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Valley Falls State Park Saw-whet Owl Banding Station 2010

Joey Herron

Year number six of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) at Valley Falls State Park netted the second highest number of migrating owls for the fall migration season since the start in 2005. A second set of nets, bringing the total to seven, was added on the south side of the hill, which yielded a significant number of owls.

Banding began on October 8, 2010, and ended on November 28, 2010. Forty-seven owls were captured including three foreign recaptures—one from Maryland and the other two banded in Poughkeepsie, New York. Also, two owls banded here in the fall of 2009 were recaptured this fall while migrating, one on the southern shore of Lake Superior near Paradise, Michigan, and the other on the northern shore of Lake Ontario near Cayuga, Ontario, Canada.

Early November appeared to be the height of the migration with 31 owls captured between November 2 and November 10. The station operated on 24 nights with the nets being opened for 89½ hours. Thirteen of the nights yielded owls with 13 NSWO's captured on the night of November 10.

The station had over 100 visitors from 5 states, including students from the WVU Wildlife Society.

Of the 47 captures, 18 were adults, 29 were hatch year birds. Females again lead the way in captures in 2010 with 34. Interesting this year were the 7 male captures, almost as many as the 9 for the five previous years combined (see following table).

After six years of banding, 179 NSWOs have been captured, including 16 foreign recaptures. The breakdown shows a heavy advantage for females, 69% to 9% for males. The unknown category completes the last 22%. The adult, hatch year ratio is almost even with 46% adult to 54% hatch year individuals.

I would like to thank Valley Falls State Park superintendent, Ron Fawcett, for the use of the park facilities and allowing visitors to experience the fall migration. Without Ron's support this operation would not be possible.

Banding Summary for 2010

Date	NSWO caught
10/08/10	0
10/10/10	0
10/12/10	5
10/14/10	0
10/15/10	0

Date	NSWO caught
10/16/10	0
10/19/10	0
10/22/10	0
10/24/10	0
10/27/10	1
10/28/10	1
10/30/10	1
10/31/10	1
11/02/10	8 (1 foreign recap)
11/06/10	1
11/07/10	2
11/08/10	7
11/10/10	13 (1 foreign recap)
11/11/10	3 (1 foreign recap)
11/12/10	3
11/13/10	1
11/17/10	0
11/21/10	0
11/28/10	0
Total	47

Age

After hatch year (AHY)	13
Second year (SY)	5 38% (adults)
Hatch year (HY)	29 62%

Sex

Female – 34 – 72%

Male – 7 – 15%

Unknown – 6 – 13%

511 Ohio Ave
Fairmont, WV 26554

Swainson's Warbler Summers at Prickett's Fort State Park West Virginia

Joey Herron

Amazingly, a Swainson's Warbler spent the summer of 2010 at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County, West Virginia. I first encountered the bird on the evening of April 28, 2010. In all honesty, I did not realize it until I went home to compile my list of birds seen that evening. I thought it quite unusual that a Louisiana Waterthrush would have a plain breast, and then it hit me! I've got to check it out the next morning to be sure. It took only a few minutes for me to find the bird the next day and verify it as a Swainson's Warbler. What a find and to be so far north of its breeding range was quite unusual (Hall, 1983; Dunn & Garrett, 1997).

After observing the bird numerous times in the same area, I decided to try to catch the bird and band it. The area this bird seemed to establish as its territory consisted of a second growth area to the right of the entrance sign to the fort, between the two bridges, across from the picnic area. At the north end of this small woodlot was an opening that cut east/west across it. Prickett's Creek was just on the other side of this opening and this is where I had first encountered the bird. The canopy cover of the area occupied by the bird was about 60%, and the understory cover was about 70%, thicker in some places.

To capture the bird, I ran two mist nets across this opening on the morning of May 8 and waited. Each time I parked my vehicle at the picnic area, this warbler could be heard blasting away with its "whee whee whip-poor-will" song (Dunn & Garrett, 1997) at some perch in the woodlot. This morning was no different. I first heard the song at 8:30 a.m. and many times after that, but no bird in the net. I did some casual birding in some other areas and checked out the wetland area for ducks and shorebirds. After numerous checks and catching a male Northern Cardinal and a male Eastern Towhee, I decided to close the nets at 11 a.m. As I walked toward the nets, I noticed a small bird in the top trammel, and sure enough it was the Swainson's Warbler! Shaking with excitement, I extracted the bird from the net and placed a nice new band on it, took some pictures, and sent him on his way. What a handsome bird and what a long beak! This was the first Swainson's Warbler I have ever banded.

Surprisingly, this bird stayed all summer and never left the woodlot area. Dozens of birders from all over the east coast came to see this bird—a testimony to the importance of this bird to our state. Birders from Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and many from West Virginia made the trip. I met a man from Queens, New York, and a half dozen people from Ohio who informed me this was a life bird for them, the first time they had seen one.

In all, I encountered the bird on 18 different dates, including the May 8 banding date. The last day I saw and heard this Swainson's Warbler was on July 25, 2010, almost three months from the initial sighting. I went back several times afterward and did not see or hear the bird again. The bird did not return for an encore in 2011.

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511 Ohio Ave
Fairmont, WV 26554

High Population Density of Golden-winged Warblers in Southern West Virginia

Ronald A. Canterbury

Introduction

The Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) has long been a species of special concern throughout its range, and has declined from much of its historical range for more than 40 years (Confer, Hartman, & Roth, 2011). According to the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), the species has had its steepest decline in West Virginia than anywhere throughout its range (Buehler, Roth, Vallender, Will, Confer, Canterbury, Barker-Swathout, Rosenberg, & Bulluck, 2007). However, the Golden-winged Warbler often breeds outside of the areas used for BBS routes in West Virginia and is well into its breeding cycle when most breeding bird surveys are conducted, and, therefore, may be missed on such surveys because males are often silent during this time, or sing intermittently and may be elusive. Consequently, I believe BBS estimates of population trends for this species, given data presented in this paper, are poor estimators at best.

My earlier research in the coalfields of southern West Virginia disclosed that Golden-winged Warblers may reach one of their highest known range-wide population densities at 0.79 birds/ha on their most preferred habitat of upland, narrow contour mine bench sites (Canterbury & Stover, 1999).

In this paper, I report a relatively high, albeit declining, density of Golden-winged Warblers in southern West Virginia, as part of a long-term, ongoing, 24-year study of the populations and habitats of this species in the southern West Virginia coalfields.

Methods

Territorial male Golden-winged Warblers were identified by sight and sound, spot-mapped and GPS referenced, and color banded (Canterbury, 1994). Detailed observations of territory size and overlapping territories, including with its sister species, the Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*, formerly *V. pinus*), were made by observing each territory for at least 20 person-hours during 8-15 visits per study site. Numerous site visits and detailed observations of each territorial male assured that my field crew and I were confident of the number of occupied and unoccupied territories and the number of pairs of birds in any given study area per year. Data were collected from 1993-2010 and density estimates [number of singing males per 100 ha, (Hall, 1983), but converted to number of males or territories/ha to be consistent with current literature] are compared across habitats. Due to yearly variation in population demography, I also report on the highest known density obtained from each sampling locality.

Study Sites

The numerous study sites used for this study are briefly described in Canterbury, Stover, and Nelson (1993) and Shapiro, Canterbury, Stover, and Fleischer (2004). These study sites and sampling localities included mostly upland, narrow contour mine bench successional edges along mature forest (dominated by oak, hickory, maple, and poplar species) mainly in Raleigh and Wyoming Counties.

Results

Golden-winged Warbler densities ranged from an average of 0.09 to 0.82 males (territories)/ha. The results are summarized in Table 1.

The highest densities were noted in old contour mines (Photo 1) along mature (60-90 year old) upland forest (oak-maple-hickory-poplar species) and ridge tops that are sites that were mined in the 1960s to late 1970s, and where successional edge habitat is maintained by industry (mining, gas wells/pipelines), albeit not intentionally.



Photo 1. Golden-winged Warbler contour mine habitat along Upper Big Branch, Wyoming County, West Virginia. Photo by R. Canterbury.

Table 1
 Population density estimates for Golden-winged Warblers (GWWA) and other demographics
 BWWA = Blue-winged Warblers

Site	County	Habitat	Mean Density per year (males/ha) and highest estimate	BWWA present (slopes)	Current GWWA to BWWA ratio (as of 2010)
Guyandotte Mountain – Crane Creek	Wyoming	Forest clear-cut/ selective harvest stand	0.15 0.18	Lower slopes along creek only	4:1
Guyandotte Mountain – Peachtree Ridge	Raleigh	Contour mine bench/forest ecotones	0.61 0.82	Yes, all slopes (lower – ridgetop)	7:1
Guyandotte Mountain – Upper Big Branch	Wyoming	Contour mine bench mainly, but variable – with timber harvest and deep mines	0.34 0.51	Yes, all slopes	3:2

Site	County	Habitat	Mean Density per year (males/ha) and highest estimate	BWWA present (slopes)	Current GWWA to BWWA ratio (as of 2010)
Bragg	Raleigh	Forest clear-cut	0.28 0.32	No	N/A
Clear Creek	Raleigh	Farms, old fields, riparian	0.09 0.20	Yes, all slopes	2:7
Laurel Creek	Mercer	Grazed pastures	0.26 0.30	Yes, all slopes	5:1
Odd strip	Raleigh	Contour mine bench/forest ecotones	0.61 0.70*	Yes, all slopes	7:2
Slab Fork strip	Raleigh	Contour mine bench/forest ecotones	0.00† 0.74	Yes, all slopes	Currently unknown† (only BWWA noted in past 7 years in lower slopes away from the major expressway)

Site	County	Habitat	Mean Density per year (males/ha) and highest estimate	BWWA present (slopes)	Current GWWA to BWWA ratio (as of 2010)
Whitby	Raleigh	Contour mine bench/forest ecotones; wetlands	0.71 0.82	Yes, all slopes	5:3

* Mine site was burned in some areas (cause unknown), which has increased Golden-winged Warbler abundance in recent years; however, the site is destined to become part of the Shawnee Parkway and will be destroyed. † Site destroyed and is now part of the Coalfields Expressway.

Discussion

The Golden-winged Warbler is an early successional species dependent upon appropriate ecotone habitats created by disturbance. In the coalfields of southern West Virginia, the species reaches some of its highest known densities in upland contour mine bench habitats. In this study, Golden-winged Warbler mean yearly densities ranged from 0.09 to 0.82 males/ha with the highest densities occurring in mine habitats (see also Canterbury & Stover, 1999). Despite its long-term population decline and high conservation status, the species remains relatively common in southern West Virginia (although, predominately in upland mine habitats of the state). Unfortunately, its preferred habitat in southern West Virginia is also critically endangered, having undergone advancing forest succession for 30-40 years, is subject to new road development (e.g., Shawnee Parkway and the Coalfields Expressway), and is experiencing increased cowbird parasitism and invasion of exotic plant species, such as Japanese Knotweed and Kudzu (Canterbury, unpublished data).

There are relatively few published densities estimates for this species in the literature. A recent abundance study (Martin, Lutz, & Worland, 2007) has quantified the species habitat use and abundance in northern Wisconsin in shrub swamp and aspen stands and found a low density of 0.02 males/ha. More recently, however, Fowlds (2010) disclosed density estimates of 0.31 males/ha in aspen stands and 0.28 males/ha in swamp edge stands, but low density (0.12 males/ha) in hardwood stands. In the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee, densities ranged from 0.4 territories/10 ha in timber harvests to 3.2 males/10 ha in mined areas, similar to the results of this study (Bulluck, 2007), where densities were highest in mine sites. Likewise, a study in Little Black Mountain, Harlan County, Kentucky, and Lone Mountain, Lee County, Virginia, on the border of these two states produced similar results in terms of preferred habitat of the species, but relatively low density estimates, albeit a potentially increasing population currently without Blue-winged Warbler encroachment (Canterbury, 2007). Kubel and Yahner (2008) conducted a study in Pennsylvania in harvested forests and utility rights-of-way and showed that the Golden-winged Warbler density was similar to those reported herein for southern West Virginia, but that productivity varied with habitat. Productivity of Golden-winged Warblers in habitats reported in this study have been highest in the upland contour mine sites (Canterbury, unpublished data).

In West Virginia, additional study of this species is needed in high elevation wetlands, meadows, bogs, and other parts of the state outside the West Virginia coalfields. Similarly, the impacts of gas wells and drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and pipeline rights-of-way are unknown and merit critical study for this species.

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Department of Biological Sciences
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0006
E-mail: ron.canterbury@uc.edu

Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2010

Ronald A. Canterbury

This report documents the 16th year of bird banding at the Three Rivers Migration Observatory (TRMO). The station was operated for only about one-third capacity due to funding constraints and unfavorable weather (many days with gusty winds). The Beckley, West Virginia, and surrounding area encompassing the banding station (within a 15-mile radius) typically experience about 9.32 inches of rainfall for August-October, but had only 6.65 inches for August-October, 2010. Further, the first frost and snow was not until October 29, 2010. September 2010 was above average in temperature.

Banding was conducted on only 39 days from August 15 through October 31, 2010. Captured were 754 birds, including 20 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that were released unbanded. The number of types of birds handled was 72 species. Table 1 lists the species and number of individuals per species captured during the autumn 2010 season, and Figure 1 shows the number of birds captured per day. As usual, the Tennessee Warbler led the way with 142 individuals captured.

We did not collect enough data to adequately estimate and analyze the migration flight pattern, but according to Figure 1, the pattern was relatively typical with the peak in the middle to the third week of September. The highest number of birds banded was 60 on September 20, and the highest three-day total of 170 birds banded from September 20-22 accounted for nearly 23% of all the birds banded. Some species were virtually absent at this station during the Fall 2010 season, including Nashville Warbler ($n = 1$ banded) and Veery (none captured). Also, despite poor netting coverage, it was still evident that some species were in low numbers for this station, such as the Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler. Most warblers had a shorter duration in their temporal migration pattern, which ended earlier than expected for most species.

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

Table 1
Species list for the Autumn 2010 season

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Mourning Dove	1	Sep. 20			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	20	Aug. 15	Sep. 22	5	Sep. 4
Downy Woodpecker	2	Aug. 22	Sep. 21		
Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	Aug. 28	Sep. 28		
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	2	Aug. 27	Sep. 21		
“Traill’s Flycatcher	1	Sep. 21			
Least Flycatcher	2	Sep. 20	Sep. 30		
Eastern Phoebe	7	Aug. 15	Oct. 11		
White-eyed Vireo	3	Aug. 27	Oct. 11		
Yellow-throated Vireo	4	Aug. 22	Sep. 21	3	Sep. 21
Blue-headed Vireo	9	Sep. 6	Oct. 16	3	Sep. 29
Philadelphia Vireo	1	Sep. 22			
Red-eyed Vireo	10	Aug. 16	Sep. 20	5	Sep. 20
Blue Jay	10	Sep. 4	Oct. 30		
Carolina Chickadee	9	Aug. 22	Oct. 31	3	Sep. 15
Tufted Titmouse	17	Aug. 15	Oct. 31	6	Sep. 28
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	Sep. 30			
Carolina Wren	5	Aug. 15	Oct. 31		
House Wren	6	Sep. 11	Sep. 30		
Winter Wren	5	Sep. 30	Oct. 16		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	Sep. 30	Oct. 17		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	13	Sep. 28	Oct. 31	5	Oct. 16
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4	Aug. 22	Sep. 21		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	11	Aug. 29	Oct. 3	3	Sep. 16
Swainson’s Thrush	46	Aug. 29	Oct. 11	10	Sep. 14
Hermit Thrush	4	Sep. 28	Oct. 30		
Wood Thrush	9	Sep. 14	Sep. 27	4	Sep. 21
American Robin	1	Aug. 20			
Gray Catbird	28	Aug. 15	Oct. 16	9	Sep. 22
Northern Mockingbird	1	Oct. 16			
Brown Thrasher	3	Sep. 8	Sep. 15		
Cedar Waxwing	4	Sep. 30	Oct. 16	3	Sep. 30
Ovenbird	28	Aug. 27	Oct. 10	8	Sep. 21
Worm-eating Warbler	2	Aug. 27	Sep. 20		
Northern Waterthrush	2	Sep. 20	Sep. 29		

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No.	Date
Blue-winged Warbler	4	Aug. 29	Sep. 15		
Black-and-white Warbler	10	Aug. 16	Sep. 28		
Tennessee Warbler	142	Sep. 9	Oct. 9	32	Sep. 21
Nashville Warbler	1	Sep. 20			
Mourning Warbler	2	Aug. 29			
Common Yellowthroat	17	Aug. 27	Sep. 30	5	Sep. 20
Hooded Warbler	23	Aug. 15	Sep. 28	4	Sep. 14
American Redstart	8	Aug. 16	Sep. 22		
Cape May Warbler	6	Sep. 14	Sep. 26	3	Sep. 14
Northern Parula	1	Sep. 26			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	8	Aug. 27	Sep. 20		
Magnolia Warbler	32	Aug. 29	Oct. 3	10	Sep. 28
Bay-breasted Warbler	9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31		
Blackburnian Warbler	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 15		
Blackpoll Warbler	16	Sep. 25	Oct. 11	5	Sep. 29
Black-throated Blue Warbler	6	Sep. 9	Sep. 15	3	Sep. 15
Palm Warbler	8	Sep. 20	Oct. 3		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	4	Oct. 9	Oct. 16		
Prairie Warbler	1	Sep. 20			
Black-throated Green Warbler	4	Aug. 27	Sep. 29		
Canada Warbler	1	Aug. 29			
Wilson's Warbler	6	Sep. 22	Sep. 30	4	Sep. 30
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	Aug. 22			
Eastern Towhee	16	Aug. 21	Oct. 31	4	Sep. 21
Chipping Sparrow	19	Aug. 16	Oct. 11	7	Sep. 29
Field Sparrow	10	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	4	Sep. 30
Fox Sparrow	1	Oct. 17			
Song Sparrow	23	Aug. 15	Oct. 31	5	Aug. 15
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	Sep. 28	Oct. 3		
Swamp Sparrow	8	Sep. 30	Oct. 9	6	Sep. 30
White-throated Sparrow	10	Sep. 30	Oct. 31	5	Oct. 31
Dark-eyed Junco	4	Sep. 30	Oct. 31		
Scarlet Tanager	15	Aug. 16	Sep. 30	4	Sep. 20
Northern Cardinal	14	Aug. 27	Oct. 9	6	Sep. 30
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4	Sep. 20	Sep. 30		
Indigo Bunting	14	Aug. 16	Sep. 20	6	Sep. 20
American Goldfinch	21	Aug. 16	Oct. 31	18	Oct. 22

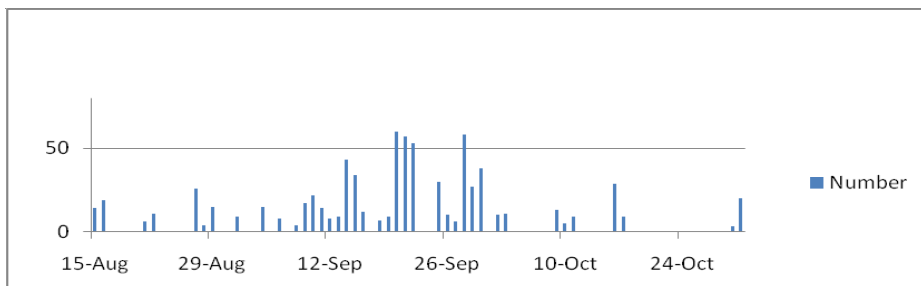


Figure 1. Number of birds captured per day in Autumn 2010 at TRMO.

University of Cincinnati
 Department of Biological Sciences
 Cincinnati, OH 45221-0006
 E-mail: ron.canterbury@uc.edu

A.O.U. Check-list Changes

Albert R. Buckelew Jr.

Recent studies of bird DNA have resulted in changes in the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (Chesser et al., 2011). The changes that affect our West Virginia list include one bird name change and extensive revisions of the Parulidae, the family of the Wood Warblers. Birders with a national list will want to study the A.O.U. list online.

Both the scientific name and common name of the Common Moorhen have been changed. The common name is now, as it was formerly, the Common Gallinule. The new order for the warblers, including only those that are on the West Virginia list, is as follows:

- Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)
- Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)
- Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*)
- Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)
- Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)
- Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)
- Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)
- Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)
- Swainson's Warbler (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*)
- Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*)
- Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*)
- Nashville Warbler (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*)
- Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*)
- Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*)
- Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*)
- Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)
- Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*)
- American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)
- Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*)
- Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*)
- Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*)
- Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*)
- Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*)
- Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)
- Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)
- Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)
Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*)
Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*)
Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)
Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*)
Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*)
Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*)
Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)
Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

The Redstart follows the AOU nomenclature and taxonomy. Therefore, the new name and sequences will be used in this journal beginning with this issue.

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Department of Biology
Bethany College
Bethany, WV 26032

Book Review

Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird by Katie Fallon. 2011. Washington, DC: Ruka Press, 224 pages. Paperback, \$17.95.

In the late 1980s, Chandler Robbins shared Breeding Bird Survey data on the apparent decline of Cerulean Warblers with Paul Hamel, the author of the section on Ceruleans in *Birds of North America*. This led to a symposium presentation, and to publication of “A Warbler in Trouble: *Dendroica cerulea*,” in the book, *Ecology and Conservation of Neotropical Landbirds*. Twenty years later the subject remains one for concern.

One young writer recently wrote of her year of research and travel to find out more. In *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird*, Katie Fallon chronicles her efforts to find the birds and to find reasons for their sharp drop in numbers.

One third of the breeding population of Cerulean Warblers lives within West Virginia. One of the first places Fallon sought Ceruleans was Cooper’s Rock State Forest. She traveled there with Hillar Klandorf, found the bird on a warm sunny day, heard its song, “just a little sneeze,” as noted by Arthur Cleveland Bent, even saw its black feathered “necklace,” and considered that her journey had begun. This was especially comforting to the author. Earlier, on April 16, 2007, she had been in her office as an instructor at Virginia Tech. Some of her students were killed in the tragic shooting there. Sadness would be her recurring companion through the year of pursuit of the Cerulean Warbler.

Before heading to Cooper’s Rock, Fallon had interviewed Petra Wood of West Virginia University. Wood had found much about the use of open versus closed canopy spaces by Ceruleans and about their elevation preferences. While Wood did not point solely to the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining in West Virginia as the one factor in Cerulean decline, she did note that, “. . . in the intact forest we had a lot more birds. . . .”

For birders, fascinating topics are explored at her next stop. Fallon meets field biologists, including Hal Harrison’s great-nephew, Randy Dettmers, at Lewis Wetzel Wildlife Management Area near Jacksonburg, West Virginia. Target netting is used in their research with a decoy nicknamed “Chuck.” The netting could help find out more about the territory of the birds (Why so varied?) and about their social behaviors (Female birds do the “Sit ‘n Spin” and “Bungee Jump”!) What about “kleptoparasitism” and the males’ use of “whisper song?”

Next the writer’s journey took her to Charleston, West Virginia, to Kanawha State Forest, where she and her husband located a Cerulean Warbler nest. Kanawha State Forest was an educated choice, not a lucky one, and as she travels she explains more fully the variety of threats to the diminutive birds and her personal observance of some of those threats.

The author met with groups that are trying to help: the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group and the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative. She recounts the efforts by the Southern Environmental Law Center to have the bird declared endangered. Twenty-seven groups signed the petition, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

As the year moved on, the writer did also, and traveled to Columbia, South America, to find Ceruleans on their winter ground. Happily, she saw children in bird costumes celebrating birds; sadly, some of the research occurred under armed guard.

In South America Katie Fallon saw shade-grown coffee. This practice has many benefits, including the use of less fertilizer and providing tree homes for Cerulean Warblers and other species that shelter in the canopy trees left uncut. So she lists buying shade-grown coffee as one of eight things readers and birders can do to assist in the effort to stem population decline of these warblers. She concludes with these hopes for Ceruleans—“May your trees be old, your mountains high, and your coffee plantations shaded.”

This lyrical and fact-packed yet concise first book was released on October 18, 2011.

Cynthia D. Ellis

Field Notes Spring Season

March 1–May 31, 2011

Casey Rucker

In 2011, West Virginia experienced its wettest spring since recording began in 1895. The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University reported average precipitation of 18.19 inches, or 154% of the 1901–2000 average. Temperatures were above normal for the period, starting with an average March and ending with temperatures soaring above 90 degrees in lower-elevation locations throughout the state during the end of May.

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 e-mail 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 the following Web site: www.list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html.

On May 3, Wendell Argabrite found a **Franklin's Gull** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, for only the third record for this species in the state. Wet weather may have contributed to an unusually good season for waterfowl throughout West Virginia. Overall, 244 species were reported in the state including 36 species of warbler (plus two hybrids).

Ducks, Swans, Geese—On March 4, Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite saw the season's sole **Snow Goose** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, and on the day before Benjamin Borda and Rennie Talbert saw the only reported **Ross's Goose** at Harris Riverfront Park in Huntington, Wayne County. **Canada Geese** were as usual widespread throughout the state. On March 24, Jon Benedetti, Pat Collins, and Richard Esker saw a bird that took a second day's look to identify as an immature **Mute Swan** at Newell's Run in Pleasants County. Matthew Orsie first reported three **Tundra Swans** in Berkeley County near Shanghai on March 3, and one **Tundra Swan** remained through April 10. Matthew Orsie found another **Tundra Swan** in Jefferson County on March 22, crediting Barry Marts with the original spot. Our state's wettest spring hosted sharply-increased sightings of ducks over the year before. Allan and Mindy Waldron were returning home from a Brooks Bird Club meeting when they saw both a **Long-tailed Duck** and a **White-winged Scoter** at Belleville Locks and Dam, Wood County, on March 6; and on the next day Jon Benedetti, Diane Trebo, Becky Wright, Jeanette Esker, Richard Esker, and Brad Bond found both birds again. There were many reports statewide of **Wood Ducks, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, Hooded, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, and Ruddy Ducks,**

and slightly fewer of **Northern Shovelers**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Redheads**, **Greater Scaup**, and **Common Goldeneyes**. There were reports from four counties each of **Northern Pintails**: Lewis (TB), Mason (DP, GR, WA, MG), Preston (GF) and Wood (JB) Counties, and **Canvasbacks**: Hancock (BS), Monongalia (TB, DCo), Pleasants (TB), and Putnam (CE) Counties. In addition to the Belleville sighting described above, a female **Long-tailed Duck** surprised the editor on March 26 at a small pond in Davis, Tucker County, and Randy Bodkins found the bird nearby three days later. The **White-winged Scoter** remained at Belleville Lock and Dam, Pleasants County, at least until March 17, when it was reported again by Jon Benedetti. Other **scoters** appearing during the spring season were a **Surf Scoter** spotted by Wendell Argabrite at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on May 3, and a **Black Scoter** that Terry Bronson saw at Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on March 22.

Quail—On March 27, Ross R. Conover reported that he had hosted three **Northern Bobwhites** in his yard in Gilmer County for most of the winter, though he speculated that they were released captives. **Northern Bobwhites** also sang for observers in Berkeley (MO), Hampshire (TB), and Mason (WA) Counties.

Pheasants, Grouse, Turkeys—Kate Weatherby looked out her window in Jefferson County on May 22 to find a cock **Ring-necked Pheasant**. Birders in appropriate habitat throughout the state reported **Ruffed Grouse** and **Wild Turkeys**.

Loons, Grebes—**Common Loons** lived up to their name this spring, with reports from 11 counties. **Pied-billed Grebes** were even more widespread, with reports from 18 counties, and reports of **Horned Grebes** came from nine counties.

Cormorants—**Double-crested Cormorants** also appeared in numbers throughout the state, as featured in reports from 15 counties.

Pelicans—Rennie Talbert saw two circling **American White Pelicans** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam on March 20.

Bitterns, Herons, Egrets—Wendell Argabrite, Michael Griffith, and Matthew Orsie saw an **American Bittern** on May 7 at the Hoeft Wetlands, Cabell County, not far from the observation deck at Greenbottom WMA, where they had seen a **Least Bittern** on April 26. **American Bitterns** also appeared in three other counties: Mason (DP, WA, MG), Preston (DCo), and Tucker (MO). Rennie Talbert flushed a **Least Bittern** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam in Mason County, on May 14. **Great Blue Herons**, **Great Egrets**, and **Green Herons** appeared throughout the state, and Diane Sylvester saw at least six **Great Blue Herons** taking off from nests near her home in Berkeley County on March 22. Matthew Orsie reported the only **Snowy Egret** of the season, first seen by David Myles on March 15 near Shanghai, Berkeley County. On a tip from Kelly Napier, Wendell Argabrite found a **Little Blue Heron** at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County, on April 23; Gary Rankin found it there on the next day, and Michael Griffith and Matthew Orsie relocated the bird the day after.

Vultures—**Black Vultures** made appearances in 10 counties, while 21 counties had reports of **Turkey Vultures**.

Hawks, Eagles—Osprey and Bald Eagles were reported throughout the state, generally in small numbers. Mindy Waldron reported that on March 12 the Bibbee Nature Club's Summers County **Bald Eagle** survey found five adults, four immature, and three chicks in the nest, as well as one adult **Golden Eagle**. Wendy Perrone reported that she and Ronald Perrone observed fratricidal behavior among **Bald Eagle** chicks in a nest on Brooks Island, Raleigh County, on March 7. **Northern Harriers** appeared in reports from Cabell (DP, WA), Mason (DP, WA, MG, GR), Preston (GF), Tucker (HM, MO), and Wood (JB, DJE) Counties. **Sharp-shinned Hawks** appeared in reports only from eight counties: Berkeley (DSy), Cabell (DP, WA, MG, GR), Jefferson (KW, BH, DM, JN), Marion (TB), Monongalia (TB), Preston (GF, TB), Summers (JJP), and Wetzel (WJ), while **Cooper's Hawk** reports were widespread throughout the state. On March 5 Rodney Bartgis saw a pair of **Northern Goshawks** flying together near Shavers Run in Randolph County. Birders in most parts of the state reported **Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks**. Bruni Haydl found a **Red-shouldered Hawk** nest with three chicks in her neighbor's yard in Jefferson County in mid May. For the second year in a row, Stephen Kimbrell found the last **Rough-legged Hawk** of the winter season, on April 5 in Tucker County, and Randy Bodkins saw a **Rough-legged Hawk** flying over Route 33 near Elkins, Randolph County, on March 28. John and Caroline Snyder were treated to a pair of **Golden Eagles** alternately flapping and soaring near the Snyders' home in Nicholas County on March 16, and **Golden Eagles** were also reported in Hardy (DH, MO, FA), Pendleton (DH), Preston (GF, TB), Randolph (KA, HM), Summers (MW), and Tucker (SK, MC) Counties.

Falcons—Many birders reported **American Kestrels** in most parts of the state. On April 23, Fred Atwood saw a **Merlin** in Cabins, Grant County, and Jean Neely saw one near the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County. Stephen Kimbrell and the editor reported multiple sightings of **Merlin** in Canaan Valley, Tucker County, during the month of April. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith found a **Merlin** at the Cranberry Glades Nature Center Boardwalk in Pocahontas County on May 14. **Peregrine Falcon** sightings came from Berkeley (MO, WH), Grant (FA), Jefferson (MO, BD), Mason (MG, WA), Putnam (CE), and Wood (JB) Counties.

Rails, Coots—Virginia Rails made appearances in four counties: Berkeley (MO), Cabell (WA), Mason (GR, MG, WA), and Mercer (JP); and **Sora** in three: Berkeley (MO), Cabell (DP, MG), and Mason (MG, WA, DP). During this wettest of springs, **American Coots** appeared in reports from throughout the state.

Cranes—David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, Michael Griffith, and Gary Rankin saw a **Sandhill Crane** near the M & G Polymer plant in Mason County on April 17, and the bird was still present two days later. Derek Courtney found another lone **Sandhill Crane** in Preston County on April 20.

Plovers—Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite found the season's only reported **Black-bellied Plover** near Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County, on May 23.

May 7 was a good day for **Semipalmated Plover**, as Matthew Orsie and Mark Johnson saw one in Moorefield, Hardy County; and David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith found one near the M & G Polymer plant in Mason County. **Semipalmated Plovers** were seen in several locations in Mason County during May. **Killdeer** were well represented with reports from 20 counties.

Sandpipers—Members of 16 sandpiper species appeared this spring. Kevin Cade found 32 **Willetts** at East Lynn Lake, Wayne County, on April 30. In Mason County, Wendell Argabrite was birding on May 3 and found a **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Gallipolis Ferry, the day after he saw a **Long-billed Dowitcher** at Shady Acres Campground. Mason County **dowitchers** continued to be reported during the rest of May. Observers reported **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Wilson's Snipe**, and **American Woodcock** from at least 10 counties each. On March 3, LeJay Graffious saw the biggest **American Woodcock** display of his life, seeing three **woodcocks** in the air while listening to seven more peenting, at Snakehill Wildlife Management Area in northeastern Monongalia County. Other **sandpipers** were reported in seven or fewer counties: **Greater Yellowlegs** in Berkeley (EK), Hardy (MO), Mason (MG, WA, DP, GR, MO), Preston (GF, DCo), Tucker (MO), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB); **Lesser Yellowlegs** in Berkeley (MO), Hardy (MO), Jefferson (MO), Marion (SO), Mason (MG, WA, DP, MO), Pleasants (JB), and Preston (GF); **Upland Sandpiper** in Mason (MG, DP, WA, GR) and Preston (DCo); **Semipalmated Sandpiper** in Hardy (MO) and Mason (GR, MG, WA, MO) Counties; **Least Sandpiper** in Berkeley (EK, MO), Hardy (MO, MJ), and Mason (MO, MG, WA); **White-rumped Sandpiper** in Berkeley (MO) and Mason (MG, WA); **Pectoral Sandpiper** in Hardy (KKi) and Mason (MG, WA, DP); and **Dunlin** in Hardy (MO), Mason (MG, WA, MO) and Preston (GF). Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite found the season's lone **Wilson's Phalarope** near Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on May 1.

Gulls, Terns—**Bonaparte's** and **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported widely throughout the state, and **Herring Gulls** were reported in three counties. Carol Del Colle saw approximately 150 **Bonaparte's Gulls** on the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County on April 13. Wendell Argabrite's discovery of a **Franklin's Gull** is reported previously in this report. **Tern** sightings increased this spring from those of last year. Birders in three counties found **Caspian Terns**: Berkeley (MO), Jefferson (MO, CD), and Mason (MG, WA), and on March 31, Richard Esker reported that he and Jeannette Esker missed a **Caspian Tern** seen by a friend of theirs at the Sandy Creek Backwater, Wood County. Wendell Argabrite found a **Black Tern** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on May 3. **Common Terns** appeared in Jefferson (MO), Kanawha (HG), Mason (MG, WA), and Monongalia (KA, DCo) Counties, and **Forster's Terns** in Hardy (DC), Jefferson (MO, CD), Mason (MG), Monongalia (KA, DCo), Summers (JJP), Wayne (GR), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

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

Cuckoos—**Yellow-billed Cuckoos** began to arrive in the state in mid May, **Black-billed Cuckoos** in late May, and by the end of the season both species had been reported in 13 counties. Susan Olcott saw two **Black-billed Cuckoos** feasting on tent caterpillars at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County, on May 7, and three days later she saw a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** engaged in the same activity near Newburg, Preston County.

Owls—Matthew Orsie reported seeing one of the Moorefield, Hardy County, **Barn Owls** on May 21. Five counties reported **Eastern Screech-Owls**: Cabell (ReT), Jefferson (JBz), Marion (SO), Pleasants (JB), and Preston (DCo, GF), and **Great Horned Owls** appeared in reports from Berkeley (BD) and Randolph (SK) Counties. Eleven counties reported **Barred Owl**, and on April 1, **Barred Owls** performed a raucous quartet less than 100 feet from the home of Eliot Kirschbaum in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County. **Northern Saw-Whet Owls** were reported in Pocahontas (DCo), Preston (DCo), and Wayne (GR) Counties.

Goatsuckers, Swifts—**Common Nighthawks** continued to be relatively scarce, with appearances beginning late April, in Berkeley (MO), Cabell (DP), Kanawha (DB), Putnam (CE), Summers (JJP), and Wayne (BBo) Counties. On May 26, Matthew Orsie reported that the **Chuck-Wills-Widow** had reappeared at Cedar Lakes Educational Center near Ripley, Jackson County, and on May 31 Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite heard **Chuck-Wills-Widows** calling on two sides of the lake. Nine counties reported **Eastern Whip-Poor-Wills**: Berkeley (WH, MO), Gilmer (RRC), Hardy (MO, MJ), Kanawha (HG), Monongalia (LeJ), Nicholas (JCS), Putnam (CE), Wayne (GR, JWg), and Wood (JB, KCa). **Chimney Swifts** began to return during the middle of April, and by mid May there were 17 counties with reports.

Hummingbirds—**Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving in mid April and were reported from counties throughout the state.

Kingfishers—There were reports of **Belted Kingfisher** in 16 counties.

Woodpeckers—Our state's seven species of woodpeckers were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in 10 counties: Berkeley (MO), Cabell (MG), Hardy (DH), Jefferson (JBz, MO), Kanawha (HG), Putnam (CE), Raleigh (MAW, WS), Ritchie (TB), Tucker (MC), and Wood (RRC).

Flycatchers—Kyle Aldinger saw an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** in Randolph County on May 21, and Joette Borzik was serenaded by an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** in her yard in Jefferson County on May 30. Common throughout the state were **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Willow Flycatcher**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Kingbird**, with **Eastern Phoebe** reported in 27 counties, just as during the previous spring. Of our other Empidonax flycatchers, there were reports in six counties for **Alder Flycatcher**: Berkeley (EK), Monongalia (LeJ), Pleasants (JB), Pocahontas (DP, WA, MG), Randolph (KA), and Tucker (TB); and in seven counties for **Least Flycatcher**: Monongalia (LeJ), Preston (GF), Raleigh (MAW), Randolph (HM), Tucker (MC), Wetzell (WJ), and Wood (JB).

Shrikes—Matthew Orsie saw the only **Loggerhead Shrike** this spring, near Candlewood Drive in Jefferson County on May 11, where the bird remained at least through May 18.

Vireos—Cabell County hosted the only **Philadelphia Vireo** reports this season, by Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite on Fairview Ridge on April 29, by David Patick along 8th Street Road on May 6, and by Benjamin Borda on May 11. Our five breeding vireos, **White-eyed, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Warbling, and Red-eyed**, returned to nesting grounds throughout the state beginning in mid April. Kevin Cade had great views of an early **Blue-headed Vireo** in the leafless trees in his yard on Hurricane Creek Road, Putnam County, on March 16, and two days later William Tolin heard a **Blue-headed Vireo** at his home on Rich Mountain in Randolph County.

Crows, Jays, Ravens—**Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. Matthew Orsie saw four **Fish Crows** at the Locust Hill Golf Course, Jefferson County, on April 7, and on April 17, Wil Hershberger's birding class found five **Fish Crows** at Altona Marsh, Berkeley County.

Larks—**Horned Larks** made appearances in small numbers in Grant (FA), Jefferson (JL), and Mason (DP, MG) Counties.

Swallows—The first **swallows** appeared on March 2, when Matthew Orsie saw 75 **Tree Swallows** at Bloomery Road in Jefferson County. Michael Griffith saw approximately 1,000 **Tree Swallows** as well as **Purple Martins, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and Barn Swallows** at Greenbottom WMA in Cabell County on April 5. During the evening of April 22, James and Judy Phillips saw thousands of **swallows**, mostly **Tree**, over New River below Bluestone Dam, Summers County. Generally, **Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Cliff Swallows, and Barn Swallows** were widespread in their return to West Virginia. There were fewer reports of **Purple Martins** and **Bank Swallows**.

Paridae—**Black-capped** and **Carolina Chickadees** were widely reported in their bifurcated territories in West Virginia. **Tufted Titmice** appeared throughout the state as well.

Nuthatches—Birders reported **Red-breasted** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** widely this spring season.

Creepers—Reports of **Brown Creeper** were common in reporting counties this spring.

Wrens—**Carolina** and **House Wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state, although many birders missed **Carolina Wrens** this spring, a possible result of mortality during the second harsh winter in a row. **Winter Wrens** were reported in Jefferson (JBz), Pendleton (DH), Preston (TB), and Tucker (MC) Counties.

Gnatcatchers—**Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** returned to breeding grounds throughout the state.

Kinglets—**Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** appeared in good numbers in reports from throughout the state.

Thrushes—Seven species of **thrush** were found in West Virginia this spring. **Eastern Bluebirds**, **Wood Thrushes**, and **American Robins** were, as usual, seen throughout most reporting counties. There were fewer reports of the more localized **Veery** and **Hermit Thrush**. Jon Benedetti found two **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** at McDonough, Wood County, on May 7. **Swainson's Thrushes** made migratory appearances in only four counties: Jefferson (MO), Putnam (MA), Tyler (WJ), and Wood (JB).

Mockingbirds, Thrashers—**Gray Catbirds**, **Northern Mockingbirds**, and **Brown Thrashers** once again serenaded in their breeding grounds throughout the state.

Starlings—**European Starlings** continued their broad occupation of habitats in our state.

Pipits—**American Pipits** made appearances in Grant (FA), Jefferson (JL), Mason (GR, DP, WA, MG), and Preston (GF) Counties.

Waxwings—Robert Summers and Margaret Straley saw approximately 250 **Cedar Waxwings** in the trees around Roane General Hospital in Spencer, Roane County, on March 25. By the end of the season **Cedar Waxwing** reports were widespread among reporting counties.

Warblers—Both hybrids of **Golden-winged** and **Blue-winged Warblers** appeared during the spring season. Mindy and Allan Waldron reported a “**Brewster’s**” **Warbler** observed during their Raleigh County migration count on May 14, in which Alma Lowry and N. Wade Snyder also participated. Matthew Orsie and Mark Johnson relocated a “**Brewster’s**” **Warbler** for the second year in the same area in Hardy County on May 7, and Rodney Bartgis had a rare yard visitor when a “**Lawrence’s**” **Warbler** appeared in Valley Bend, Randolph County, on May 3. The following warblers, all regular migrants through or breeders in West Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Ovenbird**: April 13, Cabell (MG); **Worm-Eating Warbler**: April 7, Cabell (TI); **Louisiana Waterthrush**: March 23, Wayne (JWg); **Northern Waterthrush**: May 6, Cabell (MG, WA) and Tucker (CR); **Golden-winged Warbler**: April 26, Randolph (HM); **Blue-winged Warbler**: April 10, Cabell (DP, MG, GR); **Black-and-white Warbler**: April 4, Summers (JP); **Prothonotary Warbler**: April 21, Berkeley (MO); **Swainson’s Warbler**: April 19, Raleigh County (MW); **Tennessee Warbler**: April 27, Cabell (MO, WA, MG); **Nashville Warbler**: April 24, Preston (GF) and Wood (JB); **Connecticut Warbler**: May 21, Preston (GF); **Mourning Warbler**: April 24, Wood (JB); **Kentucky Warbler**: April 20, Ritchie (DE); **Common Yellowthroat**: April 16, Cabell (MG); **Hooded Warbler**: April 15, Wayne (MG); **American Redstart**: April 14, Summers (JP); **Cape May Warbler**: April 26, Monongalia (SO); **Cerulean Warbler**: April 14, Wood (JB); **Northern Parula**: April 10, Cabell (SA); **Magnolia Warbler**: April 26, Monongalia (SO); **Bay-breasted Warbler**: April 25, Wood (JB); **Blackburnian Warbler**: April 20,

Tucker (CR); **Yellow Warbler**: April 11, Putnam (CE); **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: April 24, Tucker (CR); **Blackpoll Warbler**: May 6, Cabell (DP) and Tucker (CR); **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: April 24, Berkeley (MO); **Palm Warbler**: March 5, Greenbrier (BW); **Pine Warbler**: March 5, Wayne (JWg); **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: March 7, Marion (TB); **Yellow-throated Warbler**: April 6, Putnam (MA); **Prairie Warbler**: March 26, Barbour (JD); **Black-throated Green Warbler**: April 3, Wayne (DP); **Canada Warbler**: May 2, Wood (JB); **Wilson's Warbler**: May 7, Mason (DP, WA, MG); **Yellow-breasted Chat**: April 21, Braxton (DH, WG). Once again, the vast majority of these arrivals took place before the “first seen” records listed by George A. Hall in *West Virginia Birds*.

On May 9, Jon Benedetti and John Tharp II found a season-high 26 warbler species at McDonough Wildlife Preserve, Wood County, and the next day they were joined by Mr. Tharp's father and found the same number of warblers. It was an early year for **Pine Warblers**, with John Waugaman's March 5 sighting along Brumfield Ridge in Wayne County closely followed by sightings on March 8 by Barry Williams at his feeders in Greenbrier County, and on March 12 on the Cabell County ridges by David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith. Hullet Good reported a **Prothonotary Warbler**, rare for Kanawha County, along Coonskin Lake on May 14, discovered during a century count day.

Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos—**Eastern Towhees** appeared at the beginning of the spring season, and were reported from all areas of the state. Fifteen species of sparrow made their usual appearances in many parts of the state. Of our winter sparrows, **American Tree Sparrows** were reported only during March, in Marion (TB), Pleasants (TB), and Preston (TB, GF) Counties. **White-throated** and **White-crowned Sparrows** lingered throughout the season and were widely reported. Matthew Orsie reported the only **Clay-colored Sparrow** of the season, in Canaan Valley, Tucker County, on May 21. Resident, migrant, and returning sparrow species made first appearances this season in reports from the following counties: **Chipping** on March 3 in Berkeley (DSy); **Field** on March 14 in Putnam (CE, RU, BW); **Vesper** on April 2 in Mason (DP, WA, MG); **Savannah** on March 3 in Monroe (WS); **Grasshopper** on April 21 in Berkeley (MO); **Henslow's** on May 7 in Preston (DCo); **Fox** and **Song** on March 1 in Wetzel (WJ); **Lincoln's** on March 27 in Tucker (SK); **Swamp** on March 2 in Pleasants (JB, DE); and **Dark-eyed Junco** on March 1 in Wetzel (WJ).

Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings—**Summer Tanagers** were observed in six counties in the western half of the state: Barbour (JD), Cabell (SA), Kanawha (JWg), Putnam (CE), Wayne (MO, WA, MG), and Wood (JB). Twenty-two counties saw reports of returning **Scarlet Tanagers**, the first of which was on March 27 in Greenbrier County by Sandy Fenstermacher.

Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite found the first-arriving **Blue Grosbeak** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam

in Mason County on May 1. The eastern peninsula of the state also hosted **Blue Grosbeaks**. Matthew Orsie found one in Jefferson County on May 11 and his team in the Potomac Valley Audubon Society Bird-a-thon in Berkeley County found one on May 15. On May 12, Michael Griffith found a singing **Dickcissel** near Craigsville in Nicholas County, and on May 30, Frederick Atwood found two singing **Dickcissels** in Grant County between Petersburg and Cabins.

Icterids—It was a good spring for blackbirds. On April 16, Wilma Jarrell saw a rare **Brewer's Blackbird** at her home in Wetzel County, and **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** made unexpected appearances on April 23 in Mason County (ReT, WA, MG, DP, GR) and on March 5 in Wood County (CR, MO). **Bobolinks** returned to six reporting counties, with an early first appearance on April 25, the earliest ever observed by Gary Felton in Preston County. Birders throughout the state reported **Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Orchard and Baltimore Orioles**. Observers found **Rusty Blackbirds** in nine counties: Berkeley (MO), Cabell (GR), Hardy (FA), Mason (DP, MG), Pleasants (JB), Preston (GF, TB), Putnam (CE, RU, BW), Tucker (CR), and Wetzel (WJ).

Finches, Allies—**Red Crossbills** prompted reports in Pendleton (DCo) and Randolph (KA) Counties. Last winter's female **Common Redpoll** lingered at the feeders of the editor in Tucker County well into the spring season, and was last observed on April 3. Jeff del Col saw a male **Common Redpoll** perched in a maple tree in his yard in Philippi, Barbour County, on March 16. **Purple Finches, House Finches, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches** appeared in reports from appropriate habitats throughout the state.

Weaver Finches—The **House Sparrow** continues throughout the state, primarily in urban settings. Susan Aaron found a leucistic female **House Sparrow** in Huntington, Cabell County, on May 24.

Contributors to the Spring Field Notes—Susan Aaron (SA), Frederick Atwood (FA), Kyle Aldinger (KA), Marcia Anderson (MA), Wendell Argabrite (WA), Jon Benedetti (JB), Ben Borda (BBo), Terry Bronson (TB), Doren Burrell (DB), Kevin Campbell (KCa), David Carr (DC), Ross R. Conover (RRC), Derek Courtney (DCo), Marquette Crockett (MC), Robert Dean (BD), Carol Del Colle (CD), Jeffrey del Col (JD), Cynthia Ellis (CE), Richard and Jeannette Esker (DJE), Richard Esker (DE), Sandy Fenstermacher (SF), Hullet Good (HG), LeJay Graffious (LeJ), Willa Grafton (WG), Michael Griffith (MG), Bruni Haydl (BH), Wil Hershberger (WH), Diane Holsinger (DH), Dee and Tom Igou (TI), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Mark Johnson (MJ), Eliot Kirschbaum (EK), Stephen Kimbrell (SK), Kathy King (KKi), Jon and B. J. Little (JL), David Myles (DM), Susan Olcott (SO), Matthew Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), James Phillips (JP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), John and Carolyn Snyder (JCS), N. Wade Snyder (WS), Becky Szabo (BS), Rennie Talbert (ReT), Randy Urian (RU), Mindy and Allen Waldron (MAW), Mindy Waldron (MW), John Waugaman (JWg), Kate

Weatherby (KW), Barry Williams (BWi) and Beverly Wright (BW).

P.O. Box 2
Seneca Rocks, WV 26884
autoblock@frontiernet.net