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Banding Northern Saw-whet Owls in Marion County, West Virginia

Joey Herron

Seeing my first Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) was one of the biggest thrills of all my birding experiences. I had to go all the way to Toronto, Canada, to see one back in 1992. Little did I know that 13 years later, I would be banding them 20 minutes from my home in Fairmont, West Virginia. I knew that there were banding activities in the eastern part of the state, and nest boxes were being placed in areas around Canaan Valley and other mountain county areas, so I decided to see if these little fuzz balls (bander's nickname) were flying south near my home.

As a last minute idea, I decided to place a row of nets on top of the hill at Morris Park, which is located near I-79 at the Pleasant Valley exit in Marion County. The elevation seemed ideal, although the habitat was a little too open. Before I received the bands I had ordered from the banding lab, I caught a saw-whet on November 1, 2004, the first for Marion County and my first outside Canada. Unfortunately, I couldn't band it and a few more nights proved to no avail.

The plan for 2005 was to set up at Valley Falls State Park, located approximately nine miles east of Fairmont and 20 minutes from my home. A protocol established by David Brinker (Project OwlNet) was used to capture the owls. An audio lure is played continuously near a row of four to six mist nets set up in the woods from dusk to dawn or as long as you want to run the nets. The time frame for migrating owls depends on weather and temperature. Here in West Virginia, early October to late November seems to be the best time to try for saw-whets.

Banding started October 29 and ended November 25 (See Table 1). Eleven nights and 41 hours later, I had captured seven Northern Saw-whet Owls, two of which had been banded the year before, one near Chillicothe, Ohio, and the other near Friedensburg, Pennsylvania. The first night, just past midnight, yielded the first two owls of the season. Both birds were second year (SY) females. At 1:00 a.m. on November 8, a male was captured and determined to be an after hatch year (AHY) bird. Two nights later was the busiest with four owls captured from 11:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. This night, two new birds were banded and the two other birds were recaptures. See Tables 2 and 3 for complete banding data.

All in all, it was a successful outing for the first year and a lot was learned to help with the upcoming year. The elevation and habitat appear to be very good at the park. Next year another net will be added, and I hope it will bring more birds, new and recaptures.

I thank Valley Falls State Park superintendent, Ron Fawcett, for the use of the park facilities and for putting up with all the late night visits.

Table 1
Banding Summary

Date	Time	NSWO Captured
10/29/05	8:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.	2
10/30/05	9:15 p.m. – 12:15 a.m.	0
10/31/05	9:15 p.m. – 12:15 a.m.	0
11/02/05	9:20 p.m. – 12:20 a.m.	0
11/07/05	10:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m.	1
11/10/05	10:15 p.m. – 4:45 a.m.	4
11/11/05	10:15 p.m. – 2:45 a.m.	0
11/14/05	4:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.	0
11/17/05	10:15 p.m. – 1:15 a.m.	0
11/19/05	6:45 p.m. – 10:45 p.m.	0
11/25/05	9:40 p.m. – 12:40 a.m.	0

Table 2
Banding Data

Age	Number or Percent of Owls Captured
HY – U	1
SY – F	2
AHY – F	3 (2 foreign recaptures)
AHY – M	1
SY & AHY	85.7%
HY	14.3%

Table 3
Sex of Banded Owls

Sex	Percent of Owls Captured
F	71.4%
M	14.3%
U	14.3%

Kanawha Valley Birdlife: Changes After Fifty Years

J. Lawrence Smith



First Northern Saw-whet Owl banded in Marion County, West Virginia, October, 2005.
Photo by the author.

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Fairmont, WV 26554

Local populations of many birds are often in a state of flux as a result of environmental changes brought about largely by human activity. I began my study of birds in earnest as a teenager in 1954, searching the forest and fields near my home at Nitro in Kanawha County, West Virginia. From the perspective of a half century, the changes in numbers and status of some species have been dramatic. Changes that have been most evident are discussed in this paper to record this facet of the history of West Virginia birdlife. Previously in *The Redstart*, I have published articles on the decline of the Red-headed Woodpecker, Whip-poor-will, and Bewick's Wren, and I have celebrated the return of the Cliff Swallow as a widespread breeding bird (Smith 1980, 2002, 2004, 2005).

The Blue Jay was largely unknown as a nesting bird in the lower Ohio River Valley 50 years ago. I was eager to observe the "big blue birds" my grandparents reported at their house near Nitro in late April, 1954. One evening I observed a flock of 25 that were assumed to be migrants, because my grandmother told me later that was the last day she saw or heard them. Within a few years, I was finding nests in the wood near Nitro.

Maturing forest growth may be a key factor in the appearance of the jay during the nesting season. A. S. Morgan of Winfield informed me that when he was a youth (before 1900), Blue Jays were found throughout the year. Then they left and were not seen for 50 years before returning to nest in the late 1950s. The increase in Pileated Woodpecker numbers at the same time would leave little doubt of the importance of increased forest cover.

My first observation of a Pileated Woodpecker was May 15, 1954, when my cousin, Clair, joined me in searching for what he called the "big red-headed woodpecker" atop a hill near Nitro. We were treated to a superb view when one flew through an opening in pine woods not more than 50 feet away. At this time you could not count on seeing the woodpecker when birding in many areas. I was usually assured of finding it in a forested area near Red House, Putnam County, where my father spent his boyhood.

During the early decades of the last century, the woodpecker was nearly absent from the valley where extensive forest tracts were lacking. Lumbering had removed nearly all timber, and vast areas had been denuded by fires. One seen on White Oak Mountain above Cabin Creek by Josiah Keely on June 30, 1920, was his only record in 30 years. While undertaking fieldwork in the lower valley, Karl W. Haller observed it only once at Frazier's Bottom in September 1939. It increased greatly in numbers after 1960.

I observed the Pileated Woodpecker on occasion within the city of Huntington, even at the edge of the business district, in the early 1970s. Interestingly, at the same time, Karl Malowski reported it in suburban Cincinnati, Ohio. My speculation is the woodpecker has grown in numbers to occupy suitable forested areas and overflowed into marginal situations that meet its needs in suburban areas. Another factor may be that large birds such as the Pileated, hawks, and owls are not wantonly killed as in the past.

Significant changes in land use such as suburban development and the building of shopping centers have greatly benefited a few species. The northward expansion of the Northern Mockingbird was aided, not only by cover offered by fencerows of multiflora rose, but also shrubbery planted in residential areas offering attractive habitat. The suburban environment, along with many people feeding birds, was key to greatly increased numbers of Mourning Doves. Large buildings at shopping centers with flat roofs offered Common Nighthawks numerous nesting sites.

Through the loss of open land, the Horned Lark has been greatly reduced in numbers as a nesting bird. Closely grazed pasture has been turned into residential development at many places or abandoned and allowed to revert to brush and woodland.

The cheerful whistle of the Northern Bobwhite is now largely a memory in the Kanawha Valley. When I began birding, five would often be heard in an area near Nitro that has since become an industrial park. Quail were doubtless at peak numbers in the early 1900s when small farms with grain crops were numerous. A key factor in its decline and almost total disappearance has been the abandonment of vast acreages of farm land that have reverted to forest. Extreme winter weather during the period 1976-1978 and 1993-1994 was almost a deathblow for the species.

Interestingly, many landscape changes that have brought the almost total disappearance of the Bobwhite have favored the Wild Turkey. I never imagined that I would ever see the present abundance of the turkeys in the Kanawha Valley. Forest cover at many places offers habitat to their liking, and they tolerate the often close proximity of houses and residential dwellings. The number of Wild Turkeys in the three counties of Mason, Putnam, and Kanawha has been estimated as high as 30,000 birds.

Mature forest cover has largely been detrimental to the Ruffed Grouse population in recent decades. Grouse are found in greatest numbers in woods at a pole or brushy stage with dense underbrush for cover. Many wildlife technicians are of the opinion that the 10-or-so-year cycle of highs and lows in grouse numbers does not occur in West Virginia. Even so, my observations have revealed a larger number of birds at intervals of about every decade. Periods with numerous records were 1955, late 1960s, 1980, and early 1990s. The frequency with which I saw grouse during these years would seem dependent on factors other than coincidence.

The presence of three species that were largely unknown in the Kanawha Valley 50 years ago is unrelated to changes, with one being the Yellow-throated Warbler. In early July 1958, my cousin and I were seeking this warbler on a hike up Jenkins Hollow near the Kanawha City section of Charleston. Prior to this time, summer records had been few, but we found the bird offering its lilting notes from tall pines along the crest of the ridge. In a few years the warbler was being found in sycamore woods along streams in keeping with the "sycamore" race found in the Ohio and the Mississippi Valley. I observed one carrying a caterpillar that may have been evidence of nesting at McClintic near Point Pleasant, Mason County, along Old Town Creek on May 28, 1971. It has continued to increase since that time and is now found widely and in numbers as a breeding bird.

I observed a Blue Grosbeak near Confidence, Putnam County, in late May 1969, which may have been a vanguard of a rather sizable local population. Anne Shreve and Connie Katholi found numerous birds during the breeding seasons 1976-1977 in the vicinity of Paradise, Buffalo, and Arbuckle. I found birds at 10 locations at Bowles and Jim Ridge west of Paradise during 1990-1992. It has been found in numbers in Mason County, but records are few in the upper valley. Jim Triplett and I found one on a reclaimed surface mine at the Kanawha-Fayette County line near Smithers in June, 2004.

I never expected to see Common Ravens in the Kanawha Valley. Ravens are now found throughout the year upriver from Montgomery, where they have probably flowed out of the New River gorge. My records include occasional observations at Boomer and numerous sightings at Gauley Bridge, Fayette County. They may be present along Cabin Creek where two were seen in late summer, 1991, in the highway cut of Interstate 64. Hullet Good has found them in areas near Elk River at all seasons and where they doubtless nest. One found at Upper Donnally Hollow on May 3, 2000, by Russell Young and Donald and Marilyn Morton is the first record at Charleston.

Changes in the status of many birds can readily be explained by human impact on the environment. The appearance of others may not have an apparent environmental cause but add to the richness of birdlife, and this certainly has been the case in the Kanawha Valley in the last 50 years.

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Ruby-throated Hummingbird Uses the Same Nest in an Unusual Location for Two Consecutive Years

Ralph K. Bell

The last week in June 2005, Tracy and Dolores Doman of Fredericktown, Pennsylvania, found a Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest on their porch swing chain about one foot down from the porch ceiling and about six feet above the floor. The first photograph shows the nest as it appeared in 2005. When the nest was first noticed, Mrs. Doman thought it was a wasp nest and was about to remove it when she noticed hummingbirds around. They had a hummingbird feeder nearby.

The Domans kept notes when they were home about the comings and goings of the female hummingbird. Only one egg hatched out of the two eggs that were in the nest. The single young was often fed by the female. Some of the feeding times, both morning and evening, are as follows (each feeding time is in parentheses):

First 3 feeding times recorded on the morning of July 20, 2005:

6:46 a.m. (28 seconds)

7:06 a.m. (24 seconds)

7:21 a.m. (37 seconds)

Last 3 feeding times recorded on the evening of July 20, 2005:

8:10 p.m. (23 seconds)

8:24 p.m. (20 seconds)

8:29 p.m. (15 seconds)

First 3 feeding times recorded on the morning of July 21, 2005:

6:45 a.m. (21 seconds)

7:06 a.m. (18 seconds)

7:12 a.m. (25 seconds)

First 3 feeding times recorded on the morning of July 22, 2005:

6:50 a.m. (19 seconds)

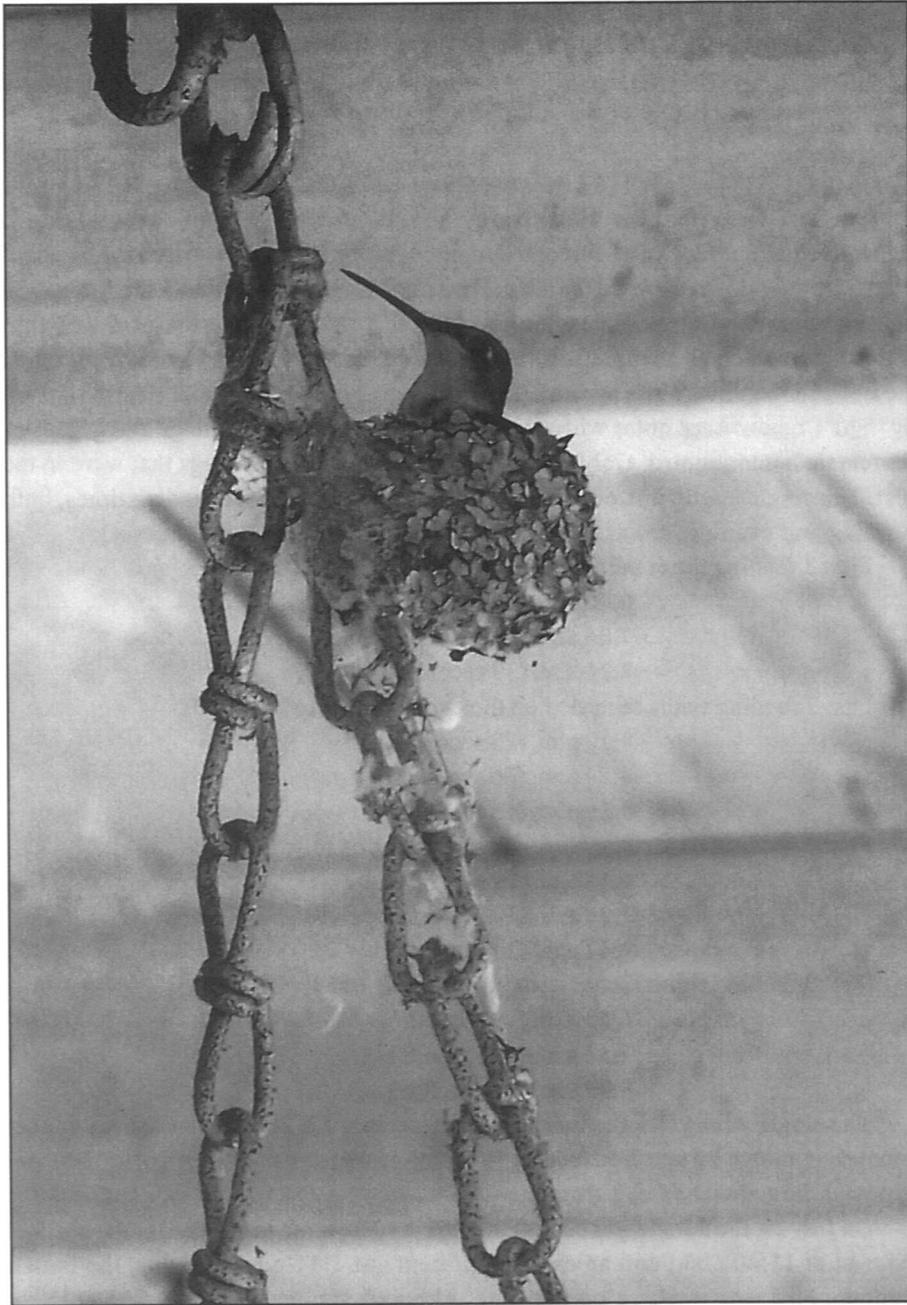
7:52 a.m. (22 seconds)

8:09 a.m. (15 seconds)

The single young fledged before 10 a.m. on July 22, 2005, and the next day the female hummingbird was seen feeding its young at the feeder. On July 26, the Domans removed the unhatched egg from the nest.

On July 29, the female was back at the nest at 10:25 a.m., and Mrs. Doman checked the nest at 11:40 a.m., and an egg was present. At 1:11 p.m. that day, the female hummingbird was working on the nest. Although the male was seldom seen, he showed up that day at 3:38 p.m., but was not noted after that.

At 5:16 a.m. on July 30, the female was noted carrying fuzzy down to the nest, and at 7:59 a.m. on August 2, she was working on the nest again, and this continued for



Ruby-throated Hummingbird on its nest on a porch swing chain in June 2005. Photo by Joan Bell Pattison.

some time. The next day the female was noted chasing other hummingbirds from the feeder several times. Then at 7:32 a.m. on August 4, she came to the nest and stayed for 1.06 minutes, then came back 10 minutes later and stayed on the nest for 15.54 minutes. Mrs. Doman then went to check the nest at 8:07 a.m. and noted there were now two eggs in the nest.

The next day, August 5, the Domans were not home from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. After they returned, they recorded a lot of activity as they noted the female carrying white fluffy down to the nest four different times and saw her chasing other hummingbirds away from the nearby feeder 21 different times. She seldom stayed on the nest over two minutes at a time, but once in the afternoon that day, she did stay on the nest for 6.03 minutes.

The Domans used their dental mirror to check the nest every day and noticed a newly hatched young in the nest at 7:20 a.m. on August 19. At 7:30 a.m. on August 21, a second young was noted in the nest.

On August 28, the young had hatched, and the following observations were made:

At 3:21 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 49 seconds.

At 4:57 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 38 seconds.

At 5:25 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 38 seconds.

The Domans also commented that the female hummingbird visited the feeder often as well as continually going to the flowers for insects as the young got older and needed more protein.

On September 1 the following observations were made:

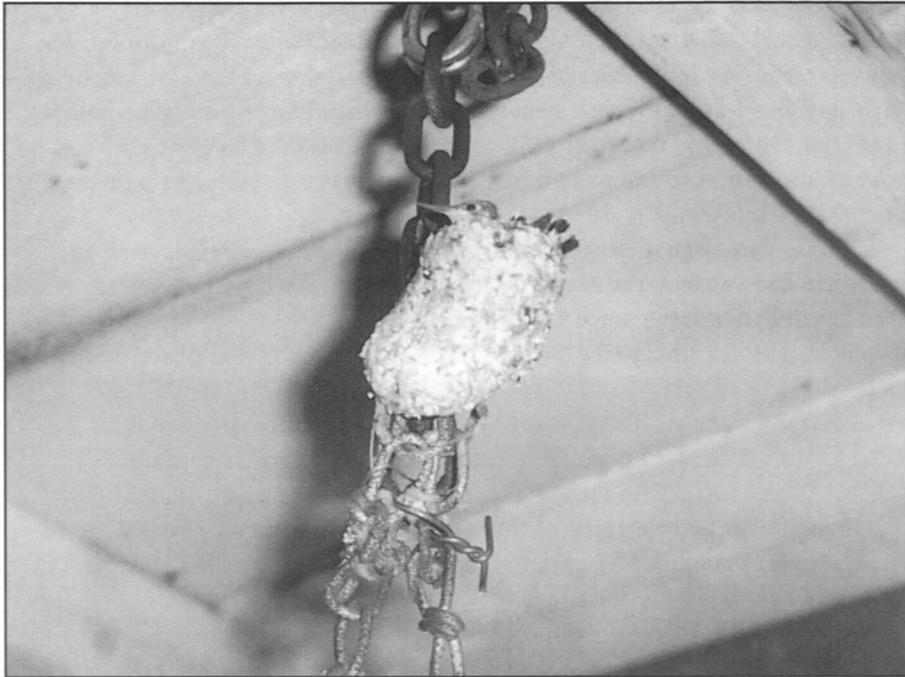
At 5:18 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 40 seconds.

At 5:39 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 42 seconds.

At 5:55 p.m., the feeding period lasted for 28 seconds.

On September 5, the young were noted moving around a lot. On the next day, both young had their heads above the rim of the nest and were looking around. Then on September 8 at 12:33 p.m., both young were noted buzzing their wings, and at 1 p.m., both flew from the nest. At least one of them flew into a nearby evergreen where the Domans saw the female feed it.

The Domans wanted to see if the hummingbirds would use the same nest the next year, so they cut off the top portion of the chain containing the nest and stored it in their cellar over the winter, planning to return it to the exact spot the next spring. The chain and nest were restored to the original position in April 2006. Some white string was tied around the nest and chain to better hold the nest in place. The first hummingbird in 2006 was noted on May 2, and an adult female was checking out the old nest the next day. On May 14 the nest was being repaired, and even some of the string was covered with lichens and other materials. The second photograph shows the nest as it appeared in May 2006.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird on its nest on a porch swing chain in its second season of use. Photo by Tracy Doman.

On May 18 there were two eggs in the nest. Then three days before the young started hatching, the female carried some white fluffy down into the nest. This behavior had been noted in 2005. The reason for this is not clearly understood. Perhaps it is to raise the tiny young up higher for easier feeding as the adult female stands on the top edge of the nest to feed, but she continued to carry in more white fluffy material even as the young got older.

The 2006 nest was checked at 8:30 a.m. on June 2, and one young had hatched. The next morning at 8 a.m. there were two young in the nest. On June 15 two beaks were visible, and two days later their heads could be seen looking around. Then on June 20 the young were noted buzzing their wings, and two days later they were standing on the edge of the nest and buzzing their wings. The next day (June 23) one young left the nest at 8:10 a.m., and at 8:25 the second young left the nest and landed in a nearby tree. They soon flew across the road (approximately 50 feet) where they

were seen being fed. The Domans could even hear them crying to be fed. That afternoon the young flew farther away and were not seen knowingly again.

The now very tattered nest was not used a second time in 2006, but the Domans plan to store it in the cellar again this winter and check next year to see if the hummingbirds will try to repair it and use it again for the third year.

Also in the summer of 2006, Patricia Hurd reported another Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest built on wind chimes hanging on her front porch in Oak Forest, Pennsylvania. Two eggs were laid, and one young successfully fledged from this nest. Mrs. Hurd also plans to remove the wind chimes and nest and store them over the winter, planning to restore them to the same place in April 2007 to see if this nest is used, also, a second season.

According to Bent (1940), Ruby-throated Hummingbirds frequently raise two broods in a season, and there are records of old nests being occupied for several seasons with remodeling each year. When the eggs are taken or destroyed, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will make as many as four attempts at nesting.

Reference

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The Fall 2005 Flyover Counts at Allegheny Front Migration Observatory With a Summary of Flyover Counts Since 1990

Ralph K. Bell

The 2005 fall flyover count at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) on Dolly Sods, West Virginia, was coordinated by Don Pattison. He was assisted by Joan Rowe, Tammy Butcher, Kathy Kern, Kathleen Larkin, Todd and Kim Schnopp, Stephen Sushinski, and many other interested people. The flyover count was started in 1990, and the total numbers for past seasons are summarized in Tables 1-5 below. The total numbers for the 2005 season of the usual selected species are as follows (with the 16-year average in parentheses):

Ruby-throated Hummingbird	265	(460)
Blue Jay	2,108	(6,187)
American Goldfinch	1,602	(2,998)
Monarch Butterfly	947	(1,139)
Dragonflies	142	

The 2004 count of Monarch Butterflies was 67, so their numbers increased substantially this year. Due to the large number of birds migrating (and captured) at the station on September 2, all volunteers were busy and many of the flyovers were not counted. It is believed there were a large number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds flying over that day, because at least 15 were taken out of the nets. Many other flyover bird species were noted as well. The total numbers counted for the season of each species are as follows:

Species	Season Total Count
Black Vulture	7
Turkey Vulture	62
Osprey	26
Bald Eagle	14
Northern Harrier	12
Sharp-shinned Hawk	70
Cooper's Hawk	31
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Broad-winged Hawk	495
Red-tailed Hawk	7
Golden Eagle	1

Species	Season Total Count
American Kestrel	7
Merlin	7
Chimney Swift	82
Belted Kingfisher	1
Northern Flicker	40
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1
Eastern Kingbird	2
Tree Swallow	141
Barn Swallow	35
Eastern Bluebird	6
European Starling	19
Summer Tanager	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	70
Red-winged Blackbird	39
Pine Siskin	1

The fall migration phenomenon at AFMO creates a lot of interest for the many visitors at the banding station. Many migrants fly over the nets, but the birds that are captured are removed by long-time, experienced net tenders. These scheduled volunteers are now the only people permitted in the net lanes. Randy Ritter has erected a net near the entrance path so the qualified net tenders can demonstrate to any interested visitors how birds are caught and then removed from the nets to be banded. Recoveries of banded birds helps us learn more about how long each species lives, their migration routes, and the location of their summer and wintering areas as well.

Many thanks and sincere appreciation to all who helped with the flyover count, as this is a very important study, and this information will continue to be important far into the future.

Table 1
Flyover Counts of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds
From 1990 Through 2005 at AFMO

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
August 28, 1990	154	709
September 11, 1991	45	396
August 30, 1992	54	391

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
September 2, 1993	42	390
August 28, 1994	44	310
September 4, 1995	64	487
September 8, 1996	44	299
September 12, 1997	125	724
September 4, 1998	52	475
August 29, 1999	41	252
September 12, 2000	44	305
August 28, 2001	88	844
September 4, 2002	117	608
September 7, 2003	53	450
August 31, 2004	66	459
September 2, 2005	43	265

Table 2

Flyover Counts of Blue Jays From 1990 Through 2005 at AFMO

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
October 5, 1990	3,186	11,395
October 4, 1991	4,628	16,245
October 2, 1992	790	2,254
September 28, 1993	3,039	4,687
September 26, 1994	13	49
September 28, 1995	2,306	6,459
September 9, 1996	7	45
September 30, 1997	2,598	10,211
October 2, 1998	250	920
October 3, 1999	8,297	18,706
October 5, 2000	63	217
October 5, 2001	2,211	13,312
October 3, 2002	703	2,641
September 27, 2003	963	4,308
October 2, 2004	1,220	5,435
October 2, 2005	369	2,108

Table 3
Flyover Counts of American Goldfinches From 1990 Through 2005 at AFMO

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
August 29, 1990	305	2,671
September 11, 1991	384	3,033
September 1, 1992	274	1,481
September 11, 1993	368	3,394
September 11, 1994	461	3,495
September 20, 1995	569	4,788
September 20, 1996	232	1,319
September 13, 1997	440	4,089
September 13, 1998	308	2,687
September 17, 1999	405	3,689
September 13, 2000	167	1,209
August 31, 2001	383	6,028
September 11, 2002	872	4,217
September 20, 2003	115	968
September 10, 2004	588	3,297
September 4, 2005	143	1,602

Table 4

Flyover Counts of Monarch Butterflies From 1990 Through 2005 at AFMO

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
September 14, 1990	171	672
September 18, 1991	1,421	5,631
September 21, 1992	168	551
September 12, 1993	595	1,811
September 17, 1994	28	302
September 19, 1995	97	343
September 21, 1996	321	889
September 19, 1997	1,355	2,099
September 19, 1998	393	986
September 19, 1999	155	1,134
September 18, 2000	265	843
September 12, 2001	165	727
September 13, 2002	452	905

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
September 27, 2003	128	318
September 13, 2004	16	67
September 19, 2005	105	947

Table 5

Flyover Counts of Dragonflies* From 1992 Through 2005 at AFMO

Peak Date	Peak Day Count	Season Total Count
August 19, 1992	28	206
August 30, 1993	5,945+	7,845+
September 9, 1994	21	116
August 14, 1995	18	122
September 8, 1996	18	94
September 19, 1997	39	166
September 14, 1998	457	705
September 10, 1999	39	227
September 20, 2000	11	38
September 7, 2001	783	1,207
August 23, 2002	38	295
August 29, 2003	10	34
September 22, 2004	19	105
September 13, 2005	30	142

*Both Green Darners and Black-mantled Gliders were counted as both are migrant species.

179 Pollock Mill Rd.
Clarksville, PA 15322

Jackson's Mill Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2005

Joey Herron

The second year of fall banding at Jackson's Mill Migration Observatory, Lewis County, West Virginia, was far and above better than the first. One net was added to increase the total to six nets.

Banding occurred on six days starting September 30 and ending again on October 22. Ninety-eight birds of 29 species were captured, more than doubling last year's total.

Six 12-meter nets were used each day with a capture ratio of 61.63 birds per 100 net hours. The biggest flight day was October 22 with 29 birds captured; the least captured was 12 on October 10. The captures were more consistent than last year with captures of 12, 13 twice, 15, 16, and 29. One bird banded last year was recaptured: a Tufted Titmouse.

The White-throated Sparrow was the most numerous species with 12 bandings; close behind was the Song Sparrow with 10. Sixteen new species were caught, including two Scarlet Tanagers, a Brown Thrasher, and a hatch year male Red-winged Blackbird. The following table lists the species with the new ones marked with an asterisk (*).

Other birds observed during the banding period were numerous Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Bluebirds, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, many Blue Jays, groups of Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, and two Common Ravens.

In just two years of banding, 144 birds of 32 species have been captured. Six species make up half the total birds captured, including White-throated Sparrow (16), Eastern Towhee (14), Northern Cardinal (12), Song Sparrow (12), Ovenbird (9), and Carolina Wren (9).

Thanks to Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp for permission to band on the property, and to the staff and grounds keepers for their support and help.

Species Banded at Jackson's Mill Migration Observatory in 2005

Species	No. Banded	First Date	Last Date	No. of Days Captured
Eastern Phoebe	3	Oct. 10		1
White-eyed Vireo*	1	Oct. 10		1
Tufted Titmouse	5	Oct. 1	Oct. 15	3

Species	No. Banded	First Date	Last Date	No. of Days Captured
Carolina Chickadee*	3	Oct. 1		1
Carolina Wren	4	Sept. 30	Oct. 10	2
House Wren*	2	Oct. 1	Oct. 22	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	Oct. 1	Oct. 9	2
Swainson's Thrush	3	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	2
Hermit Thrush*	1	Oct. 22		1
Wood Thrush*	2	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	2
Gray Catbird	3	Sept. 30		1
Brown Thrasher*	1	Oct. 10		1
Cedar Waxwing*	3	Oct. 15	Oct. 22	2
Common Yellowthroat	4	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	2
Ovenbird	5	Oct. 1	Oct. 12	3
Magnolia Warbler	5	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	3
Yellow-rumped Warbler*	2	Oct. 15	Oct. 22	2
Tennessee Warbler*	4	Oct. 9	Oct. 10	2
Palm Warbler*	1	Oct. 15		1
Scarlet Tanager*	2	Oct. 9		1
Eastern Towhee	8	Oct. 9	Oct. 22	3
Song Sparrow	10	Oct. 9	Oct. 22	3
White-throated Sparrow	12	Oct. 9	Oct. 22	3
Northern Cardinal	5	Sept. 30	Oct. 22	4
Indigo Bunting*	2	Oct. 10		1
Red-winged Blackbird*	1	Oct. 22		1
Purple Finch*	2	Oct. 22		1
House Finch*	1	Oct. 22		1
American Goldfinch*	1	Oct. 22		1

*new species in 2005

511 Ohio Ave.
Fairmont, WV 26554

Revised Bylaws of the West Virginia Bird Records Committee

I. NAME

This Committee shall be known as the West Virginia Bird Records Committee, hereafter referred to as the "Committee."

II. PURPOSE

- A. To assess the validity of the sightings of rare or unusual birds reported in the state.
- B. To maintain, permanently, the original bird records, as defined below, and all Committee votes and comments for the use by present and future ornithological students.
- C. To publish annually, in *The Redstart*, the decisions of the Committee.
- D. To establish standards for the methods of collecting and submitting quality field data.
- E. To maintain a list of the birds known to occur in West Virginia.

III. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Committee shall consist of seven voting members and a non-voting Secretary. The members shall elect a Chairman who shall assume the duties normally associated with the office and a Vice-Chairman who shall assume the duties of the Chairman in his/her absence. The editor of the "Field Notes" section of *The Redstart* shall be a permanent advisor to the Committee. This advisor shall not have a vote unless he/she is also an elected member of the Committee.
- B. Members of the Committee shall be residents of West Virginia who have expertise in the identification of birds, knowledge of the birds of West Virginia, and familiarity with the various habitats and localities in the state.
- C. The Secretary shall be one of the staff of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Diversity Program, and need not be one definite individual.
- D. Members of the Committee shall serve a term of five years. The term shall expire at the conclusion of the annual meeting. The retiring member shall be ineligible for immediate reelection to a new term, but shall be eligible for election in a subsequent year.
- E. New members of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee. Each year three months before the date at which terms end, the Secretary shall solicit nominations from members of the Committee and other members of the birding community in

the state. These nominations shall be submitted to the members of the committee for voting. In the case of a vacancy caused by death or resignation, a replacement shall be elected by the remaining members of the Committee to serve the remaining portion of the unexpired term.

- F. The Chairman shall be elected by the Committee and may be rotated among the members. Duties of the Chairman shall be decided upon by the Committee.

IV. BIRD RECORDS

- A. A "Record" shall consist of the written documentation or other information submitted to the Committee as proof of the identity of a sighted, heard, collected, banded, or photographed bird.
- B. Records shall be submitted to the Committee for the following species of birds:
1. Species that have not previously been on the "List of West Virginia Birds" (hereafter referred to as the "List") as defined below.
 2. Species that have been listed as "Hypothetical" on the List.
 3. Species on the List for which there are fewer than five accepted records.
- C. The documentation accompanying a Record should consist of a "Record Committee Report Form," any photographs that have been taken of the bird, any recordings of vocalizations that have been made, or any specimens that have been obtained. If several people have been involved in the sighting, each should independently submit a Record Committee Report Form. In such a case the multiple reports still constitute a single Record.

V. THE LIST OF WEST VIRGINIA BIRDS

- A. The List of West Virginia Birds shall consist of:
1. Those species on the Regular List in *West Virginia Birds* (Hall, 1983).
 2. Those species added to the Regular List in "Supplement III to the List of West Virginia Birds" (Hall, 1991) or any subsequent Supplements that may be published.
 3. Those species accepted for the List by the Committee.
- B. The Hypothetical List shall consist of those species given Hypothetical status in *West Virginia Birds* (Hall, 1983) or the published Supplements or those placed on the List by Committee action. This category should be reserved for Records that are probably correct but fail to meet all the requirements of acceptance (e.g., Records by a single individual).
- C. A "Review List" shall be kept listing those species for which Records should be submitted to the Committee, as defined above. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping this list, adding new species accepted by the Committee, and deleting species for which the accumulated number of Records exceeds five.

- D. The nomenclature and taxonomy of the species on the List shall be updated by the Committee as necessary as the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List Committee publishes changes in The Check-List of North American Birds.
- E. The standards used in judging the Records of birds new to the West Virginia List shall be those used in *West Virginia Birds* (Hall, 1983) modified as follows:
1. Specimens collected in the state can be accepted if examined by members of the committee.
 2. Recognizable photographs taken of the bird in the state can be accepted if examined by members of the committee.
 3. The bird has been handled by a bander and released, provided the bander and his/her associates have been judged competent by the committee.
 4. One or more sight records are made, each of which involved at least three persons having previous experience with the species.
 5. There have been five sight records over the years by persons having previous experience with the species, but for which fewer than three persons were involved in each sighting.

VI. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

- A. The Secretary's office shall receive the material documenting the submitted Record. This shall include a completed Record Committee Report Form, any photographs, recordings, and any other documentation. A registry number shall be assigned to each Record.
- B. Periodically, the Secretary shall prepare a packet of all the records accumulated and a voting form to send to the members of the Committee.
- C. The members of the Committee shall individually evaluate the Records. They should not confer with other members of the Committee. After evaluating the Record, the member should vote for or against the Record and, if voting for a Record, should also vote for placement on the Regular List, Hypothetical or Exotic List. The members of the Committee should return their ballots to the Secretary within one month.
- D. The Secretary shall tabulate the results. A Record for which the vote is unanimously positive is accepted. A Record for which the vote is unanimously negative is not accepted. Records for which the votes are not unanimous are subject to a second vote.
- E. In the case of second votes, the Secretary shall send out the original data plus the written comments made on the first balloting. On the second voting, a vote of seven for and zero against or six for and one against shall be accepted and all other combinations rejected. In exigent circumstances, the committee may elect to have a third "face to face" meeting to decide the validity of a Record. A quorum of five voting members must be present, and the majority shall prevail. Once a

decision has been made, the Secretary shall notify the presenter of the Record of the decision. In the case of a rejected Record, the reasons for rejection shall be given in the hope that additional information can be obtained and the Record resubmitted.

- F. The Committee is free to call on outside expert opinion in cases where the members of the Committee do not feel competent to decide the validity of the identification.
- G. The Chairman of the Committee shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an annual report of the decisions of the Committee, and this report shall be published in *The Redstart*.
- H. For each new species accepted for the state list, the person making the Record shall be encouraged to write a paper describing the details of the Record for *The Redstart*.
- I. The Committee shall hold an annual meeting in late February, usually in conjunction with the Mid-winter meeting of the Brooks Bird Club. Other meetings may be held if the members think one is advisable.
- J. Five members present shall constitute a quorum, and a simple majority vote shall prevail.

VII. REVISION OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws can be revised by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

These Bylaws shall be effective from March 4, 2006.

LITERATURE CITED

- Hall, G.A. (1983). *West Virginia birds*. Special Publication No. 7. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Natural History.
- Hall, G.A. (1991). Supplement III to the List of West Virginia Birds. *The Redstart*, 58(4), 107-109.

Field Notes Spring Season March-May, 2006

Janice K. Emrick, Editor

Richard (Dick) and Jeanette Esker had the only report of a **Greater White-fronted Goose** from Wood County on March 18. **Snow Geese** were reported from Mason(DP, MG), Mercer(JP), and Tucker(CR) Counties. There were many reports of **Canada Geese**. David Patick had the only report of a **Mute Swan** from Fayette County on March 5. **Tundra Swans** were found only in Jefferson County(EK, MO). During the spring season there were many reports of the following ducks: **Wood, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead**, and all three **mergansers**. **Blue-winged Teal** were reported from Wood County(DE, JE, MO). Rennie Talbert and Arline Thorn had the only report of **Northern Pintails** from Cabell County. **Canvas-backs** were found in Putnam County(SA, CE, KK). **Greater Scaup** were reported from Berkeley(MO), Pleasants(MBC), and Putnam(CE, KK) Counties. There were a few reports of **Ruddy Ducks**.

Cathy Pardee, in Mineral County, reported a pair of **Ring-necked Pheasants** on March 14. There were many reports of **Ruffed Grouse** and **Wild Turkeys**. Maggi Perl reported a **Northern Bobwhite**, in Lincoln County, on May 13. **Common Loons** were reported from many areas from early April until the end of May. **Pied-billed** and **Horned Grebes** were found in many areas, as were **Double-crested Cormorants**. Dick Esker found a **Least Bittern** in Wood County on May 25. **American Bitterns** were reported from Cabell(MG, DP), Jefferson(MO), Pocahontas(DP), and Tucker(MC) Counties. **Great Blue Herons** and **Great Egrets** were reported from many areas. John Tharp II, John Blomberg, Gary Felton, and Matthew Orsie found a **Little Blue Heron** in Cabell County on May 22. This team set a Big Day record for West Virginia with 146 species. There were several reports of **Green Herons**. There were a few reports of **Black Vultures** and more reports of **Turkey Vultures**.

The Mountwood Bird Club reported that **Osprey** were nesting in six areas along the Ohio River: Belleville, Walker Lane, Neale Island, Muskingum Island, Willow Island, and Grandview Island. The following species were reported from many areas during the period: **Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks**, and **American Kestrels**. Wilma Jarrell spotted a **Merlin** in Wetzel County on April 11. **Virginia Rails** were reported from Cabell(MG, DP) and Jefferson(MO) Counties. **Sora** were reported from Cabell(GR, MG, DP) and Preston(GF) Counties. Brian McMillan had the only report of a **Common Moorhen**, in Mercer County on May 17. Dick Esker

reported a late date of May 29 for **American Coots** in Wood County. David Patick and Michael Griffith reported the pair of **Sandhill Cranes** in Mason County that have been there for awhile.

Wilma Jarrell reported a **Black-bellied Plover** in breeding plumage in Wetzel County on May 21. **Semipalmated Plovers** were reported from Berkeley(MO), Greenbrier(BW), Hardy(KKi,DH), Jefferson(MO), and Preston(GF) Counties. Many **Killdeer** were reported. There were several reports of **Greater** and **Lesser Yellow-legs**, **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Spotted Sandpipers**, and **Least Sandpipers**. **Upland Sandpipers** were reported from Greenbrier(BW) and Preston(GF) Counties in April. Gary Felton saw a **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, in Preston County, on May 10. Matthew Orsie reported two **White-rumped Sandpipers** in Berkeley County on May 24. **Pectoral Sandpipers** were reported from Greenbrier(BW) and Preston(GF) Counties. Barry Williams had the only report of **Dunlin**, in Greenbrier County, on May 11. There were many reports of **Wilson's Snipe**, with Jeanette Esker reporting 22 of them in Wood County on April 14. **American Woodcocks** were found by early March.

There were several reports of **Bonaparte's** and **Ring-billed Gulls**. **Herring Gulls** were reported from Jefferson(MO) and Mason(MG,DP) Counties. David Patick and Michael Griffith had the only report of **Caspian Terns**, from Mason County on April 22. There were several reports of **Forster's Terns** in April. **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** were reported. **Black-billed Cuckoos** were reported from Kanawha(HG), Lincoln(MP), Preston(GF), and Wood(JTII) Counties. **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were reported from Cabell(DP,WA,MG), Jefferson(MO), Preston(GF), and Wood(JTII) Counties. Matthew Orsie had the only report of **Barn Owls**, from Hardy County. There were several reports of **Eastern Screech-**, **Great Horned**, and **Barred Owls**. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were reported from Marion(TW) and Tucker(MC) Counties. **Common Nighthawks** were reported from Monongalia(MB), Putnam(KK), and Wood(JTII) Counties in early May. **Whip-poor-wills** were found in Berkeley(MO), Kanawha(DG), Lincoln(MP), and Wetzel(WJ) Counties. **Chimney Swifts** and **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were both reported on April 14. **Belted Kingfishers** were reported during the period. All of the Picidae were reported, with **Red-headed Woodpeckers** being found in Greenbrier(BW), Jefferson(MO), and Preston(GF) Counties.

Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported from Jefferson(EK), Nicholas(DP), and Preston(GF) Counties. First dates for flycatchers were as follows: **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, April 29(JB); **Acadian**, May 5(JTII); **Alder**, May 20(GF); **Willow**, May 6(GF); **Least**, April 25(CR); **Eastern Phoebe**, March 5(DP); **Great Crested**, April 23(TM,JP); and **Eastern Kingbird**, April 20(BW). Barry Williams had the only report of **Logger-head Shrike**, in Greenbrier County on May 12. First dates for vireos were as follows: **White-eyed**, April 15(DP,JW); **Yellow-throated**, April 16(GR); **Blue-headed**, March 29(JP); **Warbling**, April 16(GR); and **Red-eyed**, April 19(DB). **Blue Jays** and **American Crows** were reported. **Fish Crows** were found in Hardy(KKi,JWh) and

Jefferson(MO) Counties. **Common Ravens** were reported, with Wilma Jarrell reporting one in Wetzel County on May 27. Matthew Orsie reported **Horned Larks** from Hardy County.

The first dates for swallows were as follows: **Purple Martins**, March 30(JTr); **Tree**, March 2(CE); **Northern Rough-winged**, March 13(BW); **Bank**, April 22(MG,DP); **Cliff**, April 17(WJ); and **Barn**, April 4(JB). All of the Paridae were reported. Both **nuthatches** were reported, as were **Brown Creepers**. There were many reports of **Carolina Wrens**. The first date for **House Wren** was April 12(GF). **Winter Wrens** were reported from Cabell(DP,MG,WA), Pocahontas(DP), and Summers(MO) Counties. David Patick and Michael Griffith reported a **Marsh Wren**, in Cabell County. Both **kinglets** were reported. The first date for **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was April 1(HG). Hullett Good reported nesting **Eastern Bluebirds** by April 4. The first dates for thrushes were as follows: **Veery**, April 29(JB); **Gray-cheeked**, April 29(JB); **Swainson's**, April 7(BW); **Hermit**, March 5(PT); and **Wood**, April 13(AB). **American Robins** were reported. The first date for **Gray Catbird** was April 10(MO). There were several reports of **Northern Mockingbirds** and **Brown Thrashers**. **American Pipits** were reported from Jefferson(MO) and Putnam(CE) Counties. **Cedar Waxwings** were also reported.

The first dates for warblers were as follows: **Blue-winged**, April 15(JW); **Golden-winged**, April 30(AW,MW); **Brewster's**, May 9(KS); **Tennessee**, April 30(JB,DE,JE,JN,MK); **Orange-crowned**, April 15(JW); **Nashville**, April 23(WJ); **Northern Parula**, April 13(MBC); **Yellow**, April 12(DS); **Chestnut-sided**, April 28(JP); **Magnolia**, April 22(CR); **Cape May**, May 23(GH,JHi); **Black-throated Blue**, April 19(DB); **Yellow-rumped**, March 1(KK); **Black-throated Green**, April 2(DP); **Blackburnian**, April 30(DP); **Yellow-throated**, April 1(LP); **Pine**, March 3(CE); **Prairie**, April 15(JW); **Palm**, April 27(MO); **Bay-breasted**, May 6(DP); **Blackpoll**, May 5(NO); **Cerulean**, April 22(CE,WJ); **Black-and-white**, April 2(DP); **American Redstart**, April 20(MW); **Prothonotary**, April 23(DP,MG,WA); **Worm-eating**, April 19(DB,JP); **Swainson's**, May 21(JP,JuP); **Ovenbird**, April 13(AB); **Northern Waterthrush**, May 5(JTII); **Louisiana Waterthrush**, March 30(SP); **Kentucky**, April 22(CE); **Mourning**, May 10(JH); **Common Yellowthroat**, April 3(JC); **Hooded**, April 19(JP,JuP,WJ); **Wilson's**, May 12(GF); **Canada**, May 19(KS); and **Yellow-breasted Chat**, April 23(DP,MG,WA).

The first date for **Summer Tanager** was May 6(JN,MK), and the first date for **Scarlet Tanager** was April 14(DE). **Eastern Towhees** were reported. Gary Felton reported a late date for **American Tree Sparrows** was April 8 in Preston County. The following were the first dates for sparrows: **Chipping**, March 13(JP); **Field**, March 8(GF); **Vesper**, March 11(GF); **Savannah**, March 2(JB,JE,EE); **Grasshopper**, April 20(MO); **Henslow's**, April 22(CR); **Fox**, March 3(PA); **Lincoln's**, April 26(CR); and **Swamp**, March 16(MBC). **Song Sparrows** were present the entire period. The last reported date for **White-throated Sparrow** was May 6(JN,MK), and the last reported date for **White-crowned Sparrow** was May 20(JE). **Dark-eyed Juncos** were last reported on May 30(GF).

There were many reports of **Northern Cardinals**. The first date for **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** was April 21(AM,MWe). The first date for **Indigo Buntings** was April 22(BW). **Bobolinks** were reported from Preston(GF) and Wood(DE,JE) Counties. **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Eastern Meadowlarks** had returned by early March. There were several reports of **Rusty Blackbirds** during the period, with Gary Felton reporting a late date of May 10 for Preston County. **Common Grackles** and **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were also reported. The first date for **Orchard Oriole** was April 2(GH), and the first date for **Baltimore Oriole** was April 2(GH). The last reported date during the period for **Purple Finch** was May 27(WJ). **House Finches** were also reported. **Red Crossbills** continued to be found in Pocahontas County(MO). **Pine Siskins** were reported until May 3(JP,WJ). **American Goldfinches** were reported from many areas. Casey Rucker had the only report of **Evening Grosbeaks**, in Tucker County, on March 1. **House Sparrows** were reported.

Contributors: Susan Aaron(SA), Pauline Anderson(PA), Wendell Argabrite(WA), Jon Benedetti(JB), Andrew Bennett(AB), Bibbee Nature Club, John Blomberg, Mike Burchett(MB), Doren Burrell(DB), Joan Carr(JC), Marquette Crockett(MC), Carol Del-Colle(CDC), Eula Elliott(EE), Cynthia Ellis(CE), Jeanette Esker(JE), Richard(Dick) Esker(DE), Gary Felton(GF), Thomas Fox(TF), LeJay Graffious, Michael Griffith(MG), Donny Good(DG), Hullett Good(HG), Bruni Haydl(BH), Joey Heron(JH), Gene Hilton(GH), Jeannie Hilton(JHi), Diane Holsinger(DH), John Jacobs, Wilma Jarrell(WJ), Kim Kazmierski(KK), Marjorie Keatley(MK), Kathy King(KKi), Elliot Kirschbaum(EK), Alma Lowry, Glenn Mahler, Ann McCrae(AM), Brian McMillan, Tina McPeck(TM), Mountwood Bird Club(MBC), John Northeimer(JN), Matthew Orsie(MO), Nina Ott(NO), Cathy Pardee, David Patick(DP), Maggi Perl(MP), Sean Pettrey(SP), James Phillips(JP), Judy Phillips(JuP), Lynn Pollard(LP), Gary Rankin(GR), Casey Rucker(CR), Davette Saeler(DS), Ken Sturm(KS), Rennie Talbert(RT), Rob Tallman, John Tharp II(JTII), Arline Thorn(AT), Paul Thorn(PT), John Trapp(JTr), Allen Waldron(AW), Mindy Waldron(MW), John Waugaman, Jr.(JW), Thomas Weak(TW), Michael Welch(MWe), Jane Whitaker(JWh), and Barry Williams(BW).

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would appreciate your correcting what I interpret to be an error in an article in the October 2005 *Redstart* (Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 153-158). While I found the hypothesis presented by Mr. Melvin L. Tyree interesting, his article contained a statement that implied Cynthia Ellis and John Smith were banders at AFMO. I had to check my records because I haven't encountered everyone and didn't recall those two names. Checking the records revealed those two people did not band at AFMO. They did assist in net tending and other activities, but they didn't band. Therefore, it's most inappropriate for your editorial staff and reviewers to allow the statement in the article that the banding records were theirs to provide [to Melvin Tyree].

Ken Heselton

The Editor replies:

In the acknowledgements section of his paper, "The Relationship Between Recent Temperature Increase and Timing of Peak Fall Bird Migration at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO)," Melvin Tyree writes, "I thank BBC members Cynthia Ellis and John Smith for graciously loaning me their bird banding records." In fact, Cynthia Ellis and John Smith loaned Melvin Tyree their back April issues (No. 2) of *The Redstart* for the years 1993 through 2004. These April issues of *The Redstart* contain George A. Hall's annual reports of the AFMO results for each preceding year. In each of these reports, the reader can find the names of the bird banders who collected data for that year, as well as the peak fall banding dates for the species considered by Tyree in his paper. Data, once published in *The Redstart* or any other journal, are available for the use of any scholar who wishes to use them, but such use should be acknowledged in a bibliography or list of references. I am sorry for any confusion caused by Melvin Tyree's acknowledgements. Cynthia Ellis and John Smith did not band at AFMO.

Albert R. Buckelew Jr.
Editor, *The Redstart*