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# The 2011 West Virginia Christmas Bird Count With Population Trends Since 1992

Jane J. Whitaker

The 112th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held from December 14 through January 5, 2012. There were 20 participating counts in West Virginia and 1 count, Buffalo Creek, in Pennsylvania. These counts are compiled and analyzed in the following report.

The weather was seasonable with no extremes. Most low temperatures were in the mid-30s and highs in the 40s. The only inclement weather reported was light rain showers on two counts. Most of the counts reported open water.

The total number for each species for all counts is listed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Species List

Species	Number
Snow Goose*	67
Cackling Goose*	2
Canada Goose	6,147
Tundra Swan	50
Wood Duck	13
Gadwall	95
American Black Duck	97
Mallard	2,167
Northern Shoveler	2
Green-winged Teal	8
Teal sp.	1
Canvasback	1
Ring-necked Duck	166
Lesser Scaup	2
Bufflehead	71
Common Goldeneye	1
Duck sp.	23
Hooded Merganser	180
Common Merganser	20
Ruddy Duck	47
Ring-necked Pheasant	6

Species	Number
Ruffed Grouse	17
Wild Turkey	342
Common Loon	3
Pied-billed Grebe	82
Horned Grebe	5
Double-crested Cormorant	5
Great Blue Heron	122
Green Heron	18
Black Vulture	712
Turkey Vulture	1,010
Bald Eagle	72
Northern Harrier	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	33
Cooper's Hawk	58
Northern Goshawk*	3
Accipiter sp.	2
Buteo sp.	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	85
Red-tailed Hawk	404
Rough-legged Hawk	5
Golden Eagle	5
American Kestrel	151
Merlin*	1
Peregrine Falcon	3
Virginia Rail	2
American Coot	476
Killdeer	288
Wilson's Snipe	7
American Woodcock*	2
Ring-billed Gull	75
Herring Gull	2
Rock Pigeon	5,302
Mourning Dove	3,222
Barn Owl	3
Eastern Screech-Owl	80
Great Horned Owl	29
Barred Owl	12
Long-eared Owl	4
Short-eared Owl*	1

Species	Number
Rufous Hummingbird*	2
Belted Kingfisher	106
Red-headed Woodpecker	26
Red-bellied Woodpecker	778
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	60
Downy Woodpecker	1,011
Hairy Woodpecker	173
Northern Flicker	335
Pileated Woodpecker	337
Eastern Phoebe	17
Northern Shrike*	1
Loggerhead Shrike	3
Blue Jay	2,219
American Crow	51,327
Fish Crow	2
Common Raven	206
Horned Lark	118
Carolina Chickadee	2,470
Black-capped Chickadee	703
Chickadee sp.	113
Tufted Titmouse	2,226
Red-breasted Nuthatch	20
White-breasted Nuthatch	1,123
Brown Creeper	74
Carolina Wren	881
Winter Wren	50
Golden-crowned Kinglet	495
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	15
Kinglet sp.	1
Eastern Bluebird	1,701
Hermit Thrush	51
American Robin	1,935
Gray Catbird	1
Northern Mockingbird	562
Brown Thrasher	1
European Starling	25,824
American Pipit	40
Cedar Waxwing	856
Yellow-rumped Warbler	249

Species	Number
Eastern Towhee	267
American Tree Sparrow	199
Chipping Sparrow	34
Field Sparrow	170
Savannah Sparrow	1
Fox Sparrow	29
Song Sparrow	1,435
Swamp Sparrow	128
White-throated Sparrow	1,401
White-crowned Sparrow	410
Sparrow Species	2
Dark-eyed Junco	5,247
Northern Cardinal	3,230
Rose-breasted Grosbeak*	3
Red-winged Blackbird	576
Eastern Meadowlark	26
Rusty Blackbird	48
Common Grackle	194
Brown-headed Cowbird	609
Purple Finch	46
House Finch	866
Red Crossbill*	19
Pine Siskin	53
American Goldfinch	2,191
House Sparrow	3,047
Total	138,165

\* denotes species not observed on the 2010 count

Table 2 indicates the 15 most common species reported, from the largest count of 51,327 for the American Crow (the roost in Wheeling had 40,056) to a count of 1,701 for the 15th most common species, the Eastern Bluebird. Other species totaling more than 1,000 individuals counted were Turkey Vultures (1,101), Downy Woodpeckers (1,011), White-breasted Nuthatches (1,123), Song Sparrows (1,435), and White-throated Sparrows (1,401).

Table 2  
Fifteen Most Abundant Species in Descending Order

American Crow  
European Starling  
Canada Goose  
Rock Pigeon  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Chickadees (Carolina and Black-capped)  
Northern Cardinal  
Mourning Dove  
House Sparrow  
Tufted Titmouse  
Blue Jay  
American Goldfinch  
Mallard  
American Robin  
Eastern Bluebird

Table 3 lists the species observed on one count only and the count locations. There were also several unusual birds observed on two counts. They were:

1. Green Heron: 17 on Ona and 1 on Morgantown.
2. Northern Goshawk: 1 on Morgantown and 2 on Hampshire.
3. Rufous Hummingbird: 1 on both Wheeling and Charles Town.

Table 3  
Species Observed on One Count Only

Species	Number	Count Location
Cackling Goose	2	Huntington
Tundra Swan	50	Buffalo Creek
Northern Shoveler	12	Ona
Canvasback	1	Lewisburg
Lesser Scaup	1	Huntington
Common Goldeneye	1	Elkins
Ring-necked Pheasant	6	Buffalo Creek
Merlin	1	Oak Hill
Virginia Rail	2	Charles Town
Herring Gull	2	Ona
Barn Owl	3	Moorefield

Species	Number	Count Location
Short-eared Owl	1	Inwood
Northern Shrike	1	Canaan
Gray Catbird	1	Pendleton
Savannah Sparrow	1	Inwood
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	Hampshire

The species observed on all counts are shown in Table 4. There were 7 species that were observed on all but 1 count. They were:

1. Canada Goose missing on McDowell.
2. Rock Pigeons missing on Pocahontas.
3. Hairy Woodpeckers missing on Raleigh.
4. Golden-crowned Kinglets, Northern Mockingbirds, and Song Sparrows missing on the Elkins count.
5. Dark-eyed Juncos missing on Athens.

Table 4  
Species Observed on All Counts

Mallard  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Chickadees  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Eastern Bluebird  
American Robin  
European Starling  
White-throated Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

Count locations, total species seen, total number of birds observed and the number of participants are listed in Table 5.

Table 5  
Location of Participating Counts, Total Species, Number of Birds, and Observers

Count Location	Species	Number	Observers
Athens-Princeton, WV	67	1,379	22
Buffalo Creek, PA & WV	64	7,251	42
Canaan, WV	49	3,022	15
Charles Town, WV	75	8,766	18
Charleston, WV	55	8,029	21
Elkins, WV	45	3,254	17
Hampshire County, WV	65	5,127	40
Huntington	63	4,789	13
Inwood, WV	67	8,194	22
Lewisburg, WV	61	6,200	20
McDowell County, WV	42	662	5
Moorefield, WV	59	2,602	10
Morgantown, WV	72	4,809	20
Oak Hill, WV	50	2,011	13
Ona, WV	76	7,285	16
Parkersburg, WV	66	6,887	36
Pendleton, WV	64	7,028	7
Pipestem, WV	60	2,222	22
Pocahontas, WV	52	1,154	13
Raleigh County, WV	55	4,548	10
Wheeling, WV	64	42,941	42

Details of each count can be found under Birds -> Data & Research -> Results: Current Year by opening this URL: <http://birds.audubon.org/data-research>

Several years of observations are needed to ascertain any meaningful trends in populations. Comparing two adjacent years contains too many variables such as weather, percent of open water, and even conditions further north. That said, waterfowl that were absent last year but present this year were Snow Goose, Cackling Goose, and Green Heron. Some waterfowl, such as Tundra Swan and Ring-necked Duck, were more plentiful but generally speaking waterfowl numbers were down. These results are possibly due to milder weather and more open water.

Species showing at least a 25 percent drop from last year are Mallard, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin. Most are northern migrants. However, the northern migrants, Red Crossbill and Northern Goshawk, were present this year.



Those species demonstrating a significant (25 percent) increase were American Coot, Killdeer, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Chipping Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and American Goldfinch.

Comparisons were made between the 1992 CBC (Wilson 1993), the 2002 CBC (Canterbury 2003), the 2006 CBC (Whitaker 2007), and the current year. The total number of birds observed in each of these years was quite variable since it was highly dependent on the American Crow roost numbers as well as the numbers of some other species of flocking birds such as European Starlings and Common Grackles. However, most of the individual species numbers have been fairly consistent over the past 20 years.

There were approximately 20 counts reporting on the four years discussed. In 1992, 112 species were observed, 112 species in 2002, 126 species in 2006, and this year 122 species were observed. Most of the differences in yearly total species counts can be explained by the unusual sightings. For example, 12 birds observed on 1 count only this year were not observed in 2002. The most abundant species listed over the past years have been very consistent. Mallards have dropped out of the top 10 for the first time in 2011 but still recorded over 2000 individuals. Grackle numbers have dropped dramatically from 7,712 in 1992; 2,488 in 2002; 1,150 in 2006; to only 194 this year. In 2010, 2,506 Grackles were observed. My assumption is that no large flocks were encountered during the 2011 count.

The House Finch is a different story. There were 5,375 in 1992. It was the fourth most abundant species trailing only American Crows, European Starlings, and Common Grackles. From that level in 1992, House Finch numbers dropped to 1,134 in 2002; to 1,186 in 2006; and to 866 in 2011. House Finch eye disease, *Mycoplasmal conjunctivitis*, is undoubtedly the culprit. It was first brought to public attention in 1994.

The West Nile Virus can probably be blamed for a drop in the Blue Jay population from 3,275 in 1992 to 966 in 2002. The current year finds this population recovering to 1,701 in number. The West Nile Virus was widespread by 2002 and the CDC website has reported that at least 326 species of American birds have been found with the disease. Most of these species are observed on West Virginia counts. Raptors, Owls, and Corvids are known to be very susceptible to West Nile and our 20-year results bear testimony to this fact. House Sparrow numbers have dropped from 4,007 in 1992 to 3,047 this year. House Sparrows are, however, still among the most common species. American Crow numbers held steady at 26,922 in 1992 and at 28,387 in 2002 before increasing dramatically in 2006 to 75,657. Raptor numbers declined after West Nile Virus spread throughout the eastern USA. Sharp-shinned Hawks declined from 46 in 1992 to 30 in 2002, Coopers Hawks from 41 in 1992 to 37 in 2002, Red-tailed Hawks from 465 in 1992 to 264 in 2002, and Kestrels from 220 in 1992 to 187 in 2002. Currently, Sharp-shinned Hawks (33 in 2011) and Kestrels (151 in 2011) have not recovered. However, Cooper's Hawks (58 in 2011) and Red-tailed Hawks (404 in 2011) have

recovered and increased to 20-year highs. For no obvious reason, Red-shouldered Hawks have increased throughout the 20-year time frame from 23 in 1992 to 85 presently.

Other species that showed a significant drop from 1992 to 2002 were Mourning Doves (5,122 in 1992 to 2,792 in 2002), Screech Owls (100 in 1992 to 45 in 2002), Great Horned Owls (49 in 1992 to 16 in 2002), American Tree Sparrows (517 in 1992 to 221 in 2002), Song Sparrows (1,687 in 1992 to 1,342 in 2002), Dark-eyed Juncos (5,312 in 1992 to 3,641 in 2002), Common Grackles (7,714 in 1992 to 2,488 in 2002), and House Sparrows (4,007 in 1992 to 2,382 in 2002). Of these other species, Mourning Dove numbers have stabilized at approximately 3,200. Screech-Owls (80) and Dark-eyed Juncos (5,247) have recovered to their 1992 numbers. American Tree Sparrows (199), Song Sparrows (1,435), Common Grackles (194) and House Sparrows (3,047) are continuing to decrease.

Other species that seem to be losing population steadily are Ruffed Grouse (75 in 1992 to 17 in 2011), Northern Bobwhites (13 in 1992 to 0 currently), and Barred Owls (18 in 1992 to 12 in 2011). Carolina Wrens held steady with 991 in 1992; 992 in 2002; then an increase to 1,454 in 2006; and have now dropped to 881.

Northern Mockingbirds have increased dramatically over the past 20 years. There were only 211 reported in 1992 and they were observed on 13 counts. In 2011 observers found 562 and they appear in all but one count. Warmer winter temperatures probably have contributed to the Mockingbird's dispersal. Red-headed Woodpeckers are staging a slow recovery from 11 in 1992 on 3 counts to 26 currently on 5 counts.

Our scavengers numbers tell a most interesting story. In 1992 vultures, American Eagles and Common Ravens had low or no individuals observed. Presently their numbers have increased substantially. Black Vultures, 0 in 1992, have increased to 712 in 2011, Turkey Vultures from 90 in 1992 to 1,010 now, American Bald Eagles from 0 in 1992 to 72 in 2011, and Common Ravens from 40 in 1992 to 206 currently.

Black Vultures are now found on 15 counts, being absent only from Canaan, Raleigh, and the Ohio River Valley counts (Buffalo Creek, Huntington, Parkersburg, and Wheeling). The range of Common Ravens has spread from 7 counts in 1992 to 17 counts today. They have yet to be reported from the Kanawha Valley and the lower Ohio River Valley.

Turkey Vultures have spread from 7 counts to 18. They were observed everywhere this year except Buffalo Creek, Canaan, and McDowell. Bald Eagles were not present in 1992 but have now become established in 13 count areas.

These remarkable increases probably are related to the dramatic explosion in deer as a food source. The White-tailed deer population has soared and for the most part the road kill is not collected. There are also undoubtedly many carcasses or portions of carcasses abandoned by hunters. I, personally, have observed all four scavenger species taking advantage of deer remains as a food source.

Most of our winter species populations seem stable; however, Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Tree Sparrows, House Finches, Ruffed Grouse, Great Horned Owls, and Common Grackles seem to have been in decline over the past 20 years. As long as the deer population stays at high numbers the scavenger species will probably continue to increase and expand their range.

I would like to thank my husband, Robert Whitaker, for technical assistance in preparing this report and for editing the manuscript. I am grateful to the compilers and participants for their efforts in the field and for providing the information in a timely fashion.

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## Pipestem Area, West Virginia, Christmas Bird Count Summary 1972–2011

James D. Phillips

The Pipestem Area Christmas Bird Count was started by BBC member, Oliver Johnson, in 1972. At the time, Johnson served as the first naturalist for Pipestem Resort State Park. He served as compiler for the count until 1984. In 1984, I became the naturalist for the park as well as the compiler for the count. The number of participants for the count has ranged from 8 to 26 people. These observers became the core of the Bibbee Nature Club. The count would not be possible without the field work and financial support of these volunteers. A list of participants is contained in this report. The number in italics after each name represents the number of counts on which each person has been a participant. In writing this report, my intention is to bring together the 40 years of count results and encourage readers to take part in Christmas Bird Counts.

We are fortunate that Johnson established the Pipestem count circle as he did. We have a variety of habitats as well as a good deal of public land to explore. Our circle includes Pipestem State Park (4,023 acres), Bluestone State Park (2,100 acres), Bluestone Wildlife Management Area (17,632 acres), the town of Hinton, and sections of the Bluestone, Greenbrier, and New Rivers. The Army Corps of Engineers dam on New River creates Bluestone Lake (more than 2,000 acres). In recent years, Mt. Valley Lake, a state impoundment popular with waterfowl, has been opened to the public and was added to our count.

The count area is a 15-mile diameter circle that is surveyed on a day during the Christmas period. In 1972, the center was described as follows: 37 degrees, 35' N, 80 degrees, 55' W, one mile east of True Post Office on County Rt. 18, to include Sun Valley School, Forest Hill, Hinton, and Dunns; urban 5%, lakes 10%, farm and grassland 209%, mixed deciduous and coniferous woods 65%. True Post Office has since closed and is now a residence. Today, it would be safe to say the center is about 1-1/4 miles east of the junction of County Rt. 18 (True Road) and County Rt. 18/1 (Edwards Road). The habitat has changed as well. The urban and forested areas have increased at the expense of the farm and grassland areas. Estimates today would be urban 10%, farm and grassland 5%, and woods 75%. The numbers of birds of the area should reflect this change in habitat.

The species count has ranged from 50 to 79 with the average being 62 species. The number of individuals has ranged from 877 to 4,573 individuals with the average being 2,415 individuals. A study of the counts indicates trends in our birdlife. Some of these events may be more noticeable than others. Let us look at some of the more obvious changes for select species:

Vultures—Reports of these birds were scattered during early counts. In recent years, Turkey and Black Vultures have become regularly counted species, and in 2001, both species of vultures appeared in record numbers. In fact, Black Vultures broke the record in 2003 and again in 2004. The large population of White-tailed deer is most likely responsible for the increase in vulture numbers.

Canada Goose—Wildlife officials with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) began releasing these birds in the early 1980s to establish another game species in the state. They first appeared on this count in 1981 and have increased to the point of being a nuisance.

Bald Eagle—This raptor was on the endangered species list when the count began. It has steadily increased in numbers, especially in the last 10 years. In 2011, a record seven birds were seen.

Ring-necked Pheasant—This species was introduced as a game bird, but not successfully.

Wild Turkey—The West Virginia DNR was working on reestablishing this species when the count began. They have been successful. It is interesting to note that our highest count for this species came in 1986. This was after a summer hatch of periodic cicadas in our area.

Northern Bobwhite—This bird was fairly common on early counts but has not been seen since the 1976 count. Deep snow and cold temperatures in 1977 and 1978 as well as habitat change are most likely the cause.

Cavity dwellers—Most of the woodpeckers and other tree cavity nesters showed an increase in numbers on counts after Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and several ice storms in the 1990s.

Eastern Bluebird—This species experienced a jump in numbers during the count after the periodic cicada hatch in 1986.

Evening Grosbeak—The last report for this species was during the count week in 1999.

The following is a complete list of species for the 40 years of the Pipestem Christmas Bird Count and the individual totals for each year. The bird names in bold face print have been seen on every count. The number in parenthesis is the number of counts that each species was found. Birds seen only in count week but not on count day are indicated with cw in parentheses. Complete details for all counts are available at [www.christmasbirdcount.org](http://www.christmasbirdcount.org).

Canada Goose (30), Tundra Swan (2), Wood Duck (10), Gadwall (11), American Wigeon (5), American Black Duck (39), Mallard (39), Blue-winged Teal (2), Northern Shoveler (3), Northern Pintail (3), Green-winged Teal (8), Redhead (2), Ring-necked Duck (12), Lesser Scaup (8), Long-tailed Duck (1), Bufflehead (36), Common Goldeneye (27), **Hooded Merganser** (40), Common Merganser (12), Red-breasted Merganser (3), Ruddy Duck (4).

Ring-necked Pheasant (1), Ruffed Grouse (35), Wild Turkey (34), Northern Bobwhite (5), Common Loon (7), Pied-billed Grebe (15), Horned Grebe (6), Double-crested Cormorant (6), Great Blue Heron (35), Great Egret (1), Black Vulture (20), Turkey Vulture (29), Osprey (1), Bald Eagle (12), Northern Harrier (3), Sharp-shinned Hawk (17), Cooper's Hawk (25), Red-shouldered Hawk (26), Red-tailed Hawk (38), Rough-legged Hawk (2), Golden Eagle (8), American Kestrel (33).

American Coot (29), Killdeer (27), Greater Yellowlegs (1), Wilson's Snipe (1), American Woodcock (1), Bonaparte's Gull (cw), Ring-billed Gull (20), Herring Gull (5), Rock Pigeon (37), Mourning Dove (38), Eastern Screech-Owl (20), Great Horned Owl (13), Barred Owl (21), Long-eared Owl (1), **Belted Kingfisher** (40), Red-headed Woodpecker (4), **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (40), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (36), **Downy Woodpecker** (40), **Hairy Woodpecker** (40), Northern Flicker (39), **Pileated Woodpecker** (40).

Eastern Phoebe (35), Loggerhead Shrike (2), Blue-headed Vireo (cw), **Blue Jay** (40), **American Crow** (40), Common Raven (36), Horned Lark (8), **Carolina Chickadee** (40), Black-capped Chickadee (36), chickadee species (25), **Tufted Titmouse** (40), Red-breasted Nuthatch (16), **White-breasted Nuthatch** (40), Brown Creeper (36), **Carolina Wren** (40), House Wren (1), Winter Wren (33), Sedge Wren (1), Marsh Wren (3), **Golden-crowned Kinglet** (40), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (23), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1).

**Eastern Bluebird** (40), Gray-cheeked Thrush (2), Swainson's Thrush (1), Hermit Thrush (38), American Robin (38), Gray Catbird (2), Northern Mockingbird (39), Brown Thrasher (8), **European Starling** (40), American Pipit (5), Cedar Waxwing (30), Yellow-rumped Warbler (38), Pine Warbler (2), Palm Warbler (1), Common Yellowthroat (1).

Eastern Towhee (33), American Tree Sparrow (7), Chipping Sparrow (5), Field Sparrow (37), Vesper Sparrow (2), Savannah Sparrow (4), Fox Sparrow (24), **Song Sparrow** (40), Lincoln's Sparrow (1), Swamp Sparrow (22), **White-throated Sparrow** (40), White-crowned Sparrow (14), **Dark-eyed Junco** (40), Snow Bunting (1), **Northern Cardinal** (40).

Red-winged Blackbird (17), Eastern Meadowlark (22), Rusty Blackbird (7), Common Grackle (16), Brown-headed Cowbird (8), Purple Finch (32), House Finch (32), Red Crossbill (2), Pine Siskin (13), American Goldfinch (40), Evening Grosbeak (15), and **House Sparrow** (40).

Table 1 gives the total species and individuals per year.

Table 1  
Number of Species and Individuals Counted Each Year

Year	No. of Species	No. of Individuals
1972	65	1,678
1973	56	1,674
1974	62	1,926
1975	53	2,170
1976	52	1,023
1977	50	877
1978	61	1,759
1979	55	1,687
1980	68	1,871
1981	63	1,732
1982	58	1,999
1983	61	1,941
1984	52	1,939
1985	65	2,010
1986	63	3,172
1987	60	2,243
1988	57	2,221
1989	69	2,878
1990	63	2,809
1991	60	2,475
1992	60	2,545
1993	65	2,864
1994	63	2,345
1995	68	2,670
1996	62	2,785
1997	67	2,858
1998	68	3,722
1999	64	4,541
2000	69	4,573
2001	71	3,453
2002	59	2,863
2003	59	1,667
2004	68	3,328
2005	64	2,756
2006	63	3,234

2007 Year	67 No. of Species	3,321 No. of Individuals
2008	65	3,173
2009	58	1,795
2010	79	3,719
2011	60	2,222

Participants in the Pipestem Area Christmas Bird Count are listed below with the number of counts attended in parentheses.

Oliver Johnson (16)	Donald Lambert (5)
Yvonne Johnson (14)	Deborah Keener (1)
Judy Kaufield (1)	Baron Cornett (2)
Stanley Maddy (8)	Margaret DeJarnette (1)
Benjamin Markell (19)	Zettie Stewart (3)
Scott Mayberry (3)	Matthew Stalnaker (2)
Ann McRae (32)	Eric Jones (3)
Grady McRae (31)	Barbara Hackworth (1)
James Phillips (40)	Paul Brant (4)
Joe Thomas (6)	Chris Bone (8)
Sid Thomas (6)	Joe Woodfield (1)
Violet Bailey (1)	Jack Parris (16)
Margaret Hank (26)	Helen Parris (16)
Robert Knutson (2)	Don Kodak (6)
Raymond Sarles (11)	Ira Lilly (12)
Kathleen Timberlake (3)	Lin Lilly (3)
Jeffrey Wartluft (1)	Judy Phillips (29)
Charles Coffman (3)	Jeffrey Presseau (8)
Clyde Crozier (3)	Gary Worthington (11)
Robert Speich (3)	Eleanor Hall (4)
James Taylor (9)	Pat Happney (3)
Andrew Timberlake (1)	Mike Phillips (1)
Christine Ballard (1)	Laurence Bayless (1)
Jack Ballard (1)	Sarah O'Mahoney (1)
Rick Hypes (7)	Vivian Lilly (2)
William Hank (23)	Wayne Lilly (2)
Robert Connor (1)	William Vance (1)
Janice Bell (12)	Charles Cox (1)
Ray Bell (5)	Ella McRae (1)
James Meyer (16)	Ethel Purser (1)



Dorse Richardson (1)  
Emily Grafton (1)  
Hilarie Jones (2)  
Gene Worthington (2)  
Douglas Butler (1)  
Sara Borum (1)  
Sara Koeze (1)  
Thomas Gillian (4)  
Daniel Perry (2)  
Fred Cooke (4)  
Janet Meyer (18)  
Dale Suier (2)  
Frank Ratcliffe (4)  
James Miller (6)  
Glen Musser (4)  
Nathan Phillips (1)  
Jesse Anderson (5)  
Pat Lilly (5)  
Randy Petry (3)  
Rebecca Petry (4)  
Sean Pettrey (2)  
Paul Shaw (2)  
Cindy Stover (4)  
Gerald Stover (2)  
Joseph Stover (2)  
Kermit Stover (3)  
Dollie Stover (3)  
Allen Waldron (16)  
Mindy Waldron (16)  
Mary Hopkins (1)  
Ronald Perrone (1)  
Michelle Bragg (1)  
Ronald Canterbury (2)  
Geoffrey Elliott (1)  
Brian McMillan (9)  
Alma Lowry (9)  
Elizabeth Redding (1)

Tom Redding (1)  
Lee Smith (1)  
Sarah Dalton (1)  
Becky Kidwell (1)  
Christi Farley (1)  
John Meyer (1)  
Bob Baker (3)  
Andy Bennett (1)  
Courtney Clemons (2)  
Donna Crews (1)  
Rodney Davis (2)  
Bob Farley (1)  
Donna Greenwald (1)  
Kim Howard (1)  
John Harper (7)  
Kathleen Holloway (1)  
Nancy Hopps (1)  
Melissa Jacobs (1)  
Davy Jones (2)  
Sharon Kearns (1)  
Andy Klopp (1)  
Anne Markell (1)  
Nelson Marshall (1)  
Karen McClure (8)  
Alex Miller (1)  
Cheryl Miller (2)  
Mark Mullins (1)  
Sharyn Ogden (1)  
Dallas Perkins (1)  
Hershell Phillips (1)  
Betsy Reeder (5)  
Jessie Reeder (1)  
Laura Rymer (1)  
Wade Snyder (2)  
Ashlee McMillan (2)  
Barry Williams (5)

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# Fungi of the 2011 Foray, Tucker County, West Virginia

Ryan Tomazin

The 2011 Foray was held June 10–19 at Camp Kidd north of Parsons, West Virginia, in Tucker County. See the January 2012 issue of *The Redstart*, 79(1) for other Foray reports. Although there was copious rainfall Spring 2011 as well as during the 2011 Foray, we only found an average number of mushroom species. More than a few species on this list were found only once all week. The Tucker County region is a great area for fungi, though, and many varieties of mushrooms can be found there throughout the year.

*Agaricus* sp.

*Amanita amerimuscaria*

*Amanita flaviconia*

*Auricularia auricula*

*Boletus badius*

*Boletus bicolor* var. *subreticulatus*

*Boletus pulverulentus*

*Boletus rubropunctus*

*Boletus subvelutipes*

*Bondarzewia berkeleyi*

*Cheimonophyllum candidissimum*

*Chlorocibaria aeruginascens*

*Clavaria amethystina*

*Clavicornia pyxidata*

*Collybia platyphylla*

*Coltricia percunis*

*Cyptotrama asprata*

*Daedaleopsis confragosa*

*Fomes fomentarius*

*Ganoderma applanatum*

*Ganoderma tsugae*

*Hapalopilus rutilans*

*Hydnum repandum*

*Hygrocybe flavescens*

*Hygrocybe marginata*

*Hygrophorus cantharellus*

*Hygrophorus cuspidotus*

*Hypomyces chrysospermus*

Fly Agaric

Yellow Patches

Wood Ear

Bay Bolete

Bicolor Bolete

Red Mouthed Bolete

Berkeley's Polypore

White Oysterette

Blue-green Wood Stain

Amethyst Coral

Crown-tipped Coral

Broad Gill

Funnel Polypore

Golden Scruffy Collybia

Thin-walled Maze Polypore

Tinder Polypore

Artist Conk

Hemlock Varnish Shelf

Tender Nesting Polypore

White Wood Hedgehog

Golden Waxy Cap

Orange-gilled Waxy Cap

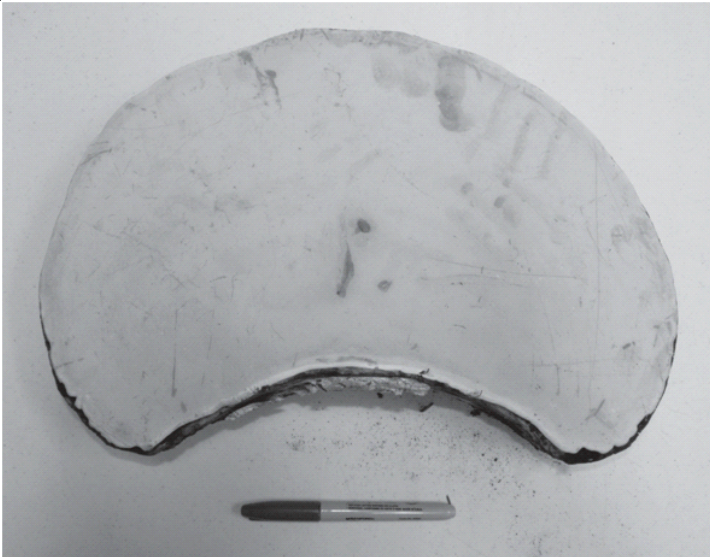
Chanterelle Waxy Cap

Bolete Mold

<i>Inonotus obliquus</i>	Chaga or Birch Canker
<i>Irpex lacteus</i>	Milk-white Tooth Polypore
<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i>	Sulphur Shelf
<i>Leccinum snelli</i>	Snell's Leccinum
<i>Leptonia incana</i>	Green Leptonia
<i>Marasmius rotula</i>	Pinwheel Marasmius
<i>Merulius</i> sp.	
<i>Microstoma floccosa</i>	Shaggy Scarlet Cup
<i>Mycena leaiana</i>	Orange Mycena
<i>Nectria cinnabaria</i>	Coral Spot Fungus
<i>Phellinus robineae</i>	Crack-capped Polypore
<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore
<i>Pleurotus ostreatus</i>	Oyster Mushroom
<i>Pluteus atricappilus</i>	Deer Mushroom
<i>Polyporus elegans</i>	Black Footed Polypore
<i>Polyporus squamosus</i>	Dryad's Saddle
<i>Pseudohydnum gelatinosum</i>	Jelly Tooth
<i>Ramaria</i> sp.	
<i>Russula crassotunicata</i>	Rubber-skin Russula
<i>Russula</i> sp. (numerous)	
<i>Scutellinia scutellata</i>	Eyelash Cup
<i>Schizophyllum commune</i>	Common Split-Gill
<i>Trametes conchifer</i>	Little Nest Polypore
<i>Trametes elegans</i>	
<i>Trametes versicolor</i>	Turkey Tail
<i>Tremella mesenterica</i>	Witches' Butter
<i>Tremellodendron pallidum</i>	False Coral Mushroom
<i>Trichoptum bifforme</i>	Violet-toothed Polypore
<i>Tylopilus felleus</i>	Bitter Bolete
<i>Tyromyces caesius</i>	Blue-staining Cheese Polypore
<i>Tyromyces chioneus</i>	White Cheese Polypore
<i>Xerula furfuracea</i>	Rooting Collybia
<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Carbon Antlers
<i>Xylaria magnoliae</i>	Magnolia Cone Xylaria
<i>Xylaria polymorpha</i>	Dead Man's Fingers



A mixed box of fungi, Tucker County, West Virginia, June 2011.  
Photo by Ryan Tomazin.



An exemplary Artist's Conk (*Ganoderma applanatum*), Tucker County, West Virginia, June 2011. Photo by Ryan Tomazin.

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# Early Results From the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project II: Increases in Range of Appalachian Mountain Species as of November 11, 2011

Casey Rucker

## Introduction

Results already recorded in the current breeding bird atlas project in West Virginia indicate that a number of Appalachian Mountain bird species may be increasing their range in the state.

The first West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project (BBA-1), first proposed by A. R. Buckelew, Jr. and George A. Hall, was conducted by the Brooks Bird Club from 1984 to 1989 with the aid of funding and data processing services from the then-named West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. *The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas* (Buckelew & Hall) was published in 1994.

On May 19, 2009, the renamed West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) launched the five-year West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project II (BBA-2). The project divides the state into blocks based on, and named after, US Geological Survey 7.5 minute topographic maps of the state. Each block is one-sixth of a topographic quad, divided horizontally in half and vertically in thirds. The DNR designates 469 of the state's 2,766 blocks as "priority" or "special" to narrow the focus of a limited number of observers to a representative sampling of the state's habitats. Observers identify the evidence of "possible," "probable," or "confirmed" breeding status of each bird they report, in most cases during "safe dates" for breeding set by atlas biologists. The goal is to record in each block as many species of birds, and as many probable and confirmed breeding records of each species, as possible.

One of the seven stated purposes for the new atlas project is to, "compare data to and access changes in the distributions of West Virginia's breeding birds since the first Atlas." There are already two and a half years worth of data from BBA-2, and as the DNR publishes on the Internet the data from atlas observers on a timely basis, at <http://bird.atlasing.org/Atlas/WV/Main?viewResults=1>, it is possible to begin to examine changes in West Virginia's bird populations based on those preliminary data.

Species record submissions in BBA-2 have already outstripped the final results of BBA-1. On the date of this writing, BBA-2 consisted of 47,199 submissions of records, with each record citing one bird species in one block. Since BBA-1 was based on a total of 34,447 records, the current atlas project already has 37% more data than the first atlas.

Another notable difference between the two projects is in participants' focus:

in BBA-1, data collectors concentrated largely on the 469 priority and special blocks, while observers in BBA-2 are submitting data from a far larger number of nonpriority blocks. In BBA-1, observers found data in 422 of the 469 special and priority blocks, or 90%, and in only 259 of the 2,677 nonpriority blocks, or 11%. In BBA-2, at the date of this writing, there are records submitted in 359 of the priority and special blocks, or only 77%, showing that the project still has a long way to go to equal BBA-1 in this coverage. In the nonpriority blocks, however, observers have submitted data in 833 of the blocks, or 36% of all blocks.

This difference in scope is good news, since reports in BBA-2 are covering far more of West Virginia geographically than those of BBA-1. There are, at the date of this writing, records submitted in 1,192 blocks statewide, compared with 681 blocks in BBA-1, or an increase in 75%. At the same time, the disparity presents a challenge in comparing the results of the two projects. The clearest comparison would be to use only the results from priority and special blocks, since those are the blocks that will probably have the closest correlation in effort-per-block between the two projects. On the other hand, limiting the data available from BBA-2 for such comparisons would fail to take advantage of the increased number of observations over the first project. Accordingly, the comparisons below will consider atlas records' locations in priority and nonpriority blocks.

This paper examines data from the two atlas projects regarding the following birds of the West Virginia Appalachian Mountains: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. In each of these species, range in appropriate habitats appears to be expanding since BBA-1.

### Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is listed by the Wildlife Diversity Program of the West Virginia DNR on its rare, threatened, and endangered species list. Breeding birds are listed as S1, "Extremely rare and critically-imperiled," with "five or fewer documented occurrences, or very few remaining individuals within the state," and nonbreeding birds are listed as S2, having "six to twenty documented occurrences." In his discussion of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, George A. Hall (1983) stated that:

This species once nested in fair numbers in the mountainous region of the state with the greatest numbers being in the middle elevations, but it has been decreasing since the 1920s and now has become rare and local in summer.

Hall listed the counties of Pocohontas, Monroe, Randolph, and the Harrison-Hardy county line as locations of recent breeding season sightings at the time, and cited an 1898 record from Tucker County but no more records since.

BBA-1 results confirmed Hall's bleak assessment of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker populations. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was one of 17 species in BBA-1 lacking any confirmed breeding records, and there were only two probable records and five

possible records during the entire atlas period. Members of the species were recorded in two regions of the first Breeding Bird Atlas, the Northern Panhandle and the Mountain region. At this point in the second Atlas project, records of the birds are located in those two regions as well as one record in the Central and Southeast Region. In the Northern Panhandle region in BBA-1, there was one possible record in the Morgantown South-1 block, and in BBA-2 there has been a probable record in Aurora-4, and a possible record in Terra Alta-6. In the Central and Southeast Region, there is one possible record located in the Hinton-6 block in BBA-2, as opposed to none in BBA-1.

In the Mountain region, however, the difference between the results of the two atlas projects becomes substantial. There were six records of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Mountain region in BBA-1, and there are already 29 records in BBA-2. There are already seven confirmed records, as follows: parent on nest, in Parsons-6, parent feeding young in Blackwater Falls-3 and Spruce Knob-2, and fledglings in Mozark Mountain-6, Harman-2, Thornwood-2 and Green Bank-4. There are also 16 probable records in this region in BBA-2 so far, as opposed to two records in BBA-1. Currently, there is just one block, Thornwood-2, with a probable record in both atlases. There are also six possible records in BBA-2 Mountain region blocks, compared with four in BBA-1. Notably, five of the seven records for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in BBA-1 were in non-priority blocks, so the records for BBA-2 appear better-distributed within priority blocks as well as in non-priority. These results seem to point to a population recovery of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the West Virginia mountains.

The causes of any recovery are less clear. In the species account of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's *The Birds of North America Online* (BNA), Walters et al. (2002) report that populations of this species have increased in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. They speculate that populations of this species may have increased since European settlement because of an increase in early successional habitats. Given the amount of logging activity in West Virginia during the period of the sapsucker's decline, however, it seems unlikely that lack of early successional habitats was the cause of that decline. Whatever the causes, it may be time for the WVDNR to reconsider its classification of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on its rare, threatened and endangered species list. There are now more than five confirmed breeding records, which would place the species in breeding S2 classification of six to 20 records, and 37 overall records, placing the species solidly within the S3 classification of 20 to 100 records.

#### Red-breasted Nuthatch

Red-breasted Nuthatches are an unusual success story among bird species, with populations generally increasing during the period from 1966 to 1996. It appears that they are also increasing in population in West Virginia. In BBA-1, there were eight



confirmed breeding records of Red-breasted Nuthatch, in three regions: in the Eastern Panhandle, in Paw Paw-6, in the Mountains, in Blackwater Falls-3 and -5, Durbin-1 and Lobelia-2, and -5, and in the Central region in Camden on Gauley-3 and -5. Notably, except for the Blackwater Falls blocks, each of these blocks has yet to reach full coverage in BBA-2 at this writing. There were also four probable records in BBA-1, and 15 possible records, making a total of 27 records in BBA-1.

In BBA-2, there are only four confirmed records so far, all in the Mountain region, in Blackwater Falls-3, Gladys-4, Clover Lick-3, and Lake Sherwood-6. Yet there are already 28 probable breeding records for Red-breasted Nuthatch, more than the total number of records in BBA-1. There are also 25 possible records so far, making a total of 56 records. It is to be hoped that with more coverage in the areas where the bird was recorded in BBA-1, the disparity in records will become much greater.

Four of the eight confirmed BBA-1 records for Red-breasted Nuthatch were made in nonpriority blocks, making the comparison between the results of the two atlas projects easier. Additionally, many priority blocks with appropriate habitats during BBA-1 showed no records of the species in spite of solid coverage of other birds, and those blocks with records of Red-breasted Nuthatch mostly show better coverage in BBA-1 than so far in BBA-2. Accordingly, the larger number of records in BBA-2 appears to reflect a greater presence in West Virginia of Red-breasted Nuthatches.

One possible explanation for an increase in Red-breasted Nuthatch range in West Virginia may be newer forestry practices that leave dead snags in place, as the species is a cavity nester.

#### Swainson's Thrush

The Swainson's Thrush is listed by the Wildlife Diversity Program of the West Virginia DNR on its rare, threatened, and endangered species list. Breeding birds are listed as S3, or "twenty-one to 100 documented occurrences." West Virginia appears to be an oasis of success amid ongoing decline for the Swainson's Thrush in other regions. Breeding bird survey data show a 5.3% per year overall decline in Canada and the northeastern U.S. from 1980 to 1992. In the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Draft North American Breeding Bird Survey, in survey-wide territory during the years 1966 to 2009 (Sauer et al., 2011), Swainson's Thrush populations suffered a significant decrease in population, but in the Appalachian region the species enjoyed a nonsignificant increase during the same period. In BBA-1, personal observations of George A. Hall (Buckelew & Hall, 1994) indicated a still-healthy West Virginia population of this bird of the northern coniferous forest. The results of BBA-2 so far appear to spell even better news of Swainson's Thrushes in the state.

In BBA-1 there were four confirmed records, all in the Mountain region, in Durbin-1 and the three side-by-side blocks of Lobelia-2 and -5 and Hillsboro-2. There were only four probable records and five possible records, for a total of 13 total records. In BBA-2 there are already three confirmed records of this often-secretive species,

all in the Mountain region, in Wildell-3, Sinks of Gandy-6, and Edray-3. There are 25 probable records, and nine possible, for a total of 37 records, nearly triple the number in BBA-1.

Hall (1983) noted that populations of spotted thrushes oscillate from year to year, with Hermit Thrushes encroaching on Swainson's Thrushes. BBA-2 already shows nearly three times as many records for Hermit Thrush as BBA-1 (though a much-lower proportion of confirmed records as yet), so it does not immediately appear that an increase in Swainson's Thrushes has been at the expense of Hermits.

Swainson's Thrush is also considered a generalist in habitat, succeeding in both mature and successional forests, as well as both conifer and mixed forests. It is accordingly a complicated question as to whether changes in the forestation of West Virginia's mountains have had an impact on Swainson's Thrush populations.

As another partial explanation for the increase in records, it is possible that there is easier public access to mountaintops in West Virginia today, meaning that less-accessible habitats might not have been as well covered in BBA-1 as in BBA-2, even in priority blocks. It is also likely that future surveying in less-accessible locations will yield even more records of this species for BBA-2.

#### Yellow-rumped Warbler

The Myrtle race of Yellow-rumped Warbler is another bird enjoying success as most bird species decline. Between 1966 and 1992, the subspecies increased in population at a rate of 1.8% per year throughout its range, and the increases were particularly great in the northeastern U.S. In West Virginia, the subspecies was not known to nest until indications of territorial activity during breeding season were first observed in 1975. The first Breeding Bird Atlas project reported the southward shift of the bird's breeding range, and predicted continued expansion in West Virginia.

BBA-1 recorded the first confirmed breeding of Yellow-rumped Warbler in West Virginia in 1987 in Spruce Knob-5, located in Pendleton County. It was the only confirmed breeding record of the species in BBA-1. There were also five probable breeding records and four possible records, for a total of 10 records, with one record in the Eastern Panhandle region and the rest in the Mountain region.

In BBA-2, surveyors have already submitted five confirmed breeding records of the species, all in the Mountain region, in Laneville-6, Webster Springs-6, Woodrow-3, Edray-2 and Lobelia-5. There are 37 probable records, located in the Northern Panhandle, Mountain, and Eastern Panhandle regions. There are also 15 possible records, making a total of 57 records, with the Mountain region continuing as the stronghold of the species but two records each in lower-elevation areas of the Northern and Eastern Panhandle regions.

All but one of the records in BBA-1 was made in priority blocks. In BBA-2, there are far more records in both priority and nonpriority blocks. Even accounting for

greater coverage of atlas blocks in BBA-2, this increase represents a significant increase in range for breeding Myrtle-race Yellow-rumped Warblers in West Virginia.

One possible explanation for an increase in Yellow-rumped Warblers in West Virginia is the maturation of spruce in forested areas. Another explanation could be that forestry methods that leave snags on the ground have benefited the populations of this species. Yellow-rumped Warblers also have widely varied feeding habits, which may allow them to exploit habitats in which other species are declining.

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# Assessment of Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Structure on Farmlands of Southern West Virginia

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## Introduction

The Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) has declined in West Virginia and throughout the northeastern United States (Confer, Hartman, & Roth, 2011). This decline has been noteworthy since 1966 (Sauer, Hines, & Fallon, 2008), and, perhaps, steepest in West Virginia than elsewhere throughout the species range (Sauer, Hines, & Fallon, 2005). Long-term studies on the species in West Virginia have been ongoing since 1987 (Canterbury, 1990; Canterbury, Stover, & Nelson, 1993). These studies have largely been localized to the coalfields of West Virginia (Canterbury & Stover, 1999). Despite extensive knowledge about the habitat and breeding ecology of the species in West Virginia, little data has been collected in habitats outside the coalfields.

In the present study, I first observed Golden-winged Warblers occupying grazed pasturelands (e.g., cattle pastures) in May 2001. The purpose of this study was to quantify the habitat structure and pairing success of Golden-winged Warblers on farms and grazed pastures in southern West Virginia, and because the species is now potentially threatened throughout its breeding range (recent petition to list the species under the Endangered Species Act), I compare the data collected in this study with the species habitat structure in the coalfields (Canterbury, Stover, & Kotesovec, 1996; Canterbury, unpublished data).

## Study Site

This study took place northeast of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia, and specifically within the Laurel and Island Creeks watersheds (DeLorme Atlas, pp. 59–60). Golden-winged Warblers were studied in an area extending from Athens (Laurel Creek and Trace Fork), north to Bent Mountain (elevation 3,088 feet) and northeast to Hackett Ridge (Lick Creek), and south and east to Elgood (Island Creek). The elevation ranged from riparian along the creeks to the highest peak on Bent Mountain noted previously. Slopes varied from little to no slope along creeks to relatively steep slope (typically 40–65%).

## Methods

Territorial male Golden-winged Warblers were identified by sight and sound, spot-mapped and GPS referenced, and color banded. Detailed observations of territory size and overlapping territories, including with its sister species, the Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*, formerly *V. pinus*) and hybrid phenotypes, were made by observing each territory for at least 20 person-hours during 8–15 visits

per locality within the study area. Numerous site visits and detailed observations of each territorial male assured that my field crew and I were confident of the number of occupied and unoccupied territories and the number of pairs of birds in any given locality within the study area per year. Data were collected from 2002–2009. Habitat structure for Golden-winged Warblers occupying grazed pastures was quantified and compared to contour mine bench habitat, the most-preferred habitat for the species in West Virginia (Canterbury & Stover, 1999; Canterbury, 2011). Habitat quantification, including percent bare ground cover, within Golden-winged Warbler territories, followed from standardized methods (Karr, 1968; James & Shugart 1970; Luscier, Thompson, Wilson, Gorham, & Dragut, 2006; Schaub, Martinez, Tagmann-loset, Weisshaupt, Maurer, Reichlin, Abadi, Zbinden, Jenni, & Arlettaz, 2010). I found the use of digital photographs of Golden-winged territories and object-based image analysis useful in habitat quantification, specifically for percent ground cover.

### Results

I studied 127 pairs of Golden-winged Warblers, including a few Blue-winged Warblers and hybrid phenotypes in this study. Table 1 shows the abundance of local resident Golden-winged Warbler pairs by phenotype in grazed pasture and old field and pine tree farms in Mercer County, West Virginia, from 2001 through 2009. At the start of the study, only one or two Blue-winged Warblers were noted in the study area, and they apparently had only started to expand in the area as most local subpopulations had no Blue-winged Warblers (See also Canterbury, 2011).

Table 1  
Abundance of Local Resident Warbler Pairs in Two Habitats in Mercer County, West Virginia from 2001 Through 2009.

Habitat	Phenotype of warbler pairs (males listed first for each pair)					
	GW x GW	BR x GW	GW x BR	GW x BW	BW x BW	BR x BW
Grazed Pasture	43	1	1	0	6	0
Old Field & Pine Tree Farm	62	3	1	1	8	1

Abbreviations: GW = Golden-winged Warbler, BR = Brewster’s Warbler, and BW = Blue-winged Warbler. No Lawrence’s Warbler phenotypes were noted in this study.

During the 8-year study, some localities such as the grazed farms along Trace Fork and Old Pisgah Road harbored no Blue-winged Warblers, but other areas within the study site harbored a few Blue-winged Warblers. The density of Golden-winged Warblers varied in this study from 0.13 males/ha to 0.32 males/ha, and averaged 0.26 males per ha. Golden-winged Warbler pairs (n = 43) that occupied grazed pasture territories differed in many habitat and demographic features compared to Golden-winged Warblers of upland, contour mine benches (Table 2).

Table 2  
Habitat and Demography Features of Golden-winged Warbler Territories in  
Grazed Pastures vs. Contour Mine Benches.

Habitat & Demography Feature	Grazed Pasture (n = 43)	Contour Mine Bench (n = 43 randomly selected from 1000s)
Average Density (males/ha)	0.26	0.61
Territory Size (ha)	Relatively large; little overlap with other males; up to 1.62 ha	Relatively small; high overlap with other males; typically < 0.81 ha
Return Rates (of banded males)	48%	12%
Herbaceous Cover	40%	25%
% Bare Ground	10%	30%
Dead Snags (singing perches)	3-4 trees	5-7 trees
Super-dominant Canopy Trees (within territories for singing & foraging)	Scattered throughout territories; often 1-3 only (primarily a single tree used).	Mainly along edge succession; often 4-5 trees used.

Golden-winged Warblers noted in grazed pasture territories often had lower density, larger territories, higher return rates, and territories with more grasses and herbaceous cover and fewer dead snags and super-dominant canopy tree-use than Golden-winged Warblers of contour mine bench habitat (Table 2).

## Discussion

The Golden-winged Warbler was recently petitioned for consideration under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The species has declined range-wide since 1966, and has undergone nearly 150 years of range expansion and contraction and replacement by the Blue-winged Warbler. In this study, Golden-winged Warblers were observed occupying grazed cow pastures. Farmers grazed their cattle on these pastures intermittently and alternated herds among pastures (grazed vs. ungrazed), which may have promoted successional edges and shrub habitat favored by Golden-winged Warblers in the study area. Brush-hogging and pine tree farm plantations have also created suitable Golden-winged Warbler habitat in the study area, and Golden-winged territories were drastically different from those of contour mine benches. Pairs of Golden-winged Warblers occupied grazed-pasture territories, relatively unlike those of typical upland, contour mine benches, in that they contained a higher-than-average herbaceous cover, less bare ground, fewer dead snags, and often used a single super-dominant canopy tree, within a more open terrain, for singing perches and foraging. These habitat features greatly contradict from the pattern for those of upland sites, where the bulk of the Golden-winged Warbler population occurs in southern West Virginia (Canterbury, 2011). Moreover, the Laurel and Island Creeks study site appeared relatively more fragmented than typical Golden-winged Warbler habitat, where Golden-winged Warblers often occur in areas with at least 80% forest cover (Canterbury, unpublished data). Landscape models are crucially needed to evaluate critical conservation habitat of the species.

Successful conservation of the species may include perpetuation and management of farms (including intermittently grazed pastures) and abandoned pastures, as well as maintenance of shrub habitat through brush-hogging. Future research is needed on the success of Golden-winged Warblers in nonabandoned farmland habitat throughout the species range.

## Acknowledgments

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## The Floyd Bartley Award for 2011

Albert R. Buckelew Jr. announced the 2011 Floyd Bartley Memorial Award at the BBC midwinter meeting at North Bend State Park on March 3, 2012. Joey Herron won the Bartley Award for his articles, “Valley Falls State Park Saw-whet Owl Banding Station 2010” and “Swainson’s Warbler Summers at Prickett’s Fort State Park, West Virginia.” Both articles were published in the October 2011 issue of *The Redstart* (Vol. 78, no. 4, pp. 124–128).

The Floyd Barley Award was established by an anonymous donor to honor the memory of Floyd Bartley. (See *The Redstart*, Vol. 43, no. 2, p. 68, 1976). Previous winners of the Award are:

1976	Ray and Jo Ashworth
1979	Harry Slack
1980	James D. Phillips
1981	J. Lawrence Smith
1982	Eugene E. Hutton
1983	Linnie Coon
1984	Patricia Temple
1985	Melvin Hooker
1987	Jonathan Minear
1988	Julie Beatty
1989	Lorraine Rollefson
1993	Ralph K. Bell
1994	Wendell Argabrite
1995	Greg Eddy
1997	Ann Pyle
1998	John Northeimer
1999	Joey Herron
2000	Anna M. McRae
2001	Gary Felton
2002	William Beatty
2003	Matthew Orsie
2004	George E. Hall
2005	Jane J. Whitaker
2006	Matthew Orsie
2008	Rosie Campbell
2009	Jane Whitaker and Reba Hutton
2010	James Triplett and Beverly Triplett

## Book Review

**A Year on the Wing: Journeys with Birds in Flight** by Tim Dee. 2009 New York: Simon and Shuster, Inc. 226 pages, no illustrations. Hard covers, \$24.

This is a marvelous book, one of my all-time favorites, a book for those who love birds and words and the beauty of language. It is written more like poetry, but preserving the science; it is lyrical, whimsical, to read. British writer Dee's description of a gannet's plunge, a wren in hand, or a million starlings going to roost in the reeds is like being there. Mostly written of birds seen on the British Isles, Dee also takes us to see Mountain Bluebirds in our American West, Cisticolas in Africa, and New World hummingbirds, and other bird species outside of Britain. We are introduced to famous birding writers, many of their books being referred to or quoted. I made a whole list of books and papers I'd like to read more about, and writers I would like to know better as a result of reading Dee's book.

Dee lets us vicariously view birds' daily lives, incredible migrations, and species peculiarities we might never get to see. We are told of old notions, have explained the origins of long-held beliefs (true and not true), and are shown great collections of bird eggs and skins. This is a new classic for bird lovers everywhere.

Rosemary M. Campbell

## Field Notes Fall Season

September 1–November 30, 2011

Casey Rucker

Fall weather in West Virginia was damp. The autumn months ranged from 5<sup>th</sup>-wettest to 15<sup>th</sup> wettest since 1895, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University. September and November were warmer than average, while October was slightly cooler than usual. A generally mild season was punctuated by snowstorms at the beginning and end of October in the mountainous regions of the state, with Snowshoe Mountain receiving more than 20 inches of snow for the month.

These notes were gathered from the National Audubon Society sponsored West Virginia Bird Listserv, and from field notes submitted to the editor by e-mail, at [autobock@frontiernet.net](mailto:autobock@frontiernet.net), and regular mail. The full content of the submitted notes by the contributors of the WV Listserv may be viewed by visiting the archives at the following website: <http://list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html>. Birders from 40 of the 55 West Virginia counties reported sightings on the WV Listserv during the fall season.

Wendell Argabrite added a bird species to the West Virginia list on October 25, when he found an adult **White-faced Ibis** at Hoeft Marsh, Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County. A month earlier, on September 20 Argabrite and Michael Griffith discovered a **Hudsonian Godwit**, which has only one previous state record, at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County. There were 233 species reported in the state during the fall months.

**Ducks, Swans, Geese**—Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite saw both a **Greater White-fronted Goose** and a **Ross's Goose** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on November 16. Two days later, James Phillips saw a **Greater White-fronted Goose** on the New River between Bluestone Dam and Sandstone Falls, Raleigh and Summers Counties, and Derek Courtney found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Tygart Lake, Taylor County, on November 23. **Snow Geese** were reported in Jefferson (TH), Mason (DP, WA, MG), Monongalia (KW), Preston (TB, DCo, GF), Raleigh/Summers (JP), Taylor (TB), and Tucker (KDz) Counties. **Canada Geese** were as usual widespread throughout the state. James Triplett found a **Mute Swan** at Hawks Nest State Park in Fayette County on November 19. Two days earlier, Terry Bronson saw 80 **Tundra Swans** at Cheat Lake in Monongalia County, where a number of others also reported the birds. Other reporters observed **Tundra Swans** in Mason (DP, WA, MG), Pendleton (MO), and Summers (MW) Counties.

As befits a rainy fall, the season was good for waterfowl, as West Virginia birders reported 24 species, including all three **scoters**. There were reports in at least five

counties of **Wood Ducks**, **Gadwalls**, **American Wigeons**, **American Black Ducks**, **Mallards**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Northern Shovelers**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Buffleheads**, **Hooded Mergansers**, **Common Mergansers**, and **Ruddy Ducks** this fall. Reports of the following species came from fewer than five counties, as noted: **Northern Pintails** – Mason (WA, MO, DP, GR), Monongalia (TB, DCo), Preston (TB, DCo), and Taylor (TB) Counties; **Canvasbacks** – Mason (WA, MO, DP, GR) and Monongalia (DCo) Counties; **Redheads** – Mason (DP, WA, MG, GR), Monongalia (TB, DCo, JBo), and Raleigh (MW) Counties; **Greater Scaup** – Monongalia (DCo), and Preston (DCo, GF, TB) Counties; **Surf Scoters** – Jefferson (MO), Mason (MG, WA), and Monongalia (DCo) Counties; **White-winged Scoters** – Monongalia (DCo), Summers (JP), and Taylor (TB, DCo) Counties; **Black Scoters** – Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (DCo, TB), and Preston (DCo) Counties; **Long-tailed Ducks** – Monongalia County (KWi, DCo); **Common Goldeneyes** – Monongalia (KWi, DCo), Tucker (CR), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; and **Red-breasted Mergansers** – Monongalia (TB, DCo), Preston (TB), Raleigh (MW, JP), and Taylor (TB) Counties. On November 23, Derek Courtney found thousands of water birds on Cheat Lake in Monongalia County, including all three **scoters**, all three **mergansers**, **Long-tailed Ducks**, **Common Goldeneyes**, and large flocks of **Buffleheads**, as well as large numbers of **Horned Grebes**, and both **Common** and **Red-throated Loons**.

**Quail**—Kim Kazmierski reported on October 6 that her brother-in-law found a covey of young **Northern Bobwhites** near Buffalo, in Putnam County.

**Pheasants, Grouse, Turkeys**—Birders throughout the state reported **Wild Turkeys**, while **Ruffed Grouse** reports came from Grant/Tucker (GF), Marion (HMy), Randolph (RBo), and Wood (KCa) Counties. On September 27, Richard Bailey experienced momentary heart stoppage on a hike in Otter Creek Wilderness, Randolph County, when 11 **Wild Turkeys** burst out of a nearby rhododendron thicket.

**Loons, Grebes**—On November 23, Derek Courtney found a **Red-throated Loon** at Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, along with 41 **Common Loons**. There were reports of **Common Loons** from nine counties: Barbour (DM), Fayette (JBT), Hardy (DC), Jefferson (MO, CD, JBz, BH), Monongalia (TB, DCo), Pendleton (MO), Preston (TB), Summers (JP), and Wetzel (WJ). **Pied-billed Grebes** appeared widely throughout the state, and birders found **Horned Grebes** in 10 counties: Grant (FA), Hardy (DC), Harrison (TB), Jefferson (MO, JBz, BH, CD), Mason (MG, WA), Monongalia (TB, DCo), Preston (DCo), Summers (JP), Tucker (CR), and Wetzel (WJ).

**Cormorants**—Reports of **Double-crested Cormorants** came from 12 counties.

**Bitterns, Herons, Egrets**—**Great Blue Herons**, **Great Egrets**, and **Green Herons** appeared throughout much of the state. Randy Bodkins saw an **American Bittern** at the Davis sewage treatment plant, Tucker County, on September 10. Mindy Waldron, Alma Lowry, Kathleen Holliday, and N. Wade Snyder were at Little Beaver State Park in Raleigh County on September 30 when they witnessed a flock of 29 **Great**

**Blue Herons** flying overhead in formation. **Black-crowned Night Herons** were reported in Mason (MG, WA, DP), Pendleton (DCo), and Summers (JP, MW) Counties.

**Ibises**—The only **ibis** reported in West Virginia this fall was the **White-faced Ibis** found by Wendell Argabrite, described previously, and later seen by Michael Griffith, Gary Rankin, and David Patick. Unlike earlier possible sightings of the species in our state, this **White-faced Ibis** was an adult with a red eye, clearly distinguishing it from the **Glossy Ibis**, another rare visitor to our state.

**Vultures**—Reports of **Black Vultures** came from seven counties, while 20 counties had reports of **Turkey Vultures**. On November 13, John Waugaman saw 120 to 130 **Turkey Vultures** rise from a roost near his home in Lavalette, Wayne County.

**Hawks, Eagles**—**Osprey, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks,** and **Golden Eagles** were the subjects of many reports throughout the state during the fall season. At Hanging Rock Observation Tower in Monroe County there were 3,926 raptors reported this season, slightly down from the record year before. Tower watchers clocked 709 **Broad-winged Hawks** on September 22, with 2,971 for the season. Gary Felton counted 301 **Broad-winged Hawks** flying over his house in Kingwood, Preston County, on September 17. Three days later, Randy Bodkins saw a **Northern Goshawk** in Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, and on November 2 Joette Borzik found an adult **Northern Goshawk** in Jefferson County. On Halloween morning Terry Bronson spied a **Rough-legged Hawk** south of Morgantown in Monongalia County, and on November 13 Ken Dzaack spotted the first **Rough-legged Hawk** of the season in Canaan Valley, Tucker County.

**Falcons**—**American Kestrels** appeared in counties throughout the state during the fall season. **Merlins** were observed by several reporters this fall in Dolly Sods, Grant and Tucker Counties, and the Hanging Rock Tower Hawk Watch, reported by James Phillips, found five **Merlins** during the season in Monroe County. On September 2 Robert Summers and Margaret Straley saw a **Merlin** at Canaan Valley NWR, Tucker County, and on the next day a **Merlin** was a rare yard visitor to Hullet Good in Milliken, Kanawha County. On October 29 a **Merlin** visited Gary Felton's yard in Preston County. Frederick Atwood saw a **Merlin** in Grant County on two separate occasions in September. There were reports of **Peregrine Falcons** from nine counties, including Randy Bodkins's unusual high-country sighting of a **Peregrine Falcon** in Parsons, Tucker County, on October 3.

**Rails, Coots**—Margaret Straley and Robert Summers were surprised on November 19 by the only **Virginia Rail** reported this season, at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County. Reports of **Sora** came from Barbour (TB), Cabell (BSMS, GR), Mason (DCo, WA, MG), and Tucker (RBo) Counties. Observers reported **American Coots** in numerous counties.

**Cranes**—On November 27, Michael Powell saw a flock of **Sandhill Cranes** flying over the Smoke Hole in Pendleton County.

**Plovers**—Our regular-but-unusual **plovers** made a number of appearances in the state this fall, particularly in the Eastern Panhandle. The following birds appeared in the following counties: **Black-bellied Plovers** in Hardy (MO), Mason (MG), and Preston (DCo); **American Golden-Plovers** in Berkeley (MO), Cabell (WA), Grant (FA), Hardy (DCo), and Jefferson (MO, JBz, CD); and **Semipalmated Plovers** in Hardy (DH), Mason (WA), Preston (GF), and Randolph (RBo). **Killdeer** were well-represented with reports from 15 counties.

**Sandpipers**—West Virginia birders found members of 21 **sandpiper** species this fall, almost double the number from same period during the previous year. Reports of **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Pectoral Sandpipers**, and **Wilson's Snipe** came from at least five counties each. **Sanderling**, **Semipalmated**, **Western**, **Least**, and **White-Rumped Sandpipers**, **Dunlin**, **Stilt Sandpipers**, and **American Woodcock** were each reported in two to four counties. The following **shorebirds** were seen only in one county each, as follows: **American Avocet** in Summers County (JP); **Hudsonian Godwit**, described above, in Mason County (MG, WA, SA); **Baird's Sandpiper** in Hardy County (MO); **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** in Hardy County (KKi); **Short-billed Dowitcher** in Hardy County (DH); **Wilson's Phalarope** in Mason County (MG, WA, DCo); and **Red Phalarope** in Randolph County (GF). On September 7, Matthew Orsie toured Hardy and Berkeley Counties and found 12 species of shorebird: **Black-bellied Plover**, **Killdeer**, **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and **Sanderling**, **Semipalmated**, **Western**, **Least**, **Baird's**, and **Stilt Sandpipers**.

**Gulls, Terns**—This fall saw a significant rise in sightings of inland seabirds, compared to the season a year ago. **Bonaparte's Gulls** were sighted in Hardy (DC), Lewis (DB), Monongalia (TB), Preston (TB, DCo), and Webster (HG) Counties; reports of **Ring-billed Gulls** came from Jefferson (BH), Mason (CE, KK, RU, BW, DP, WA, MG), Monongalia (DCo, TB), Preston (DCo), Randolph (RBi), Taylor (TB), Tucker (CR), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; and **Herring Gulls** were reported in Barbour (TB), Jefferson (BH), Mason (DP, WA, MG, GR), Putnam (CE, GR), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties. **Terns** reappeared in the following counties after their complete absence in West Virginia during the same period last year: **Caspian Terns** in Jefferson (MO, CD, DHa), Mason (MG, WA), Mercer (JP), Monongalia (DCo), Putnam (CE), and Summers (JP) Counties; **Black Terns** in Jefferson (MO) and Mercer (JP) Counties; **Common Terns** in Jefferson County (MO); and **Forster's Terns** in Summers County (JP, MW).

**Columbidae**—**Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continue to reside throughout the state.

**Cuckoos**—There were reports of **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** in seven counties, and of **Black-billed Cuckoos** in three counties. James Benedetti and the Mountwood Bird Club saw one representative each of both **cuckoo** species at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge in Pleasants County on October 6.

**Owls**—Owl reports were sparse this season. Four counties reported **Eastern Screech-Owls**: Grant (FA), Putnam (CE), Randolph (SKi), and Wetzel (WJ); there were reports of **Great Horned Owls** in four counties: Jefferson (JBz); Monongalia (KA), Putnam (CE), and Wayne (GR); and observers reported **Barred Owls** in eight counties: Grant (FA), Jefferson (DHa, CD, JBz, BH), Kanawha (HG), Monongalia (KA, JD), Preston (GF), Putnam (CE), Summers (JP), and Wayne (JWg). Wilma Jarrell heard an **Eastern Screech-Owl** calling in her yard in Wileyville, Wetzel County, in late September and mid-October.

**Goatsuckers, Swifts**—On September 7, Cynthia Ellis heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** in at her home in Putnam County. **Common Nighthawks** were reported in 16 counties this September, and Gary Felton saw the latest **Common Nighthawks** of the season on October 10 in Kingwood, Preston County. On September 1 Joey Herron saw 143 **Common Nighthawks** fly over his home in Fairmont, Marion County, and John and Caroline Snyder saw several dozen **Common Nighthawks** fly northward over their house in Nicholas County. There were 12 counties with reports of **Chimney Swifts**, all before mid-October.

**Hummingbirds**—Birders in 14 counties reported sightings of **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds**, primarily in September. Bert Odell saw the last-reported **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** of the season on November 4 at his home in Fayetteville, Fayette County. A **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Jefferson County, as reported by Matthew Orsie on November 22 and 25.

**Kingfishers**—There were reports of **Belted Kingfisher** in 19 counties.

**Woodpeckers**—Our state's seven species of woodpeckers were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in eight counties: Grant (FA), Hardy (DC), Jefferson ((DHa, JBz), Kanawha (HG), Marshall (JBo), Monongalia (TB, ESC), Putnam (CE), and Ritchie (TB). On September 3, John Boback and Michael Dietrich watched a family of four **Red-headed Woodpeckers**, two adults and two juveniles, near Boback's home in Marshall County.

**Flycatchers**—Terry Bronson saw an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Cranesville Swamp in Preston County on in September 14, and four days later Kyle Aldinger saw an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at the Core Arboretum in Morgantown, Monongalia County. Reports of **Eastern Wood-Pewees** came from eight counties, and **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were reported in five counties: Barbour (TB), Grant (MO), Mason (MG, WA), Monongalia (DCo), and Wood (JB). Jon Benedetti found the season's only **Least Flycatcher**, at McDonough Wildlife Refuge in Wood County on September 11. **Eastern Phoebes** were reported widely in the state, with the latest report from Bruni Haydl on Bloomery Road, Jefferson County, on November 25. **Great Crested Flycatchers** and **Eastern Kingbirds** made appearances in two counties each, including a late appearance of an **Eastern Kingbird** near Dallison, Wood County, on October 11 reported by Kevin Campbell.

**Shrikes**—One **Loggerhead Shrike** appeared at last summer's breeding site near

Candlewood Drive in Jefferson County, as first reported by Teri Holland on November 19 and last reported by Matthew Orsie on November 25. On the next day Frederick Atwood found the season's other reported **shrikes**, a pair of **Loggerhead Shrikes** spotted along Houghlin Road near Cabins, Grant County.

**Vireos**—**White-eyed**, **Yellow-throated**, **Blue-headed**, **Philadelphia**, and **Red-eyed Vireos** appeared in counties throughout the state during September and early October, and **Blue-headed Vireos** were seen through early November. Reporting birders observed **Warbling Vireo** in Cabell (JWg), Jefferson (JBz), and Wood (JB) Counties. A **Philadelphia Vireo** was a life bird for Herb Myers at McDonough Wildlife Refuge, Wood County, on September 30.

**Corvids**—**Blue Jays**, **American Crows**, and **Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. On October 25, Deborah Hale saw more than 50 **Fish Crows** fly over Bolivar Heights, Jefferson County.

**Larks**—**Horned Larks** appeared occasionally throughout the fall, in Jefferson (CD, TH, JBz), Mason (GR, WA, MG, DCo, MO, DP), and Tucker (TB) Counties. On November 26, Joette Borzik saw more than 150 **Horned Larks** on Smith Road in Jefferson County.

**Swallows**—On September 7, Cynthia Ellis saw a **Purple Martin** fly out of the roost box in her yard in Red House, Putnam County, and later that day a pair of **Purple Martins** roosted in the same box for an hour. On the next day James Phillips saw **Purple Martins** at Bluestone Wildlife Management Area in Summers County, and Frederick Atwood saw one **Purple Martin** in Grant County. **Tree Swallows** lingered in nine counties during September and October, and Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite observed a very late **Tree Swallow** on November 30 at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County. **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were reported in Grant (FA), Hardy (HMy), and Jefferson (DHa) Counties. On September 6 Diane Holsinger was on Cunningham Lane in Moorefield, Hardy County, when 25 **Bank Swallows** flew over her car. Reports of **Cliff Swallow** came from Grant (FA), Hardy (FA), and Mason (GR, MG, DP) Counties; and reports of **Barn Swallows** came from Grant (FA), Hardy (HM), Mercer (JP), Randolph (RBi) and Summers (JP) Counties.

**Paridae**—**Black-capped** and **Carolina Chickadees** made their usual appearances in their bifurcated territories in West Virginia. **Tufted Titmice** were widely reported throughout the state as well.

**Nuthatches**—**Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** occupied their usual spots in reports from throughout the state.

**Creepers**—Birders in 13 counties reported **Brown Creeper**.

**Wrens**—**Carolina Wrens** appeared in good numbers of reports from many parts of the state. **House Wrens** were spotted in Barbour (TB), Grant (FA), Marion (TB), Mason (GR), Monongalia (TB, DCo), Preston (TB, GF), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties, while birders reported **Winter Wrens** in Barbour (TB), Berkeley (WH), Cabell (MG), Hardy (DC), Jefferson (DHa), Kanawha (HG), Marion (TB),



Preston (DCo, LeJ), and Summers (JP) Counties. The **Marsh Wren** reported by Margaret Straley and Robert Summers at the Freeland Road Boardwalk of Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, at the end of August remained at least until October 22, as reported by the editor of these notes. **Marsh Wrens** also appeared in Cabell (MG), Marion (TB), Mason (MG, GR, DP, WA, DCo, MO), and Monongalia (DCo) Counties.

**Gnatcatchers—Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** appeared in reports from only four counties this fall: Braxton (WG), Cabell (JWg), Grant (FA), and Kanawha (HG).

**Kinglets**—Birders reported **Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** throughout the state this fall.

**Thrushes—Eastern Bluebirds, Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Swainson’s Thrushes, Hermit Thrushes, Wood Thrushes, and American Robins** were seen throughout most reporting counties. Reports of **Veery** were scarce as usual. Dee and Tom Igou reported a yard visit at their home in Huntington, Cabell County, from the only **Veery** seen this season. Jeff Del Col heard a **Veery** in Philippi, Barbour County, on September 3, and Joey Herron heard the nocturnal flight calls of **Veeries** at his home in Fairmont, Marion County, on September 25. On September 17, Wil Hershberger heard flight calls of **Gray-cheeked, Swainson’s, Hermit, and Wood Thrushes** in Berkeley County.

**Mockingbirds, Thrashers**—There were reports of **Gray Catbirds, Northern Mockingbirds, and Brown Thrashers** from counties throughout the state this fall.

**Starlings—European Starlings** continued to occupy widespread habitats throughout our state.

**Pipits**—Birders in six counties found **American Pipits** this fall: Cabell (DCo, MG, WA), Grant (FA), Hardy (DC), Jefferson (JBz), Mason (DP, WA, MG), and Preston (GF). Joette Borzik saw a flock of 100 **American Pipits** in Jefferson County on November 26.

**Waxwings—Cedar Waxwings** were present in most parts of the state.

**Longspurs**—On November 27, Matthew Orsie discerned a **Lapland Longspur** among a flock of 200 **Horned Larks** near Dutch Hill Road in Jefferson County.

**Warblers**—Warbler species reported in five or fewer counties are listed below with the counties and contributors. Species listed without contributors were reported in at least six counties. Warblers reported this fall included **Ovenbird, Worm-eating**—Cabell (JWg) and Pocahontas (DP) Counties; **Northern Waterthrush**—Cabell (DTI) and Randolph (RBo) Counties; **Blue-winged**—Cabell (JWg), Mason (DP, WA), and Wood (JB) Counties; **Black-and-white, Tennessee, Orange-crowned**—Grant (FA), Mason (DP), Monongalia (DCo), and Preston (DCo, LeJ) Counties; **Nashville, Connecticut**—Pendleton (DH), Pocahontas (DP), and Preston (GF) Counties; **Kentucky**—Jefferson County (BH); **Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, American Redstart, Cape May, Northern Parula**—Berkeley (AT), Mason (MG, WA, DP), Pocahontas (DP), Tucker (CR), and Wood (JP) Counties; **Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian,**

**Yellow** – Berkeley (AT), Grant (FA), Monongalia (DCo), Randolph (RBi), and Wood (JB) Counties; **Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Pine, Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated, Prairie** – Grant (FA), Mason (DP, MG, WA), and Wood (KCr) Counties; **Black-throated Green, Canada** – Pocahontas (RBi), Preston (TB), and Wood (JB) Counties; **Wilson’s, and Yellow-breasted Chat** – Monongalia (TB) and Tucker (MK) Counties.

**Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos**—The most-frequently reported species of **emberizid** this fall were **Eastern Towhee; Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, Song, Lincoln’s, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows; and Dark-eyed Junco**. David Carr hosted members of nine species of **sparrow** in his yard in Arkansaw, Hardy County, on a snowy October 30. On October 9, David Patick found a **Nelson’s Sparrow** at Ashton Wetlands in Mason County. The following were reported only in the counties listed: **American Tree Sparrows** in Mason (GR) and Preston (TB) Counties; **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Preston County (GF); **Vesper Sparrows** in Cabell (MG), Jefferson (MO), and Tucker (TB) Counties; and **Henslow’s Sparrow** in Tucker County (RBo).

**Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings**—**Summer Tanagers** appeared in Kanawha (HG), Mason (DP, WA, MG), and Wood (JB) Counties. **Scarlet Tanagers, Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. **Blue Grosbeaks** made appearances in Cabell (MG), Grant (FA), and Roane (BSMS) Counties.

**Icterids**—Reports of **icterid** sightings were sparse this fall, with the most notable a flock of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** that visited the home of Willa Grafton in Heaters, Braxton County, on September 21. Reports of **Bobolinks** came in September from Grant (FA), Mason (MG, GR, DP, WA), Pleasants (DE), and Preston (TB) Counties. West Virginia birders reported **Red-winged Blackbirds** in 10 counties, **Eastern Meadowlarks** in 8 counties, and **Common Grackles** in 6 counties. On October 23, Stephen Kimbrell saw a flock of more than 300 **Eastern Meadowlarks** near Beverly, Randolph County. A flock of 100 **Common Grackles** moved through the Jefferson County yard of Carol Del-Colle on September 21. **Rusty Blackbirds** were sighted in Cabell (GR, MG, WA), Grant (FA), Preston (GF, TB), and Summers (JP) Counties, **Brown-headed Cowbirds** occasioned mention in Cabell (JWg), Jefferson (JBz), Monroe (WS), Nicholas (JCS), and Preston (TB) Counties, and **Baltimore Orioles** appeared in reports from Monongalia (TB), Raleigh (WS), and Wood (JB) Counties.

**Finches, Allies**—Reports of **Purple Finches, House Finches, and American Goldfinches** were common throughout the state. David Patick found **Pine Siskins** and **Red Crossbills** at Cranberry Glades Visitor Center, Pocahontas County, in September and November. Kim Kazmierski’s yard hosted a flock of **Pine Siskins** in Hurricane, Putnam County, on November 1. Matthew Orsie found six **Red Crossbills** on Shenandoah Mountain, Pendleton County, on November 11.

**Weaver Finches**—The **House Sparrow** prompted reports from only five counties. In spite of this lack of attention, the species no doubt continues throughout the state, primarily in urban settings.

Contributors to the Fall Field Notes: Susan Aaron (SA), Kyle Aldinger (KA), Wendell Argabrite (WA), Frederick Atwood (FA), Richard Bailey (RBI), Jon Benedetti (JB), John Boback (JBo), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Joette Borzik (JBz), Terry Bronson (TB), Doren Burrell (DB), Kevin Campbell (KCa), Kyle Carlsen (KCr), David Carr (DC), Derek Courtney (DCo), Carol Del-Colle (CD), Ed and Susan Crowell (ESC), Ken Dzaack (KDz), Cynthia Ellis (CE), Richard Esker (DE), Gary Felton (GF), Hullet Good (HG), LeJay Graffious (LeJ), Willa Grafton (WG), Michael Griffith (MG), Deborah Hale (DH<sub>a</sub>), Bruni Haydl (BH), Wil Hershberger (WH), Teri Holland (TH), Diane Holsinger (DH), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Kim Kazmierski (KK), Mimi Kibler (MK), Stephen Kimbrell (SK<sub>i</sub>), Kathy King (KK<sub>i</sub>), Herb Myers (HMy), Matthew Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), James Phillips (JP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), John and Caroline Snyder (JCS), N. Wade Snyder (WS), Margaret Straley and Robert Summers (BSMS), James Triplett and Beverly Triplett (JBT), Alex Tsiatsios (AT), Randy Urian (RU), Mindy Waldron (MW), John Waugaman (JWg), Kelly R. Williams (KW<sub>i</sub>), and Beverly Wright (BW).

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