

Contents	Page
Black Vulture Nest in Pendleton County, West Virginia	
—Carla J. Dove and Christopher M. Milensky	136
A.O.U. Taxonomic Changes	
—Albert R. Buckelew Jr.	140
Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2009	
—Ronald A. Canterbury	142
Field Notes	
—Casey Rucker	146

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Black Vulture Nest in Pendleton County, West Virginia

Carla J. Dove and Christopher M. Milensky

On May 29, 2010, we discovered a Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) nest on a rocky slope (38°43'00"N 79°16'55" W) approximately 1.25 miles northeast of Ruddle in Pendleton County, West Virginia. The elevation for this nest is ca. 2,500 feet. Two chicks, rich buff in color, were huddled on the bare ground 10 feet back from the entrance of a limestone cave. The broken eggshells were still present, and we estimate the chicks were not more than a few days old. The cave, located on private property, had an entrance diameter approximately 12 feet wide and 5 feet high and was on a sloping shelf. Our observation of this nest site is consistent with Jackson's (1983) account that 14.9% of Black Vultures nest in caves and Buckley's (1999) report that this species does not build a nest but lays eggs directly on the ground in dark recesses or under cover of some sort.

Upon our discovery of this nest, one adult Black Vulture flew from the cave, perched on a nearby tree branch, and immediately regurgitated. The adult continued to make low, deep-throated hisses and groans until we left the area. As we departed, the adult followed us, leaping from tree to tree, until we were well away from the nesting area. The cave also appeared to have been occupied by Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) in previous years due to the presence of a presumed old nest of sticks and dried leaves with many molted feathers from this species. We returned to the cave on July 11, 2010, and found no sign of either chick, but visited the cave again on July 24 and found one chick huddled in the interior of the cave.

Previously published nesting records of Black Vultures in West Virginia are from Grant (Mitchell, 1988), Wyoming (Phillips, 2004), Monroe, Morgan, and Berkeley Counties (Hall, 1983). Black Vultures are known to be experiencing range expansions in the eastern United States (Buckley, 1999) and are thought to have gained access to West Virginia from the south through the Kanawha Valley and the corridor of the New River (Hall, 1983; Mitchell, 1988). The first published sight record of a Black Vulture in West Virginia was July 3, 1930 (Handley, 1931), but today this species is commonly observed in West Virginia.

We thank J. and D. Lively for access to the site and R. Clapp for breeding information on this species. Morgan Gerard assisted with the site visit on July 24.

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Two Black Vulture chicks in a cave nest in Pendleton County, West Virginia, May 29, 2010. Photo by Carla Dove.

Juvenile Black Vulture in cave nest, July 24, 2010. Photo by Christopher Milensky.

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A.O.U. Taxonomic Changes

Albert R. Buckelew Jr.

A number of changes in the The Fifty-first Supplement to The American Ornithologists' Union *Check-List of North American Birds* (Chesser et al., 2010) result in changes to the West Virginia list. In addition, I missed a change or two in my review (Buckelew, 2009) of the Fiftieth Supplement (Chesser et al., 2009).

The genus *Piranga*, which includes the Summer Tanager and the Scarlet Tanager, was removed from the tanager family, Thraupidae, in the 2009 supplement, and placed at the top of the list of birds in the Cardinalidae, the Cardinal family. Thus the family Thraupidae is removed from the West Virginia list entirely, and our “tanagers” are moved to the top of the Cardinal family.

A number of changes in the Fifty-first Supplement impact the West Virginia list. The common name of our Black Scoter has been changed to American Scoter, because the American Scoter is now considered to be a separate species from the Black Scoter.

The check-list order of the following families has been changed to Ciconiidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Pelecanidae, Ardeidae, Threskironithidae, Cathartidae. The Osprey has been placed in its own family, the Pandionidae, which now follows the Cathartidae in the checklist order. In the Scolopacidae, the order of species is Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Upland Sandpiper, and the remaining species in the family in the same order as before. In the Laridae, Sabine's Gull and Bonaparte's Gull now are found at the top of the list, and the terns are in the following order: Sooty Tern, Least Tern, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Common Tern, and Forster's Tern. Yellow-billed Cuckoo now precedes Black-billed Cuckoo on the checklist.

The Whip-poor-will has been split into two species, the Mexican Whip-poor-will and the Eastern Whip-poor-will, ours being the Eastern Whip-poor-will. The Pacific Wren has been split from our Winter Wren.

The Gnatcatchers, including our Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, have been taken out of the Sylviidae and placed in a new family, the Polioptilidae, which is placed between the wren family, Troglodytidae, and the kinglet family, Regulidae. The family Sylviidae is no longer on the West Virginia checklist.

A new family, the Calcaridae, placed after the waxwing family, Bombycillidae, now holds the longspurs and the Snow Bunting.

Several changes of scientific names are made to species found in West Virginia. The scientific names of several species of the Parulidae, the wood warblers, have been changed. Bird watchers will find many other changes, some of which may lead to new species being added to the life list, on the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American birds at www.aou.org/checklist/north. As a result of changes

in the A.O.U. Check-List and new species accepted by the West Virginia Bird Records Committee, many changes have been made to the BBC check-list since it was last published, and it is obvious that the Club should publish a revised check-list soon. *The Redstart* follows the AOU nomenclature and systematics. Therefore, the new names and sequences will be used in *The Redstart* beginning with this issue of our journal.

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Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2009

Ronald A. Canterbury

This report documents the 15th year of bird-banding at the Three Rivers Migration Observatory (TRMO). Banding was conducted on only 57 days from August 9–October 22, 2009. Captured were 2,286 birds, including 105 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that were released unbanded. Eighty-one species were handled. Table 1 lists the species and number of individuals per species captured during the autumn 2009 season, and Figure 1 shows the number of birds captured per day. The Tennessee Warbler ($n = 230$) was the most numerous species captured.

The bird movement in August was poor, and the weather was relatively hot and dry. Some warblers moved through in late August and early September, but no relatively large movement was seen until September 20. The last week of September was relatively strong in bird flights. The banding pattern seen in October was better than the last several years. Overall, the banding station experienced gusty, high winds on numerous days and above average rainfall compared with typical fall seasons. The avian flight at this station was better than in 2008, and the flycatcher flight was better than the last several fall seasons. The peak banding date this season was September 27 when 91 birds were captured, and the peak migration appeared to be the last five days of September during which 427 birds were banded (Figure 1).

Scott Perry and Andrew Canterbury assisted with data collection. Financial support was provided by Southern West Virginia Bird Research Center.

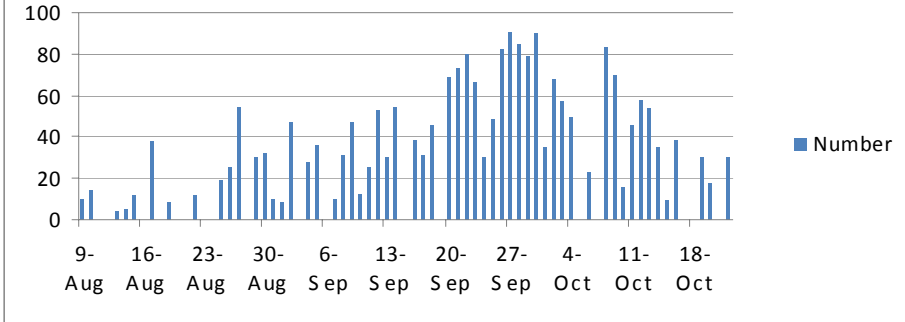
Table 1
Species list for the Autumn 2009 season

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Sept. 8			
American Woodcock	2	Sept. 30	Oct. 10		
Mourning Dove	4	Aug. 19	Sept. 30		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	105	Aug. 9	Sept. 30	7	Aug. 22
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Oct. 4			
Downy Woodpecker	8	Aug. 10	Oct. 1		
Hairy Woodpecker	2	Aug. 17	Aug. 30		
Eastern Wood-Pewee	18	Aug. 10	Oct. 19	4	Sept. 27
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3	Aug. 17	Sept. 1		
“Trail’s Flycatcher	10	Aug. 10	Sept. 10		

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Least Flycatcher	6	Aug. 14	Sept. 23		
Eastern Phoebe	29	Aug. 15	Oct. 22	3	Sept. 20
White-eyed Vireo	13	Aug. 15	Sept. 30		
Yellow-throated Vireo	10	Aug. 25	Sept. 30		
Blue-headed Vireo	24	Aug. 10	Oct. 22	4	Oct. 19
Philadelphia Vireo	1	Sept. 16			
Red-eyed Vireo	79	Aug. 9	Oct. 4	8	Aug. 25
Blue Jay	16	Aug. 14	Oct. 19	3	Oct. 2
Carolina Chickadee	30	Aug. 19	Oct. 22	5	Oct. 12
Tufted Titmouse	43	Aug. 10	Oct. 22	7	Sept. 27
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	Sept. 4	Oct. 19		
Brown Creeper	1	Oct. 12			
Carolina Wren	25	Aug. 9	Sept. 30	5	Sept. 27
House Wren	15	Aug. 14	Oct. 8		
Winter Wren	6	Oct. 4	Oct. 19		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10	Sept. 30	Oct. 22		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	25	Sept. 27	Oct. 19	4	Oct. 12
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9	Aug. 9	Sept. 9		
Veery	7	Sept. 8	Oct. 10		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	30	Sept. 13	Oct. 10	5	Sept. 27
Swainson's Thrush	74	Sept. 8	Oct. 22	5	Sept. 30
Hermit Thrush	5	Oct. 1	Oct. 19		
Wood Thrush	19	Aug. 22	Oct. 10	4	Oct. 2
American Robin	10	Aug. 17	Oct. 4		
Gray Catbird	70	Aug. 9	Oct. 10	7	Sept. 27
Cedar Waxwing	85	Aug. 22	Oct. 10	20	Sept. 30
Blue-winged Warbler	9	Aug. 13	Sept. 20		
Golden-winged Warbler	1	Aug. 29			
Tennessee Warbler	230	Sept. 1	Oct. 22	35	Sept. 27
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	Oct. 2	Oct. 19		
Nashville Warbler	20	Aug. 29	Oct. 19	5	Sept. 20
Northern Parula	7	Aug. 10	Sept. 20		
Yellow Warbler	3	Aug. 17			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	34	Aug. 15	Oct. 2	7	Sept. 20
Magnolia Warbler	89	Aug. 29	Oct. 19	10	Sept. 27
Cape May Warbler	11	Sept. 10	Oct. 2		
Black-throated Blue Warbler	30	Sept. 9	Oct. 8	8	Sept. 20
Yellow-rumped Warbler	61	Sept. 30	Oct. 22	10	Oct. 22
Black-throated Green Warbler	41	Aug. 15	Oct. 8	4	Sept. 30

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Blackburnian Warbler	18	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	3	Sept. 27
Yellow-throated Warbler	4	Aug. 9	Sept. 9		
Palm Warbler	21	Sept. 10	Oct. 19	6	Oct. 8
Bay-breasted Warbler	61	Sept. 8	Oct. 10	5	Sept. 30
Blackpoll Warbler	27	Sept. 23	Oct. 22	3	Sept. 27
Cerulean Warbler	1	Aug. 15			
Black-and-white Warbler	42	Aug. 9	Oct. 2	5	Aug. 17
American Redstart	40	Aug. 10	Oct. 8	4	Sept. 10
Worm-eating Warbler	10	Aug. 15	Sept. 30		
Ovenbird	59	Aug. 14	Oct. 8	7	Sept. 20
Northern Waterthrush	3	Sept. 27	Oct. 8		
Kentucky Warbler	3	Aug. 17	Aug. 22		
Connecticut Warbler	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 27		
Mourning Warbler	1	Sept. 23			
Common Yellowthroat	61	Aug. 17	Oct. 22	9	Sept. 30
Hooded Warbler	66	Aug. 9	Oct. 8	5	Sept. 27
Canada Warbler	2	Sept. 1	Sept. 23		
Scarlet Tanager	45	Aug. 17	Oct. 12	4	Oct. 2
Eastern Towhee	26	Aug. 10	Oct. 22	4	Oct. 12
Chipping Sparrow	50	Aug. 15	Oct. 19	8	Oct. 8
Field Sparrow	31	Aug. 10	Oct. 22	7	Oct. 2
Song Sparrow	45	Aug. 10	Oct. 12	10	Oct. 12
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	Oct. 8	Oct. 22		
Swamp Sparrow	19	Oct. 2	Oct. 22	5	Oct. 8
White-throated Sparrow	52	Sept. 30	Oct. 22	8	Oct. 12
Dark-eyed Junco	10	Oct. 8	Oct. 19		
Northern Cardinal	29	Aug. 10	Oct. 13	5	Oct. 2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	11	Sept. 20	Oct. 13		
Indigo Bunting	60	Aug. 17	Oct. 13	10	Aug. 29
House Finch	34	Oct. 2	Oct. 22	20	Oct. 2
American Goldfinch	101	Aug. 15	Oct. 13	32	Oct. 13

Figure 1. Number of Birds Captured per Day in Autumn 2009 at TRMO



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Field Notes Spring Season

March 1 through May 31, 2010

Casey Rucker

After the previous winter, this spring was a warm relief. Spring arrived at the beginning of March, there were no major snowstorms, and temperatures averaged 2.8 degrees above normal for the period. The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University reported slightly-below-normal average precipitation of 11.28 inches. Melting snow and heavy rain caused a Presidential disaster declaration due to flooding in Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Mercer, and Raleigh Counties in March.

These notes were gathered from the National Audubon Society sponsored West Virginia Bird Listserv, from bird count results, and from field notes submitted to the editor by email and regular mail. The full content of the submitted notes by the contributors of the WV Listserv may be viewed by visiting the archives at www.list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html.

Although no mega-rarities appeared in West Virginia during the spring, familiar species were present in good numbers, with 232 species reported in the state, including 36 species of warblers.

Ducks, Swans, and Geese—**Canada Geese** were widespread as usual throughout the state, and were our only geese during the spring. On March 18, Davette Saeler reported three **Mute Swans** on the West Fork River in Clarksburg, Harrison County, that had been there for the past winter. Terry Bronson saw three adult and two immature **Tundra Swans** at Cheat Lake Park, Monongalia County, on March 16. The warm weather may have spurred ducks to head north early, as sightings peaked during the first three weeks of March. On March 2, Mike Griffith spotted our only scoter this season, a **White-winged Scoter** at Beech Fork Lake Dam, Wayne County. Wilma Jarrell scoped eight **Long-tailed Ducks** above Hannibal Dam on March 22, and Matthew Orsiefound seven on the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County on March 26. Although there were many reports statewide of **Wood Ducks, Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers**, and slightly fewer of **Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneyes, and Red-breasted Mergansers**, there continued to be relatively scanty reports of many species of waterfowl. There were reports from five or fewer counties of these waterfowl species, in addition to the **White-winged Scoter** and **Long-tailed Duck**: **American Wigeon**: Cabell (DP), Mason (DP), Monongalia (TB), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; **Blue-winged Teal**: Cabell (GR), Marion (TB), Mason (DP), Taylor (TB), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; **Northern Shoveler**: Cabell (GR) and Wetzel (WJ) Coun-

ties; **Northern Pintail**: Cabell (DP), Monongalia (TB), and Wood (TB) Counties; **Green-winged Teal**: Cabell (DP), Jefferson (MO), Mason (DP), Monongalia (TB), and Wood (TB) Counties; **Canvasback**: Grant (RB), Jefferson (MO), and Mason (DP) Counties; **Redhead**: Greenbrier (BWi), Jefferson (MO), Mason (DP), Summers (STF), and Wood (TB) Counties; **Greater Scaup**: Cabell (GR), Jefferson (MO), Mason (DP), Monongalia (MO), and Wood (TB) Counties; **Common Merganser**: Jefferson (*with chicks*, MO), Monongalia (TB), Summers (MAW), and Tucker (*with chicks*, CR, KS) Counties. Jean Neely found a late **Ring-necked Duck** on May 19 in a drainage pond at Shepherd University, Jefferson County.

Quail—Northern Bobwhite made appearances in Berkeley (SS) and Greenbrier (STF) Counties.

Pheasants, Grouse, and Turkeys—Matthew Orsie (Jefferson) and Bob Burrell (Monongalia) both found **Ring-necked Pheasants** this spring. Rob Tallman saw **Ruffed Grouse** in Randolph County, as did Marquette Crockett in Tucker County and Wilma Jarrell in Wetzel County. Birders throughout the state reported **Wild Turkeys**.

Loons, Grebes—Sue Olcott rescued a **Red-throated Loon** that was grounded in a parking lot in Worthington, Marion County. The uninjured bird bit and poked Ms. Olcott thoroughly before she released it at Prickett's Fort State Park. No additional sightings were reported. Wendell Argabrite and Wilma Jarrell both found **Common Loons** on the Ohio River, at Crab Creek, Mason County, and near Proctor, Wetzel County, respectively. Kyle Aldinger spied a **Common Loon** in Morgantown, Monongalia County, and Kate Weatherby saw a **Common Loon** on the Shenandoah River, Jefferson County. Grebes were relatively scarce during the spring. **Pied-billed Grebes** and **Horned Grebes** appeared in only five counties each: Cabell (both grebes, BBo, CE, KK, GR, BW); Jefferson (**Pied-billed**, MO), Kanawha (**Pied-billed**, JT), Mason (both, WA, KK, GR, ReT), Monongalia (**Horned**, TB), Putnam (**Horned**, CE), and Wetzel (both, WJ) Counties. Wendell Argabrite, Gary Rankin, and Rennie Talbert found the state's only reported **Red-necked Grebes**, a pair, on March 14 above the dam at Robert C. Byrd Locks in Mason County.

Cormorants—Beth Mankins saw a flock of at least 36 **Double-crested Cormorants** on French Creek at Belmont, Pleasants County, on March 7. Reports of **Cormorants** came from eight other counties: Cabell (WA), Hampshire (TB), Jefferson (MO), Lewis (DSa), Mason (DP), Putnam (CE), Summers (JJP), and Wood (WJ).

Bitterns, Herons, and Egrets—The Potomac Valley Audubon Society Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon, held on May 8 and 9, discovered an **American Bittern**, as well as a **Least Bittern** at Altona Marsh, Berkeley County, where David Myles also reported one on May 10. David Patick heard a **Least Bittern** at Greenbottom WMA in Cabell County, on May 23. **Great Blue** and **Green Herons** appeared throughout the state, and Cynthia Ellis noted 24 active **Great Blue Heron** nests at the rookery

north of Buffalo, Putnam County, on April 2. Davette Saeler reported the only **Snowy Egret** of the season, April 23, at Veteran's Park in Clarksburg, Harrison County. Reports of **Great Egrets** came from seven counties: Cabell (GR), Marion (SO), Mason (WA), Monongalia (DCo), Randolph (RT), Taylor (TB), and Wetzel (WJ).

Vultures—Black Vultures made appearances in nine counties, while 16 counties had reports of **Turkey Vultures**.

Osprey, Hawks, and Eagles—Osprey and Bald Eagles were reported throughout the state, generally in small numbers. Participants in Jim and Judy Phillips's eagle survey found 6 adult and 13 immature **Bald Eagles** on March 6, and Bill Kennell reported a **Bald Eagle** nest on the Cheat River near Point Marion in Marion County on May 10. **Northern Harriers** appeared in reports from Barbour County (JD), Cabell County (DB), Harrison County (JD), Mason County (DP), Summers County (JJP), Tucker County (MC), and Wood County (TB). There were **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's Hawks** in reports from birders throughout the state. In the state's lone sighting, on March 6, Bill and Emilie Johnson saw the last of a **Northern Goshawk** that had lingered at their house in Morgantown, Monongalia County, since December of 2009. Birders in most parts of the state reported **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Broad-winged Hawks**, and **Red-tailed Hawks**. Steve Kimbrell found the last **Rough-legged Hawk** of the winter season on March 6 in Tucker County. Jim and Judy Phillips' eagle survey recorded 3 immature and two adult **Golden Eagles** on March 6, and Ken Sturm saw the only other reported **Golden** soaring over the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge headquarters on March 24.

Falcons—Many birders reported **American Kestrels** in most parts of the state. Wendell Argabrite found a **Merlin** in Barboursville, Preston County, on March 23; and on May 20, Ken Sturm saw a soaring **Merlin** on the Freeland tract of Canaan Valley NWR, not far from where the family of **Merlins** was reported last July. **Peregrine Falcon** sightings came only from Kanawha County (JT), Monongalia County (KK) and Wood County (DJE).

Rails, Coots—Virginia Rails made appearances in three counties: Berkeley (SS), Jefferson (MO), and Mason (GR). On April 24, Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite found a **Sora** at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County, and Matthew Orsieheard a **Sora** in Stauffer's Marsh, Berkeley County, on May 10. **American Coots** appeared in only six counties this spring.

Cranes—On April 16, Xiaohan Ye saw a **Sandhill Crane** flying over Morgantown, Monongalia County.

Plovers—Black-bellied Plovers made appearances in Mason County on May 7 and 8, observed by Wendell Argabrite and Michael Griffith at Byrd Locks, Mason County, on April 11. **Killdeer** were well represented with reports from 21 counties.

Sandpipers—Sixteen sandpiper species appeared this spring. Mason County was the sandpiper hotspot of the state, producing the only state reports of **American**

Avocet (MG), **Ruddy Turnstone** (WA), **White-rumped Sandpiper** (WA, MG), **Long-billed Dowitcher** (MG, GR), and **Red-necked Phalarope** (WA, MG). Wendell Argabrite and Michael Griffith had a 12-shorebird day in Mason County on May 12. Observers reported **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers** and **American Woodcocks** from at least 10 counties each. Other sandpipers were reported in six or fewer counties: **Greater Yellowlegs** in Greenbrier (BWi), Jefferson (MO), Marion (TB), Mason (GR), and Pocahontas (DP) Counties; **Lesser Yellowlegs** in Berkeley (BD, LeJ, MO), Jefferson (MO), Mason (WA, DP), Pocahontas (DP), Preston (DCo), and Taylor (TB) Counties; **Semipalmated Sandpiper** in Berkeley (SS) and Mason (DP) Counties; **Least Sandpiper** in Berkeley (MO), Jefferson (CD), Mason (WA, MG), and Pocahontas (DP) Counties; **Pectoral Sandpiper** in Berkeley (SS), Hardy (DH, KKi, JW), Jefferson (MO), Mason (WA), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; **Dunlin** in Mason (GR) and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; **Short-billed Dowitcher** in Mason (WA, MG) and Preston (DCo) Counties; and **Wilson's Snipe** in Berkeley (SS), Hardy (DH, KKi, JW), Harrison (DSa), Mason (DP), Monroe (WS), and Wood (TB) Counties.

Gulls and Terns—Gulls appeared sporadically, with **Bonaparte's Gull** sightings in five counties, **Ring-billed Gull** in 11 counties, and **Herring Gull** in three counties. There were a few sightings of terns during the spring. Birders in three counties found **Caspian Terns**: Berkeley (SS), Jefferson (CD, MO), and Mason (WA). May 8 was **Common Tern** day in West Virginia, with our only sightings this spring made at two ends of the state, one by Sandy Sagalkin in Berkeley County and the other in Summers County, where a **Common Tern** appeared at Bluestone Dam during the 39th Spring Migration Bird Count of the Bibbee Nature Club, as reported by Jim Phillips. Beverly Delidow, John Hubbard, Derrick Kolling, Gary Rankin, and John Waugaman found the only reported **Forster's Tern** during the season, at Shady Acres Campground, Mason County.

Columbidae—**Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continue to reside throughout the state.

Cuckoos—**Yellow-billed Cuckoos** began to arrive in the state on the first of May, and by the end of the month there were reports in 15 counties. There were only three counties reporting **Black-billed Cuckoo**: Pendleton (CR), Preston (TB) and, Wood (JB).

Owls—Owl reports were scanty this spring. Three counties reported **Eastern Screech-Owls**: Cabell (BD, JH, DK, GR, JWg), Jefferson (CD), and Wayne (JWg), and three counties reported **Great Horned Owls**: Berkeley (Potomac Valley Audubon Society Birdathon), Preston (TB), and Wood (TB). Nine counties reported **Barred Owl**: Berkeley (Potomac Valley Audubon Society Birdathon), Cabell (TI); Monongalia (KA), Nicholas (JCS), Pocahontas (DP), Ritchie (TB), Tucker (International Migratory Bird Count), and Wayne (BD). On March 24, Derek Courtney encountered a **Northern Saw-Whet Owl** at the Cranesville Swamp Preserve in Preston County.

Goatsuckers and Swifts—Common Nighthawks made early appearances in Harrison County, where Davette Saeler reported one on March 18 at her house in Jane Lew at about the same time as the previous year, and in Wayne County, where John Waugaman heard one calling on Brumfield Ridge on March 17. The other reports of **Common Nighthawk** all dated from May, in Braxton (WG, DH), Pocahontas [Rockingham (VA) Bird Club], Putnam (KK), and Wetzel (WJ). April was the month for **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** reports: from Berkeley (WH), Putnam (CE), and Wayne (JWg) Counties. **Chimney Swifts** began to return at the beginning of April, and by mid-May there were 15 counties with reports.

Hummingbirds and Kingfishers—Ruby-throated Hummingbirds began arriving in mid-April. Birders in 13 counties reported sightings this spring. There were reports of **Belted Kingfisher** in 14 counties.

Woodpeckers—Our state's seven species of woodpeckers were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in 11 counties: Berkeley (SS), Brooke (JRg), Greenbrier (BW), Hardy (DH, KK, JW), Harrison (JoS), Jefferson (MO), Nicholas (JCS), Pocahontas (SK), Preston (DCo), Randolph (RB), and Wetzel (WJ). Bruni Haydl received a yard visit from a bedraggled **Red-headed Woodpecker** in Jefferson County on April 26.

Flycatchers—West Virginia birders reported eight species of flycatcher returning this spring, all local breeders. Common throughout the state were **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Eastern Kingbird**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Phoebe**, the last reported in a whopping 27 counties. Of our other Empidonax flycatchers, there were appearances in five counties each for **Alder Flycatcher**: Berkeley (SS), Jefferson (Potomac Valley Audubon Society), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas (Rockingham (VA) Bird Club), and Tucker (KS); and **Least Flycatcher**: Hardy (DH, WG), Pendleton (CR), Pocahontas (DP), Preston (DCo), and Tucker (KS); and in seven counties for **Willow Flycatcher**: Berkeley (SS), Mason (MG, GR), Pocahontas [Rockingham (VA) Bird Club], Putnam (CE), Summers (JJP), Tucker (KS), and Wood (DE).

Shrikes—Berkeley County hosted the only **Loggerhead Shrike** sighting this spring. On March 21, Jon and B. J. Little found a **Loggerhead Shrike** for the second season in a row, this time in southern Berkeley County. There was a possible sighting of a **Loggerhead Shrike** at Dolly Sods, reported at second hand by Terry Bronson, which from the description likely took place in Grant County at the top of the Allegheny Front. The bird was not relocated.

Vireos—Two lucky birders reported **Philadelphia Vireos** in early May. Diane Holsinger was with Willa Grafton on May 5 when they saw a **Philadelphia Vireo** at the Christmas Tree Farm in Heaters, Braxton County, and Jon Benedetti was with Barb and Neal Hohman and John Tharp II at McDonough Wildlife Preserve on May 10 (more on this remarkable day later) when they found four **Philadelphia Vireos**. Our five breeding vireos, **White-eyed**, **Yellow-throated**, **Blue-headed**, **Warbling**, and

Red-eyed Vireos returned to nesting grounds throughout the state beginning in mid-April.

Crows, Jays, and Ravens—**Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. Carol Del-Colle heard **Fish Crows** calling in Charles Town, Jefferson County, the only county where they were reported, on March 11.

Larks—Matthew Orsiefound a pair of **Horned Larks** in Jefferson County on March 20.

Swallows—The first swallows appeared on March 6, when Matthew Orsiesaw four **Tree Swallows** at the Route 9 bridge in Jefferson County. **Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Barn Swallows** were widespread returners to West Virginia. There were fewer reports of **Purple Martins, Bank Swallows, and Cliff Swallows**. Wendell Argabrite scored a double hat-trick of swallows at Robert C. Byrd Locks, Mason County, having seen all six of our breeding swallows on April 8. Jim Triplett reported nesting **Purple Martins** in Charleston, Kanawha County, on May 2.

Paridae—Both species of chickadee made their usual appearances in their bifurcated territories in West Virginia. **Tufted Titmice** were well reported throughout the state as well.

Nuthatches—**Red-breasted Nuthatches** appeared in six counties: Braxton (DH), Monongalia (BD, LeJ, MO), Pocahontas (Rockingham (VA) Bird Club), Preston (BD, LeJ, MO), Raleigh (WS), and Tucker (TB). **White-breasted Nuthatches** occupied their usual spots in reports from throughout the state.

Creepers—Birders in 11 counties reported **Brown Creeper**: Barbour (JD), Berkeley (CBC), Greenbrier (STF), Jefferson (CD), Monongalia (TB), Pendleton (CR), Pocahontas (KC, DP), Preston (TB), Ritchie (TB), Summers (JJP), Wayne (JW), and Wetzel (WJ).

Wrens—**Carolina and House Wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state, although in some parts of the mountainous regions there were very few **Carolina Wrens** this spring, a possible result of a die-off during the past harsh winter. **Winter Wrens** were reported only in Pendleton (CR) and Summers (JJP) Counties.

Gnatcatchers—**Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** returned to breeding grounds in most parts of the state.

Kinglets—**Golden-crowned Kinglets** made appearances in nine counties, with sightings distributed throughout the spring season. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** migrated in good numbers throughout the state in April and May.

Thrushes—Seven species of thrush were found in West Virginia this spring. **Eastern Bluebirds, Wood Thrushes, and American Robin** were, as usual, seen throughout most reporting counties. There were fewer reports of the more-localized **Veery and Hermit Thrush**. There were two reports of migrating **Gray-cheeked**

Thrushes, in Monongalia (JD) and Wood (JB) Counties. **Swainson's Thrushes** made migratory appearances in seven counties.

Mockingbirds and Thrashers—**Gray Catbirds**, **Northern Mockingbirds**, and **Brown Thrashers** made outspoken appearances on breeding grounds throughout the state.

Starlings—**European Starlings** continued to occupy widespread habitats throughout our state.

Pipits—On March 7, Mindy and Alan Waldron saw 30 to 40 **American Pipits** along the Bluestone River at Bluestone State Park, Summers County, during the annual eagle count. Derek Courtney found a flock of approximately 50 **American Pipits** in Pocahontas County on May 9.

Waxwings—Spring saw the usual rise in **Cedar Waxwing** sightings from most parts of the state, with more reports in May than during the prior two months combined.

Warblers—The following warblers, all regular migrants through or breeders in West Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Blue-winged** on April 22 in Barbour (TB), Calhoun (TF), and Putnam (CE); **Golden-winged** on May 7 in Greenbrier (BW); **Orange-crowned** on April 30 in Jefferson (MO); **Tennessee** on April 28 in Wood (JB); **Nashville** and **Chestnut-sided** on April 26 in Kanawha (CE); **Magnolia** on April 30 in Pleasants (JB); **Cape May** on May 1 in Wood (JB); **Black-throated Blue** on April 28 in Randolph (RT); **Northern Parula** on April 6 in Summers (JJP); **Yellow** on April 17 in Marion (SO); **Black-throated Green** on April 11 in Calhoun (TF); **Yellow-rumped** on March 1 in Kanawha (JT); **Blackburnian** on April 24 in Mason (WA, MG, JK, DP); **Yellow-throated** on April 1 in Summers (JJP); **Pine** on March 10 in Summers (JJP); **Prairie** on April 21 in Wetzel (WJ); **Palm** on April 21 in Wetzel (WJ); **Bay-breasted** on May 7 in Monongalia (DCo); **Blackpoll** on May 6 in Berkeley (MO); **Cerulean** on April 19 in Wayne (ReT); **Black-and-white** on April 6 in Wayne (MG); **American Redstart** on April 15 in Wayne (MG); **Prothonotary** on April 24 in Berkeley (Potomac Valley Audubon Society) and Cabell (WA, MG, JK, DP); **Worm-eating** on April 20 in Summers (JJP); **Swainson's** on April 28 in Marion (JoH); **Ovenbird** on April 10 in Wayne (WA, MG, DP); **Northern Waterthrush** on May 1 in Pleasants (JaH); **Louisiana Waterthrush** on April 7 in Jefferson (JL) and Kanawha (DB); **Kentucky** on April 14 in Cabell (TI); **Connecticut** on April 25 in Cabell (MG); **Mourning** on April 14 in Cabell (TI); **Hooded** on April 15 in Wayne (MG); **Wilson's** on May 5 in Berkeley (MO); **Common Yellowthroat** on April 22 in Taylor (TB); **Canada** on May 1 in Pleasants (JaH); and **Yellow-breasted Chat** on April 25 in Cabell (ReT). Notably, the vast majority of these arrivals took place on or before the "first-seen" records listed by George A. Hall in *West Virginia Birds*. Unseasonably mild weather in March and April, may have contributed to these early arrivals.

Jon Benedetti, Barb and Neal Hohman, and John Tharp II enjoyed a spectacular

23-warbler-species day at McDonough Wildlife Preserve, Wood County, on May 10. Many of the state's birders enjoyed the sights and sounds of the **Swainson's Warbler** that Joey Herron found at Prickett's Fort State Park in Marion County in late April. He reported the bird as still present on May 21. Derek Courtney found a **Swainson's Warbler** at Joe's Run in Monongalia County on May 7, and Terry Bronson relocated the bird there on May 15. A number of birders reported greater-than-usual numbers of **Blackpoll Warbler** moving through the state this spring.

Towhees, Sparrows, and Juncos—The first **Eastern Towhee** of the season was in Preston County, reported by Terry Bronson. Fifteen species of sparrow made their usual appearances in many parts of the state. Of our winter sparrows, **American Tree Sparrows** appeared to have been chased north by our spring's warm temperatures, with Terry Bronson providing the state's latest report on March 12 of four individuals near Reedsville, Preston County. **White-throated** and **White-crowned Sparrows** lingered throughout the season and were widely reported. Resident, migrant, and returning sparrow species made first appearances this season in the following counties: **Chipping** on March 20 in Wayne (DP); **Clay-colored** on May 7 in Marion (TB); **Field** and **Vesper** on March 19 in Wetzel (WJ); **Savannah** and **Grasshopper** on March 22 in Wetzel (WJ); **Henslow's** on May 2 in Preston (DCo); **Fox** on March 10 in Monongalia (FS); **Song** on March 4 in Monongalia (TB), **Lincoln's** on the 23-the big warbler day of Jon Benedetti et al. at McDonough, in Wood on May 10; **Swamp** on March 20 in Jefferson (MO); and **Dark-eyed Junco** on March 2 in Monongalia (TB).

Cardinals, Grosbeaks and Buntings—**Summer Tanagers** appeared in counties on or near the Ohio River: Putnam (CE), Ritchie (JP), Wayne (JWg) and Wood (JB). Twenty-two counties saw reports of returning **Scarlet Tanagers**, the first of which was on April 21 in Wayne County by Michael Griffith. **Northern Cardinals**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, and **Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. Wil Hershberger found the first-arriving **Blue Grosbeak** in Berkeley County on May 1. Three other counties hosted **Blue Grosbeaks**: Matthew Orsiefound one in each of two locations in Jefferson, David Patick reported one at Gallipolis Ferry in Mason, and Gary Felton saw two at a feeder in Preston.

Icterids—**Bobolinks** returned to 10 reporting counties, with an early first appearance on April 23 in Mason County (WA, MG, JK, DP). Many reports of **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Eastern Meadowlarks**, **Common Grackles**, **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, and **Orchard** and **Baltimore Orioles** emanated from areas all over the state. Observers found **Rusty Blackbirds** in four counties: Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (TB), Summers (JJP), and Wyoming, where Tammy Lester observed a cooperative **Rusty Blackbird** in the crabapple tree in her yard.

Finches and Allies: Unlike the previous winter season, there were reports of **Red Crossbill** in West Virginia in Pocahontas (Rockingham (VA) Bird Club) and Preston (DCo) Counties. **Purple Finches**, **House Finches**, and **American Gold-**

finches appeared in reports throughout the state, although in lower numbers than during the previous winter. **Pine Siskins** were present in four counties: Calhoun (TF), Preston (DCo), Putnam (KK), and Wetzel (WJ).

Weaver Finches—The **House Sparrow** continues throughout the state, primarily in urban settings.

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