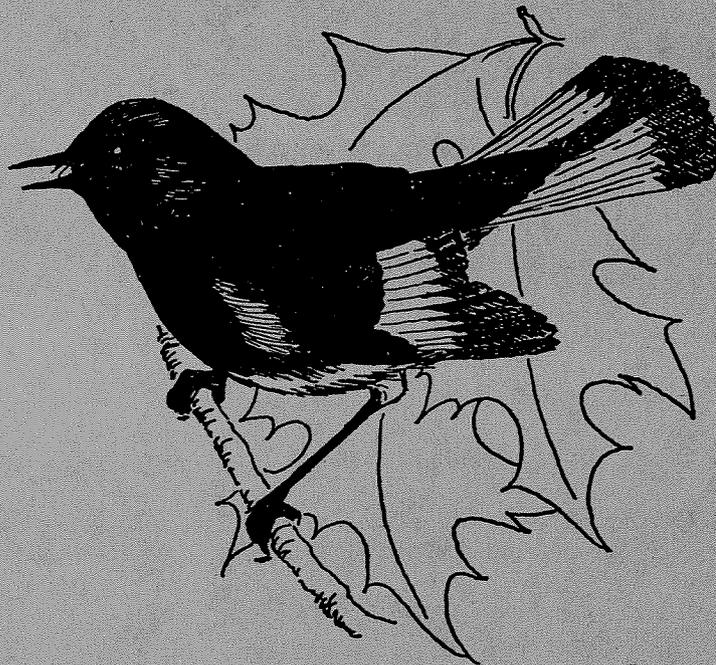


The **REDSTART**

VOLUME 42—NUMBER 3

JULY, 1975



PUBLISHED BY THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB

The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

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

OFFICERS

President	Mrs. John Laitsch
First Vice President	J. Russell Hogg
Second Vice President	Kenneth H. Anderson
Executive Secretary	Charles Conrad
Secretary	Miss Eva Hayes

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected Members: 1975—Mrs. Esther Reichelderfer, Mrs. Zettie Stewart, Norris Gluck
1976—Harold Boecher, Mrs. Ann Llewellyn, Miss Carolyn Ruddle

Standing Members: Mrs. John Laitsch, J. Russell Hogg, Kenneth H. Anderson, Charles L. Conrad, Miss Eva Hays, George Hurley, Ralph K. Bell

TRUSTEES

Mrs. Pete Gregg (1975), E. R. Chandler (1976), Miss Gladys Murrey (1977)

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN 1975

Membership	J. Russell Hogg
Mailbag Editor	Charles L. Conrad
Environmental	Ben Kiff
Research	George A. Hall
Package Program	Mrs. Harold Boecher
Foray	Charles L. Conrad
Scholarships	Glen F. Phillips
Land Acquisition	Mrs. Kyle Bush
Backyard Sanctuary	Dorothy Conrad
Romney School Project	Clark Miller
Hawk Counts	George Koch
Publicity	Mrs. Robert Ferrell
Club Library	Dorothy Broemsen
Historian	Elizabeth DeGarmo
BBC Store	Gregg E. Eddy

The REDSTART

VOLUME 42—NUMBER 3

JULY, 1975

Editorial Staff

Editor

George F. Hurley
920 Hughes Drive
St. Albans, W. Va.

Field Notes Editor

Mrs. John Laitsch
MC 21, East Liverpool, Ohio

Art Editor

Mrs. Harvey Shreve
P. O. Box 311
St. Albans, W. Va.

Banding Notes Editor

Mrs. Constance Katholi
930 Woodland Ave.
South Charleston, W. Va.

Current Periodicals Reporter

Clark Miller
Inwood, W. Va.

Advisory Editorial Board

Dr. George A. Hall, Dr. Harold
E. Burt, John Laitsch, Roland
D. Cowger, Miss Lena Artz, Miss
Maxine Thacker.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Searching for the California Condor —David H. Smith	98
Invasion of Baltimore Orioles —Clifford and Linnie Coon	100
Herptiles of Ritchie County, W. Va. —Robert C. Lightburn	101
Blue-Wing Mates with Golden-Wing in Coonskin —Norris Gluck	104
Olive-Sided Flycatchers —Maurice Brooks	105
The Gathering Cage —Constance Katholi	107
Field Notes —Nevada Laitsch	108

THE REDSTART is published quarterly in January, April, July and October at 920 Hughes Drive, St. Albans, W. Va. 25177. The official organ of the Brooks Bird Club, it is mailed to all members in good standing. Non-member subscription price is \$2.50. Individual copies cost \$0.50 except the Foray issue which is \$1.00. Changes of address and requests for back issues should be mailed to 707 Warwood Ave., Wheeling, W. Va. All articles for publication and books for review should be mailed to the Editor.

Application to mail at Second Class postage rates is pending at St. Albans, W. Va. Printed by Harless Printing Company, St. Albans, W. Va.

Searching for the California Condor

David H. Smith

On Monday, September 16th, 1974 at 3:00 p.m. I arrived by rented car at Gormon, a town of one hundred plus persons about sixty-five miles north east of Los Angeles. My purpose for being in this area was to try to see the California Condor.

As I registered at the motel the clerk was discouraging. She said the Condors had all been killed. I checked into the room and about five minutes later left to look over part of the route I would be taking the next morning. First I had to get some gasoline. Again I met with discouragement. The service station operator told me Condors had not been seen for years.

From Gormon I went three or four miles to a small town, Lake of the Woods. This town is at the base of Mt. Pinos where you take the road fifteen miles to the summit. I went part way up stopping at three rest areas and picked up two "lifers"—the Mountain chickadee and the Pygmy nuthatch.

On Tuesday at 5:00 a.m. I was out of bed and after a hasty breakfast started for the top of Mt. Pinos. The first twelve miles from Lake of the Woods had an excellent paved road but the last three miles of the road was gravel with deep ruts and sharp stones. The summit of Mt. Pinos is nearly nine thousand feet. It was chilly although the temperature in Lake of the Woods was in the eighties.

The top of Mt. Pinos is fairly flat comprising an area of approximately forty acres with some trees, mostly pine. Some areas had fairly high grass and red currant bushes. The currants were ripe and the numerous Western bluebirds, White-crowned sparrows, juncos, and other birds were having a grand feast. The currants were large and juicy and made an excellent dessert.

The Condor lookout is on the south side of the summit. It looks off over to the Sespe Creek Condor Refuge which is about eight miles to the south east. In between is forested area and then deep gorges forming the badlands.

On Tuesday, four or five persons came up the mountain. They had a quick look and after several minutes left in disgust because they did not see a Condor. One man, however, was on vacation. He was in the Fish and Game Service and had just transferred from Delaware to Sacramento. He was a good birder and realistic. Two golden eagles were seen, two red-tailed hawks, several ravens and a Calliope hummingbird. The latter is the smallest bird in North America so it is possible I might see the largest and the smallest bird on this trip. No Condors were sighted Tuesday but I was not too disappointed although I was thinking of the other lifers I could be finding while waiting, possibly hopelessly, for the Condor. Wednesday was much like Tuesday although I added another "lifer" on the summit, the green-tailed towhee. Four golden eagles were seen as well as many white-throated swifts, and violet-green swallows.

Thursday was a day of frustration. I was sitting on some rocks overlooking the valley when a man approached me and asked me if I was driving a green Plymouth. I was and he gave me the bad news that I had a flat tire. I took the wheel off and then tried to put the spare on but after struggling with it for several minutes decided it was a different size wheel. The only solution was to hitch a ride down the mountain, get the tire fixed, and hitch a ride back up. This took three hours, all the while cursing the car-rental agency. Also this was taking time away from the look-out and

possibly missing a Condor. On returning I was on pins and needles the rest of the day because if I got another flat I might have had to spend the night on the mountain with little to eat. By 5:00 p.m. no Condors were sighted so I drove down the mountain and then sixty miles to Bakersfield, the nearest city where the car rental agency was located. I changed cars and the next morning at 4:00 a.m. took off from Bakersfield for the top of Mt. Pinos. At the end of the paved road going up the mountain a horrible idea came into my mind. What if the spare in the new car did not fit or was flat. I stopped the car, opened the trunk, and would you believe the spare was flat. I had no choice but to return the twelve miles to the base of the mountain. At the service station I found out the tire was not only flat but had had a blow-out and could not be fixed. The nearest service station that had tires was ten miles away so off I went fretting all the way thinking of the Condors I was missing. Also thinking of the odds of having two bad spares on two different cars. Also castigating myself for not checking the second car at the rental agency. Anyway about 11:00 a.m. I arrived at the summit of Mt. Pinos and took up my vigil again. No Condors appeared. I had planned to leave for home Saturday. Finally I decided to give it one more try. I went down the mountain, phoned home, had dinner, and then got some lunch food and went back up the mountain. Even though it was going to be cold I decided it would be fun to stay on top of the mountain overnight. It was a clear night. The stars seemed so much closer. The silence was rather eerie. I felt high, in tune, I suppose, with the physical height. The sunrise was beautiful. This was going to be my day. Surely the odds had to be in my favor.

At 10:00 a.m. Saturday about thirty members of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society came up on a field trip looking for the Condor. About 12:30 John Borneman arrived. He is a former ranger but for the past several years has been employed by the Audubon Society for the sole purpose of studying the Condor and trying to protect and increase its numbers. He had much interesting information about the Condors. He said he had "ordered" some Condors for 2:00 o'clock. But 2:00 o'clock came and then 3:00 o'clock but no Condors. The Santa Barbara group left. Five of us were left including John Borneman. At about 3:03, at least just barely after the Santa Barbara group left, someone shouted "Condor." About a mile to a mile and a half away what looked like a small plane was coming directly toward us. It approached slowly with us hoping it would not turn. It came to about five hundred feet in front of us and about five hundred feet above us. The bare head, the massive wings with the V-shaped white were well seen. Then the bird turned to the left and slowly went down the valley.

After the big bird was out of sight I practically collapsed. Five days and when all seemed lost this near extinct creature appeared like something out of another age. My heart was racing. I then told John Borneman I had been up on the mountain for five days. He said that must be some kind of record for consecutive days. He was so pleased that I had achieved my goal. By the way John is a protege of Bill Wiley.

Would I do it again? No doubt about it. Birding teaches self-discipline and perseverance. Without a question seeing the Condor is my greatest birding thrill. No doubt part of the thrill was the long five day vigil and the other frustrations which made it a sweeter victory. There will be other tough birds to see but after all that is what makes birding a fascinating hobby.

At the bottom of the mountain I met a car load of the Santa Barbara birders at the

service station. One of them asked me if the Condor had been sighted and when I told them one appeared shortly after they left there were groans and cries of anguish. One elderly lady did cry. Apparently she had been up the mountain many times with no success. She was probably wondering whether she or the bird would become extinct first. While I was on the mountain I wondered too if man would survive the Condor. The two species have similar problems—loss of habitat for one. Of the two species which deserves to survive? I vote for the Condor because its problems of survival are caused by man, not itself. Man's survival problems are caused by himself and are at least potentially resolvable but the Condor is helpless.

Wheeling, W. Va.

Invasion of Baltimore Orioles

Our first Baltimore oriole made his dramatic appearance on April 24th, a brilliant orange and black male singing among the high branches of a tulip poplar where the leaves were just beginning to unfold. As he searched for caterpillars on the new leaves he shared his buoyant personality with all outdoors, trilling his bugle-like notes.

We were away from home most of the time for the next few days but on April 28th nine males and one female came to feed on the feed bags we had hanging in the trees and under the overhand of the porch just outside our kitchen window. The cornbread mix was a favorite of many of our birds, since myrtle warblers (yellow-rumped), summer and scarlet tanagers, white-throated sparrows, downies, flickers, hairy, red-headed and red-bellied woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, yellow warblers, tufted titmice, mockingbirds, cardinals, redstarts, brown thrashers, ruby-crowned kinglets, catbirds, and others (cowbirds, red-wings, grackles) fought for a place in line to feed.

On April 29th we counted 16 Baltimore orioles around the feeders at one time, and on April 30th about 21. They remained with us, and on May 2nd they were all over the place, after which they began to decline somewhat. On May 5th we counted 10, May 6th, 8 or 10, May 7th, 6 or 8. On May 11th only one came to feed at a time, although we recognized at least 2 different males and 2 females. As of July 3rd they are occasionally coming to feed, but only one at a time.

(The mix in the feeder bags was made of crumbled cornbread, stale peanut butter, used cooking oil, and fats saved from the kitchen, formed into balls and hung in nylon mesh bags saved from shopping. During the height of migration we had 6 feeder bags going at a time).—Clifford and Linnie Coon, Comfort, West Va.

Herptiles of Ritchie County, W. Va.

Robert C. Lightburn

Basing both weeks of the 1974 Foray (6/1-8/74 and 6/29-7/6/74) at Ritchie County 4-H Camp "Rachawanna" presented an interesting challenge in many ways.

Apparently little or no effort had been made to examine Ritchie County in the field of the natural sciences to date, unless one considers the two week field trip records made by two gentlemen from New York City in 1874, while visiting the same territory. In Dr. Bayard Green's *Amphibians and Reptiles in West Virginia**, one of the counties that seems to have been only sketchily reported on is Ritchie. Only fourteen species of herptiles were recorded as having been present in this region. During the two weeks of the Foray, we were able to compile a reliable list of some thirty species. However, three of the species noted in Dr. Green's list were not reported. These were the Midland Painted Turtle [*Chrysemys picta marginata*], the Seal Salamander [*Desmognathus m. monticola*], and the Long Tailed Salamander [*Eurycea l. longicauda*]. The compiled accounts then total thirty three species for the county.

The area itself was a good deal different from what one usually finds West Virginia to be, the highest elevation was under 490 meters. There was an abundance of flowing water, however the level was rather high, covering most of the stones one would expect salamanders would be found under. Not surprisingly then we found very few salamanders, both in variety and number. The valley and hill terrain provided a diversity of habitat with hemlock and pine stands, and mixed hardwood forest, as well. With the Nature Conservancy's work and North Bend State Park, at least some of this beautiful land may remain.

I should like to thank the ever growing number of people, who take time to show interest and to contribute to the herpetology report. My special thanks to Pete Chandler, who put together a list for the first week of the Foray, and to Maxine Thacker, who advised me with regard to the findings of that week. These are both long time members of the Brooks Bird Club, and deserve particular mention for their constant and lasting enthusiasm for the study of Amphibians and Reptiles.

*Green, N. Bayard, *Amphibians and Reptiles in West Virginia their Identification and Distribution*, Marshall Univ., Dept. of Biological Sciences, Huntington, W. Va., 1965

Information pertaining to relative abundance of species was only gathered the second week, and similarly, which toads or frogs were heard singing was only noted the second week.

I should like to suggest the following as outstanding references in the field of herpetology, especially for this area of North America. The best known to most, and still the enthusiast's bible, is the Peterson Guide, *A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians*, by Roger Conant, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1958. A more recent publication, but equally well illustrated (with range maps and beautiful photography) and textually written (based on a key rather than picture identification) is *Amphibians and Reptiles of Kentucky*, by Roger Barbour, The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1971.

Turtles: Family Chelydridae

Eastern Snapping Turtle [*Shelydra s. serpentina*]. Found during both weeks, four

were reported for the second part of the Foray.

Family Testudinidae

Eastern Box Turtle [*Terrapan c. carolina*]. Reported for each week of the foray. Six specimens were sighted the second week.

Family Trionychidae

Eastern Spiny Softshell [*Trionyx s. spinifer*]. One adult specimen was seen in a small pond, just down the hill from the swimming pool at North Bend State Park.

Lizards: Family Iguanidae

Northern Fence Swift [*Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus*]. This species was noted both weeks.

Family Scincidae

Five-lined Skink [*Eumeces fasciatus*]. An old male with its reddish head, looking very similar to a male Broad-headed Skink [*Eumeces laticeps*], was probably seen the first week, a younger specimen the second. It is rather unlikely though possible, that the skink seen the first week was a Broad-headed Skink as this species has only been listed for the more southern and perhaps a few eastern (along the Allegheny Mountain Ridge) counties.

Snakes: Family Colubridae

Northern Water Snake [*Natrix s. sipedon*]. The "Banded" water snake was reported only during the first week.

Queen Snake [*Natrix septemvittata*]. Two specimens were uncovered along small creeks during the second week. Both were young measuring 10½" and 12¼".

Eastern Garter Snake [*Thamnophis s. sirtalis*]. This adaptive snake was present at each session of the Foray.

Eastern Hognose Snake [*Heterodon platyrhinos*]. The "Puff Adder" was reported only during the first week of the Foray.

Northern Ringneck Snake [*Diadophis punctatus edwardsi*]. Recorded for the first week. Three were collected during the second session of the Foray with lengths 6", 12-7/8", 15-3/8".

Northern Black Racer [*Coluber c. constrictor*]. This serpent was sighted during the course of both weeks. This snake has smooth scales, and when in the sun it reflects brilliantly often giving a bluish appearance. When the snake is shedding and the skin is loose, it may appear bluish as well. I make these two points here to clear up a possible mistaken identity with the Blue Racer which is an entirely different species [*Coluber constrictor foxi*] not found anywhere in the state of West Virginia.

Black Rat Snake [*Elaphe o. obsoleta*]. The "Pilot Black Snake" was noted both weeks.

Eastern Milk Snake [*Lampropeltis doliata triangulum*]. The "Upland House Snake" was reported for the first week. Here again there seemed to be some possible confusion as someone reported a Corn Snake [*Elaphe g. guttata*], which would have been a state record and an astonishment as this snake is found only east and south of West Virginia. Young Milk Snakes are brightly colored and could easily be mistaken for the colorful Corn Snake.

Family Viperidae

Northern Copperhead [*Agkistrodon contortrix mokeson*]. This snake was noted at

some point during each week of the Foray.

Salamanders: Family Proteidae

Mudpuppy [*Necturus m. maculosus*]. Only one Mudpuppy was found, and that the second week.

Family Salamandridae

Red-spotted Newt [*Diemictylus v. viridescens*]. Sighted both weeks in the adult aquatic form. The Red Eft or land stage was also seen the first week.

Northern Dusky Salamander [*Desmognathus f. fuscus*]. The most abundant of the salamanders here, the "Dusky" was uncovered in several places.

Red-backed Salamander [*Plethodon c. cinereus*]. This wide-spread species was reported only for the first week.

Slimy Salamander [*Plethodon g. glutinosus*]. Listed from the first week, the Slimy Salamander eluded our search during the second.

Northern Two-lined Salamander [*Eurycea b. bislineata*]. Recorded for the first week. This species was not seen during the second part of the Foray.

Toads and Frogs: Family Bufonidae

American Toad [*Bufo Americanus*]. These amphibians were collected each week, and heard during the latter.

Fowler's Toad [*Bufo woodhousei fowleri*]. This species, observed both weeks, was the most common of the toads the second week when it was heard, as well.

Family Hylidae

Spring Peeper [*Hyla crucifer*]. Several of these small treefrogs were noticed each of the weeks of this Foray.

Eastern Gray Treefrog [*Hyla v. versicolor*]. A good number, if not seen, were at least heard near camp, throughout both parts of the Foray.

Mountain Chorus Frog [*Pseudacris brachyphona*]. Noted in Dr. Green's account, this species was listed for the first week.

Bullfrog [*Rana catesbeiana*]. Marked the first week, about six individuals were spotted in the same pond as the Eastern Spiny Softshell and some were heard making their deep call also.

Green Frog [*Rana clamitans melanota*]. This frog was reported both weeks, and its rough song heard the second week.

Northern Leopard Frog [*Rana p. pipiens*]. Found both weeks. Only one was discovered during the second week.

Pickerel Frog [*Rana palustris*]. Absent from our list for the second part of the Foray, this species was, however, listed for the first.

Southern Wood Frog [*Rana s. sylvatica*]. Both weeks produced Wood Frogs, with the second turning up some tadpoles as well, a healthy sign.

—Fayson Lakes, Kinnelon, N.J. 07405

This article, properly a part of the Foray Report, was received too late for inclusion in that issue of The Redstart. Ed.

Blue-Wing Mates With Golden-Wing in Coonskin

Norris Gluck

Until recent years the fields in Coonskin Park, Charleston, W. Va. were mowed frequently during the spring and summer months but a few years ago this practice was discontinued in several areas of the park. Now these unmowed areas are covered with brush, briars, sprouts and weeds. With the changing of the habitat, there was a noticeable increase in the population of the Blue-wing and Golden-wing Warblers. Because of a hearing defect, I have never been able to hear the songs of the Blue-wing and Golden-wing. Consequently, it is difficult for me to find these species on their breeding territories and so I have never spent much time trying to study their nesting habits. It is interesting to note that, according to Bent's Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers, the first Golden-wing Warbler nest ever reported, was by a naturalist, Dr. Samuel Cabot, in May, 1837 in Greenbrier County, Virginia (now West Virginia).

When we consider how much the Blue-wing and Golden-wing have in common: similarity of behavior, identical nesting habits, much the same habitat, we might not be too surprised and perplexed to find that these two species do interbreed and are the parents of Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers. But ornithologists did puzzle over the status of these hybrids for a number of years. I do not feel qualified to explain or predict where we might expect to find the Blue-wing and Golden-wing interbreeding unless it would be a situation where their ranges overlapped and there were a scarcity of one species and an overabundance of the other.

What I am trying to do is lead up to a situation which occurred on June 13, 1974, when, as I walked along the edge of the woods, in the brushy right-of-way of an electric power line, in Coonskin Park, I disturbed a male Blue-wing Warbler. It flew around me in an excited manner, constantly sounding its alarm note. I was sure I was in the territory of a breeding bird so tried to keep an eye on it to see if I could locate its nest. The grown-up right-of-way was typical Blue-wing (or Golden-wing) habitat. At my vantage point in the path below the grown-up brushy habitat, I could not get a good view into the thicket, so I walked across and above the right-of-way, where I could look down into the brush and sprouts. Immediately, I saw another bird fly into the habitat where the Blue-wing had been but it was a female Golden-wing with food in her mouth. I was astounded and excited as this was not a Blue-wing as I had expected and at first, I thought it was a Brewster's. I tried to keep her under observation in the brush, but could not follow her. It was late in the afternoon so decided to return the next day.

The next morning, I found the female Golden-wing bringing food into the area and each time, she was very much disturbed by my presence, as I sat quietly above the brushy right-of-way. She would fly into the bushes around me, continuously giving a chirping note, often she flew very close to me and, several times, when she became excited, she gave a chattering-like note or call. The male Blue-wing flew to her two or three times and closely followed her. I seemed to be close to the nest (or young) but because of the under-growth I could not see the nest site. After observing the two birds for over an hour, a young bird fluttered out of the thicket into the path

below me, closely followed by the excited mother Golden-wing. I watched her feed the young bird and then they both disappeared into the brush. I was not able to find them again. I returned the next day and on June 20 but was never able to locate the birds again.

I had planned to try to describe how Mendel's Law operates in the prediction of the offspring species but the hybridization of the Vermivora Warblers appears to be too complicated for me to cover in this report.

When I reflect on the possibility of seeing these two hybrids on the same day at a Brooks Bird Club Foray, I am greatly impressed by the rarity of the observations which took place during the 1972 Foray when both species were observed on June 19—a Brewster's at Holly Grove and a Lawrence's near Adrian, both locations in Upshur County.

LITERATURE CITED

Bent, Arthur Cleveland, *Life Histories of North American Warblers.*

—1424 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, W. Va.

Olive-Sided Flycatchers

The morning of the first night I ever spent at Cranberry Glades was made notable by a chorus of Olive-sided Flycatchers. From dead tips in the spruces that fringed the Glades, these birds uttered their ringing three-note calls, "Come, Right, Here!" I didn't realize then that I was listening to an authentic Northlands symbol. Later I heard the same notes at Jenny Lake in the Tetons, in northern Saskatchewan, and on Mount Edith Cavell in the Canadian Rockies. These birds, *Nuttallornis borealis*, are genuine "northerners".

Previous to World War II, these big flycatchers could be found in many high areas of West Virginia—the Cheat Range, Canaan Valley, around the old Stoney River Lake, on Dolly Sods, and elsewhere. Usually they occurred where there still were, or had been, red spruces or balsams. I have heard them in Table Mountain pines, but generally they seemed devoted to the spruces.

During the years that followed the Great War, bird students in our high mountains began to note a scarcity, or complete absence, of the Olive-sides. They disappeared (so far as my experience goes) from Cranberry Glades, they became infrequent around Gaudineer Knob, and I couldn't find them on Dolly Sods.

One of our proud boasts was that we had lost no known breeding birds from our spruce belt during the present century. Around 1950 I began to make one exception—the Olive-sides. For a period of about fifteen years I could find not a single one during the nesting season. The same thing happened in known Virginia stations; they disappeared at Mount Rogers, and if there were any left in Highland County, bird students weren't aware of it. A few lingered at the southern extremities—among the spruces and balsams in North Carolina and Tennessee, but even there they became local and scarce. It looked as though we had lost this fine bird as a resident in the southern Appalachians.

Last June (1974) Ruth and I had a free day in the Cheat Mountains. We decided

(against strong inclinations and local advice) to try retracing the old route of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike from Red Run along present U.S. Route 250 to White Top, scene of a highly successful Brooks Bird Club Foray in the summer of 1935.

Anyone fortunate enough to be on that Foray will remember it. There was a notable gathering of outdoor people—W. E. Clyde Todd, M. Graham Netting, Ruth Trimble, Ed Rainey, and Leonard Llewellyn among others. It was on this trip that the first Cheat Mountains Salamander was collected. I also recall Mr. Todd's delight in listening to the Olive-sides. Foray members had walked the old road, a lot of times; they had seen wild turkeys along it, and found nests of Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes at its borders. Along its steep slopes had been discovered the first known yellow-fruited plants of mountain long-stemmed holly, *Ilex lomgipes*. Ruth and I wanted to see it once again.

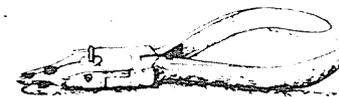
It wasn't long until we were sorry we had tried it. After the first few hundred yards we entered a region of such devastation and destruction as could be imagined only in a bad dream. First the timber cutters had done their worst, and then the coal strippers had come to complete the rape of a beautiful mountain slope.

Very soon we lost any traces of the old Turnpike grade; the land is crisscrossed by deep gulleys and piles of slash. Young spruces, birches, and herbaceous plants are making valiant efforts to reclothe this wasteland, and, since plants grow quickly in this land, they will succeed in time. But a fine mountain road will not be the same again. We gave it up after a time. It was a sickening experience, and we were almost sorry we had tried it.

But not quite. One dividend, one experience of the trip, almost made us forget the unpleasant features. On the tip of a dead spruce stub was an Olive-sided Flycatcher, lustily calling his ringing "Come, Right, **Here**".

Maurice Brooks
Route 11, Box 69
Morgantown, W. Va.

The Gathering Cage



Constance Katholi, Editor
930 Woodland Avenue
South Charleston, W. Va.



Columbus, Ohio—Our decoy trap on the University Farm has, through the years, been a tempting target for vandalism on the part of youngsters from 8 to 16. They have crawled through the 2' x 2' door which exits into the gathering cage and then chased the birds around until everybody was exhausted; they have used the chicken-wire top of the trap as a trampoline and they burned down the discarded chicken coop which we used for field-laboratory and storage.

Their latest foray was perhaps more novel than the others. It involved three youngsters, a dog and a bow and arrow. They pried the padlock from the door and entered the trap with their equipment. They killed one mourning dove with an arrow; the dog took care of a second; and the coroner was uncertain about the third.

At that point in the proceedings Maurice Giltz of the Zoology Dept., who collaborates with me in the operation and maintenance of the trap, happened along. He secured the names and addresses of the vandals but these names proved to be fictitious. However, he secured the license number on the dog's collar and that was **not** fictitious. The campus police took over as usual but in this case were supplemented by the game warden because "hunting" mourning doves is illegal in Ohio.

The youngster that lived in the dog's family had been on the police blotter previously. He did not reveal the names of his accomplices. However he (or his parents) paid \$60 for repair of the door. We suspect further that the parents had some sort of conference with their wayward son. Whether there will be further legal action is not known at this time. Undoubtedly the word has been passed to the other youngsters who have been messing around the trap; or were planning to do so. At least things have been very quiet around the trap since the incident; and that, after all, is our major concern.

From the broader sociological standpoint it may be noted that our vandals all came from a middle or upper-middle income community in the vicinity of the University Farm. This substantiates the point that not all delinquency can be traced to economically under-privileged status. —**Harold E. Burt**

Clarksville, Pa.—As most banders know, the *Empidonax* flycatchers are notoriously difficult to identify unless the song is heard. On May 15, 1975, one of these flycatchers was netted here in a very productive net that is only a few feet

from our cellar door. It looked (to me) like an Acadian Flycatcher and keyed out in all respects (except one) with Phillips, Howe and Landon (*Bird Banding* Vol. XXXV11, #3). In this one instance, the 6th primary was "cut out" (emarginated) and this is not supposed to be the case with the Acadian Flycatcher. For the clincher, I put the bird in my Seth Low "all-purpose" trap where it could fly from perch to perch, drink water or even catch flies. Within a few minutes the bird was giving the common Acadian call of "Spit-chee" and its identity was certain.

The idea that some flycatchers will give their calls in a trap in the spring was found out by accident. On May 26, 1963, I captured one of the *Empidonax* flycatchers in a yard net. We didn't have the "Formula B" key then (Phillips et al.) and I just wasn't sure of its identity. So I put it in a one-cell cage and headed for Pittsburgh—hoping to find someone at the Carnegie Museum who knew his flycatchers. Well, we were riding merrily along with the radio on, when the bird let out a sharp "whit-chu" and kept saying it over and over. It was a Willow Flycatcher (called Traill's Flycatcher at that time). Since then, I have put many Acadian and Willow Flycatchers in the "all-purpose" trap during the month of May and almost all have given their calls—either the full call or the "phit" version. —Ralph K. Bell



FIELD NOTES

Mrs. Nevada Laitsch, Editor
MC 21, East Liverpool, Ohio

WINTER SEASON
December 1, 1974 to March 1, 1975

The winter season could be classified as generally mild, although some periods of cold and heavy snow were experienced at higher elevations.

Most reporters found birding on the dull side since few northern species occurred in our region. The natural food supply was ample, therefore feeder patronage was light. The top news is the steady expansion of House Finches which are appearing with regularity in many areas.

Your editor wishes to express appreciation to all contributors to FIELD NOTES and especially to the new and irregular reporters. Evaluation of wintering birds was made more meaningful through your reports regardless of how trivial they may have seemed to the sender. The space saving method used in my summaries does not

permit mention of every record. However your records and comments are important and welcome because they make possible an understanding of the populations and distributions of the birds in our region.

Grebes and herons—A flock of **Horned Grebes** numbering more than 100 was seen on the Ohio river at Wheeling, W. Va. on Feb. 2 (PT). **Pied-billed Grebes** were found in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia throughout the winter (CM). A few were on the Kanawha river at Charleston, W. Va. (NG) and on Lake Bluestone, Summers County, W. Va. (JLS). 8 were at Youngstown, O. Dec. 13 (WB) and 4 were included in the Morgantown, W. Va. Christmas Count (RB). A half dozen or so **Great Blue Herons** wintered in the eastern panhandle of W. Va. They were seen occasionally near East Liverpool, O. and Youngstown, O. 2 were included on the Pipestem area C.C. (OJ) and the first one since 1969 was found on the Clarksville, Pa. C.C. (RKB). One was seen near Lewisburg, W. Va. Dec. 27 (COH). Two **Green Herons** were seen on the Charleston, W. Va. C.C.

Waterfowl—Swans and geese received little mention. A flock of 10 **Whistling Swans** was seen at Youngstown, O. Dec. 27 (WB). A small flock of **Snow Geese** was seen in Jefferson County, W. Va. in last December (CM). Reports of good numbers of wintering **Mallard Ducks** were submitted by several persons. A high of 87 were counted on the Clarksville, Pa. C.C. Gadwalls were found at Youngstown, O. Jan. 22 and Feb. 22 (WB) and 10 were seen at McClintic Wildlife Station in Mason County, W. Va. Dec. 31 (JLS). 10 **Pintails** and 40 **Wigeons** were observed on strip mine ponds near Youngstown, O. Feb. 28. A flock of 18 **Redheads** was at Hinton, W. Va. in late February (JLS). 46 **Goldeneyes**, 17 **Buffleheads** and 35 **Hooded Mergansers** were included on the Pipestem area C.C. **Hooded Mergansers** were also on the Charleston C.C.

Vultures and hawks—Mr. Handley gave an interesting account of **Black Vultures** in the Lewisburg, W. Va. area. On Feb. 10 he placed the lungs and stomach of a freshly killed beef where it could be watched. During the next two days it was consumed in its entirety by 40 **Black Vultures**, 15 **Turkey Vultures** and one adult **Red-tailed Hawk**. His comments were that the number of **Black Vultures** was surprising as he usually sees 10 **Turkey Vultures** to every 3-4 **Black Vultures**. Clark Miller reported a greater abundance of **Black Vultures** this year compared to the past several years in the eastern panhandle. There was some favorable comment on populations of wintering hawks. The **Red-tailed Hawk** is still the most commonly reported species in our region. A **Goshawk** was seen near Bethany, W. Va. Dec. 12 (J. Buckalew fide GE) and one was recorded near Brockway, Pa. in early January by Tom Shields. **Cooper's Hawks** were included in most reports. The **Rough-legged Hawk** included on the Wheeling C.C. was unusual (GE). Merit Skaggs writes that **Marsh Hawks** are not uncommon at Hamersville, O. One was included in the Morgantown C.C. (RB). Shields was at loss to explain the presence of a **Peregrine Falcon** at his home near Brockway, Pa. on Jan. 14. It was observed for several minutes near the feeder. Ephe Olliver saw a **Merlin** kill a **Dark-eyed Junco** in one of his nets in Elkins, W. Va. Feb. 20. **Am. Kestrels** were widely reported which indicated an improved wintering population.

Gallinaceous and shorebirds—85 **Am. Coots** were seen at Youngstown, O. Dec. 3 but only 10 were there after Jan. 21 (WB). 5 were on Lake Bluestone in late January (JLS). 4 were included on the Pipestem C.C. and one was seen at McClintic Wildlife

Station Dec. 31. **Killdeer** remained in the region in limited numbers. **Am. Woodcocks** were first heard at Wheeling on Feb. 22 and flight songs were heard two days later (GE). Breiding reported them in Ritchie County, W. Va. Feb. 23. **Com. Snipe** were listed on the Charleston C.C. and Bell found 21 in a swampy area near Clarksville, Pa. Dec. 29. They were seen at Jackson's Mill, W. Va. Jan. 29 (GB) and at Charleston Feb. 24 (HG).

Gulls, doves and owls—Large flocks of **Ring-billed Gulls** were on the Kanawha river at Charleston on Dec. 2 (HG). Good numbers were seen at East Liverpool, O. on the Ohio river on the same date. **Mourning Doves** were reported to be increasing in several areas. The only record of **Barn Owl** was the one seen near Waynesburg, Pa. Dec. 29 (RKB). **Screech Owls** were mentioned in most reports. The use of a taped **Screech Owl** song between midnight and 6 a.m. rewarded Gregg Eddy and Andy Hoffman with the count of 32 **Screech Owls** for the Wheeling C.C. Reports of **Great Horned Owls** came from Poland, O. (WB) and Charleston, W. Va. (NG). A **Snowy Owl** was seen by several persons near Washingtonville, O. during Christmas week (WB). One was seen near Bethany, W. Va. Dec. 20 (GE) and one was seen near Washington, Pa. Feb. 14 (RKB). **Barred Owls** were reported in most areas. A **Saw-whet Owl** was heard at Niles, O. Feb. 14 (WB).

Kingfishers and woodpeckers—A greater number than usual of **Belted Kingfishers** remained in the region during the winter season. Most of the woodpecker family appeared to be in good shape. The mild winter encouraged more **Flickers** than usual to spend the winter in the region. Several records of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were submitted. 2 were included on the Clarksville, Pa. C.C. and one on the Charleston count. They were listed at Buckhannon, W. Va. (MT) and 3 were seen near Lewisburg, W. Va. Dec. 27 (COH). A **Black-backed three-toed Woodpecker** was observed at close range on Dec. 14 near East Liverpool, O. by E. R. Chandler and John Laitsch.

Flycatchers, larks and corvids—**Phoebes** were found in four locations near Hinton, W. Va. during the period (JLS). One was listed on the Pipestem C.C. and 4 on the Charleston C.C. The first migrants were reported at Charleston on Feb. 23 (NG). **Horned Larks** were found in Columbiana County, O. and Hancock County, W. Va. during the period. 18 were found on the Pipestem C.C. and 40 were included on the Morgantown C.C. Breiding listed them at Morgantown on Feb. 5. **Com. Ravens** were included on the Pipestem C.C. for the first time (OJ). 2 were listed at Green Springs, Hampshire County, W. Va. in January (CL).

Chickadees and wrens—Very few **Black-capped Chickadees** were noted outside their normal range this winter. Gluck considered the population of **Carolina Chickadees** to be lower than usual at Charleston. A **House Wren** banded by Ephe Olliver on Jan. 13 at Elkins, W. Va. was unusual. The mention of **Winter Wrens** in many accounts indicated a good distribution of wintering birds. Populations of **Carolina Wrens** continue to remain at a high level.

Mimics and thrushes—**Mockingbirds** were seen in good numbers on their usual wintering grounds. The one which came to a feeder regularly at Canfield, O. was somewhat north of its normal range. A **Gray Catbird** was listed on the Pipestem C.C. **Brown Thrashers** were found wintering at Buckhannon, W. Va. (MT) and 3 were listed on the Charleston C.C. 7 **Hermit Thrushes** were listed on the Charleston C.C. and 1 on the Pipestem count. One was seen at Niles, O. Dec. 26 (WB). A **Swainson's**

Thrush was found on the Charleston C.C. Small flocks of **Eastern Bluebirds** wintered in many areas and survival was probably good due to the fairly open winter.

Kinglets through shrikes—Small groups of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were present during the winter in most areas. Several records of from one to three **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** remaining during the period were received. After two years of near total absence, **Cedar Waxwings** made a good showing as a wintering bird. Good sized flocks were reported in many areas where they remained until their food supply was depleted. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was seen near Lewisburg, W. Va. Dec. 27 and 2 were included on the Pipestem C.C.

Warblers—**Warblers** were few and far between during the winter season. A few **Yellow-rumped Warblers** did winter in the region but were found mostly in the southern portion of the region. Miller commented that they did not stay in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia in the usual numbers. **Pine Warbler** records were confined to the southern part of the region. A female **Redstart** banded at Elkins on Dec. 5 was quite unusual (EO).

Blackbirds—A fair number of **Eastern Meadowlarks** spent the winter in the region. 61 were found on the Clarksville, Pa. C.C. and 42 were listed on the Pipestem count. 3 **Rusty Blackbirds** were included on the Pipestem C.C. A flock of 7 was seen near Lewisburg Dec. 27 (COH) and 2 came to a feeder at Youngstown, O. throughout the season (WB). A few **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Com. Grackles** and **Brown-headed Cowbirds** came to feeders irregularly during the winter and migrants were reported to be moving in during the last week of February.

Finches and sparrows—Many reporters commented on the abundance of **Cardinals**. Even a mild invasion of northern finches failed to develop this winter. **Evening Grosbeaks** were extremely erratic in their appearances and seemed to favor higher elevations. Small flocks were reported here and there where they fed a day or so then moved on. Flocks of **Purple Finches** were found only in the southern part of the region. Otherwise it was mostly singles and they failed to show at all in many places. A newcomer, the **House Finch**, is beginning to make an inroad into the region and it probably will not take long for them to achieve the status of permanent resident in many areas. This was evidenced by a number of reports of their appearance at feeders during the winter. Numbers were increasing in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia where they occur at Charlestown, Inwood and Harpers Ferry. They were found at Green Springs, W. Va. (CL) and Franklin, W. Va. (CR). They also were coming to feeders in Finleyville, Pa. (M&RH) and several came to feeders in Uniontown, Pa. (VJ). This was definitely not a **Pine Siskin** year. A few mostly singles, were reported but roving flocks were not seen. **Am. Goldfinches** were considered common by most reporters. Recording of 4 **Savannah Sparrows** on the Pipestem C.C. was surprising. Noteworthy was a **Grasshopper Sparrow** banded at Elkins on Jan. 18 (EO). The wintering population of **Dark-eyed Juncos** was better than usual. **Tree Sparrows** were very scarce in most areas. 3 **Chipping Sparrows** were found on the Clarksville, Pa. C.C. where they are not considered to be a wintering species. 2 of this species was banded at Elkins on Feb. 28 (EO) which seems early for migrants. **Field Sparrows** remained in the region in better than usual numbers. **White-Crowned Sparrows** were found in small numbers in several areas. Very good numbers of **White-throated Sparrows** were noted in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, in Greenbrier County, W. Va. and East Liverpool, O. A

total of 647 was found on the Charleston C.C. Most reporters listed **Fox Sparrows** which indicates that their numbers are better than usual. The wintering population of **Song Sparrows** appeared to be normal. The only record of **Snow Buntings** came from Mahoning County, O. where a flock of 50 or so was seen Jan. 1 and nearly as many were still there on Feb. 9 (WB).

Contributors—William Bartolo, **WB**; William Beatty, **WB**; George Breiding, **GB**; Dorothy Broemsen, **DB**; Robert Burrell, **RB**; Eleanor Bush, **EB**; Everett R. Chandler, **ERC**; Greg Eddy, **GE**; Norris Gluck, **NG**; Hullett Good, **HG**; Charles O. Handley, Sr. & Jr., **COH**; Margaret and Roger Higbee, **M&RH**; George F. Hurley, **GFH**; Oliver Johnson, **OJ**; Virginia Johnson, **VJ**; Charlotte Lanham, **CL**; Clark Miller, **CM**; E.M. Olliver, **EO**; Carolyn Ruddle, **CR**; Thomas Shields, **TS**; Merit Skaggs, **MS**; J. Lawrence Smith, **JLS**; Patrica Temple, **PT**; Maxine Thacker, **MT**.—Mrs. Nevada Laitsch, MC 21, Dixonville, East Liverpool, Ohio.

This issue printed on re-cycled paper.

Chuck Ripper Prints Available

The Club is fortunate to have available 16" x 20" prints of the Scarlet Tanager and the Wild Turkey. Both are reproduced in full color from originals by C. L. Ripper. Only 1000 copies are available. Cost is \$20.00 plus \$1.50 shipping plus 3% sales tax (West Virginia residents only).

Proceeds go to the BBC Land Acquisition Fund. Buy several and help us save some land for the future!

Address orders to:

The Brooks Bird Club
707 Warwood Avenue
Wheeling, W. Va. 26003

REDSTART EDITORIAL POLICY

Original papers in the field of natural history are published in the Redstart. Papers are judged on the basis of their contributions to original data, ideas, or interpretations. Scientific accuracy is most important and to this end an Advisory Board, selected by the Editorial Staff, will review submitted papers. Papers should be typewritten, double spaced and on one side of the paper only. Clarity and conciseness of presentation are very important.

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, \$7.00; Family, \$8.00; Sustaining, \$10.00; Life, \$150. Checks should be written payable to the Brooks Bird Club and mailed to 707 Warwood Avenue, Wheeling, West Virginia.