



THE MAIL BAG

A PUBLICATION OF THE BROOKS BIRD CLUB OF WEST VIRGINIA
P.O. BOX 4077 • WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

VOL. 78, ISSUE 3

JULY – AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2021

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Editor's Note

For once, writing this Editor's Note feels like writing lines in class. We've had no BBC events, though that may be remedied this fall. Perhaps the dog days of summer have kept many people off of eBird and the Audubon email listserv. And I've been busier than I've ever been in my life, so instead of birding and mothing and mushroom picking, I stay inside and work all hours. That said, see the article below. We'd love to hear how you're doing!



I suppose one thing that can take up space is to share with the uninitiated my great sojourn out West (in addition to the photos within this issue). Sixteen days of new experiences led to a great enjoyment of the sometimes-under appreciated states of Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. Before traveling, I'd asked Janice Emrick for advice on good birding locations in the prairie potholes. She said to just look for any water and that I'll find birds. How true that was! I wholeheartedly recommend the Dakotas for spring and summer birding, and the other two mentioned states were no slouches either. Avocets, Black Terns, Eared Grebes, Long-billed Curlews, Lark Buntings, more Horned Larks than you could count. And then, the sparrows. Piles of Clay-colored in the N.D. potholes; lots of Vespers in the National Bison Reserve in Montana; thick numbers of Brewer's in Yellowstone and Grand Tetons.

Ooh, then the thrushes! The number one thrush in Glacier and the surrounding area isn't the robin or Hermit Thrush; it is the Swainson's Thrush. They were everywhere. Then, the haunting, otherworldly whistle of the Varied Thrush, a new favorite of mine. Next, I learned after a while that Warbling Vireos are the predominant vireo out there. From arid mountaintop to lake sides to towns, Warblings are present. Then you add your bevy of Empidonax species that mainly are told apart by song and call note. I lucked out and got the grand slam out there. New phoebes, new tanager, new bluebirds, new hummingbirds...it was a dream. It also was the largest number of life birds I've had just about ever in such a short time, tallying at least 50 lifers. Probably better than my 1996 BBC trip to Magee. More than China, even. So, with 200 species on the trip, let no one tell you the upper tier is slacking in birds!

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, CINDY SLATER

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together. For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad." - Edwin Way Teale, *Autumn Across America*, 1956

Wow! Is it really August? September is just right around the corner. I just don't understand how time goes by so quickly. Fall is my most favorite time of year. So many changes take place: canning garden harvests, the smell of the air, the Bird Club Fall Reunion that will take place at Cedar Lakes this year, the Eastern Shore trip, and Thanksgiving, the best food day on earth! So, if you are sad about the dwindling of bird songs or the shorter days and longer nights sign up to go to one or both of our fall events. It will be great for us to gather together even if it is only for a short time. Stay well my friends. Hope to see you very soon.

– *Your BBC President, Cindy Slater*

A CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DECEMBER ISSUE

There are a lot of reasons to contribute to the Mail Bag. You might have a great story, an exciting trip to tell us all about. You might have been holed up at home and you have lots of photos and sightings from your feeders. Perhaps you just would like to tell us how you and yours have been.

This call to action will fulfill two purposes. First, we had a great issue last December, thanks to over two dozen submissions where the club members told us how they fared during the first COVID year. You all made the issue.

Second, it helps occasionally make the editor's job easier. Due to strokes of good luck in these worst of times, your editor will be bound up with a lot of business-related work, readying many projects for customer's Christmas gifts. Getting lots of contributions help make the issue come together faster.

Please email wvwarblers@hotmail.com, or mail photos and/or submissions to Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station Street, Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017.

Let's make the next issue great!

ORION METHENY WINS THE 2021 MORGANTOWN BIRDING CUP

Katie Fallon

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2021 Morgantown Birding Cup, held from 6pm on Friday, May 14, until 6pm on Saturday, May 15. We hope everyone had a good day finding birds and spending time outside!

We had more than thirty teams participate, and more than 80 people across all the teams. Some people watched their bird feeders, some walked around their neighborhoods, and some walked for miles. Many folks tallied songbirds migrating through our area, including Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Cape May warblers, and even a few Wilson's Warblers. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are still in the area, too, and some teams had migrating pine siskins. Interestingly, no teams reported seeing either Black-billed or Yellow-billed cuckoos. Teams could search for birds within walking, biking, or kayaking distance from their home or the home of a friend, within the five West Virginia counties served by Mountaineer Audubon: Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor.

And now, without further ado, here are the top six teams:

6. Cooper & Janell Sizick tallied 60 species. Cooper is a young birder, and greatly improved his count from last year's cup. Cooper and his parent Janell birded in Monongalia County.

5. Chris Lituma found 70 species, counted in the Cheat Lake area.

4. The Downsy Woodpeckers (Emma Lendt & Michael Downs & two young birders) counted 73 species in Preston County.

3. The Hemlock Sherlocks aka LeJay & the Blue Jays (LeJay Graffious, Cheyenne Carter, and Alaska Jiminez) tallied 74 species on Old Hemlock and the surrounding area in Preston County.

2. Zealon Wight-Maier found 78 species in Monongalia County. Zealon is another young birder, and he is currently the top eBirder by species in Mon County in 2021.

AND THE WINNER of the 2021 Morgantown Birding Cup:

1. Orion Metheny with a whopping 82 species, found in Preston County!

Congratulations again to everyone who participated. Like last year and this year, the third annual Morgantown Birding Cup will be held on the third Saturday of May, which will be May 21, 2022. Mark your calendars! The cup is an endeavor of the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia, Mountaineer Audubon, and the West Virginia Young Birders Club.

From Orion Metheny, this year's first-place winner:

"Nearly 10 miles of walking and 3.5 miles of kayaking resulted in 82 bird species yesterday! The highlights were a Common Merganser with young, a flyover of a Double-crested Cormorant, and a bunch of neotropical migrants.

Yesterday was a reminder of the importance of habitat & habitat diversity. The field you want to mow, the brush you want to clear, the marshy area you want to drain; those are some of the key habitats that made finding 82 different species possible. A pristine, mowed yard with non-native plants results in just a handful.

Don't forget to donate and support **Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia** as well, so that they can continue their help and rehabilitation of our feathered friends! They do such amazing work.

A special thanks to **Katie Fallon** for putting this together! I had so much fun and excitement! I like to think I'm not competitive...until there is a birding competition!

And of course, a non-special thanks to the Broad-winged Hawk that has been in my yard every day except yesterday when I needed it!"

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:

Ryan Tomazin
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Bridgeville, PA 15017
412-220-9726
wwwarblers@hotmail.com



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: jslater1120@yahoo.com

NOTES (AND PHOTOS) FROM ROSE CAMPBELL

Annual Falconry Event at Holloway, March 6-7

Master Falconer, Mick Brown and several other falconers hunted and displayed their birds at the Old Timer's Club in Holloway, Ohio. When I attended, Mick's Harris Hawks, a Red-tailed Hawk and a Golden Eagle were displayed at the club house. The other hawks and falcons were afield after game and I didn't see them.

Mick and friends talked about their birds' care and hunting skills. The ladies of the Old Timers served a nice meal for attendees. The event will be held here again next year at about the same time. (The hawks must hunt during hunting season as any other game is.)

(I have spoken to Mick lately and he said he'd replaced his lost Saker/gyr with a Finnish Goshawk, a large, fierce bird. He had photos of her from hatching till now.)

Blue Bird Symposium at Broken Timbers, March 27

Sylvia Owens and friends presented a talk and movie about blue birds at Broken Timbers Nature Center. A movie by Stoke's Bird Guides told how, where and why to set up blue bird houses, then all of us were helped to build a pre-cut bird house to take home.

We all enjoyed seeing the several nature displays on birds, plants, butterflies, fish, etc., at the Center. The event was well attended in spite of the COVID restrictions.

Spring Wildflower Hike at Sunfish Creek, April 24

About two dozen folks went for the hike along the creek. It seemed to me the flowers were exceptionally plentiful and lovely this spring. In spite of pipe lines and bridge construction there are still several miles of unspoiled roadsides and woods to enjoy the flowers. This area has large patches of blue bells, blue-eyed Marys, larkspur, trilliums, and many of the other spring ephemerals.

A few warblers, other spring migrants and a small heron rookery were spotted. Later we were treated to a covered dish lunch at Sylvia Owen's cabin. (This lunch doubled as a birthday celebration for a local youngster.)

The Bob-o-link Bonanza was cancelled because of threatening weather, but as it turned out we didn't get the bad stuff forecast for us, only a very few sprinkles. It could have been.

Here at home, we enjoyed another good grosbeak/ oriole spring. Last spring (2020) was the best spring I ever remember for orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

(About twenty years ago, there was a spring almost the equal of it.)

Starting in late April, we had an increasing number of orioles, (both Baltimore and Orchard) and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. As soon as we saw the orioles, I put out several orange halves, but at first, the orioles preferred the humming-bird feeders.

The grosbeaks were after sunflower seed. For the next month and a half, we had lots of both species at our feeders, along with more-than-usual Red-headed Woodpeckers.

One pair of Baltimores nested nearby and the usual pair of Orchard Orioles nested near the pond. At least four pairs of grosbeaks stayed to raise young here and brought them to the feeders all during late June and early July. They begin to leave at the end of July and we aren't seeing any now.



Scott & Janice Emrick make bird houses



Golden Eagle at falconry event



Mrs. & Mr. R.B. Grosbeak



A handsome male Orchard Oriole

INTERVIEW WITH RICH BAILEY AND CASEY RUCKER, EDITORS OF *THE SECOND ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS IN WEST VIRGINIA*

You've just completed what many would consider your life's work with this Atlas. What have you learned, scientifically and personally, about the status of birds and birders in WV?

Rich: Philosophically and personally, I've gotten a better sense of how very much I *don't* know, along with many fascinating questions that demand investigation. Having said that, an obvious and easy statement is that atlas results highlight the fact that bird occurrence in WV is always changing, in both good and worrisome ways. Even among species obligated to certain habitats, such as early-successional forests or grasslands, some increased their populations and/or occurrence despite otherwise universal declines of their peers. From a conservation standpoint, West Virginia looms large in population responsibility for forest songbirds. Atlas products, such as estimated density maps, are and will be incredibly useful in guiding the nature and location of work. Seeing point-count data translated into these maps was incredibly exciting, not just because of the thousands of hours it took to complete the fieldwork. From a human standpoint, I'm so grateful to the relatively small number of birders, many of them members of the Brooks Bird Club, who worked tirelessly to see the project through. The Mountain State lost population (and birders) between atlas periods, but we nonetheless amassed more than triple the number of observations compared to the first atlas.

Casey: It was a pleasant surprise to me that a good number of bird species are thriving in West Virginia, especially those associated with our extensive and maturing forests. The atlas project was also an exercise in history, and I learned a lot about the history of land use in this territory beginning with centuries of landscape modification by Native Americans before the arrival of Europeans. Pre-settlement forests were not unbroken canopies from the Shenandoah to the Ohio, but rather mosaics of young, mid-aged, and old growth stands due to blowdowns, normal tree mortality, fires, and, I've just learned, possibly the effects of millions of roosting Passenger Pigeons! On birders in West Virginia, the increase in use of eBird is very encouraging, both in the number of younger birders whose voices are becoming more and more evident, and in making the special web portal we used in the atlas obsolete.

What species of concern should we be on the lookout for, and how should birders transmit special sightings for WV?

Rich: Informed by atlas results, we developed a list of 69 Species of Greatest Conservation Need as part of writing the second State Wildlife Action Plan. The reasons for inclusion on the list are varied, ranging from high population responsibility and accordingly high obligation to conserve (cerulean warbler, wood thrush), to exceptional rarity or dependency on sensitive habitats (olive-sided flycatcher). Birders can best contribute to species on the list by lending their expertise to long-term monitoring efforts such as the Breeding Bird Survey or Christmas Bird Count, or to spending more time birding in under-visited quarters of the state, such as southwestern counties. Regardless of where birders spend their time, they should endeavor to vet their observations and then consistently submit checklists to eBird. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is using eBird data in all sorts of fascinating ways to forward bird conservation. There are also excellent community forums for reporting bird observations, such as the WV bird listserv (essential for compiling records in *The Redstart*), and the Facebook group *Mountain State Birders*. Finally, we are always seeking assistance on species projects, such as monitoring bald eagle and peregrine falcon nest sites. Above all else, I would implore the state's birders to think about how they can convey their passion for birds beyond the recreational context, and consider how they can contribute to the critical work of conservation.

Casey: As a resident of the mountains, I'm especially interested in our rare boreal breeders. It would be great for our birders to explore more areas of the highlands with a view to discovering breeding Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied flycatchers, and Nashville Warblers. These species may well disappear as the climate warms, functioning as 'canaries in the coal mine.' As to how to transmit special sightings, please continue to let me know as field notes editor, at autoblock@frontiernet.net.

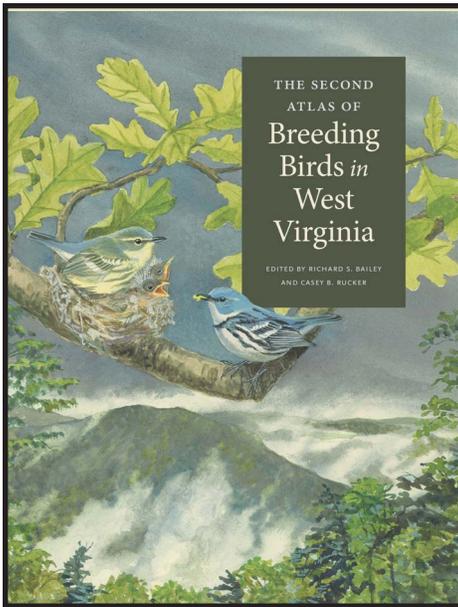
You've produced a book and a body of work to be proud of. Have you been able to estimate how many hours of time you've invested in field work, writing, editing, etc.?

Rich: I would make a rough estimate that I've spent perhaps 8000-10000 hours on the project, all told.

Casey: I'm guessing it was around 6,000 to 8,000 hours for me.

With this project in the rearview mirror, what are you doing with your newfound time (scientifically and/or personally)?

Rich: The atlas was a product of the first State Wildlife Action Plan (2005-2015), which tasked us, in part, with conducting concerted surveys for species across taxa. The atlas has given us an excellent sense of where birds are, how many of them there are, and how their populations and occurrence has been changing over time. The second Plan (2015-2025), and the third when it arrives in 2025, tasks us with translating those data into meaningful conservation actions on the ground. That has already included projects such as the WVDNR-NRCS partnership to provide financial incentives to private landowners to create or enhance habitat for Cerulean and Golden-winged warblers. We're also focusing increasingly on developing relationships with institutional landowners such as Weyerhaeuser, whose lands hold great promise for forest management for songbirds and other species such as Ruffed Grouse. Other examples include development or compiling management practices for species or



species groups, increasing our outreach and resources for state residents looking to protect birds, and plugging into regional and national efforts to reverse bird declines, such as the recently initiated Road to Recovery.

Casey: I'm still editing *The Redstart* and the newsletter of the Friends of the 500th, our local support organization for Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which keeps me pretty busy in addition to my work with Rich for the DNR. I'm thinking about what larger project I should tackle next, so stay tuned.

Have you set your sights on the next atlas and who might take the reins?

Rich: Tentatively, planning for the third atlas will commence in 2029, with an expected start of fieldwork in 2034. I will be eligible to retire in 2034, but I suspect I might be convinced to see fieldwork through to completion. I also suspect that I might then hand the reins to deserving others to complete any future book.

Casey: My crystal ball is hazy about my septuagenarian participation in the next atlas. If I can, I will.

Any interesting stories from the field while collecting data?

Rich: Some of the greatest days of birding I've ever had were in pursuit of atlas data, and of those days the best were, ironically, down in the often-neglected

coalfield counties. Rich assemblages of species occur down there, in a rugged landscape that makes the rest of the state feel flat. Hours of travel to access remote reclaimed minds yielded high densities of Grasshopper Sparrows, while Cerulean and Kentucky warblers often rewarded arduous drives along ridgeside jeep trails. I enjoyed many hours of employing song and call broadcasting to coax Swainson's Warblers from their haunts. I found a thriving Purple Martin colony in a densely settled coal town in a narrow hollow. Sometimes things took a turn towards the macabre, as when I found a raven eating another raven, road-killed. Other oddities included a snow-white European Starling and a Brewster's Warbler in Kanawha County, far west of the contact zone.

Casey: Grant was the only county where people called the cops on me as I was surveying for shrikes, and that happened a few times. Luckily, I knew the conservation officers who were summoned to the scene, and enjoyed our conversations. I remember looking at the atlas breeding code that includes a bird carrying a fecal sac, and thinking, "who ever sees that?" Then I started looking, and sure enough over the course of years I saw a lot of fecal sacs being carried out of nests. Memorable moments also included nearly stepping on a fledgling Hermit Thrush on Brown Mountain in Canaan Valley, encountering a pair of Northern Goshawks on private property in southern Preston County (they were not pleased with my presence), and hightailing it away from a bear cub near Camp Dawson as the noise of army maneuvers seemingly surrounded me.



MR. ED. GOES WEST

Your editor visited Glacier National Park, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Badlands, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the Arrowwood and Chase Lake NWRs in eastern North Dakota, Bowdoin NWR in Montana, and a lot of places in between. We scored 200 or so species of birds, plus almost all of the large and small mammals one might expect. And one Prairie Rattlesnake.

Due to time constraints and some open space, here and on page 7 are some fun photos from our trip. Culled from the 4,000 we took...



Life Long-billed Curlew at Bowdoin NWR



Lifer Steller's Jay at Glacier National Park



White-faced Ibis at Yellowstone N.P.



WALTER I. RYBECK PASSES

Walter Rybeck, 96, died from pneumonia on May 3 at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, MD.

Mr. Rybeck advocated for economic justice, particularly regarding affordable housing, job creation and infrastructure funding. Tools for accomplishing these objectives, his philosophy and significant aspects of his life are discussed in his 2011 book, "Re-Solving the Economic Puzzle." (See details below.)

Rybeck's early career was in journalism. He funded a trip to South America in the late 1940s by writing a column for several West Virginia newspapers. A highlight of that trip was getting stranded in the Galapagos Islands for several months when it was inhabited only by a few pioneering families.

Rybeck was born in Wheeling, WV. He attended West Virginia University for two years before joining the army during World War II. After the War, he resumed his studies at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. An accomplished pianist, Rybeck accompanied an aspiring singer, Coretta Scott.

After graduation, he worked as a reporter for the Columbus Citizen. He became an editor for the Dayton Daily News. In Dayton, Rybeck met and married Erika Schulhof. In the early 1960s, Rybeck became the Washington Bureau Chief for Cox Newspapers. In 1967, as an Assistant Director for the National Commission on Urban Problems, Rybeck worked with former Senator Paul Douglas investigating the roots of urban decay. Thereafter, he became the editorial director at the Urban Institute, an assistant to Congressman Henry Reuss (Wisconsin) and Congressman William Coyne (Pennsylvania) before creating his own consultancy, The Center for Public Dialog.

Rybeck became involved in the communities where he lived. In Wheeling, WV, he was heavily involved in nature and folk dance programs at Oglebay Park. In Fairmont, WV, Rybeck helped organize a symphony. In Dayton, he helped organize a natural history museum. At Riderwood Village (a retirement community in Silver Spring, MD), Rybeck served on the Performing Arts Council.

Survivors include his wife of 67 years, Erika Schulhof Rybeck of Silver Spring; two sons, Rick Rybeck (Washington, DC) and Alex Rybeck (New York City), daughter-in-law Ellen Czaplowski, a niece (Blanche Rybeck) and several nephews (Charles, Dan, Abe and Ted Rybeck).

A memorial service will be held at Riderwood Village, date to be determined. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the charity of your choice. Mr. Rybeck was partial to organizations that worked for social and economic justice, environmental preservation, aid to refugees, and in-depth journalism.



Walt leading a walk in 1938 at Oglebay Day Camp, Wheeling, WV.

LAUNCH OF "BIRDING BACKPACKS" PROGRAM IN MONONGALIA COUNTY

Mountaineer Audubon is pleased to announce a new initiative in partnership with the Morgantown Public Library System – Birding Backpacks!

Starting Monday, June 21, birding backpacks will be available at all five branches of the Morgantown Public Library System. The birding backpacks will contain a pair of children's binoculars, a pair of adult binoculars, bird field guides, and trail maps. Just like a book, they can be checked out for free for up to three weeks. They are intended for people of all ages, from kindergarteners to retirees.

This initiative is also supported by (and would not be possible without) the Brooks Bird Club and Service League of Morgantown.

If you are in the region and know of any young or beginning birders who may not have their own set of binoculars, please spread the word! In addition, if you have a child in grades K-5, you can help us celebrate the launch of the birding backpacks by joining us on a bird walk as part of the library's Summer Reading Program: https://www.mympls.org/upcoming_events/bird-walk-grades-k-5-families/

Good birding,
Hannah Clipp
Mountaineer Audubon President

•••

Mountaineer Audubon and the Morgantown Public Library teamed up on June 26, 2021, to offer a bird walk for kids at the WVU Core Arboretum. The walk was led by myself (Katie Fallon) from Mountaineer Audubon and Charlotte Chung from the Morgantown Public Library.

The walk marked the official kick-off of the Birding Backpack program; backpacks containing binoculars, field guides, maps, and checklists can now be borrowed from all five branches of the Morgantown Public Library. In addition

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to the library system and Mountaineer Audubon, the backpacks are supported by the Brooks Bird Club and the Service League of Morgantown. Thank you to everyone involved in this initiative!

About 30 people joined us for the walk, including many young children. It was hot and a bit windy, which made for difficult birding, but some of us got good looks at a Downy Woodpecker, a Turkey Vulture, cardinals, and a Brown-headed Cowbird. I think it's safe to say that everyone learned the song of the red-eyed vireo by the end of the walk, and the song of the Acadian Flycatcher (also known as "the pizza bird").

Thank you to everyone who participated in the walk, and to everyone who had a hand in making this partnership possible, especially Mountaineer Audubon president Hannah Clipp for pushing the Birding Backpack initiative forward!

– Katie Fallon

CORRESPONDENCE

Motus Hanging Rock Installation

The Hanging Rock Raptor Migration Observatory project started out as a cooperative project between the Bert family, the USFS, the Mountain RC&D, and the Handlan Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club. Before that, the Handlan Chapter started monitoring raptors in 1952, accompanied by some academics from Concord College and Marshall U. Very shortly after negotiations to establish the site as public property (the first and second fire observation structures were owned by the WV Div. of Forestry, but the land was owned by a local family, eventually purchased by the Bert family), the WV Scenic Trails Association joined the effort in order to develop the Allegheny Trail right by the old fire tower. Eventually, a local group of raptor observers took over the monitoring effort as the Handlan Chapter dropped out of the picture. I remember BBC members George Hurley and Ken Anderson lead-

ing monitoring efforts there before the chapter's involvement waned. The new motus apparati installation makes this facility even more important to migration studies, including birds, bats, and insects. You might want to share this link with our chapter members. It is a crowning achievement for migration research at a place that started as a BBC-Handlan Chapter project. Thanks to the WVDNR's Mack Frantz and Rich Bailey for pushing the motus project to completion, and to the local volunteers who helped carry and erect the apparati (motus box and antennae).

Thanks,
Doug Wood
<https://wvdnr.gov/motus-migration-tracking-system/>

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

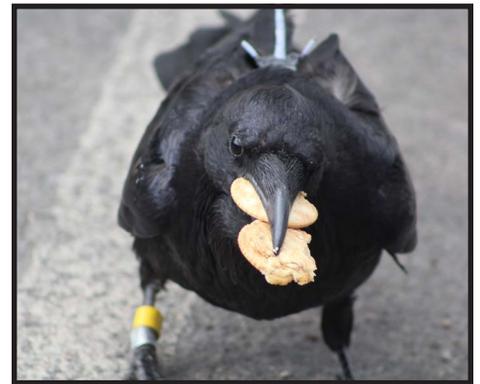
NEW MEMBERS

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Chipmunk species at Mud Volcano



Tagged and banded raven at Mud Volcano



Black-billed Magpie in Jackson, Wyoming



Harlequin Ducks at LeHardy Rapids



Avocet defending its chick at Chase Lake

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Today, it began with a pandemic haircut on the back porch. I was cutting my husbands hair when I heard an American Redstart singing in the yard, then saw the warbler by the pond, via naked eye. A Northern Parula also sang. The haircut was finished (not my best work!), and the birding continued. Active chickadees got the warblers excited, and the yard teemed with life. There was an airport like lineup of birds wanting to get into the pond waterfalls for a drink/bath.

The checklist of 32 species started at 5:15 PM with a male Eastern Phoebe attracting a female phoebe to the scene. He had been singing for days, sitting on my glider bench under his chosen outdoor light fixture. The female phoebe must have just arrived, and was silent, but interested. He tried to lure her to the old usual phoebe nest spot, where phoebes previously made a nest above the basement door light. This location yielded a successful clutch of 4 young the first year, and 2 following years of failed effort. Not sure why those nests failed, but despite major inconvenience to us not being able to use the basement door for 2+ months, we always welcomed them and didn't use the door. It's a cool spot, as the female can sit on the nest while eating small moths attracted to the yellow outdoor light at night. No need to eat on the run. Free evening buffet. The light also offers some warmth to the bottom of the nest on cold nights.

I received a text from Carol W. asking if there was any "action" at the house today. "Better get here quick." I just had a Cape May Warbler male taking a bath in the waterfall. After Carol arrived, magic continued to happen. A Veery walked out of the wild area and hopped into the waterfall for a bath. I later checked my eBird records, and this was only the second record of Veery documented at my house. The first sighting was May 12, 2020, but it was only heard singing. This was a sighting of a silent Veery, and we got photos.

We were shocked to find a Lincoln's Sparrow actively bathing in the pond. Social distanced high 5's. The Lincoln's Sparrow was a LIFER FOR THE YARD, and became number 124 for my ongoing yard bird list. Got some photos for the checklist, but it was getting dark as the sun was setting, and they are rainy. I could have popped open champagne to celebrate the Lincoln's, but there was no time to celebrate. Get out there and bird!

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 5/12/21

On our walk a few weeks ago I noticed a knothole in a hackberry tree. To me it looked like it might make a good nest. Kept tabs on it and last week as we were passing it I saw a White-breasted Nuthatch on the outside, frozen in place. Yesterday I got lucky and saw it coming out.

Later on I got to an area that is frequented by Song Sparrows and Field Sparrows. Trying to get an ID I was thrilled to see a gorgeous Common Yellowthroat. Both he and the Field Sparrow were in a short snag with dried vines on it. Neither one was singing but just stayed there for the longest time. So often you just get glimpses of this pretty bird so this was a real treat to see him out in the open.

I've seen the pair of kingbirds and two Great Crested Flycatchers several times. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak that was here seems to have moved on. One morning there were two of them and an Indigo Bunting but the Blue Jays ran them off. Surprisingly, the Pine Siskins are still here in good numbers. Still had a Purple Finch this morning. A male Baltimore Oriole and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird were here at the same time.

Had to refill the square suet basked with dog fur again. Fun to watch the House Finches leaving with a beak full.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 5/14/21

This evening at Canaan Valley State Park, I found an American Bittern at Mill Run. Their vocalization is one of the best there is!

At the sewage lagoon near the golf course, a pair of Merlins flew in and landed in dead tree tops near me. The male continued to make vocalizations I've not heard before while he groomed himself. It was obvious that he had just taken a serious dust bath, as dust flew off his body like Charlie Browns friend "Pigpen."

A gray ghost Northern Harrier caught some prey in a meadow near Mill Run, and I could see blood on his beak. Eastern Meadowlarks sang until about 8:50 PM when 2 American Woodcocks peented and displayed near each other along golf course road.

– BIRDMOM, Jefferson County, WV, 5/19/21

Yesterday, May 27, I conducted the first of four BBS this year from Kermit, through Breeden, and ending near Dingess (Mingo and Logan Counties). I observed two Swainson's Warblers at each of two stops and heard one, maybe two more between stops. Cerulean Warblers at 14 of the 50 stops, some with two individuals, and plenty heard in between stops. A surprise was an Alder Flycatcher at a small, shrub-dominated wetland in Mingo County.

– Doug Wood, Coal Mountain, WV, 5/28/21



Veery at the bird bath.
– photo by Carol Winckler



Red-necked Phalarope found by Laura Ceperly at the Canaan Valley State Park settlement ponds. Photo by Jim Triplett.

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

We took a jaunt to Bickle Knob today for a picnic with Sarah's sister and husband and then a hike on Forest Road 774 toward Backer Sods. While driving we heard and had good looks at Canada Warblers in the rhododendron thickets along the way. I always hope for a Mourning Warbler at the Bickle Knob Tower. We were not disappointed plus heard another where Forest Road 774 begins. Other warblers included Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green.

It is always thrilling to hear the song of the Winter Wren. We heard two of them. A Hermit Thrush sang in the distance. A Red-shouldered Hawk soared overhead showing off the windows in its outer primary feathers against the bright blue sky.

I was most disappointed to hear no Scarlet Tanagers. We have not heard any at our place in Harman nor have we heard Baltimore Orioles here this spring. I miss both of them.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 5/31/21

Today, I was able to get my first glances of an inquisitive American Kestrel chick peering out of the entrance of its home from a box erected on-site at the USDA Research site in Bardane. I had reported last week on observing the female kestrel delivering Cicadas to the nesting site. As I was viewing the chick, an inquisitive Fish Crow came a little too close to the box, and one of the protective measures of the adults kicked in and began to lure the crow away and enticed it to follow it away from that area. Photo below.

– N. Wade Snyder,
Shenandoah Junction, WV, 6/21/21



Young American Kestrel.
– photo by N. Wade Snyder

6/27/2021 5:44 PM

Thanks to a text from Fred Atwood this morning at 8AM, stating that the Roseate Spoonbills were still at South Mill Creek Lake, we decided to travel from Canaan Valley to see if we could find them. When we arrived, we found a couple of men fishing from a boat at the upper end of the lake where the spoonbills had been reported to be hanging out. No spoonbills in the lake or around the lake. We figured the fishermen had chased them off (not intentionally). After reading one of Fred's posts, we decided to try the upper end of the lake where South Mill Creek runs into the lake. We walked the path towards the lake and found an opening looking towards the stream. The area had reeds and looked like a good spot for them. There they stood about 30 feet away, all five of them.

I told them they were lost, but nobody pays any attention to me, especially Bev! What a thrill.

– Jim and Bev Triplett, Canaan Valley, WV, 6/27/21

Saturday afternoon I went to try to see or hear the Sedge Wren in Canaan Valley State Park. I walked up and down the road where it has been with no success. As I was driving away, I heard it singing out my window. I stopped and listened for a while. It sang infrequently and briefly but never showed itself. It was still on the right heading toward the golf course and before the first bend in the river.

This morning we drove to Montrose via River Road. Shortly after getting along the Dry Fork, I noticed something scurrying *up* the rapids in the river. That is what caught my eye. Then we noticed multiple things splashing up and down the rapids. We got our binoculars and counted 11 female or first-year Common Mergansers feeding in the river. When they got below the rapids, they swam downstream with their heads repeatedly beneath the water looking for prey. I wondered if it was a family of first-year birds. They looked pretty well full grown.

– Herb Myers, Harman, WV, 7/26/21

– Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ

BIRD BANDING AT OLD HEMLOCK

The first of the season's Old Hemlock Bird Observatory banding program to Monitor Avian Production and Survivorship occurred today. We caught 24 birds in the mist nets and observed 42 different species of birds. I think it is amazing the 21% of birds captured today were banded here in previous years. This is evidence of site fidelity of birds returning to home territory after spending the winter in the tropics.

Birds with New Bands

1-Black-throated Green Warbler
5-Hooded Warblers
4-Ovenbirds
1-Red-eyed Vireo
1-Wood Thrush
1-Gray Catbird
2-Northern Cardinals
1-Swainson's Thrush
1-Tufted Titmouse
1-Hairy Woodpecker

Recaptured Birds Banded Previous

Ovenbird 2019
Ovenbird 2019
Hooded Warbler 2020
Ovenbird 2019
Hooded Warbler 2020

Unbanded Birds

Eastern Towhee – caught in net and escaped

Without volunteers this project would be near impossible. Thanks to Mike Bergen, Orion Metheny, Lee Miller and Nicole Gerard for helping today.

– LeJay Graffious
Administrator
Old Hemlock Foundation
Preston County



EASTERN SHORE TRIP 2021

NOVEMBER 17th-21st

We will begin this year's trip to the shore and head straight to Rehoboth Beach for a change. We will spend all four nights at our lovely hotel right on the beach. This year you will again be required to bring a mask. Your room will be awaiting you when you arrive any time after 4pm Wednesday. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings Continental Breakfast is included. As usual dinner will be on your own. We can provide lunch for you at your request or if you feel more comfortable you may choose to bring your own. As difficult as it may be, physical distance will be honored during all times. Everyone has different comfortable ranges and we will give our best college try to honor all of those. Sunday morning we will go over the bird list, say our good-byes and drive safely home remembering all the fun we have had with each other.

Price includes Wed., Thurs., Fri., and Sat. night's lodging (2 per room); Thurs., Fri., Sat., and Sun. Morning Continental Breakfast; Lunch can be provided if you request one in advance at the additional cost. A full itinerary will be sent to everyone who signs up.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER 25, 2021

**Make checks payable to Cindy Slater and send along with your reservation to
2310 Cowling Road Scottdale, Pa 15683**

=====please cut here and return=====

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____ Name of person Sharing Room _____

(2 people per room, I will not be assigning roommates this year you will need to let me know if you choose to have a roommate and who that person will be otherwise a single room supplement rate may apply)

Are you interested in lunch or will you be bringing your own? _____

Per Person Rate with roommate \$400.00 \$ _____

Per Person Rate with No Roommate \$600.00 \$ _____

Per Person Lunches add \$75.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of a van at this time. However, if this is something you would seriously be interested in and can show proof of vaccination and would not mind wearing a mask for long hours please let me know. I could possibly be persuaded to change my mind. Can't wait to see you either way! Any questions, please call Cindy Slater 724-570-8502.

BBC FALL REUNION & ANNUAL MEETING

CEDAR LAKES CONFERENCE CENTER, RIPLEY, WV – OCTOBER 22-24, 2021

Cedar Lakes, WV, will be a WONDERFUL place for us to meet this year for our fall reunion meeting location. The dates for the BBC reunion are **October 22-24, 2021**. To attend the weekend, please fill out the application below. The event will be held at Cedar Lakes West Virginia.

Plans include a Friday board meeting at 2:00 PM. Others may begin check in at 3:00 PM. We will all meet for dinner, cafeteria-style, at 6:00 PM in the dining room. Ryan is working on getting a great program that will follow in the Meeting Room. Weather permitting, we will have a campfire. A bird walk may be held Saturday morning for anyone interested with breakfast to follow in the dining room. After breakfast, we will pick up our sack lunch (don't forget to bring your lunch tote souvenir from Foray a couple of years ago!) and go out on our all day field trip. Lunch arrangements may also be made in the main dining room for those who do not wish to go on the field trip. Saturday night cafeteria-style dinner will be at 6:00 PM in the Dining Room. Afterwards, another great program and visiting. After breakfast Sunday morning, a Reflection Service will be held at 9:30 AM, followed by the BBC's Annual Meeting for the membership of the Club at 10:00 AM. After the meeting, we will go over the bird list before checking out at 11AM. Can't wait to see you there!

BBC FALL RETREAT RESERVATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021

Make checks payable to Brooks Bird Club, Inc. and send with your reservation to:

Cindy Slater at 2310 Cowling Road, Scottdale, PA 15683

Telephone - 724-570-8502.

Cindy's Email: mountaingirl127@gmail.com

or use the BBC website

You must be a BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBER TO ATTEND any of the weekend events.

PLEASE CALL CINDY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

 NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL. NO. _____ EMAIL _____

Name of person sharing room _____

(2 people per room) If you need a roommate, we'll get you one. Roommate will be assigned if no preference given

COMPLETE WEEKEND: _____ No. Attending @ \$141.00 Double Occupancy \$ _____

_____ Single Room Supplement @ \$232.50 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

(Includes Fri. & Sat. night's lodging; Friday dinner, program, and campfire; Sat. & Sun. breakfast; Sat. lunch, activities; Sat. dinner & program. Sunday Reflections & Annual Membership Meeting.)

Saturday Lunch Option: (must have your selection at this time)

Ham _____ Turkey _____ Swiss Cheese _____ or Dine in Lodge _____



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**Rosie photographed
a “Rosy”**

*A pretty male Rose-breasted
Grosbeak on Rosie Campbell’s
farm in eastern Ohio*

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