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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Return of the Common Raven, Revisited	
—Douglas McClure Wood and Cynthia D. Ellis .....	116
Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2012	
—Ronald A. Canterbury .....	124
Valley Falls State Park Saw-whet Owl Banding Station Report for 2011 and 2012	
—Joey Herron .....	130
Field Notes	
—Casey Rucker .....	135

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## Return of the Common Raven, Revisited

Douglas McClure Wood and Cynthia D. Ellis

“...for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening”—I Kings 17:5-6, *The Holy Bible*, The Authorized King James Version, first published 1611.

This passage from the Bible has for hundreds of years informed English speaking peoples that ravens (or their Old World kin) are associated with wilderness, for the story told in I Kings is the story of a prophet of the God of Abraham named Elijah, who withdrew into a desolate place with no other human occupants, where he was fed by ravens. In another biblical passage, another prophet spoke of a time when all evidence of human influence in Zion will be obliterated by the same God until it has reverted to a piece of ground inhabited only by wild creatures: “But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” (Isaiah 34:11).

At the most recent turn of the century, J. Lawrence Smith, a minister of the United Methodist Faith, was one of West Virginia’s preeminent naturalists, as well as a prolific writer on the subjects of the natural and cultural histories of Appalachia. In the October 2008 issue of *The Redstart*, Smith wrote, “Few birds are as closely associated with the wilderness in America, the original primeval scene, or places of like appearance today, as the Common Raven.... Prior to the middle of the last century, its widespread return to the mountains of West Virginia attracted the attention of many observers. Within recent decades, ravens have appeared in places where they would not previously have been expected, and they may, in the future, lose their wilderness aura.” (p. 163) With this last phrase, Smith just may have earned the title of his biblical raven-inspired predecessors—*Prophet*.

Smith chronicled the westward range expansion of the Common Raven from its familiar high Allegheny Mountain haunts to the middle Kanawha Valley in the vicinity of West Virginia’s capital, Charleston. The results of the first West Virginia breeding bird atlas gave additional evidence of this range expansion (Buckelew & Hall, 1994, p. 104). Other researchers have chronicled the raven’s range expansion in other portions of North America (Kilham, 1989) and (Boarman & Berry, 1995) and in Europe (Saemann, 1989). Kentucky researchers indicated that this re-colonization phenomenon had occurred since 1980 (Cox et al., 2003). Smith reflected a similar time frame for the reappearance of the raven in the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia. Cox et al. stated that “The Common Raven (*Corvus corax* L.) was found throughout Kentucky during early European settlement....” West Virginia’s ravens were also once more

widespread. Smith quoted an 18th century western Virginia frontier settler, Joseph Doddridge, who bore witness to the abundance of ravens and other scavenging and predatory bird species when his family first settled in what is now southwestern Pennsylvania near the border with West Virginia's northern panhandle.

Smith explained, "The feeding habits of the raven are quite similar to vultures" (p. 163). Indeed, the Ohio Valley Lenape (Delaware) Indians of Doddridge's day referred to the raven as *wingeohkwet*—*one who likes meat* in English translation (Dean, 1990). Although today ravens are usually categorized as carrion eaters, they are also known to prey upon smaller creatures. In past centuries, in the days of the species' greater abundance, the raven was notorious for this predatory behavior. When William Doan traveled through the Allegheny Mountains between Lewisburg and Romney in the autumn of 1888, performing ornithological work on behalf of the West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station at Morgantown, he noted that the mountain inhabitants said of ravens "that they are very destructive to the poultry, especially during the months of May and June" (Doan, 1888, p. 67). It was undoubtedly this predatory behavior, noted more often in the past than today, that led the Cherokee to title their third highest military rank *Kalanu* (Overhills dialect) or *Corona* (Middle and Lower dialects)—*Raven* in English translation (DeBrahm, 1971, p. 109).

Smith's raven observations, and the observations he recorded from other birders in the Kanawha Valley region, show an increasing trend in Raven sightings from that region since around 1980, with the Kanawha Valley birds' "point of origin most likely the New River Gorge." (p. 164). Although Ravens will nest in trees, crevices in rock outcrops seem to be preferred in the Appalachians. My own observations of western West Virginia ravens bear out a strong positive correlation between frequency of sightings and abundance of large rock faces. In two areas where I have often seen and heard ravens in late winter and early spring (Kanawha State Forest and I-79 near Burnsville) there are numerous cliffs on or near hilltops.

In May of 2010, author Cynthia Ellis was with a group hiking and birding at Putnam County Park in Eleanor, West Virginia, when the group saw a raven flying overhead, occasionally croaking. This was the first raven sighting that Cynthia was aware of in Putnam County, having resided and birded there much of her adult life. Then, in November of 2011, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR) personnel began receiving phone calls about ravens vandalizing cars at the park-and-ride location at the north end of the Winfield bridge in Putnam County. John McCoy of the *West Virginia Gazette*, penned an article about the incident, in which he printed some of the interesting conjectures of crime scene witnesses, wildlife officials, and naturalists (McCoy, 2011). In March 2012, Ellis photographed a pair of ravens that were removing windshield wiper blades from a truck parked at the lot. This observation caused Ellis to wonder if the pair was using the blades in a nest somewhere nearby. However, her photos reveal an interesting behavior. While one of the ravens was busy pulling apart the wipers, the other was obviously engaged in a dominance



Figure 1 . Common Raven displaying in Putnam County. Photo by Cynthia Ellis.

display with its own reflection in the windshield (See Fig. 1). It appeared to me that the two were engaged in a territorial nest destruction routine. Detailing the territorial behavior of ravens in the British Isles and Ireland, Derek Ratcliffe (1997) described the observations of two researchers in Wales who recorded an encounter between nesting ravens and an intruding pair that dismantled the owners' nest and destroyed the eggs. The displaying raven in Ellis's photographs stands tall with head erect and bill down, while its hackles are up, that is, the feathers on the pate, crown, nape, and throat are raised. In two of Ellis's photos both ravens are "bristling."

A year later, on March 20, 2013, author Douglas Wood stumbled upon a raven nest in a crevice of the locally famous cliff, Redhouse Rock, just about 0.1 mile as the *Corvus corax* flies from the raven theft crime scene. While guiding two WVDNR botanical researchers to numerous cliffs in the region to collect lichens, Wood led them to a few cliffs across the river from Winfield, including Redhouse Rock. When they first topped the rock, they heard and saw a raven flying nearby. From beneath them, a second raven appeared. Wood suspected the second raven had flown from a perch on the rock face, but he did not investigate from the upper vantage point further, as his companions were eager to descend to the bottom of the cliff to start collecting lichens. They did so, but on the way back from the collecting site, Wood noticed the underside of a stick-nest protruding from a crevice atop a ledge approximately 5 meters above the cliff base. The ledge edge was covered with bird whitewash droppings. Wood was sure that he had found the raven pair's nest, so he photographed it (See Fig. 2). Wood came back on a second day to photograph the nest from above, and this time he saw one of the adults leave the nest site. He knew that Redhouse Rock was a favorite place for people to visit in warmer weather, so he determined not to revisit the site for another month or so, and decided to tell very few people of the nest site to prevent a horde of curious birders from descending upon the pair during the critical brooding period. The Kentucky researchers concluded similarly, "we advise the closure of public areas where raven nesting sites occur and encourage researchers and managers to minimize disturbance in such areas" (Cox et al. 2003, p. 102).

Ellis, too, was concerned about the welfare of the raven family should word leak out. WVDNR ornithologist Richard Bailey indicated that neither the first nor the current breeding bird atlas efforts had turned up ravens nesting that far west from New River Gorge. Ellis said she would attempt to observe the nest from afar via spotting scope, at least until trees leafed out. Fortunately for viewing purposes, the spring greening came late due to unusually cold weather throughout March and into the first week of April. Ellis was able to make several observations (nearly every week) of the ravens over the course of April, May, and June. She saw them chase an Osprey and a Red-tailed Hawk away from the nest area. On April 22, Earth Day, she observed people above the nest site. She observed ravens carrying what appeared to be nestlings of other species; perhaps food for the pair's young. And then, at 3:27 p.m.



Figure 2. Common Raven nest at Redhouse Rock. Photo by Douglas Wood.



on June 19 at the Winfield bridge park-and-ride, Ellis observed an adult Raven with food in its bill, two young ravens begging, and a third juvenile following close behind when the trio flew off. The westward pioneering pair had successfully raised at least three young to fledgling status, just in time to celebrate West Virginia's sesquicentennial birthday the following day.

Habitat destruction certainly played a role in the decline of ravens from the western Appalachian hill country, but it may not have been as important in that decline as was the deliberate killing of the big black bird that had a reputation among many mountain cultures (Euro-American and American Indian) as a predator of poultry and small game. Steep, forested cliff faces have been noted by several ecologists as places of high native biological diversity, because they were the least desirable terrain for long-term ecologically destructive human disturbances such as agriculture and residential development. So preferred raven nesting sites probably maintained their attractiveness to potential nesting pairs even when surrounding countryside was being timbered and farmed in the 19th century. However, ravens were deliberately persecuted as vermin. Evidence from today's ravens indicates that they are quite tolerant of certain forms of human disturbance, and can successfully raise young at active surface mine sites as long as there are adequate food resources nearby (Cox et al., 2003). Citing the positive correlation between the former decline of ravens, large herbivores, and large carnivores, as well as more recent evidence that in New England coyotes who open carcasses of large herbivores "may be especially important for the re-colonization of ravens," Cox et al. (2003, p. 101) suggested that there is a three-way positive correlation between raven abundance, large herbivore abundance, and large predator abundance. Certainly the westward expansion of the raven's range and the species' population increase in West Virginia, especially noticed since about 1980, was preceded by a greatly expanding deer population in the Mountain State's western hill country as well as a widely recognized increase in coyote sightings and bear populations there. This body of evidence seems to point to forest removal as less of a causal agent in the historic decline of ravens than was deliberate killing by humans of ravens and large predators, which ravens depend upon to open large herbivore carcasses.

According to Smith, other bird species that, like the Common Raven, were "dependent upon rather continuous and even heavy forest cover—Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker" suffered rapid population declines after the near total removal of forest cover by destructive logging practices and subsequent wildfires west of the Allegheny crest. True enough; however, initial research by early practitioners of the then emerging scientific field of wildlife biology, concluded incorrectly that these species were dependent upon large tracts of undisturbed forest land for their survival. To be sure, such lands were the only places where those species existed at that time, but the application of modern wildlife management principles, including better protection from overharvesting of the Wild Turkey, and placing woodpeckers

and the Common Raven on the nongame, nonvermin species lists, has allowed these birds to expand their ranges into lands formerly considered unsuitable by wildlife biologists. Indeed, most turkey biologists today advise that a mix of vegetation covers ranging from grasslands and shrub-lands to scattered woodlots with suitable roosting trees and acorn-bearing oaks are likely to support more turkeys per acre than are larger forested tracts.

Smith's observation of a garbage-eating raven is worthy of note in this regard. Watching a raven fly out of a trash bin near Shoney's restaurant in Flatwoods, West Virginia, in 1996, Smith realized that his iconic vision of the raven as a denizen of solely primeval wilderness was nothing more than a preconceived notion, borne out of the particulars of the history of the species in the Appalachian region (and perhaps out of his ministerial familiarity with Judeo-Christian scriptures). Smith noted that, "In reality, ravens are opportunists responding to the designs of humankind, and in their willingness to accept the leavings of civilization, Common Ravens have wandered far from the wilderness" (p. 164). Cox et al. (2003) made a similar conclusion. They mentioned the raven's success in adapting to human environments in the southwestern U.S. as noted by researchers in the 1980s and 1990s, and they reflected upon the potential for such adaptation in the Appalachian region: "Our observations of ravens in a highly disturbed area suggest the potential for a similar pattern of behavioral adaptation towards human landscapes in the eastern United States" (p. 102). Wilderness-loving ravens eating garbage from a trash bin at Shoney's in Flatwoods, West Virginia, in 1996; habitually nesting on active strip mine high walls in Kentucky in 1999, 2001, and 2002; and now building nests with stolen windshield wipers near Winfield, West Virginia—Smith's prophesy is approaching fulfillment with each passing year as the Common Raven's wilderness aura is subsumed by the boldness of this opportunistic bird, now protected by hunting regulations. It seems the provender role between Elijah's kind and the ravens may be reversing.

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## Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2012

Ronald A. Canterbury

This report summarizes the 18th year of bird banding at the Three Rivers Migration Observatory (TRMO). The 2012 fall banding season was a fairly good season in comparison to the last two years at this station. The station was operated 92 days from July 12–November 13, 2012. In July, 215 birds were captured during 15 days of banding. August banding produced 359 birds during 26 days of banding. During September, 660 birds were captured in 28 days of banding, while October banding produced 226 captures during 17 days of banding. Banding during November totaled 56 birds during six days of netting.

During the 2012 fall season, 1,516 birds were captured. We handled 83 species. The number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds captured this fall was 86. Table 1 lists the species and number of individuals per species captured during the season, and Figure 1 shows the number of birds captured per day. Numerous species arrived earlier than average, which may have been due to the prolonged summer drought or poor seed crops in the northeast. An extremely early Least Flycatcher was captured on July 23. Blackpoll Warblers arrived as early as September 12, which is unusually early for this station. Not only did some migrants arrive earlier than expected, the flight of some species was shorter in duration and ended earlier than usual. For example, no Common Yellowthroats were captured after October 6, which is unusual for this station. Similarly, the last Chestnut-sided Warbler for the season was captured on September 28.

The peak migration appeared to span from September 8–19 (Figure 1). As typical for this station, the Tennessee Warbler led the way with 287 individuals captured this fall. Unusual for this station was the capture of four Great Crested Flycatchers. Also noteworthy was the capture of a Blue-winged Warbler with some phenotypic features of a Kentucky Warbler and resemblance to a Cincinnati Warbler, considered to be an intergeneric hybrid of Blue-winged and Kentucky Warblers (Morse, 1989). The facial pattern was similar to that of a Kentucky Warbler and the bird had relatively pink legs, but otherwise resembled a Blue-winged Warbler. The capture of a Swainson's Warbler (Figure 2) on August 28 represented only the second individual of this species ever captured at TRMO. Raptors included a Cooper's Hawk banded on September 20 and an Eastern Screech-Owl (Figure 3) captured on September 23. There was a small influx of Pine Siskins, but no heavy flight of northern finches and boreal species was noted at TRMO, which was disappointing given the widespread irruption of Boreal species in the late fall/winter of 2012-2013. Some interesting recaptures included a Blue-winged Warbler banded in 2010, a Gray Catbird banded in 2009, and an Eastern Towhee banded in 2007.

Karen Daniel, Randy Daniel, Scott Perry, and Allen Waldron assisted with data collection. Financial support was provided by Southern West Virginia Bird Research Center.

Table 1  
Species List for the Autumn 2012 Season

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Cooper's Hawk	1	Sep. 20			
Mourning Dove	2	Aug. 9	Sep. 23		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Sep. 17			
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Sep. 23			
Eastern Whip-poor-will	1	Aug. 29			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	86	July 12	Sep. 26	7	Aug. 28
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	July 27			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Oct. 11			
Downy Woodpecker	4	Aug. 12	Oct. 20		
Hairy Woodpecker	1	Sep. 24			
Eastern Wood-Pewee	10	Aug. 13	Sep. 26		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3	Aug. 16	Aug. 25		
Trail's Flycatcher	4	July 31	Sep. 18		
Least Flycatcher	7	July 23	Sep. 24		
Eastern Phoebe	27	July 17	Nov. 3	3	Sep. 9
Great Crested Flycatcher	4	July 20	Aug. 20	3	July 20
White-eyed Vireo	8	July 19	Aug. 30		
Yellow-throated Vireo	10	July 18	Oct. 19	3	July 18
Blue-headed Vireo	12	July 19	Oct. 14		
Red-eyed Vireo	51	July 16	Oct. 3	6	Aug. 7
Blue Jay	4	Aug. 12	Oct. 31		
Carolina Chickadee	20	July 13	Nov. 10	3	Sep. 8
Tufted Titmouse	27	July 14	Nov. 10	5	Oct. 22
Red-breasted Nuthatch	8	Sep. 17	Oct. 31		
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	July 18	Aug. 30		
Carolina Wren	29	July 16	Nov. 8	3	July 20
House Wren	9	July 19	Sep. 30		
Winter Wren	2	Oct. 11	Oct. 24		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	6	July 20	Sep. 1		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	8	Oct. 12	Oct. 31	3	Oct. 31
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	13	Oct. 6	Oct. 31	3	Oct. 20
Veery	5	Sep. 10	Sep. 19		

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Gray-cheeked Thrush	9	Sep. 23	Oct. 22		
Swainson's Thrush	25	Sep. 7	Oct. 6	4	Sep. 21
Hermit Thrush	6	Sep. 19	Oct. 31		
Wood Thrush	9	Aug. 4	Oct. 4	3	Aug. 4
American Robin	2	July 23	Oct. 17		
Gray Catbird	61	July 16	Oct. 14	10	Sep. 16
Brown Thrasher	4	July 31	Oct. 10		
Cedar Waxwing	26	July 26	Oct. 27	10	Oct. 27
Ovenbird	17	July 24	Oct. 22	3	Aug. 12
Worm-eating Warbler	5	July 29	Aug. 30		
Blue-winged Warbler	9	Aug. 11	Aug. 25	3	Aug. 15
Black-and-white Warbler	40	July 16	Sep. 29	7	July 16
Swainson's Warbler	1	Aug. 28			
Tennessee Warbler	287	Aug. 20	Oct. 22	30	Sep. 8
Nashville Warbler	3	Sep. 10	Oct. 12		
Mourning Warbler	1	Sep. 6			
Kentucky Warbler	3	July 16	July 23		
Common Yellowthroat	23	Sep. 6	Oct. 6	5	Sep. 9
Hooded Warbler	50	July 17	Sep. 30	4	Aug. 8
American Redstart	25	July 16	Oct. 9	5	Oct. 1
Cape May Warbler	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 8		
Northern Parula	2	July 24	Oct. 4		
Magnolia Warbler	49	Sep. 1	Oct. 17	6	Sep. 19
Bay-breasted Warbler	33	Sep. 7	Oct. 6	8	Sep. 26
Blackburnian Warbler	9	July 23	Sep. 30		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	14	Sep. 7	Sep. 28	5	Sep. 23
Blackpoll Warbler	16	Sep. 12	Oct. 11	6	Sep. 18
Black-throated Blue Warbler	10	Aug. 26	Oct. 11	3	Sep. 8
Palm Warbler	6	Sep. 8	Sep. 19		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	5	Oct. 11	Nov. 8		
Yellow-throated Warbler	1	July 18			
Black-throated Green Warbler	19	July 18	Sep. 28	4	Sep. 8
Wilson's Warbler	2	Aug. 30	Sep. 12		
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	Sep. 16			
Eastern Towhee	24	July 12	Oct. 27	4	Oct. 27
Chipping Sparrow	22	July 13	Oct. 31	9	Sep. 17
Field Sparrow	19	Aug. 13	Oct. 20	4	Oct. 11
Fox Sparrow	2	Oct. 31	Nov. 8		
Song Sparrow	12	July 17	Nov. 13		

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Lincoln's Sparrow	6	Oct. 6	Oct. 24		
Swamp Sparrow	6	Sep. 30	Oct. 27		
White-throated Sparrow	15	Oct. 4	Oct. 24	4	Oct. 20
Dark-eyed Junco	22	Oct. 10	Nov. 13	10	Nov. 9
Scarlet Tanager	20	July 16	Sep. 29	5	Sep. 29
Northern Cardinal	32	July 14	Nov. 12	5	July 24
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	Sep. 8	Sep. 18		
Indigo Bunting	61	July 16	Oct. 10	6	July 16
Purple Finch	10	Oct. 17	Nov. 8		
House Finch	14	Sep. 16	Oct. 31	6	Sep. 19
Pine Siskin	76	Sep. 19	Oct. 27	11	Oct. 22
American Goldfinch	30	July 13	Nov. 3	7	Oct. 24

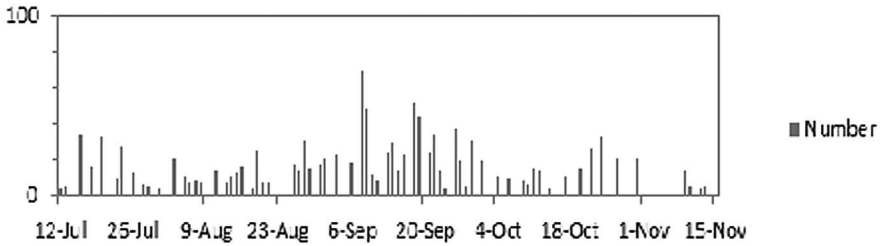


Figure 1. Number of Birds Captured per Day in Autumn 2012 at TRMO



Figure 2. Swainson's Warbler captured at TRMO on August 28, 2012. Photo by Scott Perry.



Figure 3. The author holding an Eastern Screech-Owl captured at TRMO on September 23, 2012. Photo by Karen Daniel.



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# Valley Falls State Park Saw-whet Owl Banding Station Report for 2011 and 2012

Joey Herron

The seventh and eight years of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWOs) at Valley Falls State Park are combined in this report. See Table 1 for 2011 banding results and Table 2 for 2012 banding results.

2011

The seventh year of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls at Valley Falls State Park ended up with the 3rd lowest total since starting in 2005. It appeared that most of the eastern banding stations experienced the same low numbers as compared to other years. Again this year nets were placed on both the north (5) and south sides (2) of the hillside.

Banding began on October 17, 2011, and ended on December 3, 2011. Twenty owls were captured, including three foreign recaptures, one banded in Coudersport, Pennsylvania in October of 2007; and the other banded in Steele, Alabama, in November of 2010, the first banding at that station. Information on the third recapture has not been submitted as of this date.

Captures were spotty throughout the period with the night of November 4th yielding a high number for the season of seven owls in seven and a half hours of banding. The station operated on 19 nights with the nets being opened for seventy-seven and three quarter hours. Nine of the nights yielded owls with a peak capture of seven NSWOs captured on the night of November 4th.

The station had over 125 visitors from five states, including students from the WVU Wildlife Society and various groups and organizations from all over West Virginia.

Of the 20 captures, 15 were adults and 5 were hatch year birds. Females again led the way in captures in 2011 with 18. There was one male and one unknown.

After seven years of banding, 199 NSWOs have been captured, including 19 foreign recaptures. The breakdown shows a heavy advantage for females, 71% to 9% for males. The unknown category completes the last 20%. The adult/hatch year ratio is almost even with 49% adult to 51% hatch year individuals.

Table 1  
Banding Summary for 2011

Date	NSWOs caught
10/17/11	0
10/22/11	0
10/25/11	2
10/30/11	4 (1 foreign recapture)
11/01/11	1
11/02/11	0
11/04/11	7 (2 foreign recaptures)
11/05/11	0
11/08/11	0
11/11/11	1
11/12/11	1
11/13/11	0
11/17/11	0
11/18/11	0
11/19/11	2
11/24/11	1
11/25/11	1
12/01/11	0
12/03/11	0

Total 20

Age

After hatch year (AHY) 6

Second year (SY) 9 75% (adults)

Hatch year (HY) 5 25%

## Sex

Female – 18 – 90%

Male – 1 – 5%

Unknown – 1 – 5%

## 2012

The eighth year of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls at Valley Falls State Park started out very slow, but ended with a flurry of activity in November. A first for the station this year was the capture of two Barred Owls.

Banding began on October 16, 2012, and ended on November 21, 2012. Forty-four NSWOs were captured in 2012, the third best year, including one foreign recapture, the last capture of the year. In addition, the first capture of the year on October 21 marked the 200th NSWO captured at this station.

A seven-day period in November appeared to be the height of the migration with 23 owls captured between November 10 and November 17. The station operated on 18 nights with the nets being opened for seventy and three quarter hours. Thirteen of the nights yielded owls with a peak capture of 10 NSWOs captured on the night of November 15.

Of the 44 captures, 22 were adults and 22 were hatch year birds. Females again led the way in captures in 2012 with 37, with two males and five unknowns. As mentioned earlier, two Barred Owls were captured on separate nights, October 26 and November 9. It is not known if it was the same bird or not, but bands have been received so that future birds will be banded and identified.

After eight years of banding, 243 NSWOs have been captured, including 20 foreign recaptures. The breakdown shows a heavy advantage for females, 74% to 8% for males. The unknown category completes the last 18%. The adult/hatch year ratio is almost even with 49% adult to 51% hatch year individuals.

The station had over 120 visitors from four states, including students from the WVU Wildlife Society and various groups and organizations from all over the state. A special thanks to Milu Karp, a graduate student from West Virginia University who helped with the operation of the station in 2012. Again, I would like to thank Valley Falls State Park superintendent, Ron Fawcett, for the use of the park facilities and allowing visitors to experience the fall migration. Without Ron's support, this operation would not be possible.



Joey Herron holds a banded Barred Owl. Photo by Joey Herron.

Table 2  
Banding Summary for 2012

Date	NSWOs caught
10/16/12	0
10/20/12	0
10/21/12	2
10/24/12	1
10/25/12	0
10/26/12	2 (1 Barred Owl)
11/2/12	1
11/3/12	1
11/5/12	6
11/6/12	1
11/8/12	6
11/9/12	0 (1 Barred Owl)
11/10/12	3
11/13/12	5
11/15/12	10
11/16/12	5
11/17/12	0
11/20/12	1 (1 foreign recapture)
Total	44

Age

After hatch year (AHY) 16

Second year (SY) 6 50% (adults)

Hatch year (HY) 22 50%

Sex

Female – 37 – 84%

Male – 2 – 5%

Unknown – 5 – 11%

511 Ohio Ave  
Fairmont, WV 26554

## Field Notes Spring Season

March 1 – May 31, 2013

Casey Rucker

Our late-arriving winter led into the coldest March since 1960, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University. Heavy snowstorms buried much of West Virginia in early and late March. April and May were slightly warmer than normal, and all three months saw below-average precipitation in most areas of the state.

These notes were gathered from the National Audubon Society sponsored West Virginia Bird Listserv, from bird count results, and from field notes submitted to the editor by e-mail 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 web site: <http://list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html>.

Wendell Argabrite, acting on a tip, found an **American White Pelican** at Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area in Cabell County on March 20, and Cynthia Ellis and Gary Rankin saw the bird there on the next day. Richard Bailey reported 25 **American White Pelicans** on the Kanawha River at Winfield, Putnam County, on April 9. On May 28, Ryan Bosserman saw a **Marbled Godwit** at Apple Grove Fish Hatchery, Mason County. Wendell Argabrite visited the site on May 30, but the bird had already left. Overall, 235 species were reported from 43 counties in the state. Birders found 36 species of warbler plus one hybrid during the spring season.

**Ducks, Swans, Geese**—On March 19, Wendell Argabrite saw a **Snow Goose** at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County. On March 24, N. Wade Snyder found a **Ross's Goose** on the sewage treatment pond in Moorefield, Hardy County, and Hullet Good reported a rare visit to Coonskin Lake, Kanawha County, of a **Ross's Goose** on April 2 and 3. Joe Hildreth continued to host two **Cackling Geese** at his home in Grafton, Taylor County, as he reported on March 11. **Canada Geese** returned to their usual winter haunts at lower elevations in West Virginia. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith found two **Mute Swans** on April 20 at McClintic Wildlife Management Area, Mason County, and the birds were seen there through May 12 by Herb Myers, Gary Rankin, John Hubbard, Beverly Delidow, John Waugaman, and Matthew Orsie. On March 2, James Farley and Tom Masters saw a **swan** at Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area, Berkeley County, identified as a juvenile **Trumpeter Swan** on March 3 by Wendell Argabrite and Matthew Orsie. **Tundra Swans** made appearances in Berkeley (MO, WA, DSy), Hardy (DH, DC), and Jefferson (WS) Counties.

It was a good spring for ducks. There were many reports statewide of **Wood Ducks; Gadwalls; American Wigeons; American Black Ducks; Mallards; Blue-winged Teal; Northern Shovelers; Green-winged Teal; Redheads; Ring-necked Ducks; Lesser Scaup; Buffleheads; Hooded, Common, and Red-breasted Mergansers; and Ruddy Ducks.** John Boback saw six **Northern Pintails** on Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on March 6, and on March 10 Michael Griffith found a lone **Northern Pintail** at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County. Jon Benedetti found a **Canvasback** on the Ohio River in Wood County on March 7 and 9. **Greater Scaup** made appearances in five counties: Barbour (TB), Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (TB, JBo), Putnam (CE, KK), and Tucker (RBo). Joe Hildreth found a **Long-tailed Duck** at the Tygart Lake marina, Taylor County, on March 16; and on the next day Philipp Weber saw a **Long-tailed Duck** on the C&O Canal in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County. Reports of **Common Goldeneyes** came from Hardy (DH), Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (JBo), and Monroe (MO) Counties.

On April 18, Deborah Hale saw a **Common Merganser** with *ten chicks* on the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County, along with six other female **Common Mergansers** nearby. Diane Holsinger, Kathy King, and Jane Whitaker saw a **Hooded Merganser with a duckling** in Moorefield, Hardy County, on May 24.

**Quail**—On May 17, Matthew Orsie was relieved to hear three **Northern Bobwhite** calling on historical breeding grounds near Gerrardstown, Berkeley County. Rodney Bartgis saw and heard **Northern Bobwhite** at his farm in Valley Bend, Randolph County, during the last week of May.

**Pheasants, Grouse, Turkeys**—Birders throughout the state reported **Wild Turkeys** and, in appropriate habitat, **Ruffed Grouse**.

**Loons, Grebes**—Nine counties hosted **Common Loons** this spring. There were late sightings of **Common Loons** on May 13 in Randolph County (GR), on May 18 in Jefferson County (RH), on May 21 in Pendleton County (DH), and on May 25 in Tucker County (LC). Once again, sightings of **grebes** were numerous this spring, with reports of **Pied-billed Grebes** and of **Horned Grebes** from 19 and 10 counties, respectively.

**Cormorants**—West Virginia birders reported **Double-crested Cormorants** in 10 counties.

**Pelicans**—**American White Pelicans** made rare appearances in West Virginia this spring. Details of the sightings may be found at the beginning of these notes.

**Bitterns, Herons, Egrets**—On May 16, Michael Griffith heard a **Least Bittern** at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County. **Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Green Herons** appeared throughout the state. On May 12, James and Judy Phillips saw five **Great Blue Herons**, each *sitting on a nest*, over Indian Creek near Salt Sulphur Springs, Monroe County. On April 30, Randy Bodkins saw a rare **Great Egret** in Canaan Valley, Tucker County. Matthew Orsie found the season's lone **Little Blue**



**Heron** at Lake Shannondale, Jefferson County, on April 12, and Carol Del-Colle and Joette Borzick saw the bird there later that day. Deborah Hale spotted a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** near Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, on April 22, and Matthew Orsie saw the bird in the same location on the same day and the next. Gary Felton heard a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** flying over his home in Kingwood, Preston County, on May 29. James Evans saw a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Pleasant Creek Wildlife Management Area, Barbour County, on March 27.

**Vultures**—Birders in 10 counties reported seeing **Black Vultures**, while **Turkey Vulture** reports came from 18 counties.

**Hawks, Eagles**—On April 23, the author of these notes saw a **Mississippi Kite** flying over Haslacker Road near Maysville, Grant County. **Ospreys** and **Bald Eagles** were reported throughout the state, generally in small numbers. On April 8, Bruni Haydl observed a **Bald Eagle** *feeding a chick* in a nest in her neighbor's yard in Charles Town, Jefferson County. William Tolin saw a pair of **Osprey** *on a nest*, and another **Osprey** *on another nest* at Stonewall Jackson Lake, Lewis County, on March 29. **Northern Harriers** appeared in reports from Grant County (CR), Hardy County (DH, KKi), Jefferson County (BH, DHa), Mason County (KC), Summers County (JJP), Tucker County (KDz, HMy, CR, MC, GR), and Wood County (JB). Reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, **Cooper's Hawks**, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Broad-winged Hawks**, and **Red-tailed Hawks** were widespread in West Virginia. On March 29, Terry Bronson spotted a new *nest* of the resident pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** in Morgantown's White Park, Monongalia County. In spite of the cold weather in March, the only reports of **Rough-legged Hawks** came from Hardy County (DH) on April 7 and from Tucker County (SAn) on March 4. James Phillips reported that the sixth Early Spring Eagle Survey in Summers and Monroe Counties found 10 **Bald Eagles** and one **Golden Eagle** on March 9. **Golden Eagles** were also reported in Grant County (CR), Hardy County (DH), and Wetzel County (WJ).

**Rails, Coots**—James Farley and Tom Masters saw two **Virginia Rails** at Altona Marsh, Jefferson County, on March 10; and on April 17 Matthew Orsie heard a **Virginia Rail** calling at the same location. On April 30, James Phillips saw a **Sora** at Bull Falls, Summers County. On May 16, Michael Griffith heard a **Sora** calling at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County, and four days later Frederick Atwood heard a **Sora** near Maysville, Grant County. As usual, **American Coots** appeared widely in birders' reports.

**Plovers**—There were sightings of **Semipalmated Plovers** at Shady Waters Campground and Apple Grove Fish Hatchery in Mason County during late April and May (MG, WA, DP, MO), and Rob Hilton saw a **Semipalmated Plover** at Altona Marsh, Jefferson County, on May 18. **Killdeer** were well represented with reports from 22 counties.

**Sandpipers**—**Sandpiper** reports were somewhat scanty this spring, with only 14 **sandpiper** species making an appearance. The sighting of a rare **Marbled Godwit** by

Ryan Bosserman in Mason County is described at the beginning of these notes. Observers reported **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers** in 16 and 14 counties, respectively. Reports of **Wilson's Snipe** came from 10 counties, and the following species were each reported in seven counties: **Greater Yellowlegs**: Berkeley (MO, CD), Greenbrier (BWi), Hardy (DH), Jefferson (MO), Mason (WA, MG, DP, JWg, GR, JHu, BDe), Pocahontas (KB), and Wood (JB); **Lesser Yellowlegs**: Hardy (DH), Jackson (CE), Jefferson (MO, JBz, CD), Marion (JBo), Mason (WA, MG, HMy), Pocahontas (DP), and Putnam (KK), and **Least Sandpipers**: Berkeley (MO), Grant (FA), Hardy (MO, FA), Jefferson (MO, CD, RH), Marion (JBo, TB), Mason (MG, WA, HMy, JWg, GR, JHu, BDe), and Pocahontas (DP)). **American Woodcocks** prompted reports in eight counties: Berkeley (WH), Braxton (GN), Jefferson (EK), Monongalia (GN, JBo), Preston (LeJ, LS), Randolph (GR), Roane (DG, HG), and Tucker (KDz, HMy). Other **sandpipers** appeared in reports from only two or three counties each: **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, in Hardy (MO), Jefferson (MO), and Mason (MO) Counties; **White-rumped Sandpipers**, in Jefferson (MO), Marion (TB, JBo, JoH), and Mason (WA) Counties; **Pectoral Sandpipers**, in Hardy (DH) and Mason (MG, WA, DP, MO) Counties; **Dunlin**, in Greenbrier (BWi) and Mason (MG, WA) Counties; and **Red-necked Phalaropes**, in Berkeley (MO, CD, JBz) and Tucker (DH, HMy, BSMS) Counties. Hullet Good saw a **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Coonskin Lake, Kanawha County, on May 11.

Wil Hershberger was surrounded by five displaying **American Woodcocks** near the Jones Spring Cemetery in Berkeley County on March 14. On May 9, a **White-rumped Sandpiper** was a life bird for Joey Herron at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County.

**Gulls, Terns**—There were sightings of **Bonaparte's Gulls** in Hardy (DC, DH), Jackson (CE), Jefferson (MO, DHa, JF), Pleasants (JB), and Wayne (GR) Counties. **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported widely throughout the state, and **Herring Gulls** were reported in four counties: Hardy (DH), Jackson (CE), Jefferson (DHa), and Wood (TB). **Tern** sightings were sparse this season. Birders in Jackson (CE), Jefferson (CD, JBz), Ohio (JBo), and Pleasants (JB) Counties found **Caspian Terns**. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, Michael Griffith, and Matthew Orsie found a **Common Tern**, presumably in Mason County, during their West Virginia big day on May 11. Reports of **Forster's Terns** came from Mason (DP, WA, MG, MO), Pleasants (JB), and Wayne (ReT, CE, BBo, MH, KC, LC, RU) Counties.

**Columbidae**—Linda and Bill Burns continued to host **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in Union, Monroe County, at least through April 25, with sightings by David Patick, Michael Griffith, Matthew Orsie, and Richard Bailey. **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continue to reside throughout the state.

**Cuckoos**—Both **Yellow-billed** and **Black-billed Cuckoos** began to arrive throughout the state in late April, and by the end of the season **Yellow-billed Cuckoos**

had been reported in 13 counties and **Black-billed Cuckoos** in 9 counties. On April 30, Wilma Jarrell saw her first **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** of the year, and on the next day her first **Black-billed Cuckoo**, both near her home in Wileysville, Wetzel County.

**Owls**—On March 28, Jon Benedetti and the Mountwood Bird Club observed a pair of **Barn Owls** in Wood County. Birders in only two West Virginia counties reported **Eastern Screech-Owls**: Jefferson (JBz) and Tucker (KDz). On March 9 Jon Benedetti and the Mountwood Bird Club saw a **Great Horned Owl** on a nest in Wood County, and **Great Horned Owls** also appeared in reports from Jefferson (BH, WS) and Putnam (KC) Counties. **Barred Owl** reports were widespread as usual, with sightings in 13 counties. Jon Benedetti reported **Long-eared Owls** in Pleasants County from mid-March to early April, and **Short-eared Owls** put on a show for Diane Holsinger, Kathy King, and Jane Whitaker near Moorefield, Hardy County, on the evening of March 14. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, Michael Griffith, and Matthew Orsie found a **Northern Saw-Whet Owl** in Pocahontas County on May 11.

**Goatsuckers, Swifts—Common Nighthawks** continued to be relatively scarce, with appearances beginning early May, in Cabell (DP, GR, WA, MG, MO), Grant (FA), Preston (TB), Putnam (KK), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties. Diane Holsinger flushed and re-found a **Chuck-Will's-Widow** near Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, on April 21. **Eastern Whip-Poor-Wills** were seen and heard in many parts of West Virginia this spring, with reports from 11 counties. **Chimney Swifts** began to return during the beginning of April, and by mid-May there were 13 counties with reports of the species.

**Hummingbirds—Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving in mid-April, and inspired reports from 17 counties throughout the state. James and Judith Farley hosted the first **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** reported in West Virginia this year, on April 14 at their home in Jefferson County, and three days later John and Caroline Snyder saw their first-of-year **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** in their yard in Nicholas County.

**Kingfishers—Belted Kingfishers** prompted reports in 18 counties, the same number as last year.

**Woodpeckers**—Our state's seven species of **woodpeckers** were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in nine counties: Berkeley (JBz), Grant (RBi), Hardy (DC), Harrison (JoS), Jefferson (JBz), Putnam (CE), Ritchie (TB), Roane (DG, HG), and Tucker (CR). **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** inspired reports in 14 counties. Jodie Sylvester saw her second **Red-headed Woodpecker**, and the second appearance of the species in her yard, near Rockford, Harrison County, on May 14. Joette Borzik observed **Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers**, as well as **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and **Northern Flicker**, for a seven-**woodpecker** day in her yard in Jefferson County on April 10.

**Falcons**—West Virginia birders reported **American Kestrels** in most parts of the state. For the fourth year in a row, there were multiple sightings of **Merlin** in Canaan

Valley, Tucker County, beginning March 9 (SK, CR, HMy, MC). **Merlins** were also spotted in Hardy County (DH), Kanawha County (JWa), Monongalia County (JBo), and Wetzel County (WJ). **Peregrine Falcon** sightings came from Jefferson County (DHa), Mason County (DP, WA, MG, MO), Mercer County (JP), Monongalia County (TB), Pleasants County (JB), Summers County (JP), Wetzel County (WJ), and Wood County (MO).

**Flycatchers**—Alex Tsiatsos found the season's only reported **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, in Inwood, Berkeley County (WJ), on May 17 and 18. Widely-reported throughout the state were **Eastern Wood-Pewees**, **Acadian Flycatchers**, **Eastern Phoebs**, **Great Crested Flycatchers**, and **Eastern Kingbirds**. Birders in Pocahontas (KH) and Tucker (HMy, MC) Counties reported **Alder Flycatcher**. Six counties each saw reports of **Willow Flycatcher**: Cabell (MO), Grant (FA), Jefferson (RH, JBz, DHa), Pocahontas (KH), Tucker (MC, HMy), and Tyler (TB); and **Least Flycatcher**: Monongalia (TB, LS), Pendleton (HMy), Pocahontas (DP), Randolph (RB), Tucker (HMy, MC, FA), and Wood (JB).

**Shrikes**—Richard Bailey reported that **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found in Greenbrier, Monroe, and Pocahontas Counties from April 23 through 25.

**Vireos**—Our five breeding **vireos**, **White-eyed**, **Yellow-throated**, **Blue-headed**, **Warbling**, and **Red-eyed**, returned to nesting grounds throughout the state beginning in early April. Jon Benedetti found two **Philadelphia Vireos** at the McDonough Refuge in Wood County on May 12, and on the next day Matthew Orsie got good looks at a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Sleepy Creek WMA, Berkeley County.

**Crows, Jays, Ravens**—**Blue Jays**, **American Crows**, and **Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. **Fish Crows** prompted reports in Berkeley County (RB), Grant County (RB, MO, RBi), and Jefferson County (CD, DHa, JF, SS, WS, JBz).

**Larks**—Frederick Atwood heard a **Horned Lark** singing on Hogueland Lane, Grant County, on May 19. Observers also reported **Horned Larks** in Jefferson County (BH, JF), and Mason County (DP, WA, MG).

**Swallows**—**Purple Martins** were reported in Jefferson (JBz, MO, SS, JF), Mason (DP, MG), Monongalia (JBo, TB), Putnam (KK), Randolph (RBi), Summers (JP), Wayne (CE, BBo, MH, KC, LC, RU), and Wood (JB) Counties. **Tree Swallows** had already made several appearances in West Virginia despite generally cold temperatures at the end of the winter. **Tree Swallows**, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**, and **Barn Swallows** were widespread in their return to West Virginia. On May 3, Jeff Del Col watched numerous **Tree**, **Northern Rough-Winged**, and **Barn Swallows** by the covered bridge in Philippi, Barbour County. Reports of **Bank Swallows** came from Grant County (FA), Hardy County (DH, KKi), Jefferson County (MO), Mercer County (JP), Monongalia (TB), Ohio County (PM), and Preston County (TB), and **Cliff Swallow** reports came from the following counties: Grant (CR, FA),

Jefferson (MO), Mason (WA, DP, MG), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas (DH), Preston (TB), Randolph (DH), and Wayne (CE, BBo, MH, KC, LC, RU).

**Paridae**—**Black-capped** and **Carolina Chickadees** were reported in their usual habitats in West Virginia this spring. On May 3, Bruni Haydl watched a **Carolina Chickadee** fly off from her feeder with two mealworms in its bill, *delivering one to its young* and one to its mate, in Charles Town, Jefferson County. **Tufted Titmice** appeared throughout our state as well.

**Nuthatches**—Birders reported **Red-breasted** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** widely this spring season. John Boback found a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County, on April 27.

**Creepers**—West Virginia birders reported **Brown Creepers** in Barbour (JD), Berkeley (WH), Jefferson (BH, DHa, JBz, CD), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas (KH), Preston (LeJ, TB), Tucker (HMy, MC), and Wood (JB) Counties.

**Wrens**—**Carolina** and **House Wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state. **Winter Wrens** were reported in Barbour (JD), Hardy (DH, KKi), Jefferson (JF, MO), Kanawha (HG), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas (DP), Preston (LeJ), Randolph (HMy), Tucker (HMy, FA), and Wayne (DP, GR) Counties.

**Gnatcatchers**—Beginning in early April, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** returned to breeding grounds throughout the state.

**Kinglets**—**Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** appeared in reports from throughout the state.

**Thrushes**—Seven species of **thrush** were found in West Virginia this spring. **Eastern Bluebirds**, **Hermit** and **Wood Thrushes**, and **American Robins** were seen throughout most reporting counties. **Veeries** made appearances in Hardy (DH), Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (JBo), Pocahontas (DP, WA, MG, MO, KH), Randolph (HMy), and Tucker (HMy, MC) Counties. Terry Bronson saw the only reported **Gray-cheeked Thrush** of the season at the Botanical Garden in Morgantown, Monongalia County, on May 20. Reports of **Swainson's Thrush** included Berkeley (MO), Cabell (MO), Hardy (DH), Pocahontas (MO), and Tucker (DH) County sightings.

**Mockingbirds, Thrashers**—During the spring season **Gray Catbirds**, **Northern Mockingbirds**, and **Brown Thrashers** once again serenaded their breeding grounds in West Virginia.

**Starlings**—**European Starlings** continued their broad occupation of habitats in our state.

**Pipits**—**American Pipits** made appearances in Barbour (TB), Jefferson (DHa, MO), Kanawha (DWo), Mason (MG, WA), and Randolph (RB, TH, SK) Counties.

**Waxwings**—**Cedar Waxwings** were reported only in eight counties this spring: Barbour (JD), Berkeley (JF, AT), Grant (DH), Jefferson (DHa, SC, CD, JF, MO, JBz), Kanawha (EM), Monongalia (TB), Tucker (MC), and Tyler (TB).

**Warblers**—On May 14, while surveying for the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project II, Doren Burrell found a **Brewster's Warbler** near Fields Creek, Kanawha County. On May 1, James and Beverly Triplett were surprised to see a **Yellow-throated Warbler** eating seed at their feeders in Charleston, Kanawha County. On May 1, LeJay Graffious and Larry Schwab found 11 species of **warbler** while on a tour of northeastern Preston County. The following warblers, all regular migrants through, or breeders in, West Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Ovenbird**: April 11, Jefferson (JN); **Worm-Eating Warbler**: April 11, Summers (JP); **Louisiana Waterthrush**: March 29, Cabell (MG, WA); **Northern Waterthrush**: April 27, Pocahontas (DP); **Golden-winged Warbler**: April 28, Raleigh (MAW); **Blue-winged Warbler**: April 17, Wayne (MG); **Black-and-white Warbler**: April 9, Pendleton (CR); **Prothonotary Warbler**: April 19, Jefferson (MO); **Swainson's Warbler**: April 28, Kanawha (HG); **Tennessee Warbler**: May 3, Preston (GF); **Nashville Warbler**: April 26, Jefferson (MO), Wayne (MG), and Wood (JB); **Mourning Warbler**: May 11, Pocahontas (DP, WA, MG, MO); **Kentucky Warbler**: April 16, Summers (JP); **Common Yellowthroat**: April 5, Jefferson (DHa); **Hooded Warbler**: April 12, Kanawha (CE); **American Redstart**: April 12, Kanawha (CE); **Cape May Warbler**: May 12, Kanawha (JWa); **Cerulean Warbler**: April 18, Cabell (MG, WA) and Wayne (ReT); **Northern Parula**: April 9, Cabell (ReT) and Wayne (JWg); **Magnolia Warbler**: April 30, Tucker (CR); **Bay-breasted Warbler**: May 12, Wood (JB); **Blackburnian Warbler**: April 27, Pocahontas (DP); **Yellow Warbler**: April 11, Wetzel (WJ); **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: April 28, Raleigh (MAW); **Blackpoll Warbler**: May 8, Jefferson (CD); **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: April 26, Jefferson (MO); **Palm Warbler**: March 10, Jefferson (JF); **Pine Warbler**: March 12, Summers (WP); **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: March 2, Cabell (DB), Kanawha (HG) and Monongalia (JBo); **Yellow-throated Warbler**: April 8, Monongalia (JBo), Putnam (KK), and Summers (JP); **Prairie Warbler**: April 13, Wayne (DP, MG); **Black-throated Green Warbler**: April 10, Summers (JP); **Canada Warbler**: May 11, Pocahontas (DP, WA, MG, MO); **Wilson's Warbler**: May 12, Kanawha (JWa); and **Yellow-breasted Chat**: April 28, Cabell (MG, WA). Arrivals this year were generally later than they have been in the last few years.

**Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos**—**Eastern Towhees** appeared at the beginning of the spring season and were reported from all areas of the state. Fifteen species of sparrow made appearances in accustomed haunts throughout our state. Reports of **American Tree Sparrow** came from Hardy (DC), Jefferson (JF), Mason (DP, WA, MG), Monongalia (GN), and Wood (JB) Counties. **White-throated** and **White-crowned Sparrows** lingered till late in May, and both species were widely reported. The only report of **Clay-colored Sparrow** this spring came from Richard and Jeannette Esker at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Pleasants County, on May 6. Resident and returning **sparrow** species made first appearances this season in reports

from the following counties: **Chipping** on March 3 in Wayne (GR), **Field** on March 11 in Jefferson (WS), **Vesper** on April 6 in Cabell (MG, WA), **Savannah** on March 7 in Hardy (DH), **Grasshopper** on April 18 in Grant (RBi), **Henslow's** on May 16 in Jefferson (MO), **Fox** on March 2 in Cabell (DB), **Song** on March 2 in Cabell (DB) and Jefferson (BH), **Lincoln's** on March 7 in Hardy (DH), **Swamp** on March 2 in Cabell (DB), and **Dark-eyed Junco** on March 2 in Jefferson (BH).

**Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks**—**Summer Tanagers** were observed in Cabell (DP), Kanawha (HG), Wayne (CE, BBo, MH, KC, LC, RU), and Wood (JB, DJE) Counties. Sixteen counties hosted sightings of returning **Scarlet Tanagers**, the first of which was on April 17 in Putnam County by Kevin Cade.

**Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. On April 3, Herb Myers was at home in Harman, Randolph County, when he watched a **Northern Cardinal** hover at a suet log long enough to grab a bite and fly off with it. **Blue Grosbeaks** were unusually well observed this spring, with reports from Grant (CR), Hardy (DH, KKi), Jefferson (JBz), Mason (MO), Morgan (JBz, CD), Summers (JP), and Wayne (GR) Counties.

**Icterids**—**Bobolinks** returned to 10 reporting counties, with an early first appearance on April 24 in Pocahontas County, where Sharon Kearns saw them near her home in Hillsboro. Birders in most parts of West Virginia reported **Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Rusty Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Orchard and Baltimore Orioles**.

**Finches, Allies**—**Common Redpolls** appeared at the feeders of James and Judy Phillips in Pipestem, Summers County, during the week beginning March 3, and at those of John Morrison in Morgantown, Monongalia County, on March 20. **Purple Finches, House Finches, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches** appeared in reports from appropriate habitats throughout the state. Holly Canfield hosted five lingering **Pine Siskins** at her feeders in Buckhannon, Upshur County, on May 15. **Evening Grosbeaks** lingered remarkably late in Hardy County, where Diane Holsinger saw them on May 2 at Kathy King's feeders in Moorefield, as part of a three-grosbeak day, and in Tucker County, where the author of these notes last saw them on April 29.

**Weaver Finches**—The **House Sparrow** continues to colonize our state, primarily in urban settings.

Contributors to the Spring Field Notes: Sarah Anderson (SAn), Wendell Argabrite (WA), Frederick Atwood (FA), Kitty Bailey (KB), Richard Bailey (RBi), Rodney Bartgis (RB), Jon Benedetti (JB), John Boback (JBo), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Ben Borda (BBo), Joette Borzik (JBz), Terry Bronson (TB), Doren Burrell (DB), Kevin Cade (KC), David Carr (DC), Laura Ceperley (LC), Sam Chapman (SC), Derek Courtney (DCo), Marquette Crockett (MC), Jeffrey del Col (JD), Carol Del-Colle (CD), Beverly Delidow (BDe), Ken Dzaack (KDz), Cynthia Ellis (CE), Richard and Jeannette

Esker (DJE), James Farley (JF), Gary Felton (GF), Donny Good (DG), Hullet Good (HG), LeJay Graffious (LeJ), Michael Griffith (MG), Deborah Hale (DHa), Terry Harmon (TH), Bruni Haydl (BH), Joey Herron (JoH), Wil Hershberger (WH), Rob Hilton (RH), Ken Hinkle (KH), Diane Holsinger (DH), Martha Hopper (MH), John Hubbard (JHu), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Kim Kazmierski (KK), Stephen Kimbrell (SK), Kathy King (KKi), Elliot Kirschbaum (EK), Paul McKay (PM), Earl Melton (EM), Herb Myers (HMy), Gretchen Nareff (GN), Jean Neely (JN), Matthew Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), Wendy Perrone (WP), James Phillips (JP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), Sanford Sagalkin (SS), Larry Schwab (LS), N. Wade Snyder (WS), Robert Summers and Margaret Straley (BSMS), Diane Sylvester (DSy), Jodie Sylvester (JoS), Rennie Talbert (ReT), James and Beverly Triplett (JBT), Alex Tsiatsos (AT), Jim Waggy (JWa), Mindy and Allen Waldron (MAW), John Waugaman (JWg), Barry Williams (BWi), Doug Wood (DWo), and Randy Urian (RU).

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## 2013 Calendar of Events The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

Date	Activity	Place
January	BBC Membership Month .....	Wheeling, WV
February	Write an article for the <i>Mail Bag</i> or <i>The Redstart</i> .....	mail to editors
February 7-9	Trip to Killdeer Plains (Contact Gene Hilton 304-428-8641)	
March 8-10	Mid-Winter Meeting (Contact Dick Esker) .....	North Bend S.P.
March 16	Waterfowl Field Trip (day trip) (Contact Carl Slater) .....	Seneca Lake, OH
April 21	3 Rivers Bird Club (day trip) (Contact Ryan Tomazin) .....	Raccoon Creek State Park, PA
May 4	International Migratory Bird Day, N. American Migration Count .....	local chapters
May 9-12	Wildflower Pilgrimage .....	Blackwater Falls State Park, WV
May 14-29	Spain Trip	
June 1-8	Foray - Pocahontas County 4-H Camp .....	Thornwood, WV
June 10-16	Sortie - to be announced. (Contact Dawn Fox) .....	Pendleton Co., WV
July	TBA Bonus Bird Weekend (Contact Carl Slater)	
August 10-Oct. 5	Bird Banding .....	Dolly Sods, WV
October 12	Board of Trustees Meeting (Contact Carl Slater) .....	Wheeling, WV
October 18-20	BBC Reunion .....	Canaan Valley State Park
November 6-10	Eastern Shore (Contact Carl Slater)	
Dec. 14-Jan. 5, '14	Christmas Bird Counts (Send reports to Jane Whitaker) .....	local groups

### BBC FORAYS (dates and places tentative)

2013	Pocahontas County 4-H Camp	Thornwood, WV
2014	Camp Pioneer, Randolph County	Beverly, WV
2015	Camp Galilee, Preston County	Terra Alta, WV

### SEASONAL FIELD NOTES DUE

Winter: March 15      Spring: June 15      Summer: September 15      Fall: December 15  
 MAIL TO: Casey Rucker, P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884      autoblock@frontiernet.net

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February 15      May 15      August 15      November 15  
 MAIL TO: Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017      wwwarblers@hotmail.com

### <http://brooksbirdclub.org>

The dates for the 2013 BBC program may be changed if necessary. Changes will be announced on the Web page or in *The Mail Bag*.

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