



THE MAIL BAG

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

VOL. 81, ISSUE 1

JANUARY – FEBRUARY – MARCH 2024

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Message from your President & Mail Bag Editor

The BBC board and committees had very productive meetings this spring, both in person and on Zoom. As the club continues these important steps forward, it continues to be a group effort, led on two specific points currently by Treasurer Beth Mankins and Strategic Planning Committee chairperson Rodney Bartgis. Between updating and strengthening the treasury procedures and implementing a number of new means for growing the BBC and our missions, a lot of hard work is being done. As always, member input is necessary, so feel free to contact the President, Administrator or other board or committee members with thoughts and ideas.



Foray will be held at Camp Thornwood, deep in the rich mountains of northern Pocahontas County. This fabulous location, both the camp and the Foray, showcases the high mountain bird species, a number of orchids, reptiles and amphibians that we rarely find elsewhere, and of course an interesting array of weather types over time. There are opportunities for Swainson's Thrushes, Mourning and Canada warblers, Vesper Sparrows, Northern Saw-whet Owls, and many more. Bird life is great even at the camp location, with Blackburnian and Northern Parula warblers, Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Veeries serenading everyone daily.

The region has wonderful and unique geography, a few interesting tourism spots (Green Bank Observatory, the Durbin Flyer, Cass Scenic Railroad), and views for miles. We will be encamped there June 15-22, 2024. Watch the website and your mailbox for the Foray Registration Form and get ready for one of our most popular Forays. Having begun in 1949, it is also our most-run camp. Directors Cindy Slater and Mary Murin are planning a great time. Can't wait to see you there!



– Ryan Tomazin

BBCER IS A FEATURED VOLUNTEER AT CANAAN VALLEY NWR

*Reprinted from the USFWS Newsletter, Vol. 1, Issue 15,
January 2024, edited for space.*



Dawn Washington presenting LeJay Graffious with his 500-hour award.

How many years have you been volunteering at the Refuge?

LeJay Graffious began volunteering at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (CVNWR) five years ago. His first project on the refuge was to work with Biologist Dawn Washington to be part of the Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Cooperative. As a bird bander, LeJay had specialized training to band and install GPS transmitters on the valley's woodcock.

How did you learn about volunteering at CVNWR?

Jackie Burns, a retired CVNWR employee, who volunteers at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, approached LeJay at the Dolly Sods station. She connected LeJay with Dawn Washington. After learning about the scope of the project, LeJay was enthusiastic to volunteer as the woodcock project bander.

What types of projects have you worked on over the years at the Refuge?

LeJay banded his first Canaan Valley American Woodcock on October 21, 2019. This was the beginning of considerable effort to contribute to the data set for the Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Cooperative. In the fall for 2021 LeJay approached biologist Dawn Washington about joining the Project OwlNet. The primary goal of Project OwlNet is to establish and coordinate a network of migrant Northern Saw-whet Owl banding stations to facilitate the monitoring of regional and continental population trends. The Canaan owl banding began in the fall on 2021 with little success. After more study and consideration of best location, the third site set up in 2022 proved to very productive banding nearly 100 owls in its two years of use after only one bird the first year.

What motivates you to volunteer at the Refuge? In addition to connecting to others, creating Life-Long Learning opportunities and filling a post career void, LeJay says that his volunteering brings fun and fulfillment to his life.

THE 2024 BROOKS BIRD CLUB EARLY SPRING MEETING REPORT

by *Chris Jones*

The Brooks Bird Club held its spring meeting at North Bend State Park March 8-10, 2024. Where can you share fellowship with long-standing friends, caravan to view waterfowl along the Ohio River, experience birding that includes multiple habitats at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and enjoy informative and interesting evening nature programs? All of this, and more, could be found at the North Bend BBC Early Spring Meeting Weekend, of course!

The weekend started with check-in and a board meeting at the state park lodge on Friday afternoon. A delicious buffet dinner was followed by John Northeimer's presentation of Birds of Canaan Valley from his explorations and study with Marjorie Keatley. After breakfast, on Saturday morning, some members explored and hiked around the park while a 9 car caravan traveled to the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center to explore the center and the birds on site. The rain stopped just in time for Mike Schramm, the Visitor Services Manager at the refuge in Williamstown, to lead a bird walk around the grounds. He shared that the refuge includes 24 islands with Middle Island being the only one you can drive on, and that there are 360 miles of river in the refuge. Some of the notable birds at that stop included Bald Eagles, Mockingbird, Tree and Swamp Sparrows, and Cooper's Hawk. A Red Shouldered Hawk, Black Vultures, and a Ruddy Duck were viewed along the road to the refuge.



Speaker Sparky Stensaas with member Sandy Fenstermacher - Photo by Mindy Waldron

Saturday evening's speaker, Sparky Stensaas, presented on the Sax Zim Bog birding in Minnesota. This informative and entertaining slideshow included Great Grey Owls and Red Crossbills, among other notable species.

The weekend concluded with breakfast and the membership meeting on Sunday morning. A total of 64 species were seen or heard throughout the weekend. Foray will be held this year at Camp Thornwood from June 15-June 22 in Pocahontas County. I am looking forward to seeing many familiar faces, meeting new friends, and learning and socializing together in Bartow, WV!

From there, we traveled to the Ohio River, crossed to the Ohio side of the St. Mary's Bridge and south to Newell Run. This loop road produced a Great Blue Heron, a Wood Duck, Common Mergansers, and Pied-billed Grebes. On the way back to camp, near the lodge, 18 wild turkeys crossed the road right in front of our caravan with a couple of gobblers bringing up the rear! Very cool! Campers that stayed near the lodge were able to see a Pine Warbler, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Red Headed Woodpecker, and Kestrel, among other birds.



Photo by Chris Jones

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
348 Station Street, Apt. 7
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

2023-24 WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Yesterday (12/16/23), I was joined by two others to participate in the Parkersburg CBC in our usual territory in the Mineral Wells area. The first bird of the day was an Eastern Screech Owl and the last bird of the day was a Barred Owl (after lots of looking). Altogether we found 1,080 individuals among 64 species. Some big misses were the usual Bald Eagles, Hooded Mergansers, and Pied-billed Grebes we typically see along the Little Kanawha River. However, they were replaced by a Wood Duck, American Wigeon, and a Red-headed Woodpecker, which were new to us in this territory. Getting the Red-headed Woodpecker allowed us to complete the full 7 woodpecker species set for the day. The other great highlight was a flock of 35 Rusty Blackbirds.

– Ross Brittain, Bridgeport, WV

The Morgantown CBC is in the books. Although we did not get to that magic 100 mark, I think once you look at the data overall, it's difficult to see the day as anything but a success. Our official species total will be 95; not bad at all with duck numbers low on the Mon River and Cheat Lake. We added a new species which is always awesome, and getting more difficult to do. Dr. Chris Lituma and his team were able to spot the Fish Crow pair which has taken up residence at the Pines Country Club. We need to send a special shout-out to past participant Bill Johnson who alerted us to their presence last month! While we only added 1 species to the overall list, several special birds made appearances. Mike and Cindy pulled out a Wilson's Snipe with daylight fading, only the 2nd time this species has been recorded! Lincoln's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbirds were also notable finds. We ended up tallying all 5 species of expected owls; a rewarding effort for those late night/early morning birders.

The Young Birders events continue to grow and be a massive success! We were lucky enough to have separate events at the Arboretum and at the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia outdoor classroom and adjacent farm. Over 30 people attended these youth-focused counts. While the pleasant weather undoubtedly contributed to the turnout, hopefully the seeds were planted and these young birders will be back for more soon. Great job Katie and Zach for running these!

Overall, the numbers of both participants and birds are impressive. We counted over 10,000 individuals and had almost 90 persons out in the field. Amazing to compare these totals to those from the birth of the Morgantown count which had only 2 people walking along the River on count day.

– Derek Courtney, Morgantown, WV

We completed the Raleigh CBC on Sunday December 17. The weather wasn't as nice to us as it was the day before, but we "got it done!". We had 54 species and 17,021 total birds, (15,000 for the crow roost). Two Ross's Geese and a Lincoln's Sparrow were highlights.

– Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV

The 31st Canaan Christmas Bird Count was held on December 17, on a windy day with intermittent rain. Extra thanks to our 20 intrepid counters! The weather kept most birds hunkered down, making count week a bigger factor than usual. Probably the rarest bird found was a Brown Thrasher spotted by Aaron Graham during count week. Unsurprisingly, we did not break any records for individuals of particular species, but we did tie the record for Winter Wrens at 3. Also unsurprisingly, our 1,283 individuals found was well-below-average for our counts.

Including count week birds, we found 49 species, which is a hair above average for our count.

– Casey Rucker, Dry Fork, WV

The Oak Hill Christmas Bird Count, held on December 16th with 29 participants, covered nearly 190 miles and counted 2,212 birds of 54 species. The total species is slightly above average in the circle's forty-four-year history, and the total of participants is a new high record! A few first-time participants joined Paul Shaw and Geoff Heeter on their respective

routes, a few elected to take routes and destinations on their own, and others counted from home! That said, there's so much more territory to cover, I'm hopeful more folks will enjoy it with us next year on a route, to a destination, or from the comfort of home.

The most uncommon species of this count, recorded on only two previous counts, was the Common Merganser: 4 were observed in the New River at Stone Cliff campground. Red-tailed Hawks pushed their previous high count up one more digit, to 10. The number of Turkey Vultures and Common Ravens tied with their previous high counts of 29 and 10, respectively.

– Rachel Davis

Many thanks to the 12 birders in the field and the 9 feeder watchers for a great job on a challenging day that was marked by beautiful snow most of the morning and cold sunny wind in the afternoon. Three scheduled observers were unable to make it to the CBC circle, and one was not able to arrive until noon, because of ten inches of fresh snow on unplowed roads in the mountains. These conditions led to below average counts of many of the passerines. With the exception of Hooded and Common mergansers, most waterfowl numbers were also below average. Nevertheless, 5,274 individuals of 69 species were tallied that day, with two other count week species (Northern Pintail and American Wigeon). Highlights included six Golden Eagles (which are expected here in winter), one Brown Thrasher (only the second record in the 46 years of this count), one Northern Shoveler (only the second record), one Ring-billed Gull (only the second count-day record), one Pine Warbler (3rd record for this CBC) and four Red Crossbills. No owling was done this year; thus only one screech owl was noted. Significant misses included Ruffed Grouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-winged Blackbird and Swamp Sparrow.

– Fred Atwood, Cabins, Grant Co. WV

(Continued on Page 4)

2021-22 WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS (cont. from pg. 3)

On December 20, we did the McDowell Co. CBC. There were only three of us. Of course we didn't get the numbers other counts did, but this was a great day. We really should have counted them, but we really think we saw more than 50 white-tailed deer during the day. We had 45 total species and 613 total individuals.

– Mindy Waldron, Surveyor, WV

Here are the results from our Christmas Count, conducted in the Charleston area on December 16, 2023.

Overall, our total number of species was a bit low this year, but we did have some notable numbers for three species. Our crow count was somewhat problematic this year because of a lot of movement of masses of crows, back and forth, across our counting points, but we appear to have a new record number for crows. We also had a new record for Common Mergansers with four birds observed. And, we had a first time appearance of a Limpkin on the count this year. Many folks had the opportunity to see this bird on our count day and in the weeks preceding the count.

– Doren Burrell, Mink Shoals, WV

The Charles Town CBC was held on Dec. 16, 2023, under bluebird skies, and the 24 participants were able to unmask 7,277 birds representing 77 species. The total party hours in the field was 69.75 and the total party miles was 291.2. Temperatures ranged from 22 to 58 degrees F.

A rather exceptional seven species were seen in record numbers: Red-shouldered Hawk (41); Red-headed Woodpecker (6); Pileated Woodpecker (33); Hermit Thrush (29); Field Sparrow (54); Song Sparrow (190); and Swamp Sparrow (19).

Thanks to all who volunteered for the count and made the 72nd edition of the Charles Town CBC a successful adventure!

– Bob Dean, Charles Town, WV

The Inwood CBC was held on Jan. 5, 2024, under bluebird skies, and the 21 participants were able to identify 9,806 birds representing 73 species. The total par-

ty hours in the field was 63.0 and the total party miles was 373. Temperatures ranged from 15 to 43 degrees F.

This count produced the first Fish Crow and only the second Golden Eagle. An amazing 12 species were seen in record numbers: Green-winged Teal (36); Great Blue Heron (9); Bald Eagle (8); Red-bellied Woodpecker (81); Eastern Phoebe (3); Carolina Chickadee (220); White-breasted Nuthatch (80); Gray Catbird (2); Cedar Waxwing (370); White-throated Sparrow (369); Savannah Sparrow (5); and Song Sparrow (122).

Thanks to all who volunteered for the count and made the 71st edition of the Inwood CBC a successful adventure! A special thanks to Aaron Graham and Atlee Wise who made the trip from Garrett Co., Maryland, to participate. They are remarkable young naturalists!

– Bob Dean, Charles Town, WV

FIRST BIRDS OF THE YEAR

My first bird of 2024 was a Great Horned Owl calling below our place here at Tangly Woods when I put my feeders out this morning.

Now I will watch for our first feeder bird. Happy 2024.

– Herb Myers, Keezletown, VA

Judy's first bird of the new year was Dark-eyed Junco and mine was White-breasted Nuthatch. Our Great Horned Owl must have stayed in bed.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV

Happy New Year to all of you! My first birds were American Crows and an immature Cooper's Hawk. All were feeding on a deer carcass in our back field. The deer was hit by a car and made it into the field before passing.

This is the second time that has happened since October. It is sad for the deer, but makes for good birdwatching.

– Shannon Burner, New Creek, WV

My first birds of the year, at 7:20 AM, were 7 cardinals and 2 juncos on the picnic table, searching for food through a scant half inch of snow.

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, WV

Two Common Ravens made themselves heard as it was getting light. A small flock of Dark-eyed Juncos and a Northern Cardinal called shortly after the ravens flew over.

– Wil Hershberger, Hedgesville, WV

First bird was a Song Sparrow in our snowy pasture.

– Paul McKay, Ohio County, WV

My first feeder bird was a Red-bellied Woodpecker soon displaced by a Downy. First yard bird seen was a pair of Turkey Vultures and then a Song Sparrow. First heard was a Red-shouldered Hawk, followed by a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

– Bob Dean, a half mile south of the Berkeley County line

First bird of the year was a group of cardinals, both males and females looking for seeds below the bird feeder area before we got the feeders put out.

– Wendy Perrone, Brooks, WV

Happy 2024 from Tucker County and Canaan! 24 degrees and blowing with a few flurries. First bird in the new year was a crow headed for the local land fill—always a good move to check out all the new stuff we humans have thrown out. Followed by a fussy titmouse, Blue Jay, junco, and Pileated. You gotta work to find every bird this time of year! Another great reason to get outside. Happy birding to all.

– Laura Ceperley, Canaan Valley, WV

Downy Woodpecker followed by a Northern Flicker.

– Sandy Farkas

First yard bird was the Blue Jay guarding the crab apple tree.

First bird on our property on Mount Caramel Ridge was a flock of 6 American Crows. I did a weekly temperature down-load on my beehives and our neighborhood Common Ravens did not appear or call which is a usual occurrence when we are on the property. They always seem curious when I work around the bees.

– Beth Mankins, Pleasants County, WV

Four goldfinches on the kitchen feeder tray. Later on the usual suspects, including the Brown Creeper and Pileated.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV

WINTER BIRDING IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA

In the Beginning

As a child, being introduced to the wide, wonderful world of birds by my father, George H. Breiding (and, by extension the Brooks Bird Club), changed my life and continues to do so. Although I have always considered myself a casual and opportunistic birder, this has not in any way diminished the enjoyment and excitement of bird watching.

And who would believe bird watching could enhance a marriage? For Betsy and me, it certainly has and continues to do so. And it all started on our Honeymoon, where one of the most exciting things we did outside of our tent was to seek out new birds we had never before seen, or in some cases, had never heard of.

I can remember like it was yesterday when, on one of our Honeymoon hikes, Betsy and I first heard and saw a Canyon Wren. We were hiking in Canyonlands National Park on the Syncline Trail. At one point, we heard the most beautiful and melodic sound that I think either of us had ever heard. We listened and listened and finally pinpointed the sound to a tiny speck of a bird hopping, flying, and clinging to the sheer walls of Syncline Canyon. We were finally able to get the binoculars on it and see that it was a Canyon Wren.

That call, a lovely series of sweet, liquid descending notes, held us entranced until we finally knew it was time to move on down the trail. One of the first things we did when we got to a pay phone was call my dad and excitedly tell him what we had seen and heard. He was so delighted. And how could we ever forget those mornings lying in the tent listening to the plaintive call of the Gamble's Quail as we waited for the sun to call us out for our morning coffee. Sweet memories...

Fast forward 44 years, and we are still loving and enjoying the birds, talking about birds, and thinking about birds. And reporting to each other a bird we had seen when the other was not there to enjoy it.

One of the most recent events that has happened to enhance and expand our love of birds is wintering in Tucson for six months every year. This is now our 12th winter of hiking, biking, and bird watching in the Tucson area. The big difference, of course, is that the birds are (mostly) birds that we would never see back in Good Old West Virginia.

The Tucson Basin is adjacent to five mountain ranges: the Tortolitas, Catalinas, Rincons, Santa Ritas, and Tucsons. Within that area is Saguaro NP with districts on both the east and west sides. This adds up to a whopping 18,363,000 acres, or 28,692 square miles, of public lands that have developed outdoor recreation opportunities.

The area we chose for overwintering is on the west side of Tucson. We live in a late 1950s-era development named Tucson Estates in the foothills of the Tucson Mountains. Directly behind Tucson Estates is the 20,000+ Tucson Mountain Park which has over 62 miles of non-motorized trails. We call this area our "Back Yard" and it is only a few minutes walk from our front door to access the trails. The 25,000+ acres of the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro NP are contiguous with Pima County's Tucson Mountain Park. Bonus!

The Birds of Rancho Relaxo

Every day at 4:00 p.m., on the west side of Tucson, it is happy hour here at Rancho Relaxo. That is what we call our 16-foot-wide by 66-foot-long trailer we live in at Tucson Estates, a 1600-unit trailer park. And during those happy hours, we sit on the porch and watch the birds coming into the feeding station we have set up.

The most abundant birds are Mourning Doves, and we get them by the dozens. And occasionally we get a Cooper's Hawk visiting the feeding station as well, so he can have a snack. We have seen more than one Coopers Hawk make a strike and then watch as they carefully and patiently strip the bird of feathers and spend hours devouring the entire dove.

Some of the regular visitors we have at our feeding station are the Curved-billed Thrasher who uses its long probing bill to get seed out of the rock crevices and also pokes holes into the fruits of the barrel cactus to extract the seeds and pulp. We have lots of White-crown Sparrows with their beautiful song and white-striped face as well as the diminutive Lesser Goldfinch, which we hear more than see.

The visiting Cactus Wrens are always fun to watch, and we even have them nesting in a yucca in our yard. Part of the nesting material they gathered were threads stripped from our outdoor carpet and stuffed into their nest, along with many, many pieces of yarn scraps we set out for them, including a piece that was about 20 feet long, which I set up strategically so they could grab it and then haul it up to their nest. The remainder of the yarn hung down out of the yucca and back onto the porch. It was quite comical to watch as they tried to stuff the entire length into their nest, but of course they could not get it all in and eventually gave up.

And to our delight, we have Cardinals here, which are always a reminder of home and sometimes cause a little bit of homesickness. For me, at least.

And there are the hummingbirds. We have three species here: Anna's, Costa's and Broad-billed. They are fun to watch as they feed and chase each other about, and of course the males are quite beautiful with their gorgeous gorgets flashing in the sun.

We also have the tiny, animated Verdins that come into the hummingbird feeder. The rapid fire "chip, chip, chip, chipping" is constant until the Verdin finally shuts its mouth when it gets its beak to the feeder.

We also have the occasional Gila Woodpecker coming into the hummingbird feeder, which is quite funny to watch as they are so huge they cause the feeder to sway back and forth erratically.

In October, upon our return to Tucson, we usually have non-bird visitors to

(Continued on Page 6)

WINTER BIRDING IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA *(Continued from Page 5)*

our humming bird feeders—the endangered Lesser Long-nosed Bat. They can drain a feeder in one night. The bats spend the summer here feeding mainly on Saguaro flower nectar, and then when the weather turns cool, they head south to spend the winter in Mexico.

Along with other ground feeders, we occasionally have a group of Gambel's Quail coming in as well. They are so comical with their high-speed, short bursts of running and the funny little calls they make. And as of this winter, we have now had four towhees at our feeder: Abert's, Green-tailed, Canyon, and Spotted. The Abert's are regular visitors, the others occasional.

Other occasional visitors to our feeding station are always fun to see: There is a Cardinal-like bird called the Pyrrhuloxia with its punk-looking crest. Pyrrhuloxias and Cardinals interbreed, and we are fairly certain we have seen the hybrid at our feeding station. We have seen the Hooded Orioles feeding on the blossoms of the Aloe vera. Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Grey warblers sometimes visit, and we hear Great-horned Owls all through the winter and sometimes see them perching on utility poles and in Aleppo pines. In addition to Mourning Doves, we have White-winged Doves and Eurasian Collared Doves joining the other birds.

Last winter, we had some unexpected visitors to our feeding area: Robins! A small flock visited daily until they had gobbled down every one of the many hundreds of fruits on our Pyracantha. The Mockingbirds are usually the ones to get all the Pyracantha fruits, but they had a lot of competition that winter. Much to our delight, we also had Cedar Waxwings feeding on the fruits. It is always so very nice to see a bird from back home.

Another bird we did not expect to have in our feeding area was a Roadrunner. One afternoon, as Betsy was sitting on the porch enjoying the warm sun, a Roadrunner came into the yard and then hopped up the four steps to the porch, looked around, and then hopped onto the porch railing within two feet of her. At that point, a tarantula hawk just happened to fly by, and Betsy watched as the Roadrunner plucked it out of mid-air right in front of her. Talk about exciting!!

Thankfully, we have no Starlings here at Rancho Relaxo; however, we do have plenty of House Sparrows and House Finches. The Townsend's Warbler, Desert Song Sparrow, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet sometimes stop by, but not often. And, of all things, a Hermit Thrush turned up one day! It had wandered down from the mountains, where they spend most of the year.

There are a few birds we have seen in the neighborhood that we have not seen at the Rancho Relaxo. Sometimes we see Great-tailed Grackles scrounging for food scraps in the parking areas. We have also seen three flycatchers—Black and Sayes Phoebes as well as the striking Vermillion Flycatcher. The latter we often see perched on the fences that surround the tennis court and swimming pool. The Phoebes will often sit on posts, which they use for their insect forays out into the grassy areas.

The Birds of Our "Back Yard"

When hiking or taking morning walks in our Back Yard we see some birds who visit Rancho Relaxo, and others we only see in open desert, rocky foothills, or canyons.

In the open desert and the rocky slopes, we usually see the Black-throated Sparrow, the Rock Wren, and on rare occasions, the Canyon Wren. We often see a Phainopepla perched at the top of a mesquite tree heavy with mistletoe growth. The Phainopeplas feed mainly on mistletoe berries and will guard their favored food trees. We will see them perched at the very tops of trees when engaged in sentinel duty. The Phainopepla is a brilliant sight in flight. The males are silky black and slender, with an elegant crest and bold white wing patches that appear when the bird takes flight.

Other birds we have seen and heard in our Back Yard are: Ravens, Black Vultures, Gilded Flickers, Gila, and Ladder-Backed Woodpeckers, all of which make

use of the towering saguaros for their nesting cavities. It is worth mentioning that we are on the very western edge of the Black Vultures's range. This was another bird we were surprised to see in the Sonoran Desert.

Some of the smaller birds we see in our Back Yard are the Black-tailed and Blue-grey Gnatcatchers and the Lawrence's Goldfinch. And then there are the lumbering Turkey Vultures we sometimes see flying overhead. A two-mile hike from our house, we spotted the whitewash of a Turkey Vulture nest over 100 feet up a cliff face.

Are there non-birds in our Back Yard? Yep. Javelina, coyote, jack rabbit, cottontail rabbit, mule deer, and western diamondback rattlesnakes are all common here. And if we are lucky, we will spot a well-camouflaged horned lizard, a coati or even a desert tortoise or gila monster. The latter spend 90% of their lives under ground in burrows or rocky shelters, so we rarely see them.

The Sky Islands: Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains

Bird watching is enhanced in this area by the variations in elevation and vegetation types. The elevation of the Tucson basin is around 2100', and within an hour's drive, we can be at over 9000' in the Catalina or Santa Rita Mountains.

Needless to say, the mountain birds are different from what we get in the often hot, dry basin. The shady and cooler upper regions of these Sky Islands, as they are called, are forested with oaks, conifers, ash, and sycamore. The mountains we spend the most time in are the Santa Ritas, which are about 50 miles to the south of Tucson.

The Santa Rita Mountains are home to heavily wooded, north-facing Madera Canyon, which is a local birding hot spot. We have been fortunate to see the Elegant Trogon, Painted Redstart, Bridled Titmouse, Mexican Jays, Acorn, and Arizona Woodpeckers, as well as the Scrub and Stellar's Jays, Dark-eyed and Slate-colored Juncos, and the striking Yellow-eyed Junco. We often see flocks of

(Continued on Page 7)

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Folks,

It meant so much to me to look out over the crowd at Malv's funeral and see my friends and fellow birders.

Thanks!

Perhaps you sent a lovely card,
or sat quietly in a chair.

Perhaps you sent a funeral spray,
if so, we saw it there.

Perhaps you spoke the kindest words,
as any friend could say.

Perhaps you were not there at all,
just thought of us that day.

Whatever you did to console our hearts,
we thank you so very much,
whatever the part.

– Rosie Campbell

•••

At the recent Foray in Tucker Co. 2023, a number of our members were aware of a bird nest at the far end of the Camp Horseshoe grounds, beyond the old obstacle course, just inside the woods. Mary & I, with minimal disturbance, took a very quick photo of the outside of the nest and the 2 eggs within, on the last day of the Foray, Saturday June 10, 2023.

The nest was suspended on the outside branches of a wispy sapling about 5 1/2 feet above ground. The nest was somewhat deep, composed of fine twigs inside with large twigs and cobwebs and other unidentified long white components externally. The two white eggs had black and gray dots on the large end of the eggs forming a "crown."

Mary and I reviewed the photos which were also sent to Dawn and Tom Fox for review. Based on the Peterson Bird Nest Field Guide, we all felt this was most likely a Red-Eyed Vireo's nest. We were surprised to learn that Red-Eyed Vireos nests are usually 5 to 10 feet above ground.

This was our first encounter with a Vireo's nest in general. We thought this was an exciting ending to a great Foray.

– Dan & Mary Dellatorre

(Photos at right by Dan Dellatore)

HANGING ROCK RAPTOR OBSERVATORY 2023 VISITOR LOG DATA

Written by Rodney Davis (edited for content); shared by Jim Phillips

A counter was placed on the trail out to the count area in 2022 to give us the opportunity to get a more accurate estimate of the number of visitors at Hanging Rock. We have tested the counter in various weather instances, so these numbers are approximate data. It shows that we had an estimated 12,528 visitors, ranging from 462 in March to 2,286 in October.

We had visitors from 46 states and the District of Columbia. 28 countries were also represented. October "leaf peeper" season is always our busiest month. Signing the visitor log on January 1st is an annual event for some people. Last year, there were 39 signatures from people on that date, representing 5 states.

January	474 (visitors)
February	486
March	462
April	942
May	1,116
June	1,350
July	1,428
August	1,044
September	1,695
October	2,286
November	810
December	435
Total	12,528

Hard to believe Dad will have been gone 10 years this May. He passed two days after everyone came in the house to see him at The Bell Farm Walk. It was important for him to see all of you in his last days.

– David Bell

WINTER BIRDING IN SE ARIZONA (Cont. from Page 5)

the giant Mexican Turkeys when hiking in Madera Canyon. They move slowly while feeding on acorns and pine nuts, so we usually get a good look. We saw a bunch of them on Thanksgiving Day last year. Good timing!

The gregarious Acorn Woodpeckers are especially fun to see. Their clown-like facial features and some of their antics with each other are quite humorous. They are busy, busy birds! One of the activities that keeps them busy is collecting countless numbers of acorns and carefully fitting them into the cavities they have made. It is not uncommon to see both trees and utility poles with hundreds of these cavities where the acorns are cached.

As much as we love the birds and birding in Southeast Arizona, we are always happy to get back home to our beloved West Virginia mountains, to hear the song of the Wood Thrush and see our towhees scratching in the leaf litter. Soon we will be there...

Mike and Betsy Breiding
mike.betsy@EpicRoadTrips.us
www.EpicRoadTrips.us



INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

Yesterday morning I observed a pair of Merlins flying and calling around the 14th hole at the Pines Country Club. I've been seeing individuals in that area for the past several weeks, but it seems that a pair has taken up residence.

A couple of Fish Crows continue to be resident around the clubhouse. This is the only location where I have seen them in the Morgantown area.

– Bill Johnson, Morgantown, WV, 11/9/23

Luck was with the 20 birders who joined me on Mountaineer Audubon's field trip to Cheat Lake this morning. After a string of warm days and south winds, a cold front moved through and the birds came with it. Buffleheads particularly seemed eager to head south as there were thousands on Cheat Lake today. Variety was great too, with several dabbling and diving species tallied. Participants were even treated to a bird release as well, with Katie Fallon of the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia releasing a rehabilitated Ruddy Duck and Mallard.

Waterfowl totals: Canada Goose (310); Wood Duck (17); Gadwall (71); American Wigeon (21); Mallard (78); American Black Duck (5); Ring-necked Duck (279); Greater Scaup (17); Greater/Lesser Scaup (750, just too distant and clustered to really separate); Lesser Scaup (179); Bufflehead (2,938); Common Goldeneye (3); Hooded Merganser (228); Common Merganser (2); Red-breasted Merganser (16); Ruddy Duck (2); Pied-billed Grebe (6); American Coot (21); Horned Grebe (1).

– Derek Courtney, Morgantown, WV, 11/18/23

Yesterday at Blackwater Falls State Park after the folks on my "no-bird" walk departed, an adult Bald Eagle cruised by while a kingfisher rattled in the distance, along with a nuthatch or two... Sigh, where were they while our group was working hard to find some birds? Then today on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, we were almost back at the cars from another "almost no birds" walk, we heard a distinct honking sound across the valley. 30 minutes later we're watching about 15 Tundra Swans, along with a few Buffleheads, a couple Gadwalls, a ruddy (maybe he was the "murder duck" of M'town) and a hoodie. But wait, there's more...look up and another 40 swans are coming in, looking like parachutes dropping out of the sky onto the water. What a beautiful sight, especially for Thanksgiving weekend. The lesson is — stay after the walk for the best birds (although the few chickadees, nuthatches and titmice that allowed us to watch them this morning were pretty special too).

– Laura Ceperley, Tucker County, WV, with help from Amy Hill and Herb Myer, 11/25/23

The Short-eared Owls have returned to their wintering grounds in Mason County at the John McCausland Memorial Farm. I had 8 individual birds flying around at once this evening along with 2 female harriers and one male grey ghost! Great evening to be watching the fields!

– Nate Rees, 11/25/23

We were leaving our daughter's in S. Charleston and saw about 60 crows. I thought they were chasing a Bald Eagle. However, was I ever wrong. They were heading to the roosting trees at the north end of Quincy St. I counted hundreds of them and wound up estimating 800.

Coincidentally, my first bird this morning was an American Crow. Both a nice start and a nice way to end New Year's Day!

– Rick Gregg, Kanawha Co., 1/1/24

My first bird of 2024 was a Mallard! I had driven to Beech Fork Lake before dawn to listen for owls (didn't hear any), but instead I woke up the Mallards! Not having any luck with the owls, I met Mike Griffith at Green Bottom WMA at 7:30 am. We birded many of the usual spots along the Ohio River to Point Pleasant and then along Rt. 817 to McCausland WMA. Janet Keating joined us at Crab Creek and Gallipolis Ferry. It was a snowy morning, without accumulation, which made for a wintry feel, but safe travel. Highlights of the morning were Gray Catbird at Green Bottom, Peregrine Falcon and Common Loon at Robert C. Byrd Locks & Dam and both Snow and Ross's Geese at the Gallipolis Ferry sandpit.

– Gary Rankin, Lavalette, WV, 1/2/24

Hi all; in early December 2023 we made a foray to trap Loggerhead Shrikes in the Greenbrier Valley. 5 shrikes were detected - 3 already-banded birds, and 2 birds were newly banded, all males. The lower numbers relative to spring, when we encountered 12 birds, is not at all unusual. It seems that males hold their territories year-round, while the females either leave the area or float around locally. One of our theories is that female winter survival may be one of the bigger issues limiting populations, and we're planning research to get some answers in terms of their movements. Overall, it seems that shrikes are at least stable in the Greenbrier Valley. Sadly, the continuing suspicion is that they're probably extirpated



2nd WV state record Limpkin, Putnam Co.
– photo by Anne Wills



Ruby-crowned Kinglet on suet -
photo by Laura Boggess

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

from the Eastern panhandle.

– Rich Bailey, Elkins, WV, 1/11/24

Two days ago, I saw a big flock of robins on a neighbor's lawn. From a distance they looked for all the world like starlings. When we got home there were about a dozen of them around the bird bath. There was one Cedar Waxwing with them. A little while ago robins encircled the pedestal birdbath and with them was the lone waxwing again. How odd.

The robins sure are messy visitors. They leave bits of food in the water and also spit out the pits from hackberry fruit. The cedar berries are still being gobbled up by a variety of birds, including the Yellow-rumped Warbler.

I did check on the eagles earlier in the week. The first time I saw two white heads on the nest and the other time one adult in a sycamore on the river's edge. The other one was most likely on the nest.

The Brown Creeper has been here all morning, starting at the crack of dawn. I sure would like to know how many trips up the walnut tree he makes in an hour. At one point there were two of them which is always nice to see. So much fun to watch up close.

It's cold and windy, but the afternoon sun is bright. Lots of bird activity. Right now I'm watching a male bluebird on the cedar greenery. That vivid, satiny blue of his feathers is breathtaking.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 1/14/24

David Patick and I found a large number of waterbirds at Gallipolis Ferry (Mason Co.). This included Greater White-fronted Goose (30); Snow Goose (2); Canada Goose (about 500); Tundra Swan (2); Mallard (about 1,300); American Black Duck (about 80); American Wigeon (2); Northern Pintail (about 75); Redhead (1); Ring-necked Duck (about 150); Greater Scaup (2); Ruddy Duck (11).

Also found were a Northern Harrier, a Bald Eagle, and eighteen Horned Larks.

– Mike Griffith, Huntington, WV, 1/20/24

– **Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ**

BIRD BANDING AT DOLLY SODS RESUMES AFTER YEAR-LONG HIATUS

Published by The Highlands Voice, December 2023

Brooks Bird Club, headquartered in Wheeling, has been supportive of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy since our beginnings. Chuck Conrad, administrator of Brooks Bird Club for decades, was one of nine signers of our articles of incorporation. So, we are happy to report on an updated effort connected with the folks at Brooks Bird Club.

After a year's hiatus, the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) bird banding station reopened on August 26, 2023, and closed on October 12, 2023. Lead banders Lejay Graffious and Bob Dean were assisted by many other volunteers to revitalize the research project near Red Creek campground at Dolly Sods. Of the 2,716 birds banded this year, 57 species were tagged, predominately warblers. Newer protocols have been initiated, which do even more to protect the well-being of the birds during capture, data collecting and release.

The Allegheny Front Migration Observatory is North America's oldest continuous bird banding station.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy made sure to include a field trip to Allegheny Front Migration Observatory at our 50th reunion and has recently made a contribution to the station.

Other groups and individuals who wish to donate may do so with checks directed to The Brooks Bird Club, PO Box 4077, Wheeling, WV, 26003, with "AFMO donation" on the check memo line.

To learn more about Brooks Bird Club and the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, visit brooksbirdclub.org

**ARTHUR PAVLOVIC PASSES**

Arthur S. Pavlovic, 98, of Morgantown passed away peacefully on February 22, 2024. He was born on December 2, 1925 in Bedford, Ohio, the son of the late Bohumil and Anastasia (Javorsky) Pavlovic.

Arthur was educated in the public schools of Maple Heights, OH. He enlisted in the US Navy as an Apprentice Seaman. In January, 1946, he graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electrical Engineering and was commissioned as an Ensign in the Navy.

After the Navy, he enrolled in the master's program in Physics at Case Western Reserve. On June 21, 1947, Arthur married Barbara Wise, his high school sweetheart. Prior to moving to Morgantown, WV, with his family, he had an interesting career in the engineering field.

Art he accepted a position as an assistant Professor of Physics in the Physics department at WVU. Barb and Art spent the rest of their lives in Morgantown, where they raised their four children, Karl, Stephen, Noel and Paula.

Art and Barb used their summers for family camping, canoeing and hiking trips. He is survived by his wife Barbara, his brother Richard and wife Dona, sons Karl Richard and wife Kris, Stephen Keith, Noel Bruce and wife Sarah, daughter Paula Ann and husband Phil. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to The Brooks Bird Club, The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, or Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Adamson
817 9th Ave., Apt. C
Marlinton, WV 24954
Tel: 540-577-1167
Email: wvnancylee@gmail.com

Paula Carr
5314 Jeters Chapel Rd.
Vinton, VA 24179

Amy Hill
72 Vineyard Way
Morgantown, WV 26508
Tel: 304-276-8993
Email: amy.hill79@gmail.com

Kris and Jay Jordan
1409 Mountainside Rd.
Davis, WV 26260
Email: kris.jordan37@gmail.com

Woody Yoder
32 Hidden View Lane
Moundsville, WV 26041
Tel: 304-312-4240
Email: wyoder72963@gmail.com

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Judy Knorr Griffin
2067 Frenchton Rd.
French Creek, WV 26218
Tel: 304-924-5790
Email: judyknorr@msn.com

Dave & Kim McCluskey
112 Captains Lane
Sneads Ferry, NC 284690-9662
Tel: 304-982-2008
Email: kmac5036@yahoo.com

Martin Tingley
204 Barnard Ave.
Elkins, WV 26241
Tel: 304-680-4834
Email: No Change

EMAIL UPDATE

Terry Bronson
birdsbybronson@gmail.com

P.J. Murray
pjmurray1652@gmail.com

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

April 20, 2024 – This is a joint outing with the Pittsburgh based Three Rivers Bird Club and the BBC Headquarters Chapter. Event is at Raccoon Creek Start Park. Meet at the picnic area on Raccoon Park Rd Clinton, PA 15026. Contact Ryan Tomazin wvwarblers@hotmail.com for more details.

We will drive to the beach and around the lake after checking out the picnic parking lot area. People can bring their own lunches, and everyone can use the picnic tables at Roadside Picnic Area West. If there is any interest, and if the weather holds, people can bird and botanize the Wildflower Reserve. It should be the perfect time for wildflowers.

MOUNTWOOD CHAPTER

If you have any questions, call one of these contacts:

Jon Benedetti 304-295-8945
Barb Hobman 740-374-5548
Terry Bronson 740-336-3752
Dick Esker 304-863-8765

March 28, 2024 – Washington Bottom Area, 8:00am. Washington Works trail parking lot.

April 4, 2024 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

April 11, 2024 – Pat Collins' Farm, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown.

April 18, 2024 – Leith Run, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

April 25, 2024 – Birds & Flowers, Newell's Run, 8:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

April 27, 2024 – Johnson T Janes Park,

8:00am. Park parking lot, foot of 27th St., Parkersburg.

May 2, 2024 – Ohio Birding Route Trail, 8:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

May 4, 2024 – Kroger Wetlands, 8:00am. Kroger wetlands parking lot & Broughton Nature Trail.

May 9, 2024 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

May 16, 2024 – Middle Island trails, 8:00am. Burger King, Rt. 68 & I-77, bring lunch.

May 23, 2024 – "The Wilds", Ohio, 7:00am. WV Welcome Center, Williamstown; bring lunch.

May 25, 2024 – McDonough, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot Wildlife Refuge.

May 30, 2024 – Hocking Hills, Ohio, 7:00am. Park & Ride, OH Rt. 339/Rt. 7; bring lunch.

June 1, 2024 – Johnson T Janes Park, 8:00am. Johnson T Janes Parking Lot.

June 6, 2024 – North Bend State Park, 8:00am. Kroger, 7th St. Parkersburg, bring lunch.

June 13, 2024 – Mountwood Park, 8:00am. Beach area (near torpedo), bring lunch.

Remember to check on brooks-birdclub.org under the Events/Calendar of Events tab. You'll find dates and times for meetings, outings and field trips.

If your chapter or affiliate has events to advertise, contact webmaster Larry Helgerman at brooksbirdclubweb@gmail.com



NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

MOUNTAINEER AUDUBON

April 16, 23 & 30, 2024 – 7:30am. WVU Core Arboretum. This local hotspot provides birders with the opportunity to see many Neotropical migrants during spring migration. Meet at the entrance to the Arboretum, near the parking lot on Monongahela Boulevard. Leader: LeJay Graffious.

April 24, 2024 – 7:30-11:30am (may leave earlier). Old Hemlock, Bruceton Mills. Join LeJay Graffious for a monthly bird walk at Old Hemlock to watch the arrival of spring migrants and experience the breeding season develop. We will walk approximately three miles and stop at ten predetermined locations to census birds for three minutes. Contact LeJay for directions: lejay@oldhemlock.org.

April 26, 2024 – 7:30am. Beginners Bird Walk, White Park, Mississippi St, Morgantown. This walk will help beginners with the basics to start bird watching. If participants have binoculars or a birding field guide, they should bring them. Although this walk might go slower than other walks, any level of birder is welcome. Meet at the ice rink parking lot, at the end furthest from the ice rink. The trails are fairly level and well maintained. Leader: Jane Clark.

April 27, 2024 – 7:30am. West Virginia Botanic Garden. Join Mountaineer Audubon at this local birding hotspot to look for spring migrants and resident birds. Register in advance: wvbg.org.

May 6, 2024 – Beginner Bird Walk, Friendship Hill NHS, New Geneva, PA. This walk will help beginners with the basics to start bird watching. If participants have binoculars or a birding field guide, they should bring them. Although this walk might go slower than other walks, any level of birder is welcome. Just 25 minutes north of Morgantown, this park has mostly level and well-maintained trails. With woods and fields, participants can expect to see a variety of birds. Meet at the trailhead parking lot,

about one-tenth of a mile from the entrance on the right. Leader: Jane Clark.

May 7, 2024 – 7:30am. WVU Core Arboretum. This local hotspot provides birders with the opportunity to see many Neotropical migrants during spring migration. Meet at the entrance to the Arboretum, near the parking lot on Monongahela Boulevard. WVU professor Chris Rota will also give a bird banding demonstration. Leader: Larry Schwab.

May 11, 2024 – 7:30am. Raven Rock Trail, Cooper's Rock State Forest. Join Katie Fallon and others for a hike on the Raven Rock Trail to look for warblers, tanagers, vireos, thrushes, and other migrants. This walk will be part of the Morgantown Migratory Bird Day celebration. Leader: Katie Fallon.

May 17, 6pm – May 18, 2024 6pm. – Morgantown Birding Cup. Everyone is invited to join the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia and Mountaineer Audubon for the fourth annual Morgantown Birding Cup, which will be held from 6pm on Friday, May 17, to 6pm on Saturday, May 18, 2024. This is a friendly competition; the goal is for families, friends, and individuals to have fun and get out bird watching. Count all the bird species you encounter during this 24-hour period. A count party will be held the evening on May 18 at the ACCA's Outdoor Classroom in Cheat Lake. More information: <https://wvybc.org/birding-cup/>.

May 18, 2024 – 8:00am. Bird a Working Forest, Cheat River, near Kingwood, WV. This location is part of a WV-managed timber land property. The timber was last cut in 2020 and then the forest was enrolled in the family forest carbon program. Learn about timber lands while you bird. This property is rather steep, and the participants will be walking on old logging roads. Come prepared to hike. Meet along WV 72 at coordinates 39.375732, -79.7059057. This is 8.2 miles south of the junction of WV 7 and WV 72. There are parking places at pull outs along WV 72 on the east side of the road and also about one-tenth of a mile south and the west side of the road. Leader: Alan Clark (304-288-9543).

19TH WINTER EAGLE SURVEY

Contributed by Jim Phillips/Mindy Waldron, Bibbee Nature Club

Eagle Brigade of Southern WV, January 13, 2024

Narrows, VA to State Line Nest – No eagles.

Bluestone Campground & Boat Storage (Bertha closed due to high water) – GOEA – 1 adult. BAEA – 2 adults & 2 1st year birds.

Mouth of the Bluestone/The Pits (overlook on Rt. 20 because of high water) – BAEA – 6 adults, 1 1st year, 2 2nd year, 2 3rd year and 3 undetermined age.

Bellepoint – BAEA – 1 adult, 2 2nd year birds.

Brooks Island Overlook – BAEA – 2 adults and fresh grass in the nest.

Meadow River nest – BAEA – 2 adults.

Howard's Creek nest – BAEA – 1 adult.

Blue Sulphur Turnpike nest – BAEA – 2 adults.

Lake Tuckahoe nest – no eagles.

Fairview Road nest – BAEA – 1 adult.

Alderson nest – BAEA – 1 adult.

Barger Springs nest – BAEA – 1 adult.

Dropping Lick nest – no eagles.

Red Sulphur Springs nest - no eagles.

Greenville nest – BAEA – 2 adults.

Hans Creek, Dropping Lick nest & Vicinity – BAEA – 4 adults, 1 1st year, 2 2nd year & 2 3rd year birds.

Bent Mt. Road & Athens – No eagles.

Turkey Creek, Monroe County – GOEA – 1 immature & BAEA – 2 adults, 3 immatures.

Anthony Creek nest – No eagles.

GOEA = Golden Eagle; BAEA = Bald Eagle
Conditions – 27-37 degrees, 60-100% cloud cover, 10-15 mph wind (gusts to 40) flurries. 30 participants located 2 Golden Eagles & 47 Bald Eagles. New nest on Rich Creek (MJ).



•••

Springing Forward

We experienced all of the seasons in three days around Ritchie County and North Bend State Park this year, and that grounded many vultures, including this Black Vulture in Harrisville. Photo by Ryan Tomazin. Full story on page 2.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Editor's Note/Message From Our President	1
BBCer is a Featured Volunteer at Canaan Valley NWR	1
2024 BBC Early Spring Meeting Report.....	2
2023-24 WV Christmas Bird Count Results.....	3-4
First Birds of the Year	4
Winter Birding in Southeast Arizona by Mike Breiding.....	5-7
Correspondence	7
Interesting Sightings Around The State.....	8-9
Bird Banding Resumes at Dolly Sods	9
Arthur Pavlovic Passes	9
Changes In Contact Information.....	10
Chapter Happenings	10
Nature Happenings.....	11
19th Winter Eagle Survey	11