



THE MAIL BAG

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

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APRIL – MAY – JUNE 2024

RYAN TOMAZIN - EDITOR

Message from your President & Mail Bag Editor

Sixty-odd Editor Messages. Sixteen years already! One thing I've rarely done is use this platform to just tell stories, and since I feel like I've 'said it' on a lot of BBC topics over the years, I'll share some memories from Thornwood Forays I've been to. Hope you all enjoy, as many of you helped make them.

My first Pocahontas County Foray was in 1998. I was working for WVU and the Forest Service doing songbird nest research. I didn't attend full days or nights, but I did enjoy seeing the highlands, hearing new birds, and meeting old and new BBC friends. That was the Foray where Luke Head caught the rattlesnake and kept it in a tank one night between our beds (we forced him to put it in a different building later on...or at least that's how I think it went). Another enduring memory of that year was how cold it was and how much it rained...

2003 – ...and rained and rained. My first memory was of Jay Buckelew and me driving towards Bartow to put up the BBC signs and being shocked at seeing a Double-crested Cormorant on one of the tiny farm ponds along the two-lane there. I did a singing male census up on Gaudineer Knob and was chased through the forest daily by red squirrels.

2008 – We were there for half of Foray, though it was a blur. Mornings spent on top of Gaudineer again for SMS plots with hermit thrushes and ravens. Was this the Foray where a Common Merganser was found in Bartow up on the chimney of the motel?

2013 – The Foray where moths were everywhere, and when Sue Olcott showed up with a moth light later in the week. THAT started something big in my life. The year when mourning warblers suddenly appeared in force. The long, bumpy trip to Pig's Ear to explore the swamp there. Wonderful walks around the Sinks of Gandy and Spruce Knob in perfect weather. More bird rarities with Mike Lanzone hearing terns at Buffalo Lake in the fog.

2018 – A wonderfully bird-y Foray. Created two new breeding bird survey routes up on Cheat Mountain and the Mower Tract that netted us tons of Swainson's thrushes, Canada warblers, and plenty of other high-elevation species. Great weather for field trips and great leaders. Staying in the cabin with my weight in mouse droppings spread throughout the place... The Creek Crew again finding a hellbender at the entrance to camp. Red crossbills in the virgin spruce area of Gaudineer. Catching up with friends once again, and spreading these experiences to new members!

– Ryan Tomazin

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

As the BBC completes the first half of 2024, we have reconciled some issues which were facing us at the beginning of the new year. Looking forward to the remaining 2024, there is just a little "housekeeping" to address.

The first issue is dues: The BBC Fiscal Year ends in December when we send out a dues notice to all for the new year. Please note that if a member hasn't paid by the end of May, they are considered delinquent and consequently dropped from the membership roll. Am sure many were unaware of this, so keeping this in mind, we are extending the deadline to the end of June this year.

The second issue is commitment: If you have an article you have committed to either editor of the Mailbag or Redstart, please respect their deadline for you getting your article to them. Everyone involved in the publication is on a time line. It is much appreciated.

We are trying to expand our schedule to include some interesting "bonus weekend" trips to round out the year. Hope there will be something to your liking.

Wishing you nature's best,

– Juanita Slater

Photo by Cynthia Mullens



BETTY WEIMER PASSES AT 103

Elizabeth Jean “Betty” Weimer, age 103, of Buckhannon, WV, died Sunday, April 21, 2024, at Serenity Assisted Living in Buckhannon, WV.

She was born December 1, 1920, in Pittsburgh, PA, a daughter of the late Stephen William and Hannah Pearl Riggles Murphy. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. John Robinson Weimer, DVM; one granddaughter, Margaret Ellen Godwin, one brother, Stephen William Murphy Jr., and son-in-law, Dale Manuel. She is survived by two daughters, Anne Manuel of Charles Town, WV, and Jane Godwin and husband David of Buckhannon; three granddaughters, Sarah Bonacorda of Martinsburg, WV, Jocelyn Peters and husband Greg of Buckhannon, and Martha Manuel and husband Sebastian Engel of Charles Town, WV; one grandson, Dr. Donovan Godwin, DDS and wife Casey of Swansboro, NC; nine great-grandchildren, Bella, Emma, and Madelyn Bonacorda, all of Martinsburg, WV; Matthew, Michael, and Brynne Peters, all of Buckhannon; Charlotte Engel and Mia Manuel both of Charles Town, WV, and Declan Godwin of Swansboro, NC.

Betty attended schools in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh before earning a BS in Biology from Bethany College and an MS in Biology from the University of New Hampshire. She then returned to Bethany to teach science courses to soldiers who were returning from the war. She married John in 1947, and upon moving to Buckhannon in 1950, became a member of First United Methodist Church. She served in leadership positions there and in groups such as Fred Brooks Garden Club, Brooks Bird Club, AAUW, Delta Kappa Gamma, Welcome Club, and Zeta Tau Alpha. She is probably best remembered for her leadership role in local and regional Girl Scouting, receiving a national award for her 50+ years of service. In 1992 she received the Athena Award from the Chamber of Commerce, which recognizes “transformative leaders, change-makers, and trailblazers.”

Betty spent most of her professional career teaching at West Virginia Wesleyan College where there is now a laboratory named in her honor. Many Wesleyan students over the years spent time in her basement playing games, eating chicken and waffles, and making tin can ice cream. When the weekend came around, Betty always felt there should be a gathering of some sort. In her spare time, she enjoyed playing bridge, spending time in nature, and traveling the world on bird forays with the Brooks Bird Club. Friends and family will remember her for her dry wit, practical jokes, and love of meeting new people.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Bucklew Fund at Bethany College, to WV Wesleyan College, or to a nature organization of choice. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.polingstclair.com.

♦♦♦♦

The Brooks Bird Club family also lost two other friends in May. First, Susan Peck Olcott passed away unexpectedly on May 2, at the age of 65. Recently retired from her position as a wildlife biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Sue was working at co-authoring the new West Virginia butterfly atlas. She will be remembered for her interesting and fun Foray programs on lepidoptera; and also for helping to mentor your Editor in moth identification, getting me started at the 2013 Foray.

Shawn Head, father of BBC member Luke Head and his sister, Katie, passed away on May 8, at the age of 73. Shawn also worked for the WV DNR in Elkins, specializing in wild game management. He was a wonderfully warm person who loved his grandchildren, his garden and home life. He will be missed



Photo: Mike Breiding - EpicRoadTrips.us

CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

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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

DISPATCHES FROM ROSIE CAMPBELL – WINTER/SPRING 2024

Eagle!

My morning birdwatching is from the windows while having coffee. Today, there was a 'possum run over in front of my house. Crows had already found it. (It seems to me crows are often quickest to find a carcass and are there before any of the other carrion eaters arrive.) In this group of crows, I was interested to see one of them had leucistic markings; was about half a dirty-white color.

Suddenly, there was a flare of flight and a big, dark bird flew in, scattering the crows. An eagle! Right in front of my house! Eagles have become more common here in SE Ohio, but it's still a thrill to see one up close.

The crows were careful but were slow to give up their prize and hopped around cawing. The eagle sampled the "goodie," then started to carry it off. Raising from the road, the dangling possum caught on the top of a wire fence and was yanked from the eagle's grasp. The crows dived in, but the eagle circled back, snatched the prize and flew away with it; the crows cawing behind.

BBC Trip to Funk Bottoms-Killbuck Marsh, Feb. 22-23

Several of us met at the DQ in Sugar Creek. When everyone had arrived, we set off for the wetlands. The weather was chilly, windy, and wet. At our first stop just off Rt. 83, we saw a great blue heron and heard a Carolina wren. Driving on, we found lots of ducks, mostly at a distance and several more songbirds. (As I can't hear much, I don't get the birds by ear, but several were heard.)

At our usual stop near the old ruined bridge, we saw sandhill cranes, swans gathering nesting material, Canada geese and lots of ducks. A small raft of gadwall drifted along the bank to our right. Most of the others were at a distance, needing spotting scopes to identify.

At our next stop along the back roads through the lowlands there were great rafts of pintails, mallards, gadwall and shovelers, also tundra swans, and cranes. On the far side of the swamp was an eagle's nest and an eagle perched nearby.

Here and everywhere else, the jaunty male red-wings proclaimed their turf. Nearly every tall bush, muskrat lodge, and weed clump had a male bird shouting "cong-a-reeee!"

At Funk Bottoms, there had been a lot of new dredging work and most of the ducks were at a distance. The local Boy Scouts had built a new observation platform there.

We had our usual good lunch at the Pine Tree Barn. It was nice to get in the warmth and dry out a bit.

Our next stop at the woods where we always find red-headed woodpeckers was not as fruitful. They were hard to find today. Instead of the many we usually spot, I think there were only two or three.

We stopped along wetlands a few more times, seeing more kinds of ducks and blue birds and a few other songbirds, then went on to Wooster for our hotel.

Friday morning we had a small breakfast at the hotel, then set off in the fog. (As we were leaving, I glimpsed a black squirrel, They are common here, but I've never gotten a satisfactory photo of one yet.)

A heavy fog had set over the wetlands and it was a treat to see snow white swans flying in the silver mist. Rafts of ring-necked ducks drifted on the far bank. Even with 'scopes, it was hard to identify the ducks in the mist. As the day lightened the sun came out and spotting was better. By lunch time we were nearing Berlin and had a fine lunch at the Homestead Restaurant before bidding our good-byes and heading home.



Sixteen birders attended and the species count for the trip was fifty-seven.

Mar. 1-3 Annual Ohio Falconry Meet at Holloway

Ohio Master falconer Mick Brown and friends held their annual spring hunt and demonstration at the Holloway Old Timers Club. A fine, free meal is presented by the ladies of Old Timers. Accompanied by some little dachshunds, the hawks are taken out to hunt rabbits or squirrels in the woods and fields nearby. Mick guides the hunts flying his Harris hawks. It's hard walking over rough terrain, but worth the effort to see the hawks and dogs work.

Several other falconers show their birds at the club house on perches. This year, there were red-tailed hawks, goshawks, a great horned owl and a golden eagle also displayed.

The Annual Spring Falconry Meet at Holloway Old Timers Club is always the first weekend of March before rabbit season goes out.

Wildlife Symposium at Zanesville Ohio

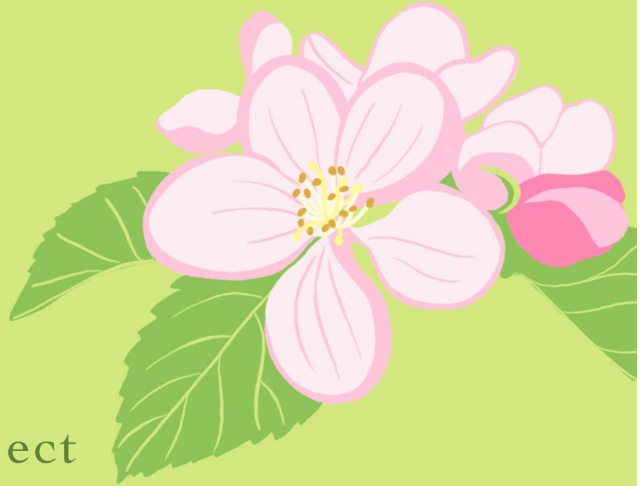
This and event that would interest any outdoor person. Ten half-hour talks were given on various wildlife and outdoor interests. A light breakfast and a fine lunch were included. Topics were: bobcats, the spadefoot toad, owls, Motus (Community Science on a Global Scale), A-B-Cs of Mushroom ID, H2O, Farmland to Wetland, Bats, providing Refugia for Cope's Gray Tree Frog, and Manage Your Fish Pond. Each topic was followed by a short question and answer session. I learned a lot and was especially interested in the bobcats, owls, and bats.

I plan to try providing the frog refuges, just to see what gets in them. The refuges are lengths of PVC pipe, fastened to a tree trunk. (They said to provide a piece of rope inside so a trapped flying squirrel can get out.)

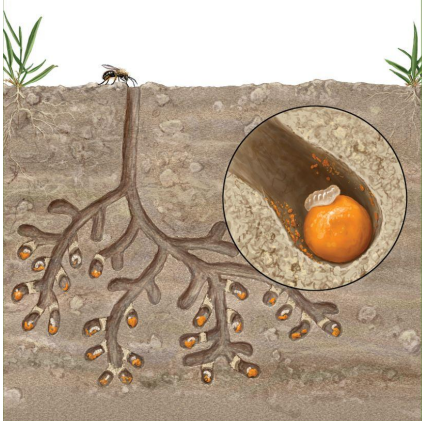
(Continued on Page 8)

Ground Nesting Bees

Community Science Project



The **Ground Nesting Bees** Community Science Project needs your help to collect data on native bee populations and nesting sites. Your contributions will help us to better understand the importance of native bees and how to protect them in our local environments.



What to look for:

Many bees nest in large aggregations. Monitor flight activity in the early spring through late summer. Entrances in grass and soil are indicators of bee activity.

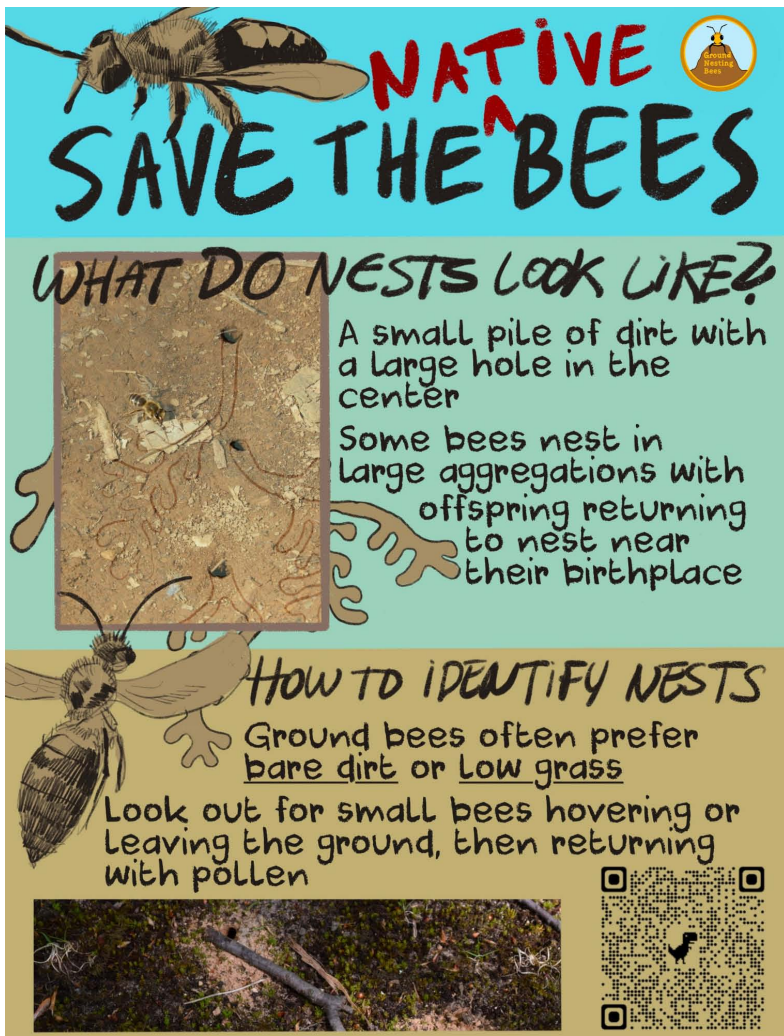


We need your help to report nesting aggregations by uploading a photo of a bee entering or exiting its nest to **iNaturalist (GNbee)**. Learn more at GNBee.org



Cornell CALS
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences





NATIVE SAVE THE BEES

WHAT DO NESTS LOOK LIKE?



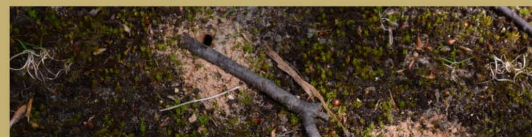

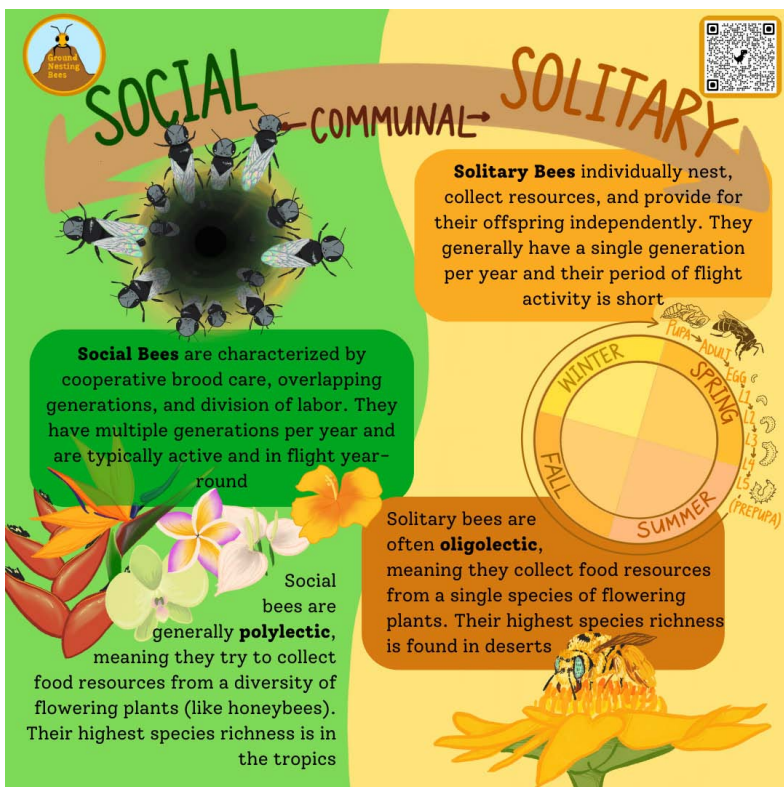
A small pile of dirt with a large hole in the center

Some bees nest in large aggregations with offspring returning to nest near their birthplace

HOW TO IDENTIFY NESTS

Ground bees often prefer bare dirt or low grass

Look out for small bees hovering or leaving the ground, then returning with pollen


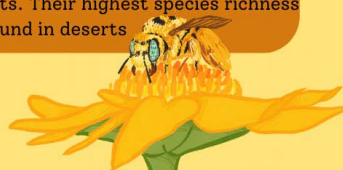

SOCIAL COMMUNAL SOLITARY

Social Bees are characterized by cooperative brood care, overlapping generations, and division of labor. They have multiple generations per year and are typically active and in flight year-round

Social bees are generally **polylectic**, meaning they try to collect food resources from a diversity of flowering plants (like honeybees). Their highest species richness is in the tropics

Solitary Bees individually nest, collect resources, and provide for their offspring independently. They generally have a single generation per year and their period of flight activity is short

Solitary bees are often **oligolectic**, meaning they collect food resources from a single species of flowering plants. Their highest species richness is found in deserts

CORRESPONDENCE

Hard to believe Dad will have been gone ten 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, son of past member Ralph K. Bell

Mary and I have just returned from 3 days at The Biggest Week in American Birding in northern Ohio. We ran into Greg Miller on the boardwalk. He was leading tours. We went on one. We weren't going to miss an opportunity like that. And we heard Kenn Kaufman speak about his new book.

– John Jacobs



(Top) Prothonotary Warbler;
(Bottom) Common Yellowthroat.
Photos by John Jacobs



INTERESTING SIGHTINGS AROUND THE STATE

(Editor's note: per standards changing, all non-proper bird names will now be all lower-cased from here on out.)

Taking advantage of sunshine and mild temps yesterday we checked on the eagles. The female was in the nest. Shortly thereafter the male joined her. After fussing with the nest she got up and flew to a nearby sycamore. I assumed it was changing of the guard. To my surprise the male also took off landing right next to her on a sycamore limb. Seemed odd that they would leave the nest unoccupied. I watched them on the limb when she stretched her neck and vocalized. Next thing you know they were mating. When I witnessed that last year (Feb. 26) I really never expected to see a repeat performance.

Shortly thereafter she returned to the nest. He remained and concentrated on preening. So exciting to think that there will be another active nest this year. I wonder if it will be one or two chicks. On the way back a raven flew by, squawking loudly. My knowledge of bird songs and calls is limited but I sure knew what this was.

I've been wishing for a pine siskin and this afternoon one finally showed up on the kitchen window food tray along with some goldfinches and house finches.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 2/2/24



*Pine Siskin, Ritchie County
- photo by Cynthia Burkhart*

I was walking with the goats in the field yesterday, when I noticed some pine needles sticking out of one of our bird boxes, so I took a look in the box. Yep, there was a complete pine needle bluebird nest, with an egg! So I checked all 19 boxes this morning, and found a total of 3 pine needle bluebird nests, and one nest made of dry leaves, dry grass, and some green moss. I'm guessing this one is a titmouse nest, as they used this box last year, as well. I don't think I've seen nest-building in our boxes this early before.

I also saw a bluebird pair on top of an empty nest box, checking out the territory.

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, WV, 2/7/24

I look forward to my trips to the landfill. It is like the world's largest bird feeder. Yesterday morning in drizzling rain I arrived just after the landfill opened and was greeted by a flock of about 24 ring-billed gulls. I see gulls only about once a year in WV so this was a good sighting, but the best was yet to come. Leaving the landfill I drove to a nearby open area that at times seems to be a "staging area" for bald eagles that utilize the landfill. Oh my gosh! There were ELEVEN bald eagles perched along the tree line at the edge of the field! I got out my spotting scope and examined each one. All were sub-adults, not a mature eagle in the bunch. What a special day for my trip to the landfill!

– Jack O'Connell, Greenbrier County, WV, 2/13/24

For the past 4 days, we've been seeing small numbers of red-winged blackbirds at the feeders. This morning there were 10, which I thought was a lot...until I looked out the window at 2:20 this afternoon, to see the yard covered with at least 90 of them.

– Cynthia Burkhart, Ritchie County, WV, 2/24/24

Despite a sugar coating of snow and cold nights, some species are thinking it's time to get busy — a pair of bluebirds have been flitting around the nest boxes on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. What started out as one male red-wing on Wednesday, grew to 20-plus on Thursday and to 50-plus on Saturday morning. Plus grackles. And some lone turkey vultures have been patrolling too.

– Laura Ceperley, Canaan Valley, WV, 2/25/24

Today the farm was filled with red-winged blackbirds, the first large group. We have had wood ducks for a week, along with our mallards. On a more amphibious note, our pond is filled with wood frogs; they sound like angry ducks. Also, red-spotted newts eating the frog eggs.

– Paul McKay, Ohio County near West Liberty, 3/4/24

I was just hanging laundry on the line when I heard the cheerful chatter of tree swallows. Already? Looked up and, sure enough it was about six of them zipping around the two nest boxes they have used in the past. If they don't lift your spirit, nothing will. Welcome back.

On our afternoon dog walk I spotted a lone cedar waxwing. Saw it four times, the last time with the late sun highlighting its yellow breast. Stunning! It is unusual to see them without companions.

The activity around the bird feeders has slowed down a bit. I suspect they are looking for a mate and potential housing. Haven't seen the sapsucker at the suet for a while, but the hairy woodpecker and the little brown creeper are still daily visitors.

Yesterday and today, the song sparrow was singing. Signs of spring all around.

– Bruni Haydl, Charles Town, WV, 3/4/24



*White-breasted Nuthatches nest building
– photo by N. Wade Snyder*

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS (con.)

Yesterday morning, I was scanning some large pastures with my spotting scope when I noticed something odd. A turkey vulture several hundred yards distant was rolling around what at first appeared to be an egg. I zoomed in to get a better look and realized that the "egg" was actually a golf ball! I watched for about 30 minutes as the vulture repeatedly rolled the ball around and defended his "prize" from another vulture. It even picked the ball up a couple of times. The number of vultures grew to five before all of them decided leave the scene. Not something that you see every day...

– Jack O'Connell, Greenbrier County, WV, 3/5/24

For the past couple of weeks, I have been watching white-breasted nuthatches taking interest in one of my backyard boxes. This evening, I was entertained as I watched the male diligently bringing material to the female. She then would take the material (which best I can tell is fur) and enter the box, only to return back to the top of the box and wait for more materials. They worked in tandem, and it was quite comical to watch. Photos of the pair are attached to the checklist.

Great Spring Birding!

– Wade Snyder, Berkeley County, 3/13/24

Call me flabbergasted. This morning, April 21, I encountered not one, but two broods of hooded merganser ducklings in Wood County at the Southern Highway Wetlands, a swampy area at Mineral Wells, WV, on the east side of I-77 about 0.2 mile south of WV Route 14, viewable from Old WV Route 21. I have found this species at this location during April for the last three years.

One brood had three very small recently-hatched ducklings. The other had twelve somewhat-larger ducklings. Both were being shepherded by a hen; a male was nearby. I attempted to get photos, but the birds were distant, there were many intervening dead trees and logs, it was a gloomy day, and the birds' brownish plumage blended in with the muddy water, so I was unsuccessful.

The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia shows only a handful of breeding records in the Allegheny Moun-

tains. Cornell University's Birds of the World indicates the species does not breed in this area, though apparently it did in the time of John James Audubon in the early 1800s.

I did find a few 20th Century records in eBird, where there are a couple of old records in Mason County reported in the Brooks Bird Club "The Redstart" on May 19, 1956, at Point Pleasant (most likely at McClintic WMA) and on May 6, 1961, at McClintic--both of 8 juveniles.

There is also a record of 7 juveniles with an adult female at Ashton in Mason County from May 3-21, 1981, reported in "Birds of the Lower Ohio River Valley in West Virginia."

This is an exciting development, and possibly unprecedented in the modern era for this area of the state.

– Terry Bronson Marietta, OH, 4/21/24

This has been owl week for us.

We visited a great horned owl nest along the Greenbrier River, Summers County and had great looks at an owlet. Then we went to another nest near Kitchen Creek in Monroe County where we saw two owlets in a nest. At 4:50 this morning I was awakened by the hoots of a great horned owl. It sounded like it was in the house. I checked rooms until I found where the sound was nearest and sat in a chair and listened. The bird must have been in a white pine just off from our front porch. I sat in a chair with the window and wall the only things between me and the bird. It did the 5 hoots twice a minute until 5:13 a.m. Then it changed to 1 set of hoots a minute until 5:30 a.m. I timed it with the clock on our kitchen stove. Then it stopped calling

We have also been excited to have eastern screech-owls using our nest box next to our garage. We had been seeing only one bird until this week when we got to see the second bird. Last evening, one bird appeared in the entrance hole at 8:00. A blue jay spotted it and started fussing at the owl and it dropped back into the box. About 20 minutes later I was watching the hole when an owl flew in and stopped a second at the entrance and then flew on. I checked again at about 8:30 and two adults flew out of the box and headed for the woods. One returned right away and then the other one. They did this same action until it was too dark for us to see them.

– Jim & Judy Phillips, Pipestem, WV, 4/25/24

Made it out to the beautiful Nature Conservancy's Cranesville Swamp Sanctuary in Preston County this morning.

Thought I had gone through a secret portal and teleported back to my old stomping grounds in Colorado due to some very familiar vocalizations I came across.

First and foremost had to do a total double take when I heard the unmistakable call of a sandhill crane coming from where the boardwalk starts. As I came out of the woods saw a low flying sandhill heading north! Was not expecting one of these guys this morning for sure.

Have to admit not real certain of the status of these cranes in WV. Did see on eBird that there were a few sightings from Cranesville Swamp Reserve in the fall and winter of 2023. Could be the same bird, but may also be migrating bird a little off course.

Very cool to the hear another very familiar call of a "piney", as we called them in Colorado, calling from the conifers. More commonly known as a red squirrel.

Other birds of note included singing blackburnian, chestnut-sided, magnolia, black-throated green, and Kentucky warblers; singing wood and hermit thrushes; and a nice red-shouldered hawk.

– Michael Brady, Morgantown, WV, 4/29/24

– **Sightings taken from
WVBird ListServ**



Short-eared owl, Preston County
– photo by Cynthia Mullens

DISPATCHES FROM ROSIE CAMPBELL

(Continued from Page 3)

Spring Wildflower Hike, Apr. 13

Sylvia Owens and the Miller family provided us with a really fine spring walk. (Climb!) This was in the steep, rocky part of Monroe County, OH. Rugged hills littered with huge boulders are the terrain.

Eighteen hikers of all ages made the walk. In this high ground, we did not encounter many of the most common spring ephemerals, but saw two plants I've never seen; Wood Betony and American Columbo.

The strenuous walk was followed by a covered dish meal and some good fellowship.

Woodcock Nest

At the first of the month we found a woodcock on her nest of four eggs. Careful not to scare her, we set up a trail-cam to watch her. In the first four days the camera was watching, the brave little bird sustained a herd of deer walking around her, one sniffing at her; a deluge of rain; a hard hail storm; and a hawk attack.



After the hawk attack, we expected to find her killed or gone, but she was soon back on the nest, and as of April 18 she is still there. She will surely be hatching in the next few days. (I think their brooding period is about 21 days) I hope the camera catches the chicks leaving the nest.

Photos by Rosie Campbell

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

Frances Tolley
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EMAIL UPDATE

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

HEADQUARTERS CHAPTER

August, 2024 (date TBD; check BBC website) – Bill Beatty and Jan Runyan will be hosting the BBC at their home and property in Wellsburg, Brooke County, WV.

September, 2024 (date TBD; check BBC website) – Suzanne Quinn will be hosting the BBC at her home and property near Dallas, Marshall County, WV.

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

June 20–21, 2024 – New River Gorge – overnight trip. Details to follow.

Aug. 15, 2024 – Sandy Creek Backwater & area, 8:00 am. Boat ramp, Northwest Drive.

Aug. 17, 2024 – Annual Picnic, 5:00 pm. McDonough Log Shelter “A”, McDonough Wildlife Refuge, bring covered dish, drink & service.

Aug. 22, 2024 – Johnson T Janes Park, 8:00am. Park in parking lot, foot of 27th St., Parkersburg.

Aug. 29, 2024 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 8:00am. McDonough parking lot.

Aug. 31, 2024 – Mountwood Park, 8:00 am. Beach area (near torpedo), bring lunch.

Sept. 5, 2024 – Ohio River Islands NWR, 9:00am. ORINWR parking lot.

Sept. 12, 2024 – McDonough Wildlife Refuge, 9:00am. McDonough parking lot.

Sept. 19-20, 2024 – Funk/Killbuck, Ohio, overnight. Details later.

Sept. 26, 2024 – Kroger Wetlands & Broughton, 9:00am. Kroger wetlands parking lot.

NATURE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE

POTOMAC VALLEY AUDUBON

PVAS leads many birding trips each year; from local bird walks at locations including the USGS Eastern Geological Science Center and our own nature preserves, to trips farther afield like Blackwater NWR and Delaware Bay.

Our current recurring guided bird walks include:

- Tuesday mornings at Rolling Ridge Conservancy Lands near Harpers Ferry, WV
- Walks on the third Wednesday of the month at Cool Spring Preserve
- Frequent walks at USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center

Check the calendar to learn more to and register for upcoming trips and events. <https://www.potomacaudubon.org/calendar/category/adult/birding/>

4TH OF JULY WEEKEND WITH THE BBC CRANBERRY BACK COUNTRY

CRANBERRY MOUNTAIN LODGE – HILLSBORO, WEST VIRGINIA

The Brooks Bird Club is having a Bonus Bird Weekend at the Cranberry Mountain Lodge in Hillsboro, WV. July 4th through the 7th 2024. There are trails that start right at the back door and go down to the visitors center. The Falls of Hills Creek are close, along with the boardwalk and many other fun REMOTE places to explore.

This will be a laid-back, no-frills, semi rustic get together. There is a good chance that cell service will be spotty at best, or not at all. Space is limited to 15. No guarantee of private rooms. We will be one big happy family in a lodge. Some rooms have 2 double beds, some rooms have 2 or 3 bunk beds... you get the picture. There are hot showers and flush toilets. There may even be a HOT TUB, although not certain on that at this moment. No travel campers, no hook ups; also, no tent camping.

On Thursday night, small snacks will be provided in the evening so we have something to munch on while we discuss the crazy drive getting to the Lodge. The driveway to the lodge is fairly long and not passable with 2 cars, so there will be rules about coming and going. First and foremost, once you get there on Thursday, please stay put until everyone arrives. (TRUST ME!) So, if you forgot your toothbrush, tuff stuff! You will want to have had dinner before you get there, and restaurants are not really close either. Another item worth noting: electricity is limited. The lodge is run from solar, so plugging in every electronic device you have will not be permitted, advised, or accepted. There is plenty for lights and all the necessities, but you won't be able to run a coffee pot and microwave at the same time. Having said all of that...

The cost will be \$35.00 per person, plus we will split the cost of food. Make checks payable to The Brooks Bird Club, Inc. The first official meal will be breakfast on Friday morning. We will have a bag lunch Friday and Saturday; dinner Friday and Saturday; and breakfast Saturday and Sunday mornings. We will all talk about how fast the weekend went and what a great time we had Sunday at breakfast, go over a bird list, divvy up what is left of the food, and then clean up, pack up and head home.

You must be a Brooks Bird Club member to participate. RSVP will be first come, first serve basis. Space is limited on this event. RSVP by Friday June 28th. I am super-excited about this trip and I can't wait to see you there!

Send RSVP to Cindy Slater, 125 North Center Street, Bridgeport, WV 26330.

Contact Cindy Slater (724-570-8502) to RSVP or more details.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

(Please DO NOT come on this trip without a RSVP. Thank you)



Photo by Cynthia Mullens

LABOR DAY WEEKEND WITH THE BBC

The Brooks Bird Club is having another Bonus Bird Weekend, August 30-September 2, 2024.

Destination, Blackwater Falls State Park. Space is limited to 16. No camping or travel campers, unless you choose to use the BWF campground and then you are on your own but we could arrange to meet together. It is a lovely cabin with hot showers and flush toilets. The itinerary is again very laid back. Blackwater Falls is a great location to use as a base, and our activities will be endless.

The cost will be \$250.00 per person, plus we will split the cost of food. The first official “get together” will be breakfast Saturday morning. We will have a bag lunch Saturday and Sunday; dinner Saturday and Sunday; and also breakfast Sunday and Monday mornings. We will all talk about how fast the weekend went and what a great time we had Monday at breakfast, then pack up and head home. Check-in will be anytime after 5:00 p.m. on Friday.

You must be a Brooks Bird Club member to participate. RSVP will be first come first serve basis. Space is limited on this event. RSVP by Monday August 12th.

Send RSVP to Cindy Slater 125 North Center Street Bridgeport, WV 26330

Contact Cindy Slater (724-570-8502) for RSVP for more details.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

(Please DO NOT come on this trip without a RSVP. Thank you)

EASTERN SHORE TRIP – NOVEMBER 5–11, 2024

CHANGING UP THIS YEAR! – NEW DATES!!!

Eastern Shore, here we come! A lot of this trip is changing this year, it will be very different. There **will not** be a reservation form, per se, for you to fill out or mail to yours truly. Instead, I will give you my itinerary and you are welcome to join if you wish. However, please let me know if you are interested and will be attending. This way I will know who to expect and when I should start to worry. I will also know who to send my itinerary and reservation information too. You will all be on your own getting to my favorite destination Chincoteague which is where we will start our avian observations. We will check out of our hotel and head north eventually ending in the Rehoboth Beach area or more north. 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.

DEADLINE FOR NON-RESERVATIONS IS OCTOBER 1st

Make non-RSVP to Cindy Slater via text 724-570-8502

or snail mail to

125 North Center Street, Bridgeport WV 26330.

Please Include the following information:

Name(s), address, telephone number, email address, attendance all or part time.

BROOKS BIRD CLUB FALL RETREAT & MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TYGART LAKE STATE PARK, WV ~ OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

It has been six years since we visited Tygart Lake and I am sure we will enjoy not only the facility, but also the beautiful fall colors. There are some beautiful trails around the park that we could explore along with other neat areas. On Friday afternoon, there will be a Board Meeting (details to follow). Folks will be able to check into the Lodge Friday around 4:00 p.m., get settled and spend some time catching up with old friends, meeting, and making new ones. Dinner will be scheduled at 6:30 p.m. After dinner there will be a fantastic program starting at 8 p.m. (speakers TBD), possible questions, and weather pending possible fire pits outside for extended visits before we must call it a night.

On Saturday after breakfast, which will start at 8 a.m., we will pick up our box lunch and set out for our day trip. (Trip options and destinations to be determined.) We will return to the Lodge in time to clean up for our banquet dinner at 6:30 p.m.

On Sunday morning after breakfast, we will have our Annual Membership Meeting at 9:30 a.m. Anyone wishing to have Sunday lunch before heading home it will be on your own in the dining room.

Checkout is at 11:00 a.m., when we say our farewell until the next time we are fortunate enough to cross paths. I look forward to seeing you there! Any questions, please call or text Cindy Slater at 724-570-8502.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

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

Cindy Slater - 125 North Center Street Bridgeport WV 26330

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 CONTACT CINDY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

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 @ \$268.00 Double Occupancy \$ _____

_____ Single Room Supplement @ \$398.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____



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Foray Ho!

We'll be at Foray when this issue hits your mail box, traveling throughout the Pocahontas County highlands.

Photo by Cynthia Mullens

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