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FOUNDED SEPTEMBER 1932

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CONTENTS

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Field Notes
—Nevada Laitsch ........................................... 98

Gathering Cage
—Constance Katholi .......................................... 102

Membership Roll .............................................. 106

Broadwings Over Kanawha County,
September 1969
—Anne Shreve .............................................. 113

Birds at My Feeders in Coonskin Park
—Norris Gluck .............................................. 115

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97
Spring migration—March 1 through May 31

Spring migration was a disappointment to most observers in our region. Winter remained with us well into April then it turned unseasonably warm over Illinois. Flowering plants, shrubs, and trees literally burst into quick growth and blossom like one of the best migrations in several Springs before the cold snap. With the over by May 20.

Reports of migrants were reported during the last week of April and the first week of May. The small bird migration started off well and good numbers of many things were reported during the last week of April and the first week of May. It looked like one of the best migrations in several Springs before the cold snap. With the resumption of hot weather migrants were hard to find and migration was essentially over by May 20.

Loons, Grebes and Herons—Common Loons were not plentiful. None were seen in the Charleston, W. Va. area. They were listed at Seneca Lake, Ohio March 30 (C&E), 4 seen on Tappan Lake, Ohio April 12 (NL) and reported on Lake White, south of Columbus, Ohio April 19 (MT). Two Red-necked Grebes were observed, with aid of 35 power scope, at Pymatuning Lake, Pa. on March 8 (MS). Horned Grebes were at Seneca Lake and on the Scioto River in Ohio March 24. Great Blue Herons were reported in most areas. Good numbers were at the heronry southwest of Seneca Lake, Ohio (C&E) and several nesting pairs were found at the heronry near Cadiz, Ohio. A Cattle Egret was seen in a pasture field along Route 23 near Lucasville, Ohio April 14 (MT). One was observed in Nicholas County, W. Va. near Mt. Lookout on May 3 by Richard Legg and Alton McClung. Black-crowned Night Herons were seen near Portsmouth, Ohio April 18. Yellow-crowned in this same area for two weeks beginning April 26 (MT). A Least Bittern was found at Altona Marsh, Jefferson County, W. Va. May 17 (NL). American Bittern was also seen at this location. An individual of this species appeared in a residential area of Chester, W. Va. March 20. It was exhausted and hungry and died a few hours after discovery (OJ&ERC).

There was a good flight of Whistling Swans in several areas. One of the largest flocks to be seen in the Youngstown, Ohio area rested for three or four days on nearby Pine Lake (NL). While most species of ducks were reported, numbers were small in most cases. Water remained frozen throughout March and the advent of warm weather probably moved the flight right through our region. Oldsquaws were found at Seneca Lake, Ohio March 30 (C&E) and at Lake Roosevelt in Shawnee State Forest, Ohio on the following day (MT). Unusually large numbers of Ruddy Ducks were on Seneca Lake April 12. Chapman and Edgerton commented “The lake was covered with rafts of Ruddies—we have never seen anything like it”.

Hawks—Birds of prey were considered scarce by most reporters. Red-tailed Hawks were most commonly reported. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported in the Kanawha State Forest south of Charleston, W. Va. Ospreys were seen at Seneca Lake, Ohio April 12 (C&E) and in southern Ohio April 19 (MT). One was observed in Webster County, W. Va. May 1 (NG). They were not found at the former nesting site in Hancock County, W. Va. this Spring. New power line construction came within feet of the nesting tree (ERC).

Gallinaceous birds—Bobwhites appear to be normal in suitable habitats. Sora Rail was seen at McClintic Wildlife Station, Mason County, W. Va. April 19 (NG). Virginia Rail and Sora were found at Altona Marsh, Jefferson County, W. Va. May 17.

Shorebirds—Conditions for shorebirds were not good. Ohio reporters usually furnish most of the records for this group. The water levels at Seneca Lake and nearby fish ponds were high. Records supplied from southern Ohio (Scioto river bottomlands between Portsmouth and Columbus) included Semi-palmated Plover April 25, Greater Yellowlegs April 19, Black-bellied Plover May 16, Upland Plover April 25, Spotted Sandpiper and Solitary Sandpiper April 23, Greater Yellowlegs April 10, Lesser Yellowlegs April 12, Pectoral Sandpiper May 18, White-rumped Sandpiper May 16, Dowitcher May 8, Semi-palmated Sandpiper and Sanderlings May 16 (MT). The peak of Killdeer migration appeared to be March 15 when several reporters mentioned good numbers. Woodcocks were first seen at Charleston, W. Va. March 10 and were skidancing at Morgantown, W. Va. March 28. Common Snipe were first noted at Charleston March 19 and a dozen were seen there April 4 (NG). Skags found them at Willoughby, Ohio April 11.

Gulls—More reporters than usual submitted records of Bonapartes Gulls. They were listed at Lake White, Ohio March 26 (MT), at Seneca Lake, Ohio March 27 (C&E); a flock of 30 at Lake of the Woods, Preston County, W. Va. April 19 (GAH) and one was at Middle Ridge farm pond near Charleston, W. Va. April 29 (CK).

Doves, Cuckoos and Owls—Mourning Doves appeared abundant and began nesting early. Cuckoos had arrived in most places by May 2 and 3 and numbers appeared about normal. Two Great Horned Owls (young) were found at Coonskin Park, Charleston, W. Va. April 16 (NG).

Goatsuckers and Swifts—Trowbridge recorded Chuck-wills-widow in Adam Co., Ohio May 31. This is the only known locality within our region where it has been found. The first date submitted for Whip-poor-will was April 16 at Kanawha State Forest, W. Va. (NG). Chimney Swifts were at Seneca Lake, Ohio April 12 and in other locations April 16-17. Common Nighthawks were in southern Ohio April 29 and had arrived in other places by May 7.

Woodpeckers—A heavy influx of Flickers was noted at Charleston, W. Va. and East Liverpool, Ohio. Some increase in Redheaded Woodpeckers was indicated by their inclusion in most reports. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers did not seem especially plentiful. The first week in April appeared to be the peak. One was listed at Barnes-
Flycatchers—Kingbirds had arrived generally by May 1 and numbers were considered good. Great Crested Flycatchers were in the southern part of the region April 21 and were widespread by April 26. Earliest date for Phoebes was March 4 at Charleston, W. Va. and March 8 at Barnesville, Ohio. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was recorded at Barnesville, Ohio May 23 (C&E). The empidonax group arrived a little earlier than usual. They were in most places by the first week of May. However, their numbers were considered somewhat low. Least Flycatchers were not listed at all in some localities where they are often common during migration.

Swallows—March 30 at Seneca Lake, Ohio was Ohio first date for Tree Swallows. Bank and Rough-winged Swallows were scarce. Barn Swallows had arrived in the southern part of region first week in April but were late at Morgantown, W. Va. and East Liverpool, Ohio. Purple Martins appeared about normal. March 25 at Charleston and April 3 at Fairmont, W. Va. were first dates.

Chickadees, Nuthatches and Wrens—April 16 was last date for Black-capped Chickadees at East Liverpool, Ohio. A few remained at Morgantown, W. Va. well into April and one was banded at Charleston, W. Va. May 2. Red-breasted Nuthatches made a poor showing during migration and Hall thought numbers were below normal on their breeding grounds May 29. House Wrens came in between April 21 and 25 and were plentiful. A Bewicks Wren was banded at Morgantown, W. Va. April 10 (GAH).

Mimics—Mockingbirds continue their range extension and were mentioned by most reporters. Brown Thrashers were a little later than usual and Catbirds were thought below normal by some reporters.

Thrushes—The thrush migration appeared poor with exception of Robins and Bluebirds. Wood Thrush were late and numbers not very good. A Veery at Morgantown, W. Va. April 26 was quite early (GAH).

Gnatcatchers, Kinglets and Waxwings—April 4 at Charleston, W. Va. was the first date for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Others timed their arrival near mid April and numbers were normal. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet was recorded April 20-25 with good numbers and much song. Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce during migration. However, their numbers were normal in Pocahontas County, W. Va. April 17-19 (NL). Cedar Waxwings were strangely absent from the region until near the end of May.

Vireos—White-eyed Vireos arrived at Charleston, W. Va. April 20, Barnesville, Ohio April 25 and Morgantown, W. Va. May 3. The number of singing Solitary Vireos was normal in Pocahontas County, W. Va. April 17-19. Few migrants were reported otherwise. Red-eyed Vireos were at Charleston, W. Va. April 20 and were well distributed in the region by May 1. Numbers were thought low at Morgantown, W. Va. and East Liverpool, Ohio. Warbling Vireos appeared fairly plentiful.

Warblers—This group represents the most perplexing portion of this report. The period began well with most of the residents either a bit early or on time. Those in the field first weekend in May found birding very good and were able to run up a good list. It appeared at this point that May 9-10 would see the peak of migration with an abundance of both species and birds. However, the freeze of May 6-7 threw in the proverbial wrench and brought things to a standstill. Treetops had been alive with warblers before but few could be found the week-end of May 9-10. What happened? Did the freeze destroy the food supply—the oaks, hickories, etc. were in full bloom and this is one of the favorite feeding spots for warblers—did they move out immediately and did the waves we were expecting move on without stopping? This interrupted season did not parallel the Spring of 1966 when a late freeze occurred. (That year migration was merely halted and some very late dates for migrants were recorded.) The earliest date for Black and White Warblers was April 17 at Charleston, W. Va. (NG). Prothonotary Warblers were at Seneca Lake, Ohio April 26 (C&E).

One was found in Hancock County, W. Va. on May 9 (OJ). This is possibly the first record for Hancock County. Swainson’s Warblers were found again at Little Creek Park near Charleston and listed in Kanawha State Forest May 30 (CK). A Blue-winged Warbler found in Jefferson County, W. Va. May 18 was surprising (GAH). Two Blackburnian Warblers were listed on the study plot in Kanawha State Forest May 30 (CK). Yellow-throated Warblers had arrived at Charleston, W. Va. April 10 (NG). They were found again near Barnesville, Ohio and a nesting pair was located there later this Spring. Two singing males were found along a tributary of Big Wheeling Creek in Marshall County, W. Va. on May 3 (NL). Chestnut-sided Warblers were scarce during migration and were considered below normal at Gaudineer last of May (GAH). The numbers of Ovenbirds, Kentucky Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellowthroat and Hooded Warblers all seemed below normal in the spruce belt in West Virginia (GAH). A very late singing male appeared at East Liverpool, Ohio on June 4 and 5 (NL). Wilson Warblers were noted at Willoughby, Ohio May 23 (MS) and one was banded at Morgantown, W. Va. May 28 (GAH). Several were found in Jefferson County, W. Va. May 17-19.

Blackbirds and Tanagers—Bobolinks were seen at Morgantown, W. Va. May 10 and were on their breeding grounds in Columbiana County, Ohio in mid May. Orchard Orioles were considered more numerous than before by several reporters. They occurred in localities where they are not known to breed. Singing males were found near East Liverpool, Ohio May 30 (ERC&NL) and an adult males was observed for two weeks in May at Willoughby, Ohio (MS). Scarlet Tanagers appeared a little below normal and were late. Range extensions were evident for Summer Tanagers. Two were banded at Morgantown, W. Va. in early May and several were found on Breeding Bird Surveys in Preston County, W. Va. (GAH).

Finches and Sparrows—Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were not too common this Spring. They patronized Skaggs’ feeder in early May feeding on sunflower seeds. Evening Grosbeaks lingered in small flocks past mid April and a few stragglers were included in the century day reports. Dickcissels were found near the Belmont-Monroe County line in Ohio on May 23 (C&E). A singing male was found on May 19 in Jefferson County, W. Va. where they have been observed before. Purple Finches remained in the southern part of the region well into April and were listed at Charleston May 2. The usual large numbers were not found in Columbiana Co., Ohio during migration. However enough were present here on May 30 to indicate an increase in breeding populations (NL). Common Redpolls continued to make birding interesting in favored habitats well into the spring season. April 6 at Barnesville, Ohio was last date. American Goldfinches drew comment from most every reporter with their abundance. Breeding recorded Red Crossbills at Petersburg, W. Va. April 16-17. One was in Hall’s yard at Morgantown, W. Va. March 29 and he saw a flock at Gaudineer May 29-30. They were present at Betty Vossler’s home in...
Forest Hills section of Wheeling, W. Va. from March 5 through June 12 with as many as a dozen females seen at one time. Savannah Sparrows were at Charleston, W. Va. last week in March (NG&CK). They were seen at Summersville, W. Va. April 3 (NL) and at Morgantown, W. Va. April 5 (GAH). Grasshopper Sparrow arrival dates were from April 25 to 28. Henslow's Sparrows were recorded at Charleston, W. Va., April 21 and 26 (CK) and at Barnesville, Ohio April 25 (C&E). Vesper Sparrows were first seen in Adams County, Ohio March 14 (MT), Barnesville, Ohio March 28 and a flock of 15 was seen at Summersville, W. Va. April 3 (NL). They were not seen at Morgantown before April 5 and were considered rather scarce (GAH). Too few persons mentioned White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows to draw conclusions. Skaggs reported a fair number of White-throats ending before May 5. Banders reported a good flight of Slate-colored Juncos with the last banding date April 28 at Morgantown, W. Va.

Contributors: George H. Breiding (GHB); Everett R. Chandler (ERC); Mary Chapman and Mabel Edgerton (C&E); Norris Gluck (NG); George A. Hall (GAH); Oliver Johnson (OJ); Connie Katholi (CK); Richard Legg, Glen Phillips, Merit B. Skaggs (MS); Marie Trowbridge (MT) and Betty Vossler.—Mrs. Nevada Laitsch, MC 21, East Liverpool, Ohio 20102 THE REDSTART—OCTOBER, 1970

Columbus, Ohio. Early in the summer we experienced the first serious vandalism at the decoy trap. The rascals broke locks, threw shovels and tools on top of the trap, climbed up there in person thinking it might serve as a trampoline (but it broke through); and they finally burned down the discarded chicken coop that we used for storage and protection in bad weather.

The campus police did their own weekend trapping (hiding in nearby woods) and on the second try apprehended two teen-agers who admitting being there before. They came initially to drink some beer away from parental supervision but presently developed euphoria and hyperkinesis to the detriment of our equipment. However the trap was repaired shortly and we were in business again. We hope the word will spread to any other juvenile diposomaniacs and we will be immune to further vandalism.

Three years ago I mentioned a kestrel in the decoy trap. On two occasions recently I have trapped a kestrel. Their behavior corresponded to my earlier observation. They may have eaten a cowbird before I arrived, but during the drive and while waiting in the gathering cage, they showed no aggression toward the other birds. In fact they were at the bottom of the pile in the gathering cage and appeared frightened if anything. In the hand they showed no tendency to bite. Predation to them is merely part of the food-getting process and does not reflect a “bad” personality or delinquency.

—Harold E. Burtt

Charleston, W. Va. After four years of frustration due to the inaccessibility of the martin roost to banders, Operation Purple Martin was unexpectedly re-activated in 1970 through the cooperation of the birds themselves who chose a new site tailor-made for the setting of nets! A preliminary check on the martins in July showed that the birds (for reasons inexplicable to humans) had moved the roost again—from the Dunbar location of 1968 and 1969—in which it had been literally impossible to maintain the high nets necessary, back apparently to North Charleston, favored in 1966 and 1967. There it had been difficult (but not impossible) for the pursuers; however, since no permanent set-ups could be made, there had been only sporadic excursions into the roost for banding purposes.

By July 21 considerable numbers of martins were congregating nightly to roost, but observers on that night felt that the birds, particularly the later arrivals, were hesitant to drop down from the sky in North Charleston, seeming uncertain whether this was, or was not, the proper area. On August 2 came an exciting report that the martins had moved again and were now firmly established near the Patrick Street Bridge, roosting in a strip no more than 150 yards long by 50 feet wide on the north bank below the sidewalk which bisects the riverbank. They were settling into the shrubby growth of box-elder, silver maple, and wild cherry growing through the riprap, swirling in low across the fast moving traffic of Kanawha Boulevard, skimming over the shoulders of watchers on the grassy edge. The sidewalk provided a natural net lane no need to cut waist-high weeds—and due to the sloping terr
ordinary net heights were productive. For the first time the birds were below eye-
level, a fact of considerable interest for the observation of the activities of the birds
on the roost trees, as well as for ease of banding.

At the lower level the nets were not visible to passing motorists, but publicity in
the newspapers resulted in a large portion of the populace becoming enlightened in
regard to purple martins and their migratory habits—as well as about bird-banding
programs in general. The nets, varying from four to seven, had to be set up anew at
each of the ten forays which were made. All the banders in the area cooperated in
the project with enthusiasm, and give thanks for their invaluable assistance to many
BBC members, to the “West Side residents” (to quote from the newspaper), and to
the Huntington Bird Club members, all of whom lent a helping hand. Approximately
650 martins were banded, equalling the total of 1965, which had previously been
the most remunerative year. A recovery was made of a bird banded in July 1969 by
Ralph Bell (OF COURSE). Of special interest was the presence of an albino martin;
this individual was observed with regularity from August 5, when it was first noticed,
until August 30, thus providing a clue to the length of time a given bird may fre­
quent the roost. Starlings roosted here with the martins, but certain other species,
such as robins and grackles, which had been in the former roosts did not join this
assemblage. Since martin banding observes a very critical time period, these had
been troublesome birds in the past, filling the nets with “undesirables” just at the
moment the main flight of martins was due. At the end of August one Chimney
Swift, two Bank Swallows, and twenty Barn Swallows were captured and banded.
This brief report is intended to serve until a later date when an article is planned to
cover the complete operation over a period of years. Please note in Anne Shreve’s
report from Middle Ridge the recovery of a martin from the Jefferson Park Roost,
indicative of how unbelievably long after the fact data may continue to accrue.

—Constance Katholi

From Middle Ridge, Charleston, W. Va. a report of two interesting returns and a
recovery: A female Downy Woodpecker, banded in Katholi’s yard on 01-18-63 re­
turned on 07-17-69.

A male Indigo Bunting, banded on 08-30-62 at McClintic Wildlife Refuge near
Pt. Pleasant as an ASY. was netted by Kiff at the same location on 06-07-69. That
makes it at least ten years old, and it is very possibly an age record for this species.

A Purple Martin, banded in the South Charleston roost at Jefferson Park on
08-16-65, was killed due to weather at Jane Lew, W. Va. in April 1970. Age and sex
were unknown at the time of banding.

—Anne Shreve

In a Memorandum-To-All-Banders (No. 13, December 1969) the Banding Office
reported that a “check” had been built into the computer file “edits” which com­
pares the “AOU Number” of each record against the band size (currently only for
bands larger than size 1 A. The check is intended to detect erroneous band or AOU
numbers. An examination of the first group of rejected records showed that many
banders routinely use sizes other than those presently recommended in the manual.
In order to update this material banders were asked to submit ideas on changes
which they thought would be desirable. In April, MTAB No. 14 expressed surprise

at the lack of response to this invitation, reasoning that banders were apparently
more satisfied with the status quo than it had originally appeared.

Charley Handley of Lewisburg, W. Va. was one bander who did reply, and the
following is a part of his letter dated May 7, 1970. He wrote, . . . “I would recom­
 mend that you consider enlarging Size 1. At the present time there are two bands,
Sizes Zero and One, which are so nearly the same that it takes a micrometer to tell
them apart. I find Size 1 snug on a song sparrow, and Size 1 B too large. During the
1969 banding season I recovered two song sparrows wearing troublesome Size 1
bands. One of these bands was full of tarsus scales and was no longer moving freely
up and down the leg. The band had not yet caused any trouble to the leg but would
probably have done so had it not been taken off and cleaned. The second band had
in some manner become clamped just above the ankle and had caused a slight swell­
ing. It was removed and placed on the other leg. Both of these bands were in per­
fected condition and had been put on properly. I am confident that the difficulty in
both instances was due to their being slightly too small. Upon noticing that Size 1
bands fit song sparrows too snugly I tried using Size 1 B for awhile but consider this
band too large. I would recommend therefore that a band size falling between Size
1 and 1 B be issued.”

In a recent letter Ralph Bell of Clarksville, Pa., adds his support to this conten­
tion, and carries the discussion further to include another species. He wrote, “. . .
I have had two Downy Woodpeckers that turned up later with the hind toe caught
under the band. This led me to believe that the Size 1 B band is a bit too large for
this species. I experimented with a Size 1 on a few of these birds but most of the
legs are too large for the band to be properly closed. I have felt for some time that
we need a band between Size 1 and 1 B for downies, song sparrows and several other
species.” Many species could be comfortably banded with a size smaller than a Zero,
which is oversized for the slender leg of a kinglet or gnatchatcher-not that one bands
very many of either! The Field sparrow, too, seems tiny for this band; and the list

could be extended.

The excerpts from the above letters were reproduced here with the hope of stimu­
lating others of you to air suggestions of your own, in The Gathering Cage at least;
wanting to mention two articles which appeared in IBBA News, Vol. 40, No. 5, and
Vol. 41, No. 2, both of which are pertinent to the present discussion. They concern
a problem encountered with Blue Jays which had been banded with Size 3 and re­
covered with the hallux caught behind the band, as was the case with the Downies
mentioned above. The authors, Janie Olyphant and Oliver L. Austin, Jr. cited suf­
cient examples (10) of jays which had repeated several times, in normal and ab­
normal condition, to prove their contention that this accident had occurred be­
cause the band was too large for this species, not because it had been put on im­
properly. Some banders, I know, have already been using Size 2 on this species. In
his closing paragraph Mr. Austin attempts humorously to explain how this may
occur, saying, “1 am still puzzled by this phenomena. The band must be at the very
top of the tarsus for the tip of the hallux to slip under it, and I still wonder just
what sort of antics the bird engages in to accomplish the feat. Perhaps when scratch­
ing its head?”

—Constance Katholi
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This story is principally about a Black-capped Chickadee which spent the winter of 1968-69 in Coonskin Park, Charleston, W. Va. Black-caps do not nest at Coonskin but many spend the winters there. They are very sociable, inquisitive, talkative.
cheerful, courageous and must be classified as bird masterpieces. You may already surmise that I believe they are anthropomorphic but how can one spend a winter with a wees wild bird, especially when it chatters at me and flies to me when I approach, sits on my shoulder, eats from my hand and hat and prefers that I crack its sunflower seeds.

I began feeding the birds at Coonskin in early October, and soon had a flock of about 13 species including chickadees and titmice. A few days before Christmas, as I was refilling my feeders, my little chickadee friend, for the first time, flew to my shoulder and spent some time perching under my coat and looking me over. Before the end of December it was taking sunflower seeds from my hat and soon was eating from my hand. Often, as it perched on my fingers, it would hold the seed between its feet and try to crack the hull against my flesh—it never succeeded. Later I began to crack the seeds with my teeth and feed it the kernel. It soon accepted that procedure and often would wait in my hand until I had cracked the seed. Sometimes as I hiked in the woods, 50 to 75 yards from the feeders, it would find me and fly from the trees to my hand for seeds. I had to carry sunflower seed in my pocket at all times.

My feeders are located at the edge of the woods, about 125 yards or more from a roadside parking area. Sometimes the chickadee would be feeding in the top of the pine trees near the parking area and would fly to me as soon as I left my parked car. Once I had not been able to find the Black-cap anywhere in the area and had returned to the inside of my parked car when I heard it chattering. I opened the door and before I could get out of the car, it was flying toward me and ate from my hand.

Another time, after I had failed to fill my feeders for 2 or 3 days, it was waiting in the top of a tall pine tree near the parking area, and when I left the car it immediately flew to me, landing in my hand among the sunflower seeds. It looked up at me and began to chatter in an excited manner and each time it returned for more seeds it continued to chatter as it stood in my hand. I could not determine if it were explaining how glad it was to see me or if it were scolding me for being late with its food.

It was always a thrilling experience to have this tiny bird eat from my hand without any apparent fear. I had other birds, Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice, which ate from my hand and hat but they were not so fearless, friendly and trusting as the Black-cap. The others would perch on the perimeter of my hand and cautiously select the seeds but not the Black-cap, he would fly, pell mell, into the palm of my cupped hand and land in the sunflower seeds, “up to his knees”, and with careful deliberation he would search for a seed that suited him.

There may be, however, a sad note to this story—the little chickadee’s friendliness, faith and fearlessness could lead to an unhappy ending—for no wild creature should put so much faith and dependence in man but should live its life according to its instincts and the rules of nature laid down by its creator. I had hoped that when it left Coonskin in the spring of 1969, for the Appalachian highlands, it would remember that it was a Parus atricapillus and completely dissociate itself from Homo sapiens and return in the fall. It did not return.

I now have a Tufted Titmouse that has all the lovable attributes of the Black-capped Chickadee. In fact it will not permit me to do anything around the feeders unless it has a part in the activities. When I try to refill one of my feeders with peanut butter from a jar, it flies in and perches on the rim of the jar as I hold it in my hand, and must have its fill before I continue with my work. It also, successfully cracked a sunflower seed on the knuckle of my thumb—no small accomplishment! It often flies to meet me as I approach the feeding area and answers my call (squeak). On February 28, it gave its most thrilling performance—on that day it was singing its most beautiful spring song from across the ravine, as I called him. It continued its singing as it flew to my hand, and standing in the seeds, he sang his beautiful song before selecting a seed. Then with the seed in its bill it flew away, singing, to a nearby tree. It is quite a character.

I will try to explain the technique I use to get the birds to eat from my hat and hand. When I begin to bring food to my feeders in the fall, I always try to establish communications with the birds—I begin “squeaking” as I approach the feeders. It is not long until they associate the food with my “squeak” and will fly to me as I approach the feeders. I usually leave just enough sunflower seed in the feeders so that the supply will be gone by the time of my next visit. Each time before I fill the empty feeders, I first, put the sunflower seeds on the top of my hat. At first the birds are afraid and will only make passes at the seed on my hat. Then a brave soul will land on my hat and quickly take a seed—others soon follow. Then I removed the seeds from top of my hat into my extended hand so that the only seeds available are now in my open hand. At first, they return to my hat and look down at the seeds in my hand. Soon one will fly down from the hat and quickly grab a seed and fly away. Shortly, it returns and then others will follow. It requires patience on my part but it is not long before most of them will eat from the hat on my head and the braver ones will eat from my hand.

1424 Kanawha Blvd., E., Charleston, W. Va.

Broadwings Over Kanawha County, September 1969
Anne Shreve

Unable to go on the usual hawk-watching trek to the mountains last fall, the third week in September was casually reserved for watching in the yard at home. Home is a high, open hilltop just west of Kanawha State Forest. 1969 was our second autumn on Middle Ridge, however we had visited the hill in other September and had seen a few migrating hawks.

The first flight this year had been recorded on August 17. 30 broadwings went over in a south-westerly direction. No other flights of consequence were seen until September 21.

That Sunday appeared to be a “hawk day”. A 10-mph wind blew from the west; the sky was bright blue and puffy clouds made a perfect backdrop for the hoped-for hawks.

At 10 a.m. 3 red-shouldered, 3 krestels and 1 broadwing went over, easily identified without the aid of glasses.

11 a.m.—A Cooper’s flew past at eye level.

115
11:30 a.m.—Finally settling down with binoculars, I focused high above the north­
eastern horizon and immediately picked out flights of 60, 4, 11 and 81 broadwings
and 2 unidentified hawks. A few friends were hurriedly telephoned. Most BBCers
were out of town hawk-watching at Peter’s Mountain.
12 noon—Ellen and Stuart Williamson and Norris Gluck arrived. Broadwings were
passing on both sides of the ridge and overhead, so high that they could not be seen
without 7-power binoculars. A frantic feeling that only a small percentage was being
counted engulfed us as the tiny silhouettes floated in and out of our binocular range.
The view here is approximately 30 miles and we could see distant flocks of 100 to
150 in literally all directions.
1 p.m. A single flock of 370 broadwings milled directly over our heads. Others
were passing to the north and south.
1:30 p.m. Stu Williamson called our attention to an extremely large flock about
two miles away and high in the northern sky. As we began counting, more “layers”
could be seen boiling above the first 300 to 400. The highest were barely discernible
specks vanishing then reappearing within our straining vision. We estimated the flight
was 1.5 miles thick. Finally agreeing on 600+, it was the largest single flight of broad­
wings that any of us had ever seen.
2 p.m. After that we did not see more than a hundred at a time and groups of 15
or 20 were more typical.
3 p.m. A low, steady stream of 243 broadwings took 40 minutes to pass.
The days tally was as follows:
3,302 broadwings, 1 Cooper’s, 3 red-shouldered, 3 kestrels, 1 turkey
vulture and 3 unidentified hawks, totalling 3,313.
The next day, Sept. 22, only 231 hawks passed over with a much lower ratio of
broadwings. There were 216 broadwings, 2 Cooper’s, 2 red-shouldered, 7 kestrels, 3
turkey vultures and an osprey. The two-day total was 3,544.
The late Russell DeGarmo’s advice to hawk-watchers was “to constantly sweep
the horizon with binoculars...”
Had we not done this, possibly nine-tenths of the hawks that we saw on the 21st
would have gone unnoticed. Surely, many were missed during the morning before
their altitude was discovered. Additional observers, particularly at the peak of the
flight, would have seen many more.
Does a large broadwing migration pass over Kanawha county every fall? One has
never been recorded before, and this one could easily have been missed.
Middle Ridge is 1,160 feet, one of the highest spots in the county. From the
valley (600 ft.) and the lower hills the hawks that we saw would have been invisible,even with the aid of binoculars. There are no long, continuous ridges here. The hills
are small and numerous, smoothing out toward the southwest. This probably ac­
counts for the breadth of the flight and for the extreme height.
Only a few hawks were seen by observers at Peter’s Mountain and Pott’s Moun­
tain on this day, both places being very foggy. Watchers on Paddy’s Knob saw only
a few all week prior to Sept. 21.
Observers on the 21st were Ellen and Stuart Williamson, Norris Gluck and Anne
and Harvey Shreve. On the 22nd, they were Ellen Williamson, Becky and Joe Beattie
and Anne Shreve.

P. O. Box 311, St. Albans, W. Va. 25177

THE REDSTART—OCTOBER, 1970

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FUTURE WORK. As a result of the investigation, what work remains to be done.

SUMMARY. For longer articles it is desirable to present a brief summary of the work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Many papers will not fit this type of presentation. Sometimes a simple sequence-of
events arrangement will serve.

BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP

The Brooks Bird Club is a non-profit 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 MAILBAG and entitles one to all the
privileges offered by the Club. Classes of membership are: Student, $2.00; Active, $5.00;
Family, $7.00; Sustaining, $10.00; Life, $100. Checks should be written payable to the
Brooks Bird Club and mailed to 707 Varwood Avenue, Wheeling, West Virginia.