



THE MAIL BAG

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RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note

By the time members receive this issue, many of us will be at Foray. We'll be missing Chan Robbins, who is memorialized throughout this newsletter. We will remember him forever, and I know I'll think of him every time I do a breeding bird survey. Cheers, Chan!

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Fall Meeting/85th Anniversary at Oglebay Park in Wheeling on October 20-22, 2017. More info on the BBC website. Besides great friends and celebrations, there will be terrific speakers and walks in the park area. Food, drinks and accommodations will be tops!

Our sympathies go out to BBC members from the Tom Fox family on the passing of Tom's mother, Dorothy. She passed away on March 26th at the age of 89. She was a member of the Brooks Bird Club and enjoyed observing her backyard birds.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JAY BUCKELEW

Chandler Robbins, author of the "Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification" and inventor of the Breeding Bird Survey, passed on March 21. He was America's number one ornithologist and an important advocate of the citizen scientist. It always surprised me that Chan was so active in our BBC. He came to many of our events and seemed to enjoy everything. Of course his children, Jane and Stuart, are very active in the BBC, also. In his later years they brought Chan to foray and other BBC meetings. Chan was active in many organizations outside of Maryland. One of my fondest memories of Chan was sharing a bus seat with him on a day-long field trip from a Wilson Ornithological Society meeting at Ithaca, New York. He kept up an almost constant conversation on various field techniques, atlas work, and the birds we saw. His encouragement and advice played a large role in my work on the first West Virginia breeding bird atlas. He will be missed by bird enthusiasts of all walks of life. From birdwatchers of the BBC and Maryland Ornithological Society to nationally prominent ornithologists, he had an important influence on many of their lives.

– Albert R. Buckelew, Jr., BBC President

BELOVED BBC MEMBER CHAN ROBBINS

On the first day of Spring, March 20, 2017, Chandler S. Robbins left his earthly shell to migrate to the high country of Heaven. Migration makes sense, because Chandler's passion and 60 plus years of vocation involved the study of migratory non-game birds.

He was born on July 17, 1918, in the Boston suburb of Belmont, Massachusetts. His maternal grandfather, from whom Chan received his middle name, was a world-famous botanist. His parents and two brothers encouraged Chan's interest in birds, and Belmont provided the ideal environment for a budding ornithologist. Chan first took part in the Christmas Bird Count when he was 16, four or five years after his interest in birds began to gel. By the time he graduated from Harvard University with a B. A. in Physics (1940), he had already participated in 15 Christmas Bird Counts. While at Harvard, Chan worked with Ludlow Griscom, a pioneer in identifying birds in the field.

Armed with this impressive pedigree of acquaintances and experiences, Chan became a teacher of mathematics and science at Windsor Mountain School in Vermont. When he moved to Patuxent as a junior wildlife biologist in 1945, it was for keeps. He began exploring the State of Maryland, from ocean to mountains. His wanderings uncovered much new ornithological information. One project was his thesis on "The Ecological Distribution of the Breeding Parulidae of Maryland" for his M.S. Degree in 1950 from George Washington University. With Robert Stewart, he coauthored one of the finest of all state bird books, the *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia* in 1958.

Another important early field trip was with the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia. On one trip, he met Eleanor Graham Cooley, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J.S. Cooley of horticulture fame. Chan and Eleanor were married in 1948. They established a home in Laurel on a 2.5-acre site overlooking the Patuxent river and began a family that grew to include two sons and two daughters, all of whom are now grown and active in environmental concerns. Eleanor, unflagging in her support, encouraged Chan's dedication to birds, recognizing that he was one of those rare persons who needed to combine work and play and who was dedicated to public service.

His career with the Fish and Wildlife Service included a 14-year (1961-1974) stint as Chief of the Migratory Nongame Bird Studies Section. He conducted population studies of doves, snipe, hawks, and songbirds to determine the effects of pesticides, particularly DDT; some studies were used in modifying hunting seasons for game birds to ensure the species abundance.

The albatrosses of Midway Island also owe a significant debt to Chan Robbins. His studies (1958-1970) showed that Navy airplanes and the island's resident albatrosses could, with some modifications of the Navy's runways, coexist without literally impacting each other. Otherwise, there would have to have been the mass

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BBC MEMBER AWARDED

Richard Esker of Ohio River Islands NWR Receives 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award

(Washington D.C.) – Richard Esker, a volunteer at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, has been announced as the 2017 Volunteer of the Year recipient. This award recognizes outstanding accomplishments of volunteers in support of the operation and management of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Since 2003, Dick has been a dedicated volunteer at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia. The same week he retired as a chemical engineer Dick was at the refuge door signing up as a volunteer. Since then, he has logged over 11,500 hours of volunteer service over the course of more than 14 years and is a regular and reliable presence on the refuge at least three days per week. Dick embraces challenging tasks that require new ideas and elegant solutions because innovation and critical thinking come naturally to him.

Prior to volunteering on the refuge, Dick was a visionary member of DuPont's Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Committee, where he helped lead the re-introduction of osprey to the mid-Ohio River Valley region. Using his extensive GIS software skills, Dick has designed nearly all of the maps that visitors and staff use for the refuge. He is also a valuable mentor to new employees and seasonal interns.

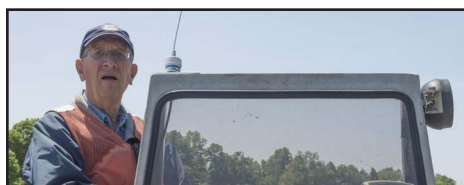
Over his many years volunteering at the refuge he has been successful in an amazing variety of undertakings, including wood working projects, kiosk construction, safety improvements, visitor center aquarium re-design, building aquaculture systems for mussel holding, motor boat operation, designing and building a tree nursery bed, invasive plant management, trail maintenance, sign construction and maintenance, bird and bat box construction and monitoring their use, osprey and bald eagle nest monitoring, breeding bird surveys,

acoustic bat surveys, maintenance of buildings, boats, and shop equipment.

Dick is an essential asset to the team at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. His creativity, positive attitude, patience, and diligence are an inspiration to all who are privileged to work beside him. We are proud to present this award to the very deserving Dick Esker.

Republished from the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Another great story is online at <http://www.wvgazettemail.com/outdoors/20170511/retired-dupont-engineer-named-national-volunteer-of-the-year>



OHIO AVIAN RESEARCH CONFERENCE COMING IN OCTOBER

This is a quick announcement that this year's Ohio Avian Research Conference will be held on Saturday, October 14th.

This will be the fifth consecutive year for this conference and it will be held once again at Denison University's Samson-Talbot Biological Building.

Ohio's conference is one of the first regional conferences recognized by the American Ornithological Society (formerly the American Ornithologist's Union & Cooper Ornithological Society).

This conference is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge and understanding of birds, expand your identification skills, make conservation connections, and generally enjoy a good time and positive camaraderie....and the food is not bad either.

So mark Saturday, October 14th, on your calendar and watch for subsequent conference-related news and announcements in the coming months.

CONTACT THE EDITOR

Have an interesting story about the nature around your neck of the woods? Want to contribute an article or travelogue? Have a nature-related event that you'd like to tell the Club about? Please contact me by mail, email or phone:

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CORRESPONDENCE

We would love to hear from members of the BBC. What have you been doing? Have you taken recent trips? What interesting birds or plants have you seen in your locality or backyard?

The Club looks forward to little notes on Christmas cards and dues notices, but feel free to get in touch with us at other times of the year too. Even just a line or two would be of interest to our readers, especially if we haven't seen or heard from you in a while.

Correspondence may be mailed to: Juanita Slater, Corresponding Secretary, c/o BBC, PO Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

For those of you who prefer email, correspondences may be sent to: gusind@stratuswave.net

REMEMBRANCES OF CHAN ROBBINS

Sad day to birders. But I celebrate that I had known him and all his contributions to the avian ecology.

– LeJay Graffious, Bruceton Mills, WV

Next bird I see/hear will be dedicated to him...

– Debby Koegler, Wheeling WV

The last time I got to bird with Chan was last June on Dolly Sods, during the Brooks Bird Club Foray. He couldn't get out of the car, but he sat with the door open and we listened to the highland species singing, him picking out every one. Magnolias, Red-breasted Nuthatches and more. He was as sharp as ever.

He'll be missed, but he lived one wonderful life.

– Ryan Tomazin, Bridgeville, PA

So sorry to hear that we have lost another leader in our birding community. The first bird guide I bought was the Golden Series "A Guide to Field Identification- Birds of North America" co-authored by Chan Robbins, Bertel Bruun and Herbert Zim. My guide was copyright 1966. I still have that original book and keep it in my office at work as a quick reference. It was revised around 2001, but my \$4.95 book is still one of my favorites.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV



Chan with Ralph Bell at the BBC 75th
– photo by Bill Beatty

It always surprised me that Chan was so active in our BBC. He came to many of our events and seemed to enjoy everything. Of course Jane and Stu were very active in the BBC, also. Chan was active in many organizations outside of Maryland. One of my fondest memories of Chan was sharing a bus seat with him on a long field trip

from the last Wilson meeting at Ithaca. He kept up an almost constant conversation on various field techniques, atlas work, and the birds we saw. He will be missed by so many people.

– Jay Buckelew, Bethany, WV

I had the pleasure of birding with Chan several times in recent years. He will certainly be missed. He also leaves a wonderful legacy of research and the simple joy of studying and watching birds.

– Wil Hershberger, Hedgesville, WV

I never met him, but loved his guide book, the second bird guide I ever bought, and the cool book for all us old hippies. It was, and still is, my favorite.

– Paul McKay, Wheeling, WV

I learned how to call in Screech Owls from Chan Robbins at the Brooks Bird Club 50th anniversary weekend, 1982.

He has been a shining figure in bird studies and conservation and a good friend to WV birds and birders for a very long time.

– Cindy Ellis, Red House, WV

One of our family passed. Chan was known around the world, but he loved West Virginia and was one of us (a BBC member). We were privileged to call him by his first name. Our hearts go out to his family and especially Jane and Stu.

– Greg Eddy, Fairfax, VA

Chan Robbins is iconic.. He was kind to a young teenage birder on BBC forays - Chan Robbins in his mid-thirties then - at Lake Terra Alta in the 1950s and later on outings in the 1960s on Dolly Sods. I was inspired by his witness to ornithology and natural history then and have been ever since.

– Larry Schwab, Morgantown, WV

My first bird field guide was Chan's book that everyone called the Golden guide. And GOLDEN it was! My grandma watched birds from her kitchen window, and as a kid growing up in the 1960's, I remember grandma had Chan's book on her window sill. Later in life, I went through at least two Golden guides, as my first guide fell apart from use/abuse. My first bird life list was started by making field observations in Chan's Golden guide.



At the 2009 Beverly Foray
– photo by Jim Triplett

In his 90's, Chan was still making regular appearances at the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) Annual Conference. A few years ago, I found a Golden guide at my folks house on a shelf near a window facing the yard. I'm pretty sure it was the book that once belonged to my grandma. I took that book with me to an MOS conference, showing it to Chan, and telling him the story about my grandma's window watching, and where the book ended up. He then autographed it and made a personal inscription for my mom and dad.

Chan's beat up military binoculars were always with him as he walked on birding field trips. His pace may have slowed, but he was a ball of fire and a very sweet man.

My deepest sympathy goes to Chan's family and the conservation community for our great loss.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV

Even the albatrosses will be in mourning. What a privilege to have known him.

– John Jacobs, Independence, WV

I first met Chan at a weekend nature camp sponsored by MOS in 1963 when I was 12 years old. After a field trip, when many of the children ran off back to the camp, Chan stopped with me and taught me to listen to a Mockingbird. He made a birder of me in that moment. I had many memorable experiences birding with Chan and MOS later, as an adult. About 5 years ago, when Chan was speaking at a meeting, I decided it was time to thank him for the way he had influenced my life. He brushed away the thanks and wanted to know what I am

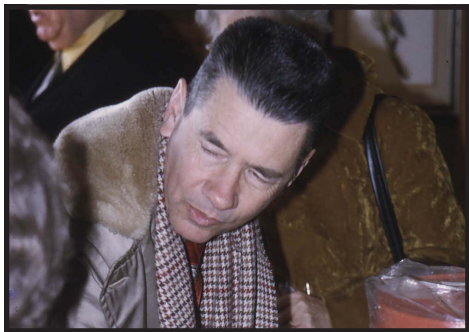
doing to pass the knowledge and enthusiasm on to kids today.

– Nancy Kirschbaum, Shepherdstown, WV

Chan Robbins, oh my gosh what a perfect name for a birder! Chan Robbins, oh my gosh, I think he is the author of my first field guide which actually was my parents' field guide! Fast forward Chan Robbins, oh my gosh he is a member of the Brooks Bird Club! I am a new member of the Brooks Bird Club! I had the privilege of meeting him and his family at a spring meeting in North bend, my first there. Dottie Simkins and I came to ask that our new Pocahontas Nature Club be accepted as an auxiliary of the Brooks Bird Club.

What a humble, knowledgeable gentleman who graciously signed my parents' field guide, my first. I was and still am, thrilled. Everytime I read about Wisdom, "his", albatross laying an egg I am thrilled. I only wish I had been a member of the Brooks Bird Club longer so I could have known him better. Peace to him and to his family.

– Sharon Kearns Leesburg, VA or Hillsboro, WV



February 1973

– photo by Stu Robbins

I just pulled out my Golden Guide (1983 revised edition) that I received from my parent's collection after they died. It had a short bird list in it dated 1987 - 88 that I never knew my dad kept until after he died. They lived in southeastern Pennsylvania and traveled very little. Now I wish I could ask Dad about the Ladder-back Woodpecker and Boreal Chickadee that he has on the list?

I had Chandler Robbins sign this guide on October 26, 2012. Now it is extra special with his death. I appreciate reading all of your memories of him.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV



During the 2012 Foray at Bluestone Dam

– photo by Ryan Tomazin

What a great loss! I really enjoyed getting to know Chan at BBC forays and meetings. I was always interested to know where his next international trip would be since Chan was in high demand around the world. We were blessed to count him as one of our own. Sincere condolences to Jane and Stu and to his many birding friends across the globe.

– Sally Egan, Bridgeport, WV

Sorry to hear of Chandler passing but it seemed he had a full life and did a lot for our knowledge of the birds. I never had the chance to bird with him but enjoyed hearing him speak at various BBC gatherings. I also enjoyed being involved with informal discussions with him at some of those functions.

As several folks on the list-serv have stated, my first bird guide was the soft bound golden guide. I wore that one out. Then I mowed yards until I could purchase a hard bound edition which I still have on my shelf. I pulled it out and noticed that I kept my life list in that book until the mid-1980s. In the margins, I found notes I made of waterfowl at various ponds in Mercer County in November of 1979 and a hawk count on Peters Mt. in September of 1980. Bird people sometimes influence the younger generation more than we realize.

Regards to the Robbins family.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV

Sad day for birders, with the news of Chan Robbins' passing. I, too, dug out my old copy of *Birds of North America*, (1966). I don't use it much any longer because it is literally falling apart. The title page, however, still has Chan's autograph (in red ink) from 1983. Our newly-minted Audubon chapter was able to arrange a field trip to Patuxent, thanks to one of our

members who knew Chan, and asked him to help us out. He was infinitely hospitable, arranging for our small band of birders to be hauled around by bus, and guiding us to the right places. At that time, we were able to snag him for a trip to Jefferson County to speak to a chapter monthly meeting. Again, as others have noted, he was so willing to help and so charmingly unaware of his fame.

– Jean Neely, Shepherdstown, WV

Chan went on one of my field trips at Canaan Valley Birding Festival. He was a jewel of a person so knowledgeable. He will leave a void in a lot of people's lives.

Chan lived a great life & touched so many birding people. His *Golden Bird Book* send so many of us on the way to a great start to birding. Special Thoughts to his family.

– Diane Holsinger, Timberville, VA

The time I met him when I was in high school – I was at an ornithological conference, standing alone at an exhibit. "You look like someone who should read this magazine," the slender man with the crew cut said to me. He gave me his copy of *American Birds*, and I became a subscriber on the spot. That night I told my family I'd met a famous ornithologist and one of the nicest people you'll ever know. More than thirty years later, I can't say that I've known a greater ornithologist or nicer person. And I'm still a subscriber.

The last time I saw Chan in person – Although he was visibly older, his formidable intellect was undiminished. We sat down together for lunch, and I was expecting to reminisce a bit. That was not on Chan's agenda. Instead, he focused on the future. We need more bird monitoring than ever before, he counseled; we especially need data on survivorship and mortality; and we need to apply digital technology to the bird conservation agenda, not vice versa. I was busily taking notes. Suddenly our server accidentally dropped something at our table, whereupon Chan sprang from his chair to assist. Note to self: bird monitoring...more data...digital technology...but more than any of that, be good to others.

– Ted Floyd, BIRDING Magazine

JEAN WORTHLEY PASSES



Reprinted from The Baltimore Sun

Jean R. Worthley, Maryland naturalist who hosted Maryland Public Television's popular children's show "Hodgepodge Lodge" during the '70s, died April 9 in her sleep at her Finksburg home. She was 92.

Jean Reese was born in Pasadena, CA. In 1927, she moved with her family to Glide, OR, where they homesteaded for seven months on 160 acres of land. They then moved to Owings Mills and then to Mississippi.

A 1940 graduate of Franklin High School, she was 15 years old when she entered Goucher College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1944.

She became a Navy WAVE—Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service—in 1944 and served as a communications officer until being discharged in 1946. From 1946 to 1948, she attended the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, on the GI Bill of Rights, where she earned a master's degree in entomology and zoology. While there, she met and fell in love with Elmer George Worthley, whom she married in 1948.

After 13 years of teaching preschool and inspired by the building of the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting studios next door to her farm, Mrs. Worthley walked over one day and applied for a job. She was named executive producer for children's programming. She produced and starred in "Hodgepodge Lodge," a children's nature show that aired weekday afternoons from 1970 to 1977 on MPT's Channel 67.

Mrs. Worthley, who was known as "Miss Jean," hosted the show. It used two Hodgepodge Lodge sets, an interior studio one, and an 8-by-10-foot lodge. Her

constant companion on the show was her female parrot, Aurora, that lived to be 38.

At the close of the show, Miss Jean gave what was called her signature "Queen Victoria" wave and asked viewers to "come back soon." By the time the show ended in 1977, she had appeared in more than 1,000 half-hour broadcasts.

From 1977 to 1978, Mrs. Worthley was a co-host with her husband, a noted botanist, of "On Nature's Trail," a 26-episode show produced by MPT that focused on plants indigenous to Baltimore County.

After her husband's death on their 43rd wedding anniversary in 1991, she continued teaching a weekly botany class. She was the author of "The Complete Family Nature Guide," which was published in 1976 by Doubleday. She was a member for many years of the Brooks Bird Club.

Mrs. Worthley donated her body to the Maryland Anatomy Board. She is survived by three sons, Kimball Worthley of Hanover, Pa., Asa Worthley of Wrightsville Beach, N.C., and George Worthley of Corpus Christi, Texas; two daughters, Waiva Worthley of Liberty, Mo., and Heather Worthley of Seattle; a brother, Andrews Reese of Salisbury; and four grandchildren. Another son, William Worthley, died in 2014.

Robbins Passes (continued on Page 5)

slaughter of the albatrosses. In 2002, Chan returned to Midway. Among the many he recaptured that trip, was one Laysan Albatross that he had first banded in the 1950s—it was then a minimum of 51 years old, and set the longevity record for the species in 2002. This is the oldest bird on record, and has been aptly named "Wisdom," and is today 66 years old.

One of Chan's many "crown jewel" accomplishments was to develop a method for a national bird survey, first tested in Maryland and Delaware in 1965. Since 1968, roadside surveys have been conducted annually by volunteer observers throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico as part of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Approximately 500 BBS routes were done in the eastern U.S. the first year; more than 3,000 routes are

currently conducted.

The focus of Dr. Robbins' studies related the bird's distribution to its habitat. His famous: A Guide to Field Identification of the Birds of North America, co-authored with Bertel Bruun and Herbert Zim, is a triumph of form and substance. The guide featured four major innovations: coverage of all North American birds, illustrations opposite the text, sonograms for most birds, and range maps. In this sense, it is the first thorough field guide. First published in 1966, it has now sold over 6 million copies.

Chan developed a thesis about the area of forest needed to support pairs of a number of species of thrushes, warblers, and other birds—not just in North America, but on their wintering grounds in Central and South America as well. In 1981, he coauthored, with Bob Whitcomb and others, the first comprehensive paper on forest fragmentation, which documents how developments split habitats into sizes too small for wildlife. In 1989 Chan and others published a major monograph that documented the effects of forest fragmentation on birds nesting in eastern woodlands—the first publication to evaluate habitat fragmentation on a regional scale.

His professional activities have taken him to all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Central and South Americas, Western Europe, former Soviet Union, North and South Pacific, East Africa, Cuba, and the Indian Ocean. He was a member of the delegation that drafted the USA/USSR Migratory Bird Treaty.

Although Chan officially retired in 2005, he maintained his office and continued his life's work as a volunteer for 11 more years, until just a few months before his passing. He continued to band birds until 2013. In his life-time, he had banded over 190,000 birds.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be made to Maryland Ornithological Society, Patuxent Wildlife Visitor's Center, First United Methodist Church of Laurel, or The Brooks Bird Club, Inc, of Wheeling, WV.

*— Prepared by Donaldson
Funeral Home's Barbara Dowell*

2017 WV BIG DAY RESULTS

On May 13, I did a Big Day at Cooper's Rock State Forest as part of eBird's Global Big Day. Fog and mist just before and after dawn meant I found no nocturnal birds, so I knew right away I would struggle to come close to my May 9, 2015, Cooper's Rock Big Day, when I found 55 species. But it never actually rained, the weather gradually improved, and the afternoon was mostly sunny. I ended up with 57 species, counting an unknown hawk.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV

Derek Courtney, Matt Orsie, Gary Rankin and I had undertaken our annual WV Big Day on May 13th. The route covered Cabell and Mason County and finished up in Pocahontas County. I have been doing this since 2013. It was again a challenging experience, but we managed to break the WV Big Day record logging 153 species. We birded from 330 am thru 11 pm and travelled 425 car miles and walked a total of 6 miles. Our last bird noted was a Northern Saw-whet Owl heard on the Scenic highway.

We observed 30 warblers, all the vireos including a Philadelphia Vireo and both Red-breasted and Common Mergansers. We found all the potential sparrows on our route, but ran out of time to search for the Vesper Sparrow. We got a Gray-cheeked Thrush and a Marsh Wren. We observed 3 migrant warblers which included Bay-breasted, Blackpoll and Tennessee.

As with every Big Day, when time is of the essence, one can have big misses. The difficulty is that we arrive in the mountains in the late afternoon when birds are not very vocal and are very difficult to find as the Golden-winged Warbler was silent at a reliable site. We missed the Belted Kingfisher, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Eastern Screech Owl.

We all had a great experience and everyone contributed and it was pleasure to be with such great company.

– David Patick, Huntington, WV

I did my Big Day in Wetzel County. I located 81 species driving less than 80 miles birding off and on through the day. Common nighthawk was last bird of day and also FOY. Only 14 warbler species, and no kingfisher or mockingbird

– Wilma Jarrell, Wileyville, WV

We had a lot of fun during the bird walks at Three Rivers Avian Center's Migration Day at Little Beaver State Park. Thanks to TRAC for putting on this great event, and especially to Rodney Davis and the enthusiastic families of young and younger birders who came out. Conditions for the earlier walk were cool and breezy. It warmed up as the day went on, but we were challenged on both walks by the high running creek, that sang louder than most of the birds. 32 species were seen between 9:30 am to 1 pm

– Bev Delidow, birding from Little Beaver State Park, Raleigh Co.

The Bibbee Nature Club conducted our 46th Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 13. Nine participants found 111 species for the day including Virginia Rail, Sora and Marsh Wren. Twenty-three species of warbler were located and all five groups were able to find a bald eagle during the day. Thanks to the participants.

– Jim Phillips, compiler, Pipestem, WV

Thanks to seven birders for braving mostly cool, rainy, foggy weather for our Tucker County count Saturday. It turned out well, with 110 species including American Wigeon, seven Common Mergansers, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers in several locations, and a high 26 species of warbler, including Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Palm, and two sightings of Wilson's. Many migrating flocks of warblers were observed.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

I was unavailable to participate in Global Big Day on May 13th so I had to delay my big day until May 17th. I focused all my effort on Nicholas County and saw and/or heard 88 species, exceeding my goal of 85 species. Personal highlights included Blackburnian Warbler,

Bay-breasted Warbler, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Osprey, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Merganser, Ruffed Grouse, and Barred Owl. I had some big misses including Wild Turkey, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Belted Kingfisher. I had a lot of fun and looking forward to next year!

– Steven Wilson, Nicholas County

Ravens confirmed nesting in downtown Morgantown

I birded this afternoon along the Decker's Creek Trail in Morgantown from the Division of Motor Vehicles office at the White Avenue bridge to the Monongahela River Rail Trail in downtown Morgantown. The clear highlight was what may be the first confirmed nesting of COMMON RAVENS in Morgantown, at least in the modern era. There are no previous eBird records of nesting in the city, though the birds are seen often enough; I have seen them performing aerial acrobatics, so I've assumed they must have been nesting somewhere.

That somewhere turns out to be the Pleasant Street bridge over Decker's Creek just a block from Morgantown High School. Maybe the science/biology department at the school may know about the nest, but if so, it has not been publicized. The nest is on a cross brace over some pipes under the bridge and is visible from both sides of the bridge near the dog park along the Decker's Creek Trail.

I actually found 4 fledged juveniles first on and near the ground at the end of a road on the downstream side of the bridge that comes down from Coburn Avenue near the school. 2 birds were playing tug of war with a stick, 1 was picking up some green foliage. All showed reddish gapes. 1 gave a not-quite adult-like "kroak" call. As I returned up the trail, I looked under the bridge and that's when I found the nest. It's serendipitous discoveries like this that are one of the great rewards of birding for me.

– Terry Bronson, Morgantown, WV, 4/29/17

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Brooks Bird Club Friends,

I was deeply honored to receive the letter from Jay Buckelew, saying that you had chosen me to receive the Bartley Award for 2016. The list of past recipients is truly an honor roll of W.V. ornithologists. Even to be considered in that company is humbling.

As I was writing the Redstart article which won the award (Vol. 83, No. 2, April 2016), I was very aware of the caliber of the readers to whom I would be speaking. I was pleased that the article was published, and now am even more pleased with your praise for it.

Thank you so much for this award. As Jay suggested, I will work on finding other topics, perhaps of our bird banding, which will warrant writing another submission to our journal.

– Jan Runyan



I birdied Canaan with Cheryl Jennings the weekend of April 22-23. It was good getting out and our best bird was probably a Blue-headed Vireo on Canaan loop road. We had a lot of rain but it was nice just to get out. The next weekend, April 28-29 I was back at Canaan. A birding friend of mine wanted to bird and see W.V.

we saw the Blue-headed vireo again in the same place. The birding was good: an Eagles' nest with young on Parker Hollow road in Hardy county plus a pair of Ospreys, 3 kingfishers plus a nest hole in Lost River. There were good looks at Red-headed woodpeckers in 3 locations.

The second day we started on Freeland Road in Canaan and ran into Casey Rucker and found every bird he told us about: Yellow Warblers, common yellowthroat, Savannah and Swamp sparrows and to top it off a Boblink.

We finished the trip on the sods. My friend was awed by the views I was aghast at all the cars and traffic. The Sods is not the place to go on the weekend.

After being sidelined for the last two years with a broken elbow and arm it was really nice to get out again even though it is still broken!

– Jane Whitaker

2017 EARLY SPRING NORTH BEND MEETING

On Friday afternoon, members start to arrive. The weather was cool and the wind had died down. Dinner was at 6:30. Food was very good and Jeanne Barnes had the tables beautifully decorated, and in addition she had made birdseed cakes for everyone. The evening program was about The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, presented by our very own Cindy Ellis. It's good to see what the conservancy has done and what's happening now around our state.

Early Saturday morning before breakfast, we met for the board meeting. After breakfast, we headed out for a day in the Ohio River Valley. At the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, we got to see many birds at the feeders. A Fox Sparrow and White-Throated Sparrows were among them. Always nice to see



the aquariums of turtles and fish and all the other exhibits there. We worked our way along the river. At one spot in a low lying area, I counted six Great Blue Herons. We took the bridge across to Middle Island near St. Marys, WV., and that's where we had lunch. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen by the Slaters and their group on their adventures through the valley. Later that evening, we were treated to a program on vultures, presented by Katie Fallon. She told us a lot about vultures, a bird that not much is known about. She introduced us to Boris, a female vulture in her care. It got exciting for a moment when Boris tried to fly

off Katie's arm. We all enjoyed the program. Katie has a new book out called *Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird*. Check it out.

Sunday after breakfast, we held the membership meeting and everyone was brought up to date on club business. It was a wonderful stay at North Bend State Park.

- Written by Deb Tingley

MARCH SOUTHERN WV EAGLE SURVEY

On Saturday, March 4, 2017, forty-two participants located 40 bald eagles (at eight sites along New River and its tributaries in Monroe, Summers and Raleigh Counties in West Virginia). The breakdown for the birds follows: 13 adults, 17 1st year birds, 7 2nd year birds and 3 4th year birds. Four nests were monitored during the day. Two had two eggs and two were presumed to have eggs based on the behavior of the adult birds.

The day was topped off when, about 200 people, cheered at the release of a young female bald eagle by the Three Rivers Avian Center of Brooks, WV.

The Eagle Brigade charted these additional sightings in April:

4/2/17 – Adult sitting on Brooks Island nest.

2 chicks confirmed in Lower Greenbrier 1 nest.

Adult on Beaury nest.

4/7/17 – 2 chicks in Brooks Island, Lower Greenbrier 1, Indian Creek 2 nests and at least one in Bluestone. Adult on Beaury nest. Indian Creek 1 & Meadow River not active.

4/9/17 – One eaglet for sure in Bluestone nest.

4/14/17 – 2nd chick confirmed in Bluestone nest.

Two chicks confirmed in Lower Greenbrier 2 nest.

4/16/17 – Both adults and chicks seen in Bluestone nest.

4/30/17 – Both chicks seen in Bluestone nest during change out.



INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Took off from work to make a River Run in Mason and Jackson County this beautiful day – and I'm glad I did. At the fish hatchery at R.C. Byrd Lock and Dam looking into the Ohio River at the man-made islands, there was plenty of waterfowl: Canvasbacks, goldeneyes (all females) even a mature Bald Eagle, but the highlights were a Long-tailed Duck and a White-winged Scoter (female). I tried to make the White-winged into a Surf (which I need) but it had a solid black bill (no light tip), 2 obscure white dots in the head (not a vibrant dot and line), a solid black nape (no white), and a dark eye. I couldn't see any white in the wing for the longest time (you often don't) until it dove for a fish and flashed me white for a split second.

Later went to Ravenswood sewage ponds, where Ross's Goose was reported but didn't see any. Went across the road to Washington Riverfront Park on the Ohio River. Among the 150+ Canada Geese were 6 white and 2 blue phase geese. Four of the whites turned out to be Ross's Goose (a WV life bird) with a distinctly abrupt forehead, smaller bill (~40% head width). They were standing next to 2 Snow Geese which were a good 2" taller than the Ross's. The 2 blue phase geese I'm not sure about, but their grin patch did appear rather large. All-in-all, a pretty special day.

– Jerry Westfall, Parkersburg, WV, 2/2/17



A breeding adult male Cinnamon Teal, a WV state first record at the Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dams at Apple Grove, WV, on 3/5/17.

– photo by David Patick

This morning on my walk up the mountain, I stopped at the usual rest stop. On scanning the woods around me, I notice an oval blob at the end of a broken off, almost vertical tree limb. Since I've been fooled by such blobs in the past, I thought that it was just the way the end was shaped. However, through my binoculars, I saw a hunched, puffed Barred Owl facing me. It looked half-asleep and didn't move.

This evening I took my wife and granddaughter up to see if it stayed at the same spot all day. Sure enough, it was still there with its back toward us. Its eyes were still mostly closed, but it turned its head 180 degrees toward us. They got great looks through my scope. I also got some decent photos to prove that I wasn't dreaming.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 2/16/17

I was headed home late yesterday afternoon and driving alone 8th Ave in Huntington. As I approached 10th Street, I noticed a large dark bird fling east and in the opposite direction I was driving. As it got closer, I realized that it was an adult Bald Eagle and it flew right over the top of my SUV.

Tonight I was thinking that this would be a perfect evening to hear Am. Woodcock. Since my wife was starting to come down with a cold, I went out to pick up dinner, arriving back home around 6:50 pm. As I got out of the car, I heard the metallic flight sounds followed by the distinctive "chortle" of an American Woodcock! I guess it was a perfect night.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 2/2/17

Welcome snow (we finally reached triple digits in seasonal inches) brought welcome birds to the yard today, 21 species and well over 400 individuals.

Three Fox Sparrows appeared; a flock of more than 250 Red-winged Blackbirds (including at least one female) paid a tentative visit; and I startled a hen Wild Turkey when I went to put seed out this afternoon. The instigator of a late-afternoon evacuation of the premises turned out to be a male American Kestrel, a rare visitor. All the above were yard FOY. A few minutes ago I watched a Common Raven casually perform a barrel roll as it soared, calling, away. What a day.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV, 3/3/17

My birding buddy had a snow day at school today, so he dragged me out to go birding. I am grateful for that, as we both had the most amazing showing of Fox Sparrows either of us had ever seen. The roads were clear where they had been plowed, but you couldn't stop and linger too many places. The residue of our big snow storm two days ago left lots of snow covered ground, with just small foraging areas for ground feeding birds. The favorite feeding areas for birds today were the areas along the roadways where the snow plow disturbed the ground, and some snow melted. If there was leaf litter, all the better for the Fox Sparrows. A few of the Fox Sparrows "sparred" with each other, flying a few inches off the ground, kicking their feet (I suppose at each other), then landing on the ground and separating. They didn't seem to like to feed right next to each other, but were quite tolerant of juncos, White-throated and Song Sparrows feeding in close proximity to them. There were amazing numbers of Song Sparrows too, and maybe they even traveled together in the storm?

All the sparrow species were observed doing the traditional foot scraping for food along



White-rumped Sandpipers at Ashton Wetlands – photo by David Patick

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

the road edge. This posed a serious danger for them, as there are so many reckless drivers who use the Bloomery Road as a shortcut. My friend was out yesterday, and he observed 5 or 6 sparrows getting killed from these drivers. Very sad that many people don't even see what is going on in the natural world, and don't realize the negative impact their behaviors have on wildlife. We also encountered a Turkey Vulture that had been hit by one of these speeders, and it had wing damage, but we couldn't approach it. There was a nearby deer carcass that it must have been feeding on. Very sad.

The total number of Fox Sparrows seen by us today was a whopping 29. This is the most either of us has ever seen at one time, and I've been to Canada twice in their breeding habitat. 12 Fox Sparrows were on John Rissler Road, and 17 were on the Bloomery Road.

Other notables were 3 Eastern Meadowlarks ground feeding between Millville and Route 340, near the white water rafting outfitters property. Their gorgeous yellow bellies with black zorro bib showed up amazingly well on the white snow covered ground. A Hermit Thrush was also seen on the edge of the road between Moulton Park and the S turn on Bloomery Road. A first of year Brown Thrasher was singing on National Park Service property at the Alstead House (near white water rafting property). A lone Rusty Blackbird was seen by Zimmerman's on Bloomery Road.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 3/16/17

While watching some Great Blue Herons on nests at the Rookery, I was surprised to see an immature Bald Eagle fly in and begin to drop down to one of the occupied nests which brought about a lot of noise from the heron. The eagle left that nest and proceeded to bother a heron in another nest nearby. Once again there was a lot of noise and the eagle was persuaded to go elsewhere. The last I saw, both herons were still on their nests, and the eagle left for parts unknown. This was a first for me. Quite a National Geographic moment.

– Carol Del-Colle, Summit Point, WV, 3/19/17

There is a small, farm pond about two miles north of Riverton along Route 33 in Pendleton County that seems to be a magnet for waterfowl. Today there were 9 Hooded Mergansers (5 female and 4 male), 4 male Wood Ducks, a male and female Bufflehead and 2 female Common Goldeneyes actively feeding. There were also at least 8 Canada Geese. On Sunday there were 2 Great Blue Herons feeding along the same pond. I like little places like that with their surprises.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV 3/21/17

Today, I was watching a Northern Harrier hunt over a freshwater marsh and a tight flock of birds flew over which I first thought was some type of shorebirds. They circled and came back around and I got my binoculars on them. They were meadowlarks. I counted 26. They landed on a knoll about 250 yards away and through my spotting scope appeared to be ALL males. Cortland Road just North of Beall Lane.

– Randy Bodkins, Norton, WV, 3/29/17

These last 2 days I've had wonderful encounters with the newly arrived Pine Warblers. At Nash Farm, one was singing in the parking area from the top of a white pine. Nearby a chipping sparrow returned song. They were trading gossip, catching up (I imagined) - about their winter vacations, where the phoebes are nesting this year, how their trip up north went. But for me, their exchange was a great lesson in differentiating their trill: one decidedly "wet," the other relatively "dry."

– Deb Hale, Bolivar, WV, 4/5/17

This morning around 7 AM, our dog treed a raccoon in an oak in our front yard. At 11 am, the coon hadn't budged, but he was joined by a Tufted Titmouse, busily plucking hair from the coon's tail. When she had a beakful, off she flew, quickly to return for more. Must be a soft nest being built nearby! (The next day, two titmice were harvesting hair.)

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, WV, 4/5/17

I recently trimmed my beard. I took the hair and placed it on the porch. A titmouse made several trips to carry it off. I have seen them come in and pull hair from our dog's tail while she was sleeping on the porch. I have had several old timers tell me they call the titmouse the hair-bird because they see them come in and pull hair out of door mats.

– Jim Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 4/5/17

I have seen titmice take the dog hair after I brushed our Corgi and I left the hair to blow in the wind.

– Jamie Gregory, 4/6/17

A friend of mine took a video of a Titmouse pulling out her hair. I'd never seen them do that to humans as well.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, 4/6/17

After attending a sunrise service at Pendleton Point in Blackwater Falls State Park this morning, Sarah and I hiked the Beall North Loop as well as the Blackwater View Trail to the new bridge in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. I don't want to sound sacrilegious, but the hike was at least as uplifting as the service.

As we began the trail, we were surprised by two ducks flying in the woods, sitting in a tree briefly and then leaving the woods. It was a pair of Wood Ducks. Are they nesting in that woods? The next surprise was a singing Hermit Thrush. Their song is so ethereal. We ended up hearing at least four along the trail and had good looks at one. At least two scolded us.

I saw two male Yellow-rumped Warblers in full breeding plumage. Talk about striking guys!! Then we began hearing singing Black-throated Green Warblers. We ended up with at least four of them including a good look at one. I thought I heard a Brown Creeper singing but couldn't locate it. A while later we saw a pair climbing a tree. They seemed to be a pair.

We saw both kinglets and four woodpecker species. Missing was a pileated woodpecker but we saw some of their large, rectangular holes in a dead tree. What an Easter morning!

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 4/16/17

– **Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ**

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS**BIBBEE CHAPTER**

May-September, 2017 – Every second and fourth Saturday at 9:00 AM, join the birding group at Grandview NPS for a morning of birding. Meet at the Visitors Center. Contact Mindy Waldron, awaldron@suddenlink.net.

July, 2017 – Date TBD. Blueberries and Birds at Blueberry Hill. Back by popular demand. Can't beat berries, birds and friends. Bring a lunch. Blueberry Hill near Ghent, WV. Contact Mindy Waldron.

August 2017 – Date TBD. 9:00 AM to ????. Trip to Bluestone WMA for birds, plants, butterflies and all things natural. The area at this time of year never disappoints for great wildflowers and birds. Meet at Bellepoint Park in Hinton. Contact Mindy Waldron.

September 2017 – Date TBD. 10:00 to 3:00 PM. Hawk watch on East River Mountain, off of Rt. 460 near Bluefield, WV. Contact Mindy Waldron.

HANDLAN CHAPTER

September 18, 2017 - Meeting at South Charleston Library, 6:30pm, Annual Ice Cream Social.

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

July 15, 2017 – 2:30pm-7:00pm. Malv and Rosie Campbell will host this picnic outing at their farm. Bring a covered dish, drink and lawn chairs. 61121 S26 Road Bethesda Ohio 43719

August 19, 2017 – 2pm-6pm. Picnic at the Emricks, 52713 OH-800, Jerusalem, OH 43747. Bring a covered dish to share. For more information contact Janice Emrick at janice.emrick@gmail.com.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

June Coordinator – Jon Benedetti
304-295-8945

June 22, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

June 29, 2017 – North Bend State Park, 8:00am. Kroger, 7th St. Parkersburg, bring lunch.

August Coordinator: Dick Esker
(304-863-8765)

Aug. 10, 2017 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 9:00am. Boat ramp, Northwest Drive.

Aug. 26, 2017 – Annual Picnic, 5:00pm. McDonough Log Shelter "A", bring a covered dish, drink & service.

September Coordinator: Jeanie Hilton
(304-428-8641)

Sept. 7, 2017 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 9, 2017 – Mountwood Park, 8:00am. Beach area (near torpedo), bring lunch.

Sept. 14, 2017 – Lake Hope, Zaleski forest, Ohio, 8:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

**NATURE HAPPENINGS
AROUND THE STATE****POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON**

June 14, 2017 – Bird walk at Harpers Ferry National Park, 7:00am to 10:00 am. Join Deb Hale on a birding trip to the North Schoolhouse Ridge section of the Harper's Ferry National Park. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. For more information,

please contact Deb Hale at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-1528.

See <http://www.potomacaudubon.org/birdcal> for more trips out-of-state.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

June 17, 2017 – "Wings of Wonder" - Blackwater Falls State Park. Come to this Birds of Prey Education Program featuring live birds native to West Virginia to learn about owls, hawks and eagles. You'll learn about the habitat, diet and behavior of each bird presented, the most common causes of injury to each species and the laws protecting these special birds. No fee to attend. Open to the public. 7:30p.m. Blackwater Falls Lodge, Conference Center.

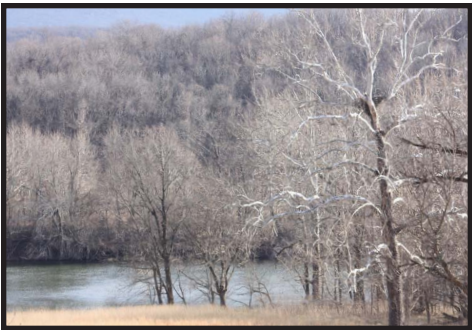
June 24, 2017 – Geology Rocks! North Bend State Park. Join Ken Ashton, a geologist with the West Virginia Geologic and Economic Survey and find out what rocks make up the Mountain State. Ken will be giving a presentation on Friday evening, followed by this hike on Saturday morning. Geology Rocks in West Virginia! 10:00 a.m. on the Overlook Trail.

July 29, 2017 – Moth Watch Night - National Moth Week, Blennerhassett State Park. When its dark and everything is still, its Moth Night! Families are invited to come to the island and enjoy this evening of exploring and fun as 'moth sleuths'. An educational program will also be part of the evening before the watch. Please bring your flash light, comfortable walking shoes, light jacket, and attitude for adventure! 8:30pm - midnight. Reservations Required.

WEST VIRGINIA FOREST SERVICE

June 19, 2017 Forest Service Meeting - A meeting will be held in Parsons from 6-8pm, dealing with gathering feedback on how the Forest Service will utilize the Nursery Bottom site in Parsons managed for recreation, education, and administrative needs. Weather permitting, the meeting will be held outdoors near the Allegheny Highlands Trailhead.

For more info contact Jon Morgan at 304-478-2000 or jmorgan@fs.fed.us; or Elizabeth Tichner at 304-257-4488 or etichner02@fs.fed.us.



...
**This photo shows you
what a prime location
this pair of eagles has.
The area on the other
side of the Shenandoah
is the Shannondale
Springs Wildlife
Management Area.**
– *Photo by Bruni Haydl*

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