

ISSN: 0034-2165

*The* **REDSTART**

VOLUME 86, NUMBER 3

JULY, 2019



**PUBLISHED BY THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB**

# 2019 - The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

Founded September 1932  
Named in honor of A. B. Brooks, Naturalist

## OFFICERS

|                     |  |              |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| President           | Janice Emrick, 52713 SR 800, Jerusalem, OH 43747             | 740-472-5212 |
| President-Elect     | Cynthia Slater, 2310 Cowling Road, Scottsdale, PA 15683      | 724-570-8502 |
| Vice President      | Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017 | 412-220-9726 |
| Recording Secretary | Sally Egan, 910 Sunset Dr., Bridgeport, WV 26330             | 304-842-9511 |
| Treasurer           | Scott Emrick, 52713 SR 800, Jerusalem, OH 43747              | 740-472-5212 |
| Imm. Past President | A. R. Buckelew, Jr., 111 Logan Ct., Bethany, WV 26032        | 304-829-4392 |

## ADMINISTRATION

|                      |   |              |
|----------------------|---|--------------|
| Administrator        | Carl Slater, 56249 Hospital Road, Bellaire, OH 43906    | 740-671-1649 |
| Membership Secretary | Juanita Slater, 56249 Hospital Road, Bellaire, OH 43906 | 740-671-1649 |

## PUBLICATIONS

|                     |  |              |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Webmaster           | Larry Helgerman, 1989 Louisa Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003<br>brooksbirdclubweb@gmail.com | 304-242-8562 |
| Editor The Redstart | Casey Rucker, P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884                                     | 304-866-4004 |
| Editor The Mail Bag | Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017                         | 412-220-9726 |

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

|                |   |              |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| Serve Through: |   |              |
| 2019 .....     | Brian McMillan, 222 Hanalei Dr., Morgantown, WV 26508       | 304-952-0377 |
|                | LeJay Graffious, P.O. Box 69, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525      | 304-379-7505 |
|                | Jeanne Barnes, 23 Northgate Dr., New Martinsville, WV 26155 | 304-455-4454 |
| 2020 .....     | Jan Runyan, 540 Genteel Ridge Road, Wellsburg, WV 26070     | 304-737-3777 |
|                | Orion Metheny, 210 Sumac Circle, Morgantown, WV 26508       | 304-594-3233 |
|                | Suzanne Quinn, 44 Easy Drive, Dallas, WV 26036              | 304-547-5162 |
| 2021 .....     | William Hicks, P.O. Box 296, Bethany, WV 26032              | 304-829-4274 |
|                | Martin Tingley, 832 Cale Road, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525     | 304-379-3753 |
|                | Jim Triplett, 1783 Smith Road, Charleston, WV 25314         | 304-345-3336 |

## ADVISORS

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Tom Fox, 1447 Sycamore Road, Millstone, WV 25261               | 304-354-7686 |
| Carol McCullough, 1119 Queensbury Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 | 412-921-6873 |
| Robert Rine, 1269 National Rd., Apt. 51, Wheeling, WV 26003    | 304-243-8766 |

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

|                    |  |              |
|--------------------|--|--------------|
| Budget             | Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017 | 412-220-9726 |
| Research           | Greg E. Eddy, 3603 Kirkwood Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031         | 703-980-3751 |
| Foray              | Cynthia Slater, 2310 Cowling Road, Scottsdale, PA 15683      | 724-570-8502 |
| Foray Directors    | Janice Emrick, 52713 SR 800, Jerusalem, OH 43747             | 740-472-5212 |
|                    | Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017 | 412-220-9726 |
| Backyard Sanctuary | Cynthia Ellis, 3114 Steel Ridge Rd., Red House, WV 25168     | 304-586-4135 |
| Club Library       | Dorothy Broemsen, 340 Peter's Run Rd., Wheeling, WV 26003    | 304-242-4498 |
| Historian          | Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017 | 412-220-9726 |

# The REDSTART

---

VOLUME 86, NUMBER 3

JULY, 2019

---

| <b>Contents</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Sabine's Gull Appears in Marion County<br>—Joey Herron .....                  | 72          |
| American Ornithological Society Taxonomic Changes 2019<br>—Casey Rucker ..... | 74          |
| eBird Reports and News<br>—Michael Slaven .....                               | 76          |
| Field Notes<br>—Casey Rucker .....  | 78          |

## **Editorial Staff**

Editor • Casey Rucker, P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884 • [autoblock@frontiernet.net](mailto:autoblock@frontiernet.net)

Associate Editor • Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017 • [wwwarblers@hotmail.com](mailto:wwwarblers@hotmail.com)

Field Notes Editor • Casey Rucker, P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884 • [autoblock@frontiernet.net](mailto:autoblock@frontiernet.net)

eBird Editor • Michael Slaven, 632 West Virginia Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26591 • [mikeslavenwv@gmail.com](mailto:mikeslavenwv@gmail.com)

Advisory Editorial Board • A. R. Buckelew, Jr., Greg E. Eddy, Joey Herron, Matthew Orsie, James D. Phillips

*The Redstart* is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October at P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003. The journal of the Brooks Bird Club, it is mailed to all members in good standing. Nonmember subscription price is \$17. Individual copies are \$4, except the Foray issue, which is \$8. Changes of address and requests for back issues should be mailed to P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003. Articles for publication and books for review should be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. Printed on recycled paper. ISSN: 0034-2165

# Sabine's Gull Appears in Marion County, West Virginia; 4<sup>th</sup> State Record in Fall 2018

Joey Herron

A beautifully marked juvenile Sabine's Gull showed up at Prickett's Fort State Park in Marion County, West Virginia on August 23, 2018. This is the first record for Marion County and only the fourth state record; the other three were recorded near the Ohio River (WVBRC 2019). Prickett's Fort State Park, located along the Monongahela River, has a diverse habitat including a large riparian area which is favorable for migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, and gulls.

On the evening of August 23<sup>rd</sup>, I was taking some photographs of a migrating Magnolia Warbler that was feeding off the southwest side of the observation platform. After getting some looks and taking a few photos, I turned around toward the water and a white, gull-like bird flew slowly past the platform, circled and headed back toward the river. I snapped a few photos and my initial impression was that a Bonaparte's Gull had flown by. I looked at the photos on my camera and the field marks led me in another direction. I quickly referenced my field guide and came up with two possibilities: Kittiwake or Sabine's Gull, both with forked tails. Fortunately, the bird reappeared and flew around the platform area for an extended time and then landed on the water.

The bird fed and flew about for more than an hour in front of the platform providing excellent views. I was able to get many nice photos and observe the bird's behavior as it fed, took a bath, slept, and flew like a moth all around the bay area in front of the platform.

Many thanks to Joe Hildreth from Grafton who helped confirm the identification and showed up later that evening to observe the gull too. Fortunately, the gull hung around for a few days and provided great looks and photos for a number of birders in the state.

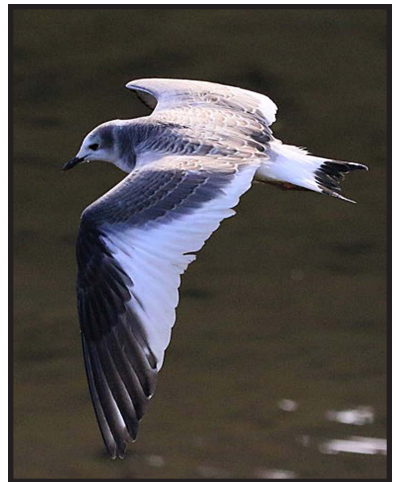
## Reference

WVBRC (West Virginia Bird Records Committee). 2019. West Virginia bird review list May 23, 2019. <http://www.brooksbirdclub.org>.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*:

1. 09/24/93; Buckley Island, Wood Co.; P Morrison & M Ellis; Redstart 62:120-121.
2. 09/04/97; Ohio River above Point Pleasant, Mason Co.; W Argabrite; WVBRC #98-2.
3. 09/19/00; Hancock Co.; R Donaghy, J Fenske & W Yoder; WABRC #2000-2-A.

511 Ohio Ave  
Fairmont, WV 26554



Photographs by Joey Herron.

## A.O.S. Taxonomic Changes for 2019

Casey Rucker

The Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) published the sixtieth supplement to the AOS Check-list on June 24, 2019, and made the article publicly available immediately (Chesser et al. 2019). Among the notable changes extralimital to West Virginia were the renaming of Blue-throated Hummingbird, a regular visitor to southeastern Arizona, to “Blue-throated Mountain-gem,” and a split of White-winged Scoter into three species which will not affect the West Virginia list. As has recently been the case, no species was added to or deleted from the West Virginia bird list. Additionally, the taxonomic order of *Charadrius* plovers, Hirundinidae (swallows), and Passerellidae (sparrows) was changed and four warbler species were placed in a new genus.

**New Genus.** Four warblers on the West Virginia list have been moved to the newly named genus *Leiothlypis* from *Oreothlypis*.

**New Scientific Names.** Accordingly, the following species have new scientific names:

|                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tennessee Warbler      | <i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i>   |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | <i>Leiothlypis celata</i>      |
| Nashville Warbler      | <i>Leiothlypis ruficapilla</i> |
| Virginia’s Warbler     | <i>Leiothlypis virginiae</i> . |

**Changes in taxonomic order.** The order of species in the genus *Charadrius* has been reshuffled, and they are now in the following order:

|                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Killdeer            | <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>    |
| Semipalmated Plover | <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i> |
| Piping Plover       | <i>Charadrius melodus</i> .    |

The order of species in the family Hirundinidae has been changed to the following:

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bank Swallow                  | <i>Riparia riparia</i>            |
| Tree Swallow                  | <i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>        |
| Northern Rough-winged Swallow | <i>Steligopteryx serripennis</i>  |
| Purple Martin                 | <i>Progne subis</i>               |
| Barn Swallow                  | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>            |
| Cliff Swallow                 | <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i> . |

The order of species in the family Passerellidae was also changed, as follows.

|                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bachman’s Sparrow     | <i>Peucaea aestivalis</i>      |
| Grasshopper Sparrow   | <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>   |
| Lark Sparrow          | <i>Chondestes grammacus</i>    |
| Lark Bunting          | <i>Calamospiza melanocoryx</i> |
| Chipping Sparrow      | <i>Spizella passerina</i>      |
| Clay-colored Sparrow  | <i>Spizella pallida</i>        |
| Field Sparrow         | <i>Spizella pusilla</i>        |
| Fox Sparrow           | <i>Passerella iliaca</i>       |
| American Tree Sparrow | <i>Spizelloides arborea</i>    |
| Dark-eyed Junco       | <i>Junco hyemalis</i>          |

|                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| White-crowned Sparrow  | <i>Zonotricha leucophryx</i>     |
| Harris's Sparrow       | <i>Zonotricha querula</i>        |
| White-throated Sparrow | <i>Zonotricha albicollis</i>     |
| Vesper Sparrow         | <i>Poocetes gramineus</i>        |
| LeConte's Sparrow      | <i>Ammospiza leconteii</i>       |
| Nelson's Sparrow       | <i>Ammospiza nelsoni</i>         |
| Baird's Sparrow        | <i>Centronyx bairdii</i>         |
| Henslow's Sparrow      | <i>Centronyx henslowii</i>       |
| Savannah Sparrow       | <i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i> |
| Song Sparrow           | <i>Melospiza melodia</i>         |
| Lincoln's Sparrow      | <i>Melospiza lincolni</i>        |
| Swamp Sparrow          | <i>Melospiza georgiana</i>       |
| Canyon Towhee          | <i>Melozona fusca</i>            |
| Green-tailed Towhee    | <i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>          |
| Spotted Towhee         | <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>          |
| Eastern Towhee         | <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> . |

Will Hershberger, Secretary of the West Virginia Bird Records Committee, has revised our state list, which is available online at links located at the bottom of the page on <http://www.brooksbirdclub.org/west-virginia-bird-records-committee.html>.

#### Reference

R. T. Chesser, K. J. Burns, C. Cicero, J. L. Dunn, A. W. Kratter, I. J. Lovette, P. C. Rasmussen, J. V. Remsen, Jr., D. F. Stotz, B. M. Winger, and K. Winker. 2019. Sixtieth supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds. *Auk* 136, ukz042. <https://academic.oup.com/auk/advance-article/doi/10.1093/auk/ukz042/5522257>.

**eBird Report Winter  
December 1, 2018 – February 28, 2019**

Michael Slaven



**American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), Pleasants County  
photograph by Michael Slaven

According to the evidence from eBird reports, birding in West Virginia from December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019, seemingly was impacted by the unusually warm and wet weather patterns that have been present for the last two winters. As one tracks the data from the eBird reports, it is striking how the elevated temperatures and diminished snowfall affected the number and variety of species seen in our state. Some birds, particularly scoter species of ducks, as well as gull species that occasionally come south from the Great Lakes during severe weather, were notably rare.

In a previous article, I documented how eBird reports for gull species showed clearly that mild weather conditions and above-average temperatures in the Great Lakes proved a nearly infallible predictor of sparse gull sightings in West Virginia. Casey Rucker's documentation of sightings from the listserv and the eBird reports show a similar trend from this last winter that is echoed in the data I have reviewed. According to reports from the Yeager Airport Station (near Charleston, WV), during the last three years, average temperatures were well above expected February levels. The average temperature in February was 43 degrees in 2019, after two straight years (2017 and 2018) of 46 degrees F. This stands in contrast to the years 2014 (average temperature 34 F) and 2015 (average temperature 26 degrees F; WU 2019).

Given the historical trends in eBird, it was to be expected that some usual wintertime visitors would likely not appear in the Mountain State during these warmer winters, while other species not found during normally-cold winters may make appearances, and that



was indeed the case over this winter. Gulls, for example, were limited in numbers and species, probably because the conditions at Lake Ontario were not very cold with only limited icing, leaving the gulls with plenty of open water. There were just a few reports of **Bonaparte's Gulls** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*), **Herring Gulls** (*Larus argentatus*), and a lone **Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus marinus*), as a result of open waters in the north that gave the gulls no reason to stray south to find expanses of ice-free lacustrine habitat. **Glaucous Gulls** (*Larus hyperboreus*), were not seen at all. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** (*Larus fuscus*), and **Iceland Gulls** (*Larus glaucoides*) were also entirely absent from West Virginia eBird reports this past winter. The lone **Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus marinus*), report came from Summers County in February.

**Red-necked Grebes** (*Podiceps grisegena*), seem also to have been noteworthy for their absence. While never plentiful in West Virginia, these birds were spotted during the winter seasons between 2013 and 2016 in at least six distinct locations, scattered through the northern, western and central portions of the state on rivers and lakes; the same species was reported only once in the winter of 2018–2019 on eBird, and then only in the far eastern portion of the state. The temperature almost certainly played a role in the lack of sightings. The bird spotted in the east this year was at the edge of the flyway that many of these birds utilize when traveling to locations along the northeastern coast of the US during winter. The birds in the central and western portions of the state seen in earlier years were likely driven south from Lake Ontario during periods of icing on the lake. Since the Great Lakes had limited ice conditions last winter, the grebes stayed where they were on the large inland lake.

A rare visitor to the state was an **American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) observed in Pleasants County; the appearance generated twenty-five eBird reports in February 2019, and continued into the next month. My photograph in this report is from March 1. The species, while fairly common in inland locations, is quite unusual for West Virginia.

Another welcome surprise was multiple reports of **Evening Grosbeaks** (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), which appeared in a wide swath of the state, including sightings in Mineral, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Preston, Summers, and Tucker Counties. As many as fifty birds at a time were observed from December 2018 to February 2019 during this irruption year. They are big, chunky finches that love to visit feeders in winter. They were almost unheard of in the eastern US until the end of the nineteenth century but spread eastward and now can be found in northeastern states and Canada's Maritime Provinces. In winter, the species tends to wander, and often visits feeders. West Virginia is outside the normal range of these colorful birds, but occasionally they do come here in the winter, and their appearance made for a very special treat for West Virginia birders.

## Reference

WU (Weather Underground). 2019. Charleston, WV: History. <https://www.wunderground.com/history/monthly/us/wv/charleston/KCRW/date>. Accessed July 3, 2019.

## Field Notes Winter Season

December 1, 2018 – February 28, 2019

Casey Rucker

December brought an end to the wettest fall, and the wettest year, on record in West Virginia, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University. All three months this winter were warmer and wetter than usual.

These notes were gathered from (a) the West Virginia Birds Listserv, sponsored by the National Audubon Society, (b) Christmas Bird Count (CBC) results, and (c) field notes submitted to the editor by email 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>, and the results of the Christmas Bird Counts may be found at <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>.

A **Painted Bunting** appeared once again in early January at a private residence near Shepherdstown, Jefferson County, as reported by David Patick, who along with Joshua Holland and Michael Griffith saw the bird on January 6. Warmer-than-usual temperatures accompanied unseasonal appearances by **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Northern Parula**, and **Nashville** and **Blackpoll warblers**. Overall, bird diversity increased slightly compared to the last few years this winter in the Mountain State, with 145 species reported from 34 of West Virginia's 55 counties.

**Ducks, Swans, and Geese** – Sightings of **geese** were down in West Virginia compared to the last few years. **Snow Geese** appeared in Jackson (TB, JsH), Mason (DP, GR, MG, JK, JsH), Randolph (RB), and Summers (JJP, MAW) Counties, while **Ross's Geese** were found only in Mason (JK, MG, JsH) and Putnam (JsH) Counties. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported in Mason (JsH, JK, MG), Pleasants (JB, JsH), and Randolph (WB) Counties, and birders observed **Cackling Geese** in Berkeley County (RB, BD), Jackson County (TB, JsH), Mason County (JsH, TB), and Pleasants County (TB, JB, JsH). Reports of **Canada Geese** were as usual widespread throughout the state. This season birders reported **Mute Swans** in Berkeley County (RB, BD), Hardy County (DaG), Mason County (DP, MG, JK, GR, TB, JsH, JBT, ReT), Pleasants County (TB, JsH), and Wood County (JB). Diane Holsinger discovered a **Trumpeter Swan** on Hutter Road in Hardy County on January 27 and was joined by Kathy King in seeing the bird on February 4. **Tundra Swans** were observed in Hardy (RB), Jefferson (JBz, CD), Mason (DP, GR, MG, JK, JsH, TB), Summers (JJP), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties.



Photograph of Common Goldeneye by David Patick.

**Waterfowl** numbers were strong for the third year in a row. The following species made appearances in at least ten West Virginia counties: **Wood Ducks, Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Canvasbacks, Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, and Hooded and Common Mergansers.** Birders in at least seven counties each found **American Wigeons, Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoters,**



Photograph of Long-tailed Duck by David Patick.

and **Long-tailed Ducks.** Randy Bodkins found a **White-winged Scoter** at the Davis water treatment ponds in Tucker County on February 19 and again on February 23. On February 27, Rodney Bartgis and Robert Dean found 21 **waterfowl** species in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties. The following birds inspired reports from the counties listed:



Photograph of Red-breasted Merganser by David Patick.

**Blue-winged Teal** in Mason (JBT); **Northern Shovelers** in Mason (JsH, JK, MG) and Pleasants (LC); **Northern Pintails** in Berkeley (RB, BD), Hardy (DH), Jefferson (CBC, MO), Mason (DP, MG, JK, JBT, ReT), Monongalia (JBo), and Putnam (CE, KK); **Green-winged Teal** in Berkeley (RB, BD), Cabell (DP, MG, JK), Grant (FA), Mason (DP, GR, JBT), Putnam (DP, MG, JK, GR, KK), and Wetzel (WJ); **Black Scoter** in Monongalia (HC, DCo); **Red-breasted Mergansers** in Jefferson (MO, RB, BD), Kanawha (RG), Mason (GR, DP, MG, JK), and Monongalia (HC, DCo); and **Ruddy Ducks** in Kanawha (CBC), Mason (DP, GR, MG, JK, TB), Monongalia (HC, DCo, CBC), Randolph (RB), and Wetzel (WJ).

**Grouse and Turkeys**

– There were **Ruffed Grouse** reports from Christmas Bird Counts in Monongalia, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph, and Tucker Counties. Birders found **Wild**

**Turkeys** in many counties throughout the state, including many on the tallies of Christmas Bird Counts.

**Grebes** – It was a good winter for **Pied-billed** and **Horned grebe** reports, which came from throughout the state. Hannah Clipp and Derek Courtney spotted a **Red-necked Grebe** at Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on December 8.

**Pigeons and Doves** – **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continue to reside throughout the state, as reported primarily in Christmas Bird Counts. **Eurasian Collared-Doves**

continued in Union, Monroe County, as observed by James and Judy Phillips and Joshua Holland.

**Coots** – **American Coots** appeared in six counties this winter.

**Cranes** – Joshua Holland watched 27 **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Beech Fork State Park, Wayne County, on January 11. James and Judy Phillips first heard, then saw two **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Bluestone State Park in Summers County on February 3.

**Plovers** – Reports of **Killdeer** were surprisingly sparse this warm winter, with records from only seven counties.

**Sandpipers** – **American Woodcock** showed up in Cabell (JsH, JK, MG), Calhoun (TF), Randolph (RB), and Summers (JJP) Counties, mostly in late February. Birders in Pendleton (CBC) and Tucker (CR) Counties reported **Wilson's Snipe**. The Pendleton Christmas Bird Count also found a very-late **Spotted Sandpiper** on December 18.

**Gulls** – It was a relatively sparse season for winter **gulls** in West Virginia once again. **Bonaparte's Gulls** made appearances in Cabell (JsH), Kanawha (RG), Mason (JsH), and Summers (JJP) Counties. Birders reported **Ring-billed Gulls** in eleven West Virginia counties; on December 8 Wilma Jarrell counted 250 **Ring-billed Gulls** in Proctor, Wetzel County. **Herring Gulls** appeared in reports from Cabell (JsH), Mason (DP, GR, JK, MG), Pleasants (CB), Summers (JJP), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (TB) Counties. James and Judy Phillips spotted a **Great Black-backed Gull** at Bluestone State Park, Summers County, on February 3.

**Loons** – **Common Loon** sightings were sparse in our state once again this winter, with reports only from Monongalia (HC, DCo), Summers (JJP, CBC), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

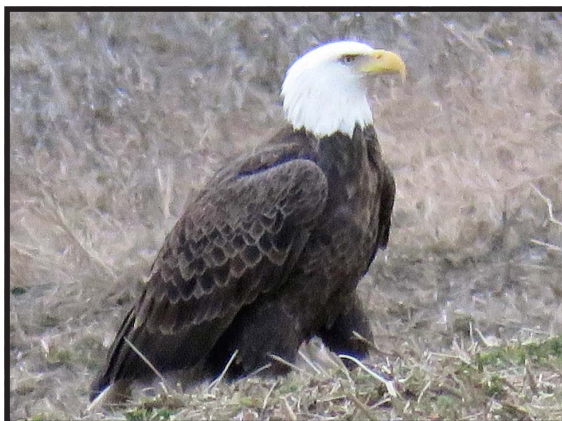
**Cormorants** – There were reports of **Double-crested Cormorants** from six counties this winter.

**Pelicans** – A state review-list **American White Pelican** flew by the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge headquarters, Wood County, on February 14 as observed by Jon Benedetti, Terry Bronson, and the Mountwood Bird Club; the bird appeared in a number of locations in Pleasants and Wood Counties through February 26 (TB, JB, CB, JsH, LC, ReT, MSI).

**Hérons** – **Great Blue Herons** appeared throughout the state this warm winter, and the Pocahontas County Christmas Bird Count found a **Great Egret** on December 15.

**Vultures** – Reports of **Black** and **Turkey vultures** came from sixteen and nineteen counties, respectively.

**Eagles** and **Hawks** – **Golden Eagles** inspired reports from Hardy (DaG), Mercer (JJP), Pendleton (CBC, DH, RB), Pocahontas (CBC), Randolph (RB), and Summers (JJP) Counties. **Northern Harriers** as



Photograph of Bald Eagle by David Patick.

well as **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's hawks** appeared widely throughout West Virginia during the winter season. On December 7, Herb Myers watched a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** unsuccessfully hunting **White-throated Sparrows** near his home in Harman, Randolph County. **Bald Eagles** were reported from twenty-two counties this winter; Bruni Haydl saw eight **Bald Eagles** in the vicinity of a deer carcass near Charles Town, Jefferson County, on December 23. **Red-shouldered** and **Red-tailed hawks** were observed in many parts of the state, while **Rough-legged Hawks** were scarce this winter, inspiring reports only from Mason (JsH, JK, MG) and Tucker (DP, JsH, MG, GR) Counties. On January 12, in their fourteenth annual Winter Eagle Survey, as reported by James Phillips, participants found two **Golden Eagles** and 56 **Bald Eagles** at sites on Indian Creek and along the Bluestone, Greenbrier, and New Rivers.

**Owls** – **Barn Owls** were reported as usual in the Hardy County Christmas Bird Count, as well as in Belleville, Wood County, as observed by Terry Bronson on three occasions. Reports of **Eastern Screech-Owls** came from ten counties and **Great Horned Owl** observations inspired birders' reports in eleven counties, beginning on December 4 when Cynthia Burkhart heard her first of the season at her home in Ritchie County. Birders in nine counties reported **Barred Owls**. The editor of these notes heard two **Long-eared Owls** countersinging near his home in Dry Fork, Tucker County, on December 2, and another **Long-eared Owl** was observed in the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count, Monongalia County, on December 15. On February 9, Joshua Holland, Janet Keating, David Patick, and Michael Griffith encountered a **Short-eared Owl** at the Robert C. Byrd Fish Hatchery, Mason County, on February 9. The discovery of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** brightened the Christmas Bird Counts of Morgantown, Monongalia County, on December 15, and of Canaan Valley, Tucker County, on the next day.

**Kingfishers** – West Virginia birders in twenty counties reported **Belted Kingfishers**, their increased presence perhaps being due to open waters during this warm winter.

**Woodpeckers** – **Red-headed Woodpeckers** made appearances in reports from Berkeley (CBC), Hampshire (CBC), Hardy (CBC), Pendleton (CBC), Pocahontas (CBC), Ritchie (CB), Roane (DG), and Summers (CBC) Counties. **Red-bellied Woodpeckers**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, **Downy** and **Hairy woodpeckers**, **Northern Flickers**, and **Pileated Woodpeckers** were all subjects of widespread reports in West Virginia over the winter.

**Falcons** – **American Kestrels** and **Peregrine Falcons** were represented in Christmas Bird Counts and other reports in most parts of the state. Birders spotted **Merlins** in Berkeley (CBC), Kanawha (RG, CBC), Mason (JsH, MG, JK, DP, GR), Monongalia (CBC), Randolph (RBo), Summers (CBC), and Tucker (CR) Counties.

**Flycatchers** – Reports of **Eastern Phoebe** came from fifteen counties this winter.



Photograph of Merlin by David Patick.

**Vireos** – For the second year in a row a **White-eyed Vireo** appeared during the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count, on December 15 in Monongalia County.

**Crows, Jays, and Ravens** – **Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Ravens** appeared in their usual haunts throughout the state. **Fish Crows** occasioned reports in Berkeley (RB, BD) and Jefferson (CD, RB, BD) Counties.

**Larks** – Reports of **Horned Larks** came only from Grant County (RBo, RB) and Mason County (JsH, JK, MG).

**Swallows** – The first **Tree Swallows** of the year appeared on February 9, as seen by Joshua Holland at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, the only location where they were reported during the season (JBT, JsH).

**Chickadees and Titmice** – **Carolina and Black-capped chickadees** appeared in reports from their overlapping territories throughout West Virginia. **Tufted Titmice** occupied their usual spots in reports from throughout the state.

**Nuthatches** – **Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches** were both widely reported throughout the state.

**Creepers** – Birders in sixteen West Virginia counties reported **Brown Creepers**.

**Wrens** – The Christmas Bird Counts of Oak Hill, Fayette County, and Charleston, Kanawha County, recorded **House Wrens**. West Virginia birders reported **Winter and Carolina wrens** in good numbers statewide.

**Kinglets** – **Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets** were both familiar sights in most parts of the state this winter.

**Thrushes** – **Eastern Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, and American Robins** appeared in good numbers in our state this winter, mostly at lower elevations. On December 15, the Charleston Christmas Bird Count, Kanawha County, recorded a **Gray-cheeked Thrush**.

**Catbirds, Thrashers, and Mockingbirds** – **Gray Catbird** reports appeared from Monongalia County (CBC), Randolph County (CBC), and Summers County (JJP). **Brown Thrashers** were spotted during the Canaan Valley Christmas Bird Count, Tucker County, on December 16, in Wayne County (DP, GR) on January 13, and on several occasions in Wood County (TB, JB). West Virginians reported **Northern Mockingbirds** widely in lower elevations over the winter season.

**Starlings** – **European Starlings** continued their widespread occupation of habitats throughout our state.

**Waxwings** – **Cedar Waxwings** appeared widely this winter, with sightings in fourteen counties.

**Weaver Finches** – Thanks to Christmas Bird Counts, we have been assured that the **House Sparrow** continues throughout the state, primarily in urban and farm settings.

**Pipits** – The only report of the season was a flock of 100 **American Pipits** observed by David Patick, Gary Rankin, Michael Griffith, and Janet Keating on New Year's Day in Mason County.

**Finches and Allies** – A large flock of **Evening Grosbeaks**, sometimes numbering in many dozens, delighted birders in Canaan Valley and Dry Fork, Tucker County, during the entire season (DP, MG, GR, MJ, HMy). **Evening Grosbeaks** also appeared in Mercer (JP), Pocahontas (CBC), Roane (MSBS), and Summers (JJP) Counties. Feeders in most parts of the state hosted **House and Purple finches, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches**. On Christmas Eve, a female **White-winged Crossbill** became the 189<sup>th</sup> species that Hullet Good has hosted at his home in Elkview, Kanawha County.

**Longspurs** – During late January Joshua Holland, Janet Keating, Michael Griffith, and Gary Rankin observed **Lapland Longspurs** amid a flock of **Horned Larks** on Leon Ferry Lane, Mason County.

**Sparrows, Juncos, and Towhees** – **Field, Fox, American Tree, White-crowned, White-throated, Song, and Swamp sparrows**, as well as **Dark-eyed Juncos**, appeared widely. **Chipping Sparrows** were observed in Kanawha (CBC), Mercer (CBC), Monongalia (CBC), Pendleton (CBC), Tucker (HMy), Wayne (MG), and Wood (CBC) Counties; a **Vesper Sparrow**, three **Savannah Sparrows**, and a **Lincoln's Sparrow** were discovered during the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count on December 15; and a **Savannah Sparrow** was noted at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on two occasions in mid-January (DP, MG, JK, GR, JsH). **Eastern Towhees** made their usual appearances at lower elevations in many parts of the state.

**Blackbirds and Allies** – Reports of **Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Common Grackles** came from areas all over the state. **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported in Cabell County (MG, JsH), Jefferson County (CBC), Ritchie County (CB), and Tucker County (DP, JsH, MG, GR).

**Warblers** – Carol Del-Colle hosted a **Nashville Warbler** at her home in Summit Point, Jefferson County, on January 17. On December 3, Deborah Hale discovered a **Northern Parula** near Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County. The Charleston Christmas Bird Count, Kanawha County, recorded three **Blackpoll Warblers** and two **Palm Warblers** on December 15. **Palm Warblers** also appeared on December 29 in the Hampshire County Christmas Bird Count, and a **Pine Warbler** was discovered during the Pendleton County Christmas Bird Count on December 18. Birders in lower elevations saw Myrtle-race **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at locations throughout the state.

**Cardinals** – Birders throughout the state reported **Northern Cardinals** in good numbers. The January appearance of a **Painted Bunting** at a private residence in Jefferson County is discussed near the beginning of these notes.

Contributors to the Winter Field Notes: Frederick Atwood (FA), Rodney Bartgis (RB), Jon Benedetti (JB), John Boback (JBo), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Joette Borzik (JBz), Will Britton (WB), Terry Bronson (TB), Cynthia Burkhart (CB), Laura Ceperley (LC), Hannah Clipp (HC), Derek Courtney (DCo), Robert Dean (BD), Carol Del-Colle (CD), Darrell Good (DaG), Donny Good (DG), Richard Gregg (RG), Michael Griffith (MG), Diane Holsinger (DH), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Mark Johnson (MJ), Kim Kazmierski (KK), Janet Keating (JK), Herb Myers (HMy), Matthew Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), James Phillips (JP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), Margaret Straley and Robert Summers (MSBS), Michael Slaven (MSI), Rennie Talbert (ReT), James and Beverly Triplett (JBT), and Mindy and Alan Waldron (MAW).

P.O. Box 2  
Seneca Rocks, WV 26884  
[autoblock@frontiernet.net](mailto:autoblock@frontiernet.net)







## PATRONIZE YOUR CLUB STORE

### ORNITHOLOGICAL BOOKS

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Wings Over the Mountains by J. Lawrence Smith .....                                     | \$10.00 |
| Birding Guide to West Virginia 2nd edition, compiled by Greg E. Eddy .....              | \$10.00 |
| Wildflowers and Trees of West Virginia by Christopher M. Gatens and Emily Grafton ..... | \$9.95  |
| Birds of the Kanawha Valley by J. Lawrence Smith .....                                  | \$10.00 |
| The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas by A.R. Buckelew, Jr. and George A. Hall .....    | \$5.00  |
| West Virginia Birds by George Hall .....  | \$20.00 |
| All issues of The Redstart 1933-2008 on one searchable CD .....                         | \$10.00 |
| All issues of The Mail Bag 1943-2011 on one searchable CD .....                         | \$10.00 |
| BBC archived photographs and other materials on DVD .....                               | \$20.00 |

### SPECIAL BBC PUBLICATIONS

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| No. 1, 1986 Birds of the Lower Ohio River Valley in West Virginia by Kiff, Igou, Slack, and Wilson .....         | \$1.00 |
| No. 2, 1990 Endangered and Threatened Species in West Virginia edited by A.R. Buckelew Jr .....                  | \$1.00 |
| No. 3, 2007 The Allegheny Front Migration Observatory: A Long-term Bird Banding Project, by George A. Hall ..... | \$2.50 |

Add \$3.50 for postage per order.

West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax per order.

### REDSTART EDITORIAL POLICY

Original papers in the field of natural history are published in *The Redstart*. Papers are judged on the basis of their contributions to original data, ideas, or interpretations. Scientific accuracy and clarity are most important, and to this end, an advisory board, selected by the editorial staff, will review submitted papers as needed. Papers should be submitted in Word, by e-mail if possible, to [autoblock@frontiernet.net](mailto:autoblock@frontiernet.net) or on a CD and sent to the editor; otherwise, papers should be typewritten, double-spaced on one side of the paper only, and sent to the editor at P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884.

### BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP

The Brooks Bird Club, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose objective is to encourage the study and conservation of birds and other phases of natural history. Membership includes subscriptions to *The Redstart* and *Mail Bag* and entitles one to all the privileges offered by the Club. Classes of membership are Student, \$10; Individual, \$25; Family, \$30; Sustaining, \$50; Life, \$500; Family Life, \$650. Checks should be written payable to The Brooks Bird Club and mailed to P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

## 2019 Calendar of Events The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

| <b>Date</b>         | <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Place</b>   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| January             | BBC Membership Month .....                                   | Wheeling, WV   |
| February            | Write an article for the Mail Bag or The Redstart .....      | mail to editors  |
| Jan. 30–Feb. 1      | Trip to Killdeer Plains (Contact Dick Esker)                 |  |
| Feb. 28–Mar. 1      | Funk/Killbuck Marsh (overnight trip — contact Dick Esker)    |  |
| March 8–10          | Early Spring Meeting (Contact Dick Esker) .....              | North Bend State Park<br>Harrisville, WV               |
| March 16            | Waterfowl Field Trip (day trip) (Contact Carl Slater) ....   | Seneca Lake, OH  |
| April 20            | Three Rivers Bird Club (day trip) .....                      | Raccoon Creek State Park, PA<br>(Contact Ryan Tomazin) |
| May 9–12            | Wildflower Pilgrimage, Blackwater Falls State Park .....     | Davis, WV  |
| May 11              | International Migratory Bird Day.....                        | local chapters   |
| June 1–3            | WV Bird Discovery Weekend, Blackwater Falls State Park ....  | Davis, WV<br>(Contact Paulita Cousin)                  |
| June 7–15           | Foray – Camp Pioneer .....                                   | Beverly, WV<br>(contact Janice Emrick or Ryan Tomazin) |
| August–October      | Bird Banding .....   | Dolly Sods, WV   |
| October 18–20       | BBC Fall Reunion & Meeting, Blackwater Falls State Park .... | Davis, WV<br>(Contact Janice Emrick)                   |
| November 6–10       | Eastern Shore (Contact Carl Slater)                          |  |
| Dec. 14–Jan. 5, '20 | Christmas Bird Counts (Contact Larry Helgerman)              |  |

### BBC FORAYS

2019 Camp Pioneer 4-H Camp, Beverly, WV  
 2020 Camp Galilee, Terra Alta, WV  
 2021 Camp Kidd 4-H Camp, Tucker County, 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

### ARTICLES FOR THE MAIL BAG DUE

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

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

The dates for the 2019 BBC programs may be changed if necessary. Changes will be announced on the web page or in The Mail Bag.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Paulita Cousin, Paulita.L.Cousin@wv.gov      | Janice Emrick, emrick@gmn4u.com         |
| Dick Esker, eskerrb@frontier.com             | Larry Helgerman, bobolink1989@gmail.com |
| Carl & Juanita Slater, jslater1120@yahoo.com | Ryan Tomazin, wvwarblers@hotmail.com    |

**The Brooks Bird Club**  
P.O. Box 4077  
Wheeling, WV 26003

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Wheeling, WV  
Permit No. 593