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*The* **REDSTART**

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# 2018 - The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

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Named in honor of A. B. Brooks, Naturalist

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## PUBLICATIONS

Webmaster	Larry Helgerman, 1989 Louisa Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003 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

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# The REDSTART

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#### **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

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# Banding at Prickett's Fort State Park Marion County, West Virginia Spring and Fall 2018

Joey Herron

During the spring and fall 2018 season, 104 birds of 33 species were banded, making 2018 the second-best year for total bandings in the eleven-year period. Six birds from previous bandings were also captured. A Blue Jay, two Carolina Chickadees, two Eastern Tufted Titmice, and a Baltimore Oriole were all recaptured, all from bandings in 2017. Three new species were added to the species list this year, including a White-breasted Nuthatch, a Winter Wren, and a Canada Warbler, bringing the species total to 72. It was an especially good year for White-eyed Vireos (7 captures) and Yellow-rumped Warblers (13 captures).

Since 2008, I have been conducting a birding class for the Lifelong Learners group of Pierpont Community and Technical College in Fairmont, West Virginia. The spring and fall classes usually consist of one classroom session and three or four field sessions at Prickett's Fort State Park during early May and early October. Other banding takes place as weather permits.

Prickett's Fort State Park is located along the Monongahela River in Marion County, and its diverse habitats include a large riparian area and many wooded areas with trails and openings. The various habitats support a wide variety of species and provide many good opportunities for observing and banding birds.

Nets were set above the main trail area next to the trail parking lot, which is located west of the visitor's center. Four to five nets are used along an abandoned railroad bed running across a power line right-of-way. This year the right-of-way was sprayed, killing the trees and vegetation near the net lanes. The spraying appeared not to disturb the birding activity near the nets. The banding has taken place in this same area every spring and fall since starting in 2008.

Of this total of 72 species, 672 birds have been banded from the spring of 2008 to the fall of 2018. Forty-nine percent of the bandings are made up of eight species: Northern Cardinal (70), Carolina Chickadee (55), Gray Catbird (34), White-eyed Vireo (36), Baltimore Oriole (33), Carolina Wren (31), Yellow-rumped Warbler (37), and Song Sparrow (31). The following chart shows numbers and species banded.

Species	Number Banded 2018	Banded 2008–2018
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	0	2(captured)
Killdeer	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	0	4
Northern Flicker	0	1
Acadian Flycatcher	2	3
Willow Flycatcher	0	1
Least Flycatcher	0	1
Eastern Phoebe	0	1
White-eyed Vireo	7	36
Warbling Vireo	0	5
Red-eyed Vireo	4	18



Kentucky Warbler - photo by Joey Herron

Species	Number Banded 2018	Banded 2008–2018
Blue Jay	2	7
Carolina Chickadee	4	55
Black-capped Chickadee	0	1
Tufted Titmouse	3	12
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	4
White-breasted Nuthatch	1(new)	1
House Wren	0	1
Winter Wren	1(new)	1
Carolina Wren	3	31
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	0	9
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	6
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	2
Eastern Bluebird	0	2
Gray-cheeked Thrush	0	1
Swainson's Thrush	0	4
Wood Thrush	0	5
American Robin	1	5
Gray Catbird	2	34
Brown Thrasher	1	6
Northern Mockingbird	0	10
Cedar Waxwing	0	5
American Goldfinch	5	24
Eastern Towhee	5	29
Chipping Sparrow	5	16
Field Sparrow	4	7
Song Sparrow	8	31
Lincoln's Sparrow	0	2
Swamp Sparrow	0	1

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number Banded 2018</b>	<b>Banded 2008–2018</b>
White-throated Sparrow	1	7
White-crowned Sparrow	0	1
Dark-eyed Junco	0	1
Yellow-breasted Chat	0	4
Orchard Oriole	1	14
Baltimore Oriole	4	33
Blue-winged Warbler	2	5
Swainson's Warbler	0	1
Tennessee Warbler	0	8
Orange-crowned Warbler	0	2
Nashville Warbler	0	3
Connecticut Warbler	0	1
Kentucky Warbler	2	4
Common Yellowthroat	0	11
Hooded Warbler	0	1
American Redstart	1	9
Cape May Warbler	2	3
Northern Parula	2	4
Magnolia Warbler	1	21
Bay-breasted Warbler	1	2
Yellow Warbler	0	11
Chestnut-sided Warbler	0	1
Blackpoll Warbler	0	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	0	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	13	37
Yellow-throated Warbler	0	1
Prairie Warbler	0	1
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	6



Canada Warbler - photo by Joey Herron



Baltimore Oriole - photo by Joey Herron

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number Banded 2018</b>	<b>Banded 2008–2018</b>
Canada Warbler	1(new)	1
Wilson's Warbler	0	4
Scarlet Tanager	0	2
Northern Cardinal	6	70
Indigo Bunting	4	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>672</b>

511 Ohio Ave  
Fairmont WV

# 118<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count

L.E. Helgerman

## Overview

The National Audubon Society (NAS) wrapped up its 118th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season last January. The CBC is the longest running avian census in the world.

Over the years, the CBC has gone through an evolution like the birds around us; from the very beginning with a handful of counts located in the eastern United States, to the thousands of Christmas Bird Counts currently conducted all over the Western Hemisphere.

Christmas Bird Count protocols have also evolved. The NAS has made great strides to improve when, where, and how we collect data. In recent decades the count has been conducted anytime between December 14th and January 5th. The CBC is really an early-winter bird survey, giving us a snapshot of what's going on in the avian world during the early-winter time frame. Depending on where the count takes place, it paints a vivid picture of avian populations, from year-round residents to migratory and wintering species.

Like any other scientific study, we need to try to do the best we can in recording what we see and or hear. We need to follow the protocols set forth by NAS. That's why every state, province, territory, and country has Christmas Bird Count compilers and editors. These compilers and editors must convey to all the CBC participants the methods by which the census is run.

## West Virginia Christmas Bird Counts

In West Virginia we currently have twenty Christmas Bird Counts with sixteen state compilers (four compilers take on two counts). Over the years the number of CBCs conducted in the state has fluctuated. Some of the early counts were abandoned while other newer counts have been established. We currently have around ten counts that have been conducted for more than forty years. The Wheeling CBC is the longest-running count in the state, having been conducted for eighty-five years. Other long-running counts include Charles Town, Charleston, Lewisburg, Hampshire, Huntington, Parkersburg, and Pipestem. Their consistency says a lot for all of the dedicated compilers who have taken on the counts and the hundreds of participants they have recruited over the years.

Not only do our compilers have dedication, they have a lot of responsibility. Along with recruiting and organizing their participants, they must know their count circle inside and out. They must know how to get the best and most coverage completed the day of the count, whatever the weather conditions may bring. CBC participants must realize that rare sightings need to be thoroughly documented to enable verification by NAS. Rare birds are always a bonus on any CBC; nevertheless, the count is primarily about the big picture. All birds are important.

Sometimes, we may be quick to judge a change in a species' status from year to year. Why are some common species counted in high numbers one year and much lower the next? Analysis of results is a job for the experts; data can be misleading if you don't take in all the factors involved. It may take many years, decades, or longer to really see what the true picture is on a particular species' status. This is not to say, however, that there aren't



some obvious changes we are seeing; as in the greater number of Bald Eagles that we see now, or how few Ruffed Grouse are being reported in the state.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). After several phone calls and emails, we were able to gain access to the Summit Bechtel Reserve (a BSA High Adventure Camp) in Fayette County on count day. The Summit Reserve property is a part of the Oak Hill CBC circle. From what I have heard, we now have an open invitation, with advance notice, from the BSA, to access the reserve on future CBCs. I'm hoping we can get some scouts to come out and help with the Oak Hill count in the upcoming years!

On that same note, I want to thank all the folks who came out last season to help on some of our WV Christmas Bird Counts that really needed it. Many traveled a good distance to help those counts. We do need to keep this up, since having under ten participants on a CBC makes it a nearly-impossible task to complete.

We had a very good West Virginia CBC season last year with 121 species found on count days plus three additional species tallied as count week birds giving us a grand total of 124 species.

### **Final Thought**

I would like to thank all of the West Virginia State Compilers and all the participants for their time and effort. Without all of you West Virginia would not have been so well represented in the 118th Christmas Bird Count season.

### **Current West Virginia Christmas Bird Counts & Compilers**

State Editor – L.E. Helgerman  
WVAP – Athens-Princeton – Ron Canterbury  
WVCA – Canaan – Casey Rucker  
WVCH – Charleston – Doren Burrell  
WVCT – Charles Town – Robert Dean  
WVEL – Elkins Area – Richard Bailey  
WVHC – Hampshire County – Vini Schoene  
WVHU – Huntington – David Patick  
WVIN – Inwood – Bob Dean  
WVLE – Lewisburg – Ben Handley  
WVMC – McDowell County – Allen Waldron  
WVMF – Moorefield – Jane Whitaker  
WVMO – Morgantown – LeJay Graffious  
WVOH – Oak Hill – Hilarie Jones  
WVON – Ona – David Patick  
WVPA – Pipestem Area – James Phillips  
WVPC – Pendleton County – Fred Atwood  
WVPH – Pocahontas County – Richard Bailey  
WVPH – Parkersburg – Jeanette Esker  
WVRC – Raleigh County – Allen Waldron  
WVWH – Wheeling – Mike Hensley

## 118th Christmas Bird Count – West Virginia Seasonal Data (2017–2018)

### Weather

The weather is never predictable during a CBC in the northeast. Here in West Virginia Fahrenheit temperatures can be below zero or in the high 60s. The state historically averages 23-degree lows and 41-degree highs during the CBC season (Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>–Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>). Some birders feel that warm conditions, great for us, are not always conducive for good bird activity. But extreme cold can have the same effect. So, where's the sweet spot? For a CBC there really isn't one, as we must make the best of whatever conditions we are given that day. This lack of predictability makes every CBC unique, special, and memorable.

West Virginia's weather for the most part ran its normal gamut last season, but temperatures were below state averages. Canaan had the coldest start at -21 degrees, and Charleston and Oak Hill notched the warmest morning temperature, both 38 degrees. Moorefield ended the day with the lowest-temperature high at 18 degrees while the Pendleton County count finished with 58 degrees, the warmest this season.

Rain, which can be the biggest factor on a CBC, did not appear to be an issue, with only a couple of counts experiencing light rainfall at some point. Both the Wheeling and Lewisburg counts, at times, had some heavy snowfall. Nine counts in all were conducted with some amount of snow on the ground: Canaan with 9" and Elkins with 6" had the most snow reported.

### Effort Report

**Participation:** The Hampshire count had the highest participation with 38 field birders. Three counts had more than 34 in the field and five counts had more than 22 participants.

**Hours:** Four counts had over 57 party hours: Inwood 57.5, Morgantown 60, Charles Town 64.75, and Hampshire 83.25. Nine other counts reported between 40–56 party hours on count days.

**Miles:** Lewisburg led the way with 410 party miles, followed by Charles Town with 332.5, third highest was Hampshire with 323. Seven other counts had 250–309 miles reported.

**Feeder Watching:** Fourteen counts had participants watching their feeders and yards. The Pendleton count had the highest participation with 14 feeder watchers, followed by Elkins (7) and Parkersburg (6).

**Nocturnal Birding:** Twelve counts had owling teams. Five counts reported over four hours of owling. Morgantown led the way with 11.75 hrs., Huntington and Inwood both had 5 hours. Five counts covered over 30 miles owling. Huntington, with 53 miles, covered the most ground.

### WV State Effort Totals

By car: 4,734.25 miles in 544.5 hours. By foot: 306 miles in 351 hours. By skis: 2.5 miles in 4.25 hours. By boat: 17 miles in 4 hours.

### Bird Reports

**Geese and Swans:** Canada Geese (8,868) were the fourth-most abundant species this count season, found on 18 counts. Three other goose species were also reported: Greater White-fronted Goose (1-Elkins/cw-Inwood), Snow Goose (3-Huntington/

2-Morgantown), and a count-week (cw) Cackling Goose (Morgantown). A total of 55 Tundra Swans were reported from three circles (50-Wheeling/3-Morgantown/2-Ona).

**Ducks:** Nineteen species of ducks were found on count day. Mallards (3,529) were the seventh-most abundant species found in the state. Other interesting ducks found this season include: American Black Duck (244) and Bufflehead (177), with Morgantown finding high numbers of both (79/105). All three mergansers were found, and both Hooded (307) and Common mergansers (387) were found on thirteen counts. A cw Red-breasted Merganser was reported from Charles Town. Gadwall (85) were on eight counts with Charles Town submitting a high count of thirty-nine. Wood Ducks (23) were still lingering on six counts. Other rarer finds included: American Wigeon (3-Morgantown/1-Ona), Canvasback (3-Parkersburg), and Common Goldeneye (2-Charles Town/2-Huntington).

**Game Birds:** Twelve counts found Wild Turkey for a total of 305 birds, Morgantown had the highest number, 79. Only four Ruffed Grouse were located on count days, (1-Lewisburg/1-Pipestem Area/1-Pendleton County/1-Raleigh County).

**Sandhill Crane:** The only Sandhill Cranes (45) were reported from the Wheeling count, a first for that count.

**Shorebirds:** As with Killdeer (61), a high number of Wilson's Snipe (20) were tallied, from five counts. On the rarer side, a single Dunlin (Morgantown) and a lone American Woodcock (Hampshire) were nice finds.

**Gulls:** Ring-billed Gulls (482 + 2-cw) were documented on eleven counts, with 409 of those found on the Parkersburg CBC. Herring Gulls (4+1cw) were also reported (1-Huntington/2-Ona/1-Pipestem/cw-Wheeling). Three Bonaparte's Gulls were seen (2-Morgantown/1-Parkersburg).

**Loons/Grebes:** Three Common Loons were discovered (1-Huntington/1-Morgantown/1-Parkersburg). Pied-billed Grebes (104) were located on thirteen counts and the only Horned Grebes (4) found in the state were from the Morgantown count.

**Cormorants/Herons:** Double-crested Cormorants (8 +1cw) were reported this season from five circles. Great Blue Herons (133 +1cw) were found on 18 counts.

**Vultures:** Black Vultures (875) were found on 14 counts. We tallied (1,133) Turkey Vultures from all but one count, making it the nineteenth-most abundant species.

**Eagles/Hawks:** Eagle numbers continue to impress with five counts having Golden Eagles (7+1cw; 1-Canaan/1-Hampshire/1-Lewisburg/4-Moorefield/cw-Pendleton). Northern Harriers (33) were seen on nine CBC's. Regularly-occurring Accipiters were located on fourteen counts (31-Sharp-shinned & 42-Cooper's hawks). A rare (cw) Northern Goshawk was reported on the Inwood count. Bald Eagles (155) were tallied from fifteen circles, with an amazing 66 counted in Moorefield. Red-tailed Hawk (339) was WV's most prevalent *Buteo*, followed by the Red-shouldered Hawk (130); both were reported on most counts.

**Owls:** The most-abundant owl species reported was Eastern Screech-Owl (60), followed by Barred (20) and Great Horned (16) owls. Other nice finds included Barn Owl (1-Moorefield/1-Pocahontas), Short-eared Owl (1-Canaan/1-Moorefield/1-Morgantown), and Saw-whet Owl (1-Canaan/2-Morgantown/1-Pendleton). Rarer still were Parkersburg's Snowy Owl and the Long-eared Owl found on the Moorefield count on a road, killed by a vehicle (specimen was collected).

**Woodpeckers:** The top three woodpeckers found in the state were Red-bellied (758) and Downy (754) woodpeckers, and Northern Flicker (391). Sixteen counts tallied Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (162). Six counts reported Red-headed Woodpecker (33),

with the highest number of twelve being reported from Pendleton County. Hampshire County recorded the highest number of woodpeckers in general this season.

**Falcons:** American Kestrels (115 +1cw) were reported from eighteen counts. The rarer Merlin (3 +2cw), found on five counts, included single birds found in Charles Town, Inwood and Morgantown plus two (cw) birds recorded from Pipestem and Parkersburg. Peregrine Falcons (10) were counted in six circles (1-Charles Town/2-Charleston/1-Morgantown/1-Ona/2-Parkersburg/1-Wheeling).

**Flycatchers:** Eastern Phoebes (44) were tallied this season from fourteen counts.

**Vireos:** A single White-eyed Vireo was found in the Morgantown circle and two Blue-headed Vireos were located on the Pendleton County count, both rare finds on a WV CBC.

**Crows and Ravens:** The large crow roosts from Charleston, Raleigh County, and Wheeling always give us a high counts and this year was no exception. American Crow (75,851) was the top species found. Becoming more prevalent, the Common Raven (352) was tallied from 17 circles. The rarer Fish Crow (4) was only located on the Charles Town CBC.

**Thrushes and Mimids:** Nineteen counts had Eastern Bluebirds (1,317), the sixteenth-most prevalent bird on the count. Sixteen circles tallied Hermit Thrushes (86), with Huntington having a high count of 13. American Robins (12,170) came in the third-most seen species in the state. Nineteen counts found Northern Mockingbirds (459). Rarer finds included Gray Catbird (1-Inwood/1-Morgantown/1-Oak Hill) and a lone Brown Thrasher found on the Oak Hill Count.

**Finches:** The thirteenth-most reported species was the American Goldfinch (1,603). Pine Siskins (118) were reported on eight counts. Six counts tallied Purple Finch (32) and only two counts documented Red Crossbills (49), one in Pendleton County and 48 counted in Pocahontas County.

**Sparrows:** Eleven species of sparrows were found this season and three of those species made the top twenty list. Dark-eyed Juncos (4,019) were the sixth-, White-throated Sparrow (1,478) was the fourteenth- and Song Sparrow (1,364) was the fifteenth-most reported species. Fox Sparrows (23 +1cw) were on nine counts. Rarer Savannah Sparrows were found on three counts (1-Charles Town/3-Parkersburg/cw-Pendleton).

**Blackbirds:** Fourteen counts reported Red-winged Blackbird (913). Eastern Meadowlarks (62 +1cw) and Rusty Blackbirds (87 +1cw) were both located in eight circles. Common Grackles (47) were on six counts.

**Warblers:** Yellow-rumped Warblers (465 +1cw) were recorded in seventeen circles. Palm Warblers (16) were located on four counts (1-Charles Town/5-Charleston/9-Ona/1-Parkersburg).

**Other noteworthy birds:** The only shrike this season was a Northern Shrike, seen on the Canaan count. Horned Larks (57) were on three counts (29-Charles Town/17-Moorefield/11-Morgantown). Red-breasted Nuthatches (30) were found in six circles. A lingering House Wren was seen on the Charles Town count, and all but two counts had Winter Wrens (61). Eleven counts tallied Ruby-crowned Kinglets (46). American Pipits (116) were discovered on five counts (1-Charleston/42-Huntington/45-Inwood/2-Moorefield/76-Morgantown).

**Birds Reviewed:** Like any rare birds found in the state at other times of the year, birds found during a CBC that are uncommon for the season, or just rare in general, must

be reviewed. This season, 52 sightings were reviewed. In most cases these birds are not state records and do not have to go through the West Virginia Bird Records Committee's reviewing process, though they do need to be reported with documentation to be accepted by National Audubon. Thanks to all who submitted Rare Bird Reports.

For further information on West Virginia's Christmas Bird Counts and complete seasonal CBC data, go to the Brooks Bird Club website, <http://www.brooksbirdclub.org/wv-cbc-results.html>. Here you can see all our circles, find compilers, and get contact information.

**Table 1**  
**WV 118th CBC Top Twenty Species Found**

No.	Species	Total
1	American Crow	75,851
2	European Starling	21,953
3	American Robin	12,170
4	Canada Goose	8,864
5	Rock Pigeon	4,055
6	Dark-eyed Junco	4,019
7	Mallard	3,529
8	Mourning Dove	2,453
9	Blue Jay	2,210
10	House Sparrow	2,154
11	Northern Cardinal	2,059
12	Tufted Titmouse	1,629
13	American Goldfinch	1,603
14	White-throated Sparrow	1,478
15	Song Sparrow	1,364
16	Eastern Bluebird	1,317
17	Carolina Chickadee	1,247
18	Cedar Waxwing	1,182
19	Turkey Vulture	1,133
20	Carolina Wren	1,099

**Table 2**  
**118th CBC - WV - Counts Categorized by Number of Species Found**

CBC Count Code	CBC Count Name	Number of Species Found	Number of Field Participants	Parties		Total Hours Counting	Total Number Birds Counted	Species Found in High Numbers	Single Birds
				Max	Min				
WVMC	McDowell County	36	6	3	1	13.5	807	No high count species	4
WVRC	Raleigh County	48 <sup>ew-3</sup>	5	3	2	24	16,009	EUST-844 AMCR-14,300	10
WVCA	Canaan	48 <sup>ew-3</sup>	13	8	1	51.25	1,478	No high count species	11
WVAP	Athens-Princeton Area	51 <sup>ew-1</sup>	7	5	1	21.25	1,609	No high count species	3
WVOH	Oak Hill	52	9	5	1	26	1,401	No high count species	11
WVLE	Lewisburg	57	10	6	1	49.5	3,556	EUST-1,055 CAGO-455	10
WVEL	Elkins	59 <sup>ew-1</sup>	17	6	2	33	3,453	CAGO-685 MALL-300	8
WVWH	Wheeling	60 <sup>ew-6</sup>	19	11	2	55.5	50,700	CAGO-381 AMRO-1,629 AMCR-45,000	6
WVCH	Charleston	62 <sup>ew-1</sup>	26	11	2	53	15,783	AMCR-12,475	5
WVHC	Hampshire County	64	38	14	7	83.25	5,251	DEU-755 EUST-788	6
WVPA	Pipestem Area	65 <sup>ew-2</sup>	12	6	1	36	2,698	EUST-439 CAGO-292	9
WVPH	Pocahontas County	66 <sup>ew-4</sup>	16	7	2	42	3,110	MALL-365 CAGO-525	8
WVON	Ona	69	17	6	4	51.5	4,284	EUST-940	5
WVMF	Moorefield	70 <sup>ew-2</sup>	19	7	2	35.75	12,089	EUST-2,450 AMRO-6,600 ROPI-480	11
WVIN	Inwood	70 <sup>ew-4</sup>	19	8	2	57.5	7,810	EUST-2,908 AMRO-1,470 CAGO-856	8
WVHU	Huntington	70	11	6	3	45.75	3,762	CAGO-505	7
WVPC	Pendleton County	74 <sup>ew-5</sup>	10	7	1	52	7,472	EUST-3,350	5
WVCT	Charles Town	78 <sup>ew-3</sup>	34	8	4	59	10,558	EUST-4,175 CAGO-1,048	10
WVPK	Parkersburg	79 <sup>ew-1</sup>	22	8	1	48	7,265	EUST-1,053 ROPI-838 RBGU-409 MALL-618 CAGO-1,759	11
WVMO	Morgantown	94 <sup>ew-1</sup>	36	11	4	60	6,692	EUST-1,125 MALL-496 CAGO-1,043	14

**Table 3****118th CBC - WV Species Found in Low Numbers (1–5) Includes Count Week Birds****One Found**

Cackling Goose (cw only)  
 Northern Goshawk (cw only)  
 Dunlin  
 American Woodcock  
 Snowy Owl  
 Long-eared Owl  
 Northern Shrike  
 White-eyed Vireo  
 House Wren  
 Brown Thrasher

**Counts Located**

(cw)-Morgantown  
 (cw)-Inwood  
 Morgantown  
 Hampshire County  
 Parkersburg  
 Moorefield (specimen)  
 Canaan  
 Morgantown  
 Charles Town  
 Oak Hill

**Two Found**

Greater White-fronted Goose  
 Barn Owl  
 Blue-headed Vireo

1-Elkins (cw)-Inwood  
 1-Moorefield - 1-Pocahontas County  
 2-Pendleton County

**Three Found**

Common Loon  
 Bonaparte's Gull  
 Short-eared Owl  
 Gray Catbird

1-Huntington 1-Morgantown 1-Parkersburg  
 2-Morgantown 1-Parkersburg  
 1-Canaan 1-Moorefield 1-Morgantown  
 1-Inwood 1-Morgantown 1-Oak Hill

**Four Found**

American Wigeon  
 Common Goldeneye  
 Ruffed Grouse  
 Horned Grebe  
 Northern Saw-whet Owl

3-Morgantown 1-Ona  
 2-Charles Town 2-Huntington  
 1-Lewisburg 1-Pipestem 1-Pendleton 1-Raleigh  
 4-Morgantown  
 1-Canaan 2-Morgantown 1-Pendleton

**Five Found**

Snow Goose  
 Herring Gull  
 Merlin  
 Savannah Sparrow

3-Huntington 2-Morgantown  
 1-Huntington 2-Ona 1-Pipestem cw-Wheeling  
 1-Charles Town 1-Inwood 1-Morgantown  
 cw-Pipestem/Parkersburg  
 1-Charles Town 3-Parkersburg cw-Pendleton

1989 Louisa Ave.  
 Wheeling, WV 26003

# Brown-headed Nuthatches, Brooke County, West Virginia: A New State Bird from 1919

Casey Rucker

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought us unprecedented access to West Virginia ornithological history, as long-lost resources have been digitized and posted online. An example can be found in a reference in Earle A. Brooks's invaluable work, *A Descriptive Bibliography of West Virginia Ornithology*, to an article by George M. Sutton on the birds of Brooke County, published in 1920 in *The Oologist*. We now have digital access to *The Oologist*, an ornithological journal published from 1885 to 1938.

George M. Sutton, after whom was named the Northern Parula X Yellow-throated Warbler hybrid that graces the cover of George Hall's *West Virginia Birds*, needs little introduction to Brooks Bird Club members. An outstanding ornithologist and painter, Dr. Sutton spent his later youth in Bethany, West Virginia, and maintained ties to the Club and the state as he rose to president of the Wilson Ornithological Society and published numerous books that often included his paintings.

In the words of Dr. Sutton in his list of Brooke County birds:

## 136. Brown Headed Nuthatch

The discovery of a pair of these birds in May of 1919 caused no little wonder to me. The birds were evidently mated, from all indications, but I can scarcely think of their nesting in the county.

Sutton 1920.

Brown-headed Nuthatches nest in pine forests of the southeastern United States, and prefer decaying or dead trees for their nests (Slater et al. 2013). Dr. Sutton's skepticism of nesting was likely due to habitat, as Brooke County was primarily farm country during the 1920s, and forests of any kind were scarce. The area certainly lacked mature pine forests (J. Buckelew, pers. comm.).

Given the eminence of the observer, and the relative ease of identifying the species, this record has been submitted to the West Virginia Bird Records Committee as a valid, and not hypothetical, record of a new addition to our state list.

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## Book Review

Ryan Tomazin

North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring. Bruce M. Beehler. 2018. Smithsonian Books, Capital Gallery, Suite 6001, Washington, DC 20013. ISBN-10: 1588346137; ISBN-13: 978-1588346131. Hardcover, \$24.95. 256 pages.

I am a fan of birding travelogues and, along with author Bruce Beehler, I've read Edwin Way Teale's *North With The Spring*, Roger Tory Peterson's *Wild America*, and Kenn Kaufman's *Kingbird Highway*. The trip mapped out in this book was inspired by Teale, following the spring migration of wood warblers to their breeding grounds from southern Texas and the Gulf Coast up the central flyway into Ontario, and finishing in the Adirondacks.

What makes *North on the Wing* unique is the author's increased emphasis on habitats along the way north, with detailed discussions about habitat change and preservation, as well as Beehler's sojourns with regional ornithologists and naturalists. This approach allows the reader to learn more about microhabitats and sensitive areas, as well as the types of research and remediation that are helping to keep the areas healthy. In the end, the book ends up being more about conservation than about the day-to-day trip.

A good example of his emphasis is Beehler's stop in the jack pine forests of northeastern Michigan. He includes some discussion of trips to the field with Kirtland's Warbler researchers, but says more about the efforts to preserve habitat, reduce nest parasitism, and increase conservation awareness. He likens the warbler's situation to that of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in southeastern states.

In the end, Beehler visits the habitats of thirty-seven species of wood warbler, seeing each in its breeding environs. Along the way, the reader learns about prime locations for finding the birds, but even more about the ecological niches needed to sustain each species.

The Brooks Bird Club was fortunate to have Bruce Beehler attend Foray this year, and he presented a program on his trip, answering questions and adding photos to the prose of his travels. Attendees were able to talk to and travel with Beehler, and he was more than happy to share more stories and information from his trip, including some of our favorite birds.

348 Station Street, Apt. 7  
Bridgeville, PA 15017

## eBird Report February–April 2018

Michael Slaven

When one considers the distribution of birds that appear in the state, it is apparent that some birding hotspots are more productive than others for both numbers and diversity of species. In 2018, the late-winter season also highlights another factor: places that are regularly birded by experienced birders sometimes yield results that are disproportionate for their size and habitat.

A good case in point is Rehe (pronounced as “Ray”) Wildlife Management Area, sited on 259 ha (638 ac) of wetlands, secondary growth woods, and wetlands on land that was once strip mined in Preston County near Reedsville. The habitat is very good, but there are places in the state that arguably should be more productive. As of 2018, however, it is acre-for-acre producing more species than anywhere else. So what is the x-factor here? It is a diverse habitat, and that explains why there are many species that are possible there. The eBird data files reveal a more telling reason for the area’s productivity, though. It is regularly and consistently birded by skilled birders such as Terry Bronson, Mollee Brown, Kyle Carlsen, David Daniels, Gordon Dimmig, and Frank Izaguirre.

Nearly fifty complete lists were submitted for the hotspot in the February to April period. This attention means that a great proportion of the bird species present there were probably counted, which contributes to a much-greater understanding of the diversity and distribution of avian species at the WMA. Although there were not too many rarities there this spring, Rehe yielded some nice finds including **Snow Goose** (*Anser caerulescens*), **Northern Shoveler** (*Spatula clypeata*), **Long-tailed Duck** (*Clangula hyemalis*), **Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*), **Horned Grebe** (*Podiceps auritus*), **Short-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus griseus*), **Wilson’s Snipe** (*Gallinago delicata*), **Greater Yellowlegs** (*Tringa melanoleuca*), **Bonaparte’s Gull** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*), **Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*), **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*), **Winter Wren** (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), **Louisiana Waterthrush** (*Parkesia motacilla*), **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Setophaga dominica*), and many other more common species of waterfowl and resident birds.

Many of these birds would not have been recorded if not for the careful attention of these birders. Similar results have been recorded by the intrepid birders of Route 2 and the Huntington area. When looking at eBird maps, one can pick out prime birding areas by looking at the locations listed. These birding hotspots do not just portray good places to bird, they also give a pretty good idea of the distribution of birders in the state, which shows clusters of birders in the Monongalia-Preston-Taylor County area, Wheeling, and the western border along the Ohio River.

It is well worth considering how under-birded many large swaths of the state are. West Virginia has a good deal of private land, off limits to birders. There are also large expanses of very sparsely-populated areas. A lack of attention from birders is therefore almost inevitable for much habitat. As a modest proposal, I would suggest that the data shows that West Virginia probably has other sites that are, if not quite so productive in diversity and populations of birds as Rehe WMA, are at least worth studying more closely. Perhaps it would be a good idea to scout out promising new hotspots and watch them consistently for a whole year to find the next surprising hotspot. When scouting potential

new patches or hotspots to study, there are a couple of things to consider. Is the area someplace you will be able to consistently check? Is the habitat good? What species might you expect given the terrain, flora, elevation, etc.? It can be useful to also pick out some microhabitats to patch watch, particularly if you are living in a city. In the winter especially, look for sources of open water, small, patches of woods, and areas where one habitat suddenly yields to another type. Finding a new spot to concentrate part of your birding efforts can be a very rewarding practice. I am planning to concentrate more effort on a couple of areas when 2019 begins. Not a bad idea for a New Year's resolution!

Happy birding!

632 West Virginia Avenue  
Morgantown, WV 26591  
mslavenwv@gmail.com

## Field Notes Spring Season

March 1 – May 31, 2018

Casey Rucker

All three months of spring were damper than average in West Virginia, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University. After much-cooler-than-average temperatures in February and March, May was the warmest on record.

These notes were gathered from the West Virginia Birds Listserv, sponsored by the National Audubon Society, from bird-count results, and from field notes submitted to the editor by email and regular mail. The full content of the submitted reports by the contributors of the WV Listserv may be viewed by visiting the archives at <http://list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html>.

N. Wade Snyder spotted and photographed a **Mississippi Kite** on May 16 at the Burr Industrial Park ponds, Jefferson County; when accepted it will be the fifth state record. For the second spring in a row, 232 species were reported in West Virginia. Distribution of bird reports was down from the year before, as 41 of 55 counties contributed to our state's avian lore. Birders found 36 species of warbler during the spring season.

**Geese, Swans, and Ducks** – On March 10, Steven Wilson found three **Snow Geese** near Brighton Park, Hardy County, and on March 24, he spotted a blue-morph **Snow Goose** in Canvas, Nicholas County. Another blue-morph **Snow Goose** appeared in Elkins, Randolph County, April 4–6, as observed by Ruth and Mike Kerns and Walter Kordek. Steven Wilson

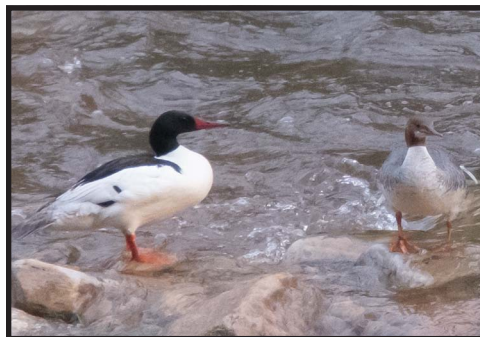


Blue-morph Snow Goose -  
Photo by Walter Kordek

saw a **Ross's Goose** on March 2 in Summersville, Nicholas County, where the individual apparently remained until March 24 (SWi). In Mason County, Michael Griffith discovered a **Ross's Goose** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam on March 23. Hullet Good spotted a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Coonskin Park, Kanawha County, on April 13. James and Judy Phillips saw three **Cackling Geese** in Princeton, Mercer County, on March 4. **Canada Geese** remained in, or returned to, their usual haunts throughout West Virginia.

There were few reports of **swans** once again this spring in West Virginia. On March 3 in Cabell County, David Patick, Janet Keating, and Michael Griffith observed a **Mute Swan** at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area (WMA), where the species reappeared on April 21 (DP, JK). David Patick and Michael Griffith saw a **Mute Swan** on April 8 at McClintic WMA, Mason County, where the bird apparently lingered through May 21 (JsH, TB). The March 17 Mountaineer Audubon spring waterfowl visit to Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, included a flyover by 42 calling **Tundra Swans**, as reported by Derek Courtney

Duck sightings in West Virginia continued last spring's encouraging results. There were many reports statewide of **Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Hooded and Common mergansers**. The following **ducks** were reported in five-to-ten counties during the spring: **Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Red-heads, Lesser Scaup, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Ruddy Ducks**. The following species were only reported in the counties



Common Mergansers - Photo by D. Miller

listed: **Northern Shovelers** in Mason (JBT, DP, GR, JK), Nicholas (SWi), and Preston (TB); **American Wigeons** in Mason (DP, JK, MG, JBT), Monongalia (TB), and Nicholas (SWi); **Northern Pintails** in Mason (JBT) and Nicholas (SWi); **Greater Scaup** in Mason (DP, JK, MG, JBT, GR) and Wayne (ReT, DP, MG); **Surf Scoters** in Mason (ReT, GR, DP, MG, TB), Tucker (RBo), and Wayne (ReT, GR, DP, MG); **White-winged Scoter** in Mason (MG, JK, DP, GR); **Black Scoter** in Wayne (ReT, GR, DP, MG); and **Long-tailed Ducks** in Hardy (DH), Jefferson (JBz), Mason (MG, JK), and Preston (TB).

**Quail** – Fred Atwood had a new state bird when he heard a singing **Northern Bobwhite** near Hogueland Lane, Grant County, on May 26, and Matthew Orsie was surprised by a **Northern Bobwhite** in his yard in Hedgesville, Berkeley County, three days later.

**Pheasants, Grouse, and Turkeys** – Wil Hershberger and the Potomac Valley Audubon Society saw a **Ring-necked Pheasant** at Cool Spring Nature Reserve in Jefferson County on April 21, where a **Ring-necked Pheasant** was seen again on May 14 (WH, JBz). Birders throughout the state reported **Wild Turkeys**, while reports of **Ruffed Grouse** came only from Pocahontas (ReT, DP, JJP), Randolph (HMy), Summers (JP), and Tucker (HMy, CR) Counties.

**Grebes** – Birders reported **Pied-billed Grebes** and **Horned Grebes** in 11 and 10 counties, respectively.

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

**Cuckoos** – **Cuckoos** apparently arrived somewhat later this year than last, and sightings were sparse. **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** began to arrive throughout the state beginning May 5 in Cabell County (ReT), and by the end of the season had been reported in just nine counties. **Black-billed Cuckoos** appeared beginning on May 14 as observed in the Tucker County International Migratory Bird Count, and reports came from only five counties.

**Goatsuckers** and **Swifts** – **Common Nighthawk** sightings were up a bit in West Virginia this spring, with May appearances in Cabell (JsH), Jefferson (BH, JBz), Kanawha (DP), Putnam (KK), Summers (JP), and Wood (TB) Counties. Kevin Campbell heard a **Chuck-will's-widow** near Parkersburg, Wood County, as reported by Jerry Westfall, for the second year in a row beginning on April 27. David Patick, Derek Courtney, Matthew Orsie, and Gary Rankin found a **Chuck-will's-widow** in Mason County during their Big Day on May 12. **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** and **Chimney Swifts** were widely reported throughout the state.

**Hummingbirds** – **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving in mid-April, and appeared in reports from 18 counties throughout the state. James Phillips reported the first in West Virginia this year: three **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** on April 14 at a friend's house in Princeton, Mercer County, and one at his home in Pipestem, Summers County.

**Rails** and **Coots** – Terry Bronson and David Daniels found a **Virginia Rail** at Altona Marsh, Jefferson County, on April 22. At Green Bottom WMA, Cabell County, Joshua Holland spotted a **Virginia Rail** on May 4 and the bird continued to be observed through May 12 (GR, JK, DP, DCo, MO). In Wood County, on April 8 Jon Benedetti reported a **Sora** discovered at Williamstown Marsh, and on April 30 Terry Bronson observed a **Sora** at Belleville Wetlands. After hearing Joshua Holland's report from the day before, David Patick heard a **Sora** calling at Green Bottom WMA, Cabell County, on April 11, where the species was observed through April 30 (JK, GR, ReT, JsH, DP, DCo, MO, GR). Janet Keating spotted a **Purple Gallinule** in the same location on April 29, and the bird was a new state bird for many, remaining at least through May 6 (JsH, GR, DP, SWi, ReT, RG, JBT, TB, MO). **American Coot** reports were even scantier than usual this spring, coming only from four counties.

**Cranes** – On March 31, Joseph Hildreth reported a **Sandhill Crane** that was photographed at Stauffer's Marsh, Berkeley County, and likely the same individual was seen at the same location by Jon and B. J. Little on April 11.

**Plovers** – David Patick, Janet Keating, and Michael Griffith encountered an **American Golden-Plover** at Apple Grove Farmland, Mason County, on April 14. It was only the third spring record in their region. Also in Mason County, James and Beverly Triplett spotted a **Semipalmated Plover** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam on May 4, where Michael Griffith found the same species on May 22 and 23; Gary Rankin and Janet Keating saw two **Semipalmated Plovers** at Gallipolis Ferry on May 6, and David Patick, Gary Rankin, and Michael Griffith saw eight **Semipalmated Plovers** at Shady Waters Campground on May 26. **Killdeer** were well represented with reports from 17 counties.

**Sandpipers** – For the second spring in a row, only twelve **sandpiper** species made appearances in the Mountain State. **Wilson's Snipe**, **Spotted** and **Solitary sandpipers**, and **Lesser** and **Greater yellowlegs** were all reported in at least seven counties. The following species were reported in six or fewer counties, as listed: **Dunlin** in Mason (MG, DP, GR); **Least Sandpipers** in Kanawha (HG), Mason (GR, JK, JsH, TB), and Tucker (CR); **White-rumped Sandpipers** in Mason (MG, JK, DP, GR); **Semipalmated Sandpipers** in Mason (MG, JK, TB, DP, GR); **American Woodcocks** in Barbour (RBr), Monongalia (DCo), Summers (JP), Tucker (KJ), and Wetzel (WJ); **Willetts** in Kanawha (RG); and **Red-necked Phalarope** in Mason (MG).

**Gulls and Terns** – Sightings of **Bonaparte's Gulls** came from Barbour (TB), Hardy (DaG), Mason (MG, DP, JK), Nicholas (SWi), Preston (TB), Randolph (RBo), Wayne (ReT, DP, MG, GR), and Wood (JB) Counties. **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported in nine counties, and **Herring Gulls** appeared in Mason (DP, JK, MG, GR), Pleasants (TB), Randolph (RBo), Taylor (JH), and Wood (TB) Counties.

**Tern** sightings were up a bit this season. **Caspian Terns** were observed in Kanawha (RG), Nicholas (SWi), and Wood (JB) Counties. James Phillips saw a **Common Tern** in the Hinton area, Summers County, on May 1. Joey Herron counted twelve **Forster's Terns** on Tygart Lake, Taylor County, on May 6. **Forster's Terns** were also reported from Kanawha (RG), Marion (TB), Mason (DP, JK), Tucker (CR), and Wayne (DP, MG, JK, GR) Counties.

**Loons** – **Common Loon** reports came from Grant (CR), Jefferson (JN), Kanawha (RG), Monongalia (JsH), Nicholas (SWi), Preston (TB), Summers (MAW), and Taylor (TB) Counties.

**Cormorants** – West Virginia birders reported **Double-crested Cormorants** in eleven counties.

**Hérons and Egrets** – It was a good season for **heron** and **egret** diversity. **American Bitterns** appeared in Cabell (GR, JK), Mason (GR, JK, JsH), Pocahontas (SK), and Randolph (RBo) Counties. On May 6, Gary Rankin and Janet Keating found a **Least Bittern** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, where the species was also observed on May 26 (DP, GR, MG). **Great Blue Herons** and **Great Egrets** appeared widely. Wilma Jarrell spotted a **Snowy Egret** in Proctor, Wetzel County, on May 8, and two days later, N. Wade Snyder saw a **Little Blue Heron** in Bardane, Jefferson County. Terry Bronson discovered a **Cattle Egret** at Apple Grove Fish Hatchery, Mason County, on May 23. **Green Herons** appeared widely.

**Vultures** – Birders in twelve West Virginia counties reported seeing **Black Vultures**, while **Turkey Vulture** reports came from twenty counties.

**Hawks and Eagles** – The **Mississippi Kite** discovered by N. Wade Snyder in Jefferson County on May 16 is described near the beginning of these notes. **Osprey** were reported throughout the state, beginning on March 16 in Kanawha County (RG) and generally in small numbers; many observers reported *nesting*. James Phillips saw an immature **Golden Eagle** in Pipestem, Summers County, on March 13, and two immature **Golden Eagles** in Monroe County four days later. **Northern Harriers** appeared in reports from Jefferson County (WS), Mercer County (JP), and Tucker County (HMy). **Accipiter** reports were sparse, with **Sharp-shinned Hawks** observed only in Preston (TB, DD), Summers (JP), and Tucker (CR) Counties, and **Cooper's Hawks** in Cabell (BBo), Jefferson (TB, DD, JBz), Summers (JP), Wayne (GR), and Wood (JB) Counties. Reports of **Bald Eagles**, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Broad-winged Hawks**, and **Red-tailed Hawks** were widespread in West Virginia this spring.

**Owls** – **Owl** reports were also up a bit during the spring season. Richard Bailey reported a **Barn Owl** roosting in a silo in Monroe County on March 4, and on April 30 Terry Bronson saw three *juvenile Barn Owls* near Belleville wetlands, Wood County. Birders reported **Eastern Screech-Owls** only in Summers (JP) and Wayne (GR) Counties. **Great Horned Owls** inspired reports in Cabell (MK), Grant (SWi), Jefferson (JBz), Kanawha (HG), Putnam (DWO), and Ritchie (CB) Counties, and birders reported **Barred Owls** in eleven West Virginia counties. For the second year in a row during their Big Day



Baby Great Horned Owl -  
Photo by Marjorie Keatley

*courtship feeding* at South Mill Creek Lake Park, Grant County, on April 22.

**Woodpeckers** – Our state’s seven species of **woodpeckers** were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in ten counties, and of **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** in eleven counties.

**Falcons** – **American Kestrels** appeared widely in West Virginia, while **Merlins** were spotted only in Cabell County (BBo), Kanawha County (RG), and Tucker County (TB, SAn, CR). **Peregrine Falcon** sightings came from Jefferson (JBz), Mason (MG, JsH), Mercer (JP), and Monongalia (TB) Counties.

**Flycatchers** – **Olive-sided Flycatcher** reports only came during May from the Cranberry Glades boardwalk, Pocahontas County (DP, DCo, MO, GR, ReT, JJP). The 47<sup>th</sup> Bibbee Nature Club Spring Bird Count found a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, new to the count, on May 12 at Pipestem, Summers County, as reported by James Phillips. **Eastern Wood-Pewees**, **Acadian Flycatchers**, **Eastern Phoebes**, **Great Crested Flycatchers**, and **Eastern Kingbirds** were widely reported throughout the state. Birders reported **Alder Flycatchers** in Jefferson County (WH), Monongalia County (GDi), Pocahontas County (DP, DCo, MO, GR, JP), and Tucker County (CR, HMy). Reports of **Willow Flycatcher** came from Cabell (GR, JK, JsH), Jefferson (CD, WS), Mason (TB), Mercer (JP), Ohio (RTo), and Tucker (CR, HMy) Counties, while **Least Flycatchers** were reported in Pendleton (HMy), Pocahontas (DP, ReT), Raleigh (MAW), Randolph (HMy), Tucker (CR), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties.

**Shrikes** – On May 3, Richard Bailey reported twelve **Loggerhead Shrikes**, *including six nests*, found during April and May in the Greenbrier Valley, Greenbrier and Monroe Counties.

**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. On April 1 Diane Holsinger listened to a **Warbling Vireo** singing at Kimsey Run Lake, Hardy County.

**Crows, Jays, and Ravens** – **Blue Jays**, **American Crows**, and **Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. **Fish Crows** were reported only in Jefferson County (BT,WH, TB, DHa).

**Larks** – **Horned Larks** were only found in reports from Mason County this spring, in four locations from March 3 to May 29 (DP, JK, MG, GR, LC).

on May 12, David Patick, Derek Courtney, Matthew Orsie, and Gary Rankin found a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** on the Scenic Highway, Pocahontas County. A pair of hooting **Great Horned Owls** was an exciting event for Cynthia Burkhart’s dog in her yard in Ritchie County on the evening of April 7.

**Kingfishers** – **Belted Kingfisher** reports were widespread in West Virginia this season, with reports from fifteen counties. Frederick Atwood watched a pair of **Belted Kingfishers** *engaged in*

**Swallows – Purple Martins** were reported in Berkeley (PS), Jefferson (BH, LF, BT, RF), Kanawha (HG), Mason (MG, JK, DP, GR, JsH), Ohio (RTo), Preston (TB, DD), Putnam (KK), Summers (JJP), and Wood (TB) Counties. **Tree Swallows** had already made appearances in West Virginia at the end of February, and joined **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** and **Barn Swallows** in widespread returns to West Virginia this spring. **Bank Swallows** appeared only in Mason (DP, JK, GR) and Wood (TB) Counties. Darrell Good found **Cliff Swallows** *nesting* in Wardensville, Hardy County, on May 13. **Cliff Swallows** also inspired reports from Jefferson (DHa), Kanawha (HG, RG), Mason (MG, DP, GR, JsH, TB), Pleasants (TB), Summers (JP), and Wood (JB, TB) Counties.

**Chickadees and Titmice – Black-capped and Carolina chickadees** were reported in their usual habitats in West Virginia this spring, and **Tufted Titmice** appeared widely as usual.

**Nuthatches** – In contrast to the prior spring, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were only reported from Pocahontas (DP, JJP) and Tucker (TB, HMy, CR) Counties. **White-breasted Nuthatches** continued to appear widely.

**Creepers – Brown Creeper** reports were down this season, coming from only eight counties.

**Wrens – House and Carolina wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state. **Winter Wrens** were reported in Jefferson (HMc), Pendleton (HMy), Pocahontas (ReT), Randolph (HMy), and Tucker (CR) Counties.

**Gnatcatchers** – Bruni Haydl spotted an either very-early or overwintering **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** on March 1 in Charles Town, Jefferson County. Otherwise, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** began returning in early April to breeding grounds throughout the state.

**Kinglets** – Birders observed **Golden-crowned Kinglets** in ten West Virginia counties, and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** in seventeen counties during the season. On April 12, Deborah Hale heard **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** singing in migration near Rissler Road, Jefferson County.

**Thrushes** – It was a fair spring for **thrush** reports in West Virginia, where the usual seven species were found. **Eastern Bluebirds**, **Swainson's** and **Wood thrushes**, and **American Robins** were seen throughout most reporting counties. **Veeries** were reported only in Mason (JsH), Monongalia (CH), Pocahontas (ReT), Tucker (CR), Wayne (GR), and Wood (JB, TB) Counties; **Gray-cheeked Thrush** reports came from Fayette (MAW) and Kanawha (KC) Counties; and **Hermit Thrushes** were reported from Barbour (TB), Cabell (GR), Hardy (KKi, JW), Monongalia (CH), Pocahontas (DP, ReT), Randolph (HMy), Tucker (HMy, CR), and Wood (JB) Counties. On May 3, Caden Haines took a break from finals and found **Veery**, **Swainson's**, **Hermit**, and **Wood thrushes**, and **American Robins**, at Core Arboretum in Morgantown, Monongalia County.

**Mockingbirds and 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.

**Waxwings – Cedar Waxwings** were reported in twelve counties this spring.

**Weaver Finches** – The **House Sparrow** continues to occupy our state, primarily in urban and farm settings.

**Pipits** – Terry Bronson found nine **American Pipits** at Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on March 22. On May 7, Wilma Jarrell enjoyed a very unusual yard bird when an



**American Pipit** flew up from her garden in Wileyville, Wetzel County.

**Finches and Allies – House Finches, Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches** appeared in reports throughout the state. On March 13, Randy Bodkins found three live **Red Crossbills** on Cheat Mountain, Randolph County, as well as a carcasses on Route 250 where vehicle mortality is all-too-frequent. Terry Bronson saw eight **Red Crossbills** at Blackwater Falls State Park, Tucker County, on March 19.

**Towhees, Sparrows, and Juncos – Eastern Towhees** were already present in some areas at the start of the spring season, and by its end were reported from throughout the state. Thirteen other species of sparrow made appearances in accustomed haunts throughout our state. Herb Myers saw an **American Tree Sparrow** at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, on March 8, and Elliot and Nancy Kirschbaum enjoyed a new yard and county bird when an **American Tree Sparrow** appeared at their home in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County, on March 26. **Fox Sparrows** appeared through mid-April, and **White-throated** and **White-crowned sparrows** were reported through early May. All three species were widely reported. Resident and returning **sparrow** species made first appearances this season in reports from the following counties: **Chipping** on March 8 in Randolph (HMy), **Field** on March 1 in Jefferson (CD), **Vesper** on March 29 in Jefferson (DH), **Savannah** on March 23 in Mason (MG), **Grasshopper** on April 22 in Grant (FA), **Henslow's** on May 11 in Tucker (LeJ), **Song** on March 2 in Tucker (CR), **Swamp** on April 7 in Barbour (TB, DD), and **Dark-eyed Junco** on March 2 in Randolph (HMy) and Tucker (CR). On May 11, LeJay Graffious discovered **Henslow's Sparrows** in Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, at a location where the birds had been absent for a number of years. Elizabeth Bullard hosted 25–30 **Fox Sparrows** at her feeders in Pocahontas County on March 13.

**Chats – Yellow-breasted Chats** first appeared on April 19 in Belle, Kanawha County, as reported by Richard Gregg, and by the end of the season had appeared widely throughout the state.

**Blackbirds and Allies – Bobolinks** returned to eight reporting counties, with a first appearance on April 28 in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, as observed by David Patick. There were many West Virginia reports of **Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Orchard and Baltimore orioles. Rusty Blackbirds** appeared only in reports from Cabell (MG), Greenbrier (MAW), Jefferson (BT), Mason (MG), Pleasants (TB), Preston (TB), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

**Warblers** – The following **warblers**, all regular migrants through or breeders in West Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Ovenbird**: April 15, Calhoun (TF), **Worm-Eating Warbler**: April 13, Cabell (MG), **Louisiana Waterthrush**: March 27, Cabell (MG), **Northern Waterthrush**: April 28, Pocahontas (DP), **Golden-winged Warbler**: May 6, Randolph (RBi), **Blue-winged Warbler**: April 21, Wayne (ReT), **Black-and-white Warbler**: April 1, Wayne (DP, MG), **Prothonotary Warbler**: April 14, Jefferson (WH), **Swainson's Warbler**: May 2, Raleigh (MAW), **Tennessee Warbler**: May 2, Monongalia (JsH), **Nashville Warbler**: April 19, Wood (JB), **Mourning Warbler**: May 13, Pocahontas (ReT), **Kentucky Warbler**: April 21, Cabell (DP, JK), **Common Yellowthroat**: April 17, Kanawha (RG), **Hooded Warbler**: April 15, Kanawha (RG), **American Redstart**: April 15, Summers (JJP), **Cape May Warbler**: April 29, Jefferson (JBz), **Cerulean Warbler**: May 1, Cabell (JsH), **Northern Parula**: April 12, Jefferson (DH), **Magnolia and Bay-breasted warblers**: May 1, Cabell (JsH), **Blackbur-**

**nian Warbler:** April 28, Pocahontas (DP), **Yellow Warbler:** April 14, Cabell (DP, JK, MG), **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** April 27, Barbour (RBr), **Blackpoll Warbler:** May 1, Summers (JP), **Black-throated Blue Warbler:** April 28, Pocahontas (DP), **Palm Warbler:** April 1, Hardy (DH), **Pine Warbler:** March 2, Summers (JJP), **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** March 1, Kanawha (HG), **Yellow-throated Warbler:** April 1, Wayne (DP, MG), **Prairie Warbler:** April 14, Mason (DP, JK, MG), **Black-throated Green Warbler:** April 1, Wayne (DP, MG), **Canada Warbler:** April 28, Pocahontas (DP), and **Wilson's Warbler:** May 14, Berkeley (MO) and Monongalia (GD<sub>i</sub>). Twenty-five of these warbler species appeared on or before the “first-seen” dates in George A. Hall's *West Virginia Birds*. A **Prothonotary Warbler** was a new yard bird for Joette Borzik in Jefferson County on May 3. Three days later, Carol Del-Colle spotted a male **Cape May Warbler** in her yard in Summit Point, Jefferson County, the first time the species had appeared there as a spring migrant.

**Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings – Summer Tanager** reports were up a bit this spring, coming from Cabell (DP, GR), Kanawha (JBT), Ritchie (CB), Summers (JP), and Wood (TB) Counties. Twenty-one counties hosted sightings of returning **Scarlet Tanagers**, the first of which was spotted by Rennie and Nancy Talbert at Beech Fork State Park, Cabell County, on April 21.

**Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. On April 16, Thomas Fox found the earliest **Indigo Bunting** he had ever seen at his feeders in Millstone, Calhoun County. **Blue Grosbeaks** were the subjects of reports from Jefferson (WS, DH<sub>a</sub>), Mason (GR, MG, LC), and Monongalia (GD<sub>i</sub>) Counties. There were an unusual number of reports of **Dickcissel**, coming from Jefferson County (WS), Mason County (MG, JK, DP, GR, JBT), Pleasants County (TB), Wayne County (GR, JK, MG), and Wood County (LC).

Contributors to the Spring Field Notes: Sarah Anderson (SA<sub>n</sub>), Frederick Atwood (FA), Richard Bailey (RBI), Jon Benedetti (JB), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Ben Borda (BBo), Joette Borzik (JBz), Ross Brittain (RBr), Terry Bronson (TB), Cynthia Burkhart (CB), Kevin Cade (KC), Laura Ceperley (LC), Derek Courtney (DCo), David Daniels (DD), Carol Del-Colle (CD), Gordon Dimmig (GD<sub>i</sub>), Reed Flinn (RF), Tom Fox (TF), Laura Frazier (LF), Darrell Good (DaG), Hullet Good (HG), LeJay Graffious (LeJ), Richard Gregg (RG), Michael Griffith (MG), Caden Haines (CH), Deborah Hale (DH<sub>a</sub>), Bruni Haydl (BH), Joey Herron (JoH), Wil Hershberger (WH), Joseph Hildreth (JH), Joshua Holland (JsH), Diane Holsinger (DH), Karen Jacobson (KJ), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Kim Kazmierski (KK), Sharon Kearns (SK), Marjorie Keatley (MK), Janet Keating (JK), Kathy King (KK<sub>i</sub>), Debbie Koegler (DK), Heather McSharry (HMc), Herb Myers (HMy), Jean Neely (JN), Matthew Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), James Phillips (JP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), Paul Saffold (PS), N. Wade Snyder (WS), Rennie Talbert (ReT), Ryan Tomazin (RTo), William and Carol Telfair (BT), James and Beverly Triplett (JBT), Mindy and Allen Waldron (MAW), Jerry Westfall (JWe), Jane Whitaker (JW), Steven Wilson (SW<sub>i</sub>), and Doug Wood (DWo).

P.O. Box 2  
Seneca Rocks, WV 26884  
autoblock@frontiernet.net

## **ERRATUM**

In *The Redstart* 85(3), the field notes mistakenly reported on page 99 that Beverly and James Triplett found a Blue-headed Vireo in the Charleston Christmas Bird Count. The individual turned out to be a Yellow-rumped Warbler.





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## 2018 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. 31-Feb. 2	Trip to Killdeer Plains (Contact Dick Esker)	
March 1-2	Funk/Killbuck Marsh (overnight trip — contact Dick Esker)	
March 9-11	Early Spring Meeting (Contact Dick Esker) .....	North Bend State Park Harrisville, WV
March 18	Waterfowl Field Trip (day trip) (Contact Carl Slater) ....	Seneca Lake, OH
April 21	Three Rivers Bird Club (day trip) .....	Raccoon Creek State Park, PA (Contact Ryan Tomazin)
May 10-13	Wildflower Pilgrimage, Blackwater Falls State Park .....	Davis, WV
May 12	International Migratory Bird Day/ N. American Migration Count .....	local chapters
June 3-10	Foray – Camp Pocahontas .....	Thornwood, WV (contact Janice Emrick or Ryan Tomazin)
August-October	Bird Banding .....	Dolly Sods, WV
October	BBC Fall Reunion & Meeting, Date and time TBD Check Mail Bag and website	
November 7-11	Eastern Shore (Contact Carl Slater)	
Dec. 14-Jan. 5, '19	Christmas Bird Counts .....	local chapters

### BBC FORAYS (dates and places tentative)

2017 Lost River Resort, Hardy County, Lost River, WV  
 2018 Thornwood 4-H Camp, Pocahontas County, Thornwood, WV  
 2019 Camp Pioneer, Randolph County, Beverly, 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, wwwarblers@hotmail.com

<http://brooksbirdclub.org>

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

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Dick Esker, eskerrb@frontier.com	Dawn Fox, dafox210@gmail.com
Carl & Juanita Slater, gusind@stratuswave.net	Ryan Tomazin, wwwarblers@hotmail.com
Janice Emrick, emrick@gmn4u.com	

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

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