species, including Cerulean, a small Great Blue Heron rookery with birds on nests, and quite a lot of Turkey Vultures, and I thought I glimpsed an eagle.

The day got cooler as we went on and everyone was glad to gather round a nice bonfire at Sylvia Owen's place along the creek. It rained hard while we enjoyed our little lunch and good conversation in the shelter.

CORRESPONDENCE

We recently noticed that the devices added to the cell towers in Davis, WV, (to deter vultures, we think) have been removed and the vultures are returning.

On June 23, as we walked in our neighborhood, we saw a flash of wings and heard a noise near the window of a house we were approaching. A Cooper's Hawk was sitting on the deck railing and we thought it might have hit the window. It continued to sit and look from side to side and down for quite some time. Suddenly, a Mourning Dove zipped out of the shrubs, with the Cooper's in fast pursuit. That made us think that the dove might have hit the window and been sheltering in the shrubs. Both disappeared into the woods so we don't know the end of the story.

– Marjorie Keatley & John Northeimer

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To Ryan Tomazin and the Brooks Bird Club Board of Directors,

I just wanted to update you to let you know that the bird blind has been installed. It is beautiful and will hopefully inspire countless Garden visitors to discover the world of birding. It provides a cool sculptural art element and is situated such to generate intrigue from a distance, luring guests to discover and explore a new area of the basin.

The acknowledgment plaque and interpretive sign are also installed.

– Philip Smith, Executive Director
West Virginia Botanic Garden



SHIRLEY RADCLIFFE PASSES

Shirley R. Radcliffe, formerly of Parkersburg, died on Saturday, May 14, 2022, surrounded by loved ones. She was the wife of James Carl Radcliffe, to whom she was married for 64 years. Born at home in Cleona, PA on February 16, 1936, she was the daughter of the late Amos M and Mary Lineweaver Runkel.

Shirley was a 1954 graduate of Lebanon High School. She was a founding member of the Mountwood Bird Club. She and her husband loved to travel and took many birding trips, including to Trinidad, Tobago, Belize, and Costa Rica. She would spend long hours gardening and liked to build pathways and walls with large stones. For most of her life she belonged to a bowling league and had a lot of fun bowling with her friends. She also enjoyed sewing clothing, doll clothes, and curtains. Shirley always created a beautiful and comfortable home for her family.

Surviving, in addition to her husband, are two children: Richard Carl Radcliffe of Williamstown and Cathy Jo Radcliffe of Lansdale, PA. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews and birding and bowling friends.

She was preceded in death by three sisters: Alverta Granger, Marion Kreider and JoAnn Nelson.

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Many of you knew and birded with Shirley. For those who may not have known her as well, she was one of the founders of the Mountwood Bird Club, and a really super human being.

– Jon Benedetti

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Shenandoah mystery – Some Common Mergansers were floating on the Shenandoah. Saw one male with what looked like the body of a female. Had me worried. Turned out she just had her head underwater for the longest time. She did that a couple of times. Really looked strange.

Yesterday my dog found an empty, broken egg on the mulch around the sycamore tree. At first I thought it was peeled bark. From the looks of it I guessed it was probably a duck egg. Not big enough for a goose egg. Of course I brought it home but didn't think any more of it.

This afternoon while sitting on the edge of the neighbor's terrace a bird comes from behind me and lands in the water, maybe 30 ft or so. It was a Common Merganser female! She just stayed there, dipping her bill in the water and throwing her head back, scratching her ear, etc. I've never seen one that close up and didn't realize they had a white throat. She was close enough that I got to see the neat pattern of the feathers right above the water line. What a treat, thanks to my "non-yappy" dog.

The sycamore where the eggshell was found has two big nest holes in it that I assumed were probably used by pileated woodpeckers. Now I'm wondering if the merganser could be nesting there. Beyond the tree is an open meadow so she wouldn't have come from there. Her behavior was odd too...not in a hurry to go anywhere. Any thoughts?

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 3/2/22

We have been in Lost River State Park for the past three days. It is our closest West Virginia retreat since we moved to VA.

This morning on my walk before the rain, I heard my first 2022 Louisiana Waterthrush and Blue-headed Vireo. Both were singing along the small stream that runs between the cabins. There was also a Winter Wren singing there.

Yesterday I heard and saw a Pine Warbler singing and feeding in the pines up along Piney Ridge Road. It has been a consistent spot for them.

I have seen or heard all the woodpeckers that are possible within the park including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Northern Flicker. Also, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated woodpeckers were present. I assume that Red-headed Woodpeckers are not within the park.

It has been a fun three days here in Hardy County. I will count my species total when we get home. Let it rain.

– Herb Myers, 3/31/22

There is a raven nest above the boardwalk trail at Beartown State Park in Pocahontas County (near the Greenbrier Co. line). The nest is on a short spur that squeezes between rocks as you go down several stairs to a landing. It is just a few feet above your head when you go between the rocks. The ravens were very vocal, but not aggressive.

– Jack O'Connell, 4/1/22

Bird behavior of note – When I started birding here there was an Osprey on the electrical pylon about 20 feet from the nest. It took me about an hour going through various stops until I was just below the dam. There was a Bald Eagle on one of the short light poles located further downstream, (North). I looked up and saw a Osprey barreling past at an altitude of only a 100 feet or so. When it got near the eagle it dove down at it. The eagle "ducked" (?) and moved off. I immediately went to the area of the conflict but both the osprey and eagle were gone. I drove a little further and reacquired the eagle only one or two hundred yards away. It seemed calm, cool and collected after its close call but was now perched on a handrail—even though another light pole was close by.

Due to battles in the past, I assumed the demarcation line between osprey territory and eagle territory was the dam. One species crosses it to the other side at their peril. The actions today seem to invalidate my assumption. The eagle was clearly outside the line and below the dam. However, it only moved a couple of hundred yards and changed the height of its perch from the top of a light pole to the handrail. Would that little bit of distance or the height of the eagle's perch above the ground be important to the osprey? Or was the Osprey just having a bad day? Whatever was important, the osprey left it alone after it moved.

– Rick Gregg, Kanawha Co., WV, 4/10/22

David Patick, Janet Keating and I spent the morning birding along Rt. 2 in Cabell and Mason Counties and birded Chandler Ridge in Mason Co. It was nice to find a lot of new arrivals, including Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers on Chandler Ridge and Green Herons and Sora at Green Bottom.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 4/15/22

I seem to always be behind with these posts, but here goes anyway. . .around 9:15 PM on April 22, my husband heard 2 saw-whet owls "tooting" their sonar-like calls. First time ever here! Earlier that day we saw the FOY Barn Swallows arrive. Same day, a lovely Turkey Vulture was sunning itself on top of the (much hated by me) power pole at the edge of the front yard. It posed very nicely for my photos.

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, 4/22/22



Common Redpoll found in Preston County, March 6, 2022 – photo by David Daniels

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

While completing a marsh bird survey at Greenbottom this evening, Janet Keating, my son, Max, and I found a few notable birds including a (surprisingly) Cabell first Black-bellied Whistling Duck that flew overhead and landed near the observation deck at the boardwalk.

Shortly after the BBWD flew overhead, we flushed an American Bittern from near the gravel road leading to the boardwalk.

Janet and I then refound the BBWD and it was later seen just before dark by Bryan Smith.

Prior to all of this I found four Willet at the Greenbottom boat launch that were later seen by Janet, David Patick, and David Johnston.

– Josh Holland, Huntington, WV, 4/28/22

I watched a Carolina Chickadee pull fuzzy stuff off our summer kitchen and then freeze like a predator was around. Held the pose for about a minute and then flew away. As soon as it did it was attacked by a pair of chickadees and I followed their fight up into the woods. Were they trying to steal the fuzz?

Next, I hear my first singing House Wren in 4-5 years. It was checking out one of the bird houses and came back out of it and flew up and sang a bar of its song, and got brutally attacked by a Carolina Wren.

Can't we just get along?

Also, I think I figured out why my birds don't seem to sing like elsewhere and the Wood Thrushes have abandoned the yard. I believe I have a Cooper Hawk's nest just outside the fence. I haven't seen them but I have heard the "cak-cak-cak" when a



Pine Warbler - photo by Cindy Burkhardt



Prothonotary Warbler, Kanawha State Forest, April 22, 2022 – photo by Jim Triplett

gorging on black oil seeds. The rain was the perfect excuse to stay indoors and watch birds!

– Shannon Burner, New Creek, WV, 5/7/22

On Saturday, May 14, 2022, six members of the Bibbee Nature Club participated in the 51st Century Day Bird Count. The count was conducted in the Pipestem Area Christmas Bird Count Circle which includes sections of the New, Greenbrier and Bluestone Rivers, Bluestone & Pipestem State Parks, Bluestone Wildlife Management Area and the town of Hinton in southern West Virginia.

Despite the scattered showers, the group was able to locate 105 species of birds including 16 species of warbler. In the last 10 years the count has averaged 100 species of birds and 19 species of warbler. Birds of note included Bald Eagle, Barred & Great Horned owls, whip-poor-will, Swainson's Thrush and Vesper Sparrow.

– Jim Phillips (compiler), Pipestem, WV

This morning I went through Mathias, Hardy County. Three Common Mergansers flew to the top of the roof of a house near the road in Mathias. They then flew to the chimney landed briefly & then flew back to the stream, where I stopped & watched them. NEVER seen this type of behavior before. Has anyone?

At Baker, I saw Common Merganser in the water with 14 young; 5 or 6 were on her back.

– Diane Holsinger, 5/15/22

Was woke up last night and thought about the eclipse. Opened my window up to see the eclipse starting. Watched for a few minutes and went back to bed. Woke up again and couldn't see moon. As the moon started peeking through again thought I heard a whip-poor-will call. Leaned closer to window and heard the whip-poor-will clearly.

Heard a Swainson's Thrush singing near feeders this evening and watched another in tree.

– Wilma Jarrell, Wileyville, WV, 5/16/22

Yesterday we had a lot of fun at the young birders' walk at the West Virginia Botanic Garden. We had great looks at male and female Scarlet Tanagers, and we had a lot of practice listening to Blue-headed and Red-eyed vireos.

Follow the WV Young Birders' Club on Facebook (facebook.com/WVYBC) and Instagram (@wvybc). Thanks again to all who participated in the walk, and to our volunteer walk leaders -- Mike and Ruth Bergen, Madelyne Ray, and myself.

– Katie Fallon, Morgantown, WV, 5/31/22

– Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ



CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Dylan Fowler
257 E Rd. #415
Arthurdale, WV 26520
Email: dkfowler7@gmail.com

Elisabeth McElwee
1528 Bedford Rd.
Charleston, WV 25314
Email: emcelwee@uvm.edu

Keith Schilstra
334 Eastbury NE
North Canton, OH 44720

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

BIBBEE CHAPTER

Nothing planned for July & August.

HANDLAN CHAPTER

Nothing planned for July & August.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

Nothing planned for July & August.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

*Aug. Coordinator – Dick Esker
304-863-8765*

Aug. 4, 2022 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am, boat ramp, Northwest Drive.

Aug. 11, 2022 – Greenbottom area, 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Aug. 18, 2022 – Funk / Killbuck, Ohio, all day, 7:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV; bring lunch.

Aug. 20, 2022 – Annual Picnic, 5:00pm, McDonough Log Shelter “A”, McDonough Wildlife Refuge; bring a covered dish, drink & service.

Aug. 25, 2022 – Jesse Owens WMA, 8:00am, WV Welcome Center, Williamstown, WV; bring lunch.

*Sept. Coordinator – Jeanie Hilton
304-428-8641*

Sept. 1, 2022 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 3, 2022 – Mountwood Park, 8:00am, beach area (near torpedo), bring lunch.

Sept. 8, 2022 – Waterloo/Lake Hope/Zaleski, 8:00am, Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

Sept. 15, 2022 – Ohio River Islands NWR, 8:00am, ORINWR parking lot.

Sept. 22, 2022 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am, McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 29, 2022 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton Nature Trail, 8:00am, Kroger wetlands parking lot.



NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

Due to safety measures associated with COVID-19, some activities have been postponed or have COVID protocols and limited attendance. Check with the websites below for details.

POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

August 14, 2022 – 7:30 am-10:30 am. Trip Leaders are Bob Dean & Heather Walsh.

Join PVAS on a Summer Bird Walk at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center property!

Our expert birders are offering regular walks at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center property and are excited with what it has to offer! The size is not excessively large, but the bird species are diverse, and the quality of the wetland is excellent. The property has a mix of open ponds and woods, offering different species. The route is generally flat, with some gradual hills.

This bird walk is open to the public and children are welcome to attend with an adult. Please dress for the weather and

wear sturdy walking shoes and bring along drinking water.

Please contact Krista Hawley at AdultPrograms@PotomacAudubon.org or 681-252-1387 with any questions you may have. Registration is required and limited to 15 participants. If you are sick or have been sick within the past two weeks (or been around anyone else that is sick), please stay home.

There will be a similar Fall Bird Walk on September 10, 2022, with Trip Leaders Lynne Wiseman & John Young.

August 17 & Sept. 21, 2022 – 7:00 am-10:00 am.

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 63 acres is home to much wildlife.

Please meet by 7:00 am in the front parking lot of Cool Spring Preserve, the walk will last a couple of hours.

Species likely to be seen in August include Yellow-breasted Chats, Yellow Warblers, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Carolina Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, and many more!

Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and insect repellent. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them. The trip may be cancelled in the event of bad weather.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children ages 12 and up will be welcome but they must be accompanied by an adult.

This event is free and open to the public; however, registration is required. If you have questions or would like more information, contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 681-252-1387.

See www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/category/bird-events/ for more outings.

BROOKS BIRD CLUB 90TH ANNIVERSARY RESERVATION FORM

HAWKS NEST STATE PARK, ANSTED, WV – OCTOBER 28-30, 2022

The 90th Anniversary of the Brooks Bird Club Inc. will be held at Hawks Nest State Park. This site was chosen as the Bird Club has never visited Hawks Nest and with the fall colors it was thought to be very fitting that this should be the place to celebrate 90 years of working together for the study of birds as well as all other forms of nature.

Reservations include Friday night lodging, dinner, & program. Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner, program and lodging, and Sunday breakfast. At 9:30 AM on Sunday, the BBC will hold its annual Membership meeting before everyone packs up and travels safely home. A full schedule of events will be available closer to the actual date.

A Board Meeting will be held Friday at 2PM.

BBC 90TH ANNIVERSARY RESERVATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 23, 2022

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

Cindy Slater - 2310 Cowling Road, Scottdale, PA 15683

Telephone - 724-570-8502.

Cindy's Email: mountaingirl127@gmail.com

or use the BBC website

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

PLEASE CONTACT CINDY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.



NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ EMAIL _____

Name of person sharing room _____

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

COMPLETE WEEKEND: _____ No. Attending @ \$200.00 Double Occupancy \$ _____

_____ Single Room Supplement @ \$325.00 \$ _____

_____ Alternate Reservations @ \$90.00 \$ _____

(No Lodging, Breakfasts or Lunch)

TOTAL \$ _____

Includes Fri. & Sat. nights lodging; Friday night dinner & program; Sat. & Sun. breakfast; Sat. lunch, dinner & program.





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Last of the old guard

Karl “Mike” Haller, (fourth from left), oldest member and last remaining charter member, has passed. Here, he is showing the location of the original Sutton’s Warbler that he and Lloyd Poland found in West Virginia. See Page 3 for remembrances and photos.

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