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# Turkey Vultures Attack and Feed on White-tailed Deer Fawn in Eastern Ohio

Rosemary M. Campbell

On June 8, 2008, I saw two Turkey Vultures perched on fence posts across the road from my house in Belmont County, Ohio. Thinking an animal had been hit by a car, I went to investigate. (A road kill is no fun to remove, but gets worse if it's put off.) There was nothing on the road, but in the tall weeds nearby was a newborn White-tailed Deer fawn, alive. I frightened the Turkey Vultures away.

The next morning, I saw one of the Turkey Vultures in nearly the same place, maybe a few posts further down the road. The other Turkey Vulture was on the ground. It would hop a step or two, take wing, and land again in just a few feet, as though it was following something. The other vulture joined it. I grabbed camera and binoculars and went again to investigate. The vultures flew, but there was a fawn down, still breathing, but torn open at the umbilicus and rear, its eyes gone. Its hide-and-lie-still instinct had not worked against the vultures.

According to Kirk and Mossman (1998), Turkey Vultures will occasionally take live prey in unnatural situations such as animals that are captive, anesthetized, or incapacitated in some way. Turkey Vultures have been known to take helpless young herons from the nest and Ruffed Grouse chicks. There are no reports of Turkey Vultures attacking and eating live fawns.

Most vulture attacks on living animals turn out to be due to Black Vultures. Black Vultures do occur and breed in southwestern and east-central Ohio, but they are not nearly as common as Turkey Vultures in eastern Ohio. I had heard of Black Vultures killing lambs, but I was close to these birds and they were definitely Turkey Vultures. I would guess the vultures came for the afterbirth in the first place and found a motionless fawn easy prey. White-tailed Deer does usually eat the afterbirth and move the fawns to another location as soon as possible. They also defend their young aggressively against most predators. I have no idea why this doe didn't do these things unless it was a multiple birth and she was with another fawn, or just didn't realize the Turkey Vultures were a danger. I did not take a picture. Recording a behavior was the last thing on my mind at the time.

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Kirk, D. A., & Mossman, M. J. (1998). Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*). In Poole, A. & Gill, F. (Eds.) *The Birds of North America*, No. 339. Philadelphia: The Birds of North America, Inc.

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# Bibbee Nature Club Spring Bird Count Summary, 1972–2011

James D. Phillips

This report is a summary of the spring bird counts conducted by the Bibbee Nature Club from 1972 to 2011. Originally, the count was done as a Century Day Count, usually held on the first or second Saturday in May. We used the same area as our Christmas Bird Count circle and tried to find 100 species or more in a day. Individual numbers of birds were not recorded. The count circle is mostly in Summers County but includes a small portion of Mercer and Monroe Counties. In 1995, we began participation in the Spring Migration Count. This count is held the second Saturday of May and numbers are kept for individual birds. The area covered was all of Summers County. In 2011, we returned to the Century Day Count format and moved the count to the first Saturday in May.

Some observations that may be made from these counts are as follows. Black Vultures were not seen until 1976. Wild Turkeys didn't appear until 1975 and did not become regulars on the list until 1982. Northern Bobwhites were seen regularly until 1982. We haven't recorded a Loggerhead Shrike since 1979 or Horned Lark since 1982. The Bewick's Wren has not been seen since 1974. House Finches first appeared on the 1984 count. We haven't had a Whip-poor-will since 2006. Bald eagles have been found five of the last six years.

In the list below, the bird names in bold type are the species that have been found on every count. The number in parentheses is the number of counts on which that species has been found.

Canada Goose (28), Mute Swan (1), Wood Duck (33), American Black Duck (7), Mallard (34), Blue-winged Teal (10), Ring-necked Duck (1), Bufflehead (3), Common Goldeneye (5), Hooded Merganser (1), Common Merganser (2), Red-breasted Merganser (2), Ruddy Duck (2), Northern Bobwhite (14), Ruffed Grouse (21), Wild Turkey (31).

Common Loon (6), Pied-billed Grebe (9), Double-breasted Cormorant (17), American Bittern (1), Great Blue Heron (17), Great Egret (2), Little Blue Heron (2), Green Heron (33), Black-crowned Night-Heron (1), Black Vulture (29), **Turkey Vulture** (40).

Osprey (21), Bald Eagle (9), Northern Harrier (4), Sharp-shinned Hawk (22), Cooper's Hawk (24), Red-shouldered Hawk (22), Broad-winged Hawk (32), Red-tailed Hawk (34), Golden Eagle (1).

Virginia Rail (1), American Coot (6), Black-bellied Plover (1), Killdeer (38), Solitary Sandpiper (19), Spotted Sandpiper (33), Greater Yellowlegs (3), Lesser Yellowlegs (9), Upland Sandpiper (1), Least Sandpiper (4), Wilson's Snipe (2), American Woodcock (10), Bonaparte's Gull (1), Ring-billed Gull (17), Herring Gull (1), Common Tern (3), Forster's Tern (2).

Rock Pigeon (37), Mourning Dove (38), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (27), Black-billed Cuckoo (18), Eastern Screech-Owl (8), Great Horned Owl (8), Barred Owl (21), Common Nighthawk (2), Eastern Whip-poor-will (14), **Chimney Swift** (40), **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (40), Belted Kingfisher (26).

Red-headed Woodpecker (4), Red-bellied Woodpecker (35), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4), Downy Woodpecker (39), Hairy Woodpecker (30), **Northern Flicker** (40), **Pileated Woodpecker** (40).

American Kestrel (26).

Olive-sided Flycatcher (1), Eastern Wood-Pewee (38), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (2), Acadian Flycatcher (29), Willow Flycatcher (2), Least Flycatcher (14), **Eastern Phoebe** (40), **Great Crested Flycatcher** (40), Eastern Kingbird (37), Loggerhead Shrike (3).

White-eyed Vireo (35), Yellow-throated Vireo (38), Blue-headed Vireo (35), Warbling Vireo (30), Philadelphia Vireo (2), **Red-eyed Vireo** (40), **Blue Jay** (40), **American Crow** (40), Common Raven (32), Horned Lark (9), Purple Martin (23), Tree Swallow (11), Barn Swallow (38).

**Carolina Chickadee** (40), Black-capped Chickadee (34), **Tufted Titmouse** (40), Red-breasted Nuthatch (3), **White-breasted Nuthatch** (40), Brown Creeper (1), **House Wren** (40), Winter Wren (3), Marsh Wren (1), Carolina Wren (38), Bewick's Wren (2), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (37), Golden-crowned Kinglet (7), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (16), Eastern Bluebird (38), Veery (16), Gray-cheeked Thrush (3), Swainson's Thrush (5), Hermit Thrush (12), **Wood Thrush** (40), **European Starling** (40), American Pipit (2), Cedar Waxwing (28), Snow Bunting (1).

**Ovenbird** (40), **Worm-eating Warbler** (40), Louisiana Waterthrush (38), Northern Waterthrush (7), Golden-winged Warbler (30), Blue-winged Warbler (22), Brewster's Warbler (2), **Black-and-white Warbler** (40), Prothonotary Warbler (22), Swainson's Warbler (3), Tennessee Warbler (23), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), Nashville Warbler (12), Mourning Warbler (1), Kentucky Warbler (38), Common Yellowthroat (37), **Hooded Warbler** (40), **American Redstart** (40), Cape May Warbler (16), Cerulean Warbler (30), Northern Parula (37), Magnolia Warbler (24), Bay-breasted Warbler (10), Blackburnian Warbler (18), **Yellow Warbler** (40), Chestnut-sided Warbler (26), Blackpoll Warbler (15), Black-throated Blue Warbler (25), Palm Warbler (10), Pine Warbler (20), Yellow-rumped Warbler (36), Yellow-throated Warbler (31), Prairie Warbler (28), Black-throated Green Warbler (26), Canada Warbler (6), Wilson's Warbler (7), Yellow-breasted Chat (30).

Eastern Towhee (39), American Tree Sparrow (6), **Chipping Sparrow** (40), **Field Sparrow** (40), Vesper Sparrow (13), Savannah Sparrow (10), Grasshopper Sparrow (20), Fox Sparrow (6), **Song Sparrow** (40), Lincoln's Sparrow (1), Swamp Sparrow (2), White-throated Sparrow (31), White-crowned Sparrow (22), Dark-eyed Junco (16).

Summer Tanager (4), **Scarlet Tanager** (40), **Northern Cardinal** (40), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (37), Blue Grosbeak (7), **Indigo Bunting** (40), Bobolink (16), **Red-**

**winged Blackbird** (40), **Eastern Meadowlark** (40), Rusty Blackbird (3), **Common Grackle** (40), **Brown-headed Cowbird** (40), Orchard Oriole (36), **Baltimore Oriole** (40), Pine Grosbeak (1), Purple Finch (10), House Finch (27), Pine Siskin (12), **American Goldfinch** (40), Evening Grosbeak (7), and **House Sparrow** (40).

Numbers for various count results are as follows: total number of species for all counts 198 plus 1 hybrid, high count of species 122, low count of species 94, average number of species 107, total number of warbler species 36, high count for warblers 27, low count for warblers 15, average number of warblers 22.

The following table gives the year, number of species for each year, and the number of warbler species for each year.

Bibbee Bird Counts 1972–2011

Year	Number of Species	Number of Warbler Species
1972	104	21
1973	115	24
1974	116	24
1975	122	25
1976	96	22
1977	94	18
1978	101	24
1979	114	24
1980	97	21
1981	102	20
1982	111	20
1983	110	26
1984	102	19
1985	104	26
1986	114	27
1987	101	23
1988	117	26
1989	100	15
1990	103	20
1991	119	25
1994	98	24
1995	105	22
1996	98	16
1997	122	24
1998	120	24
1999	116	26

Year	Number of Species	Number of Warbler Species
2000	99	22
2001	102	24
2002	108	21
2003	97	16
2004	107	24
2005	107	22
2006	102	18
2007	111	23
2008	107	23
2009	113	20
2010	99	18
2011	104	20

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# Improving Turkey Vulture Breeding Bird Atlas Data

Scott Pendleton

There are three ways to find a Turkey Vulture nest: luck, lips, and learning. Luck consists of walking by a downed tree and having a vulture chick hiss as you pass. This has happened twice to me. Lips consists of talking to land owners and farmers. This accounted for 5 of my 14 nests, two natural cavity nests from one farm. The goal of this paper is increase the last category, learning.

Breeding bird atlas evidence codes are designed to cover the majority of species the majority of the time. Some codes are inappropriate for certain species. The Turkey Vulture is one species where many of the codes do not regularly apply. This paper looks at Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II (OBBA2) preliminary data from 2006 to 2011 for Turkey Vultures in light of this species' behavior in an effort to make West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas II (WVBBA2) data accurate. It should be noted the raw data presented have not been reviewed and some reports may eventually be determined invalid or downgraded to Observed or Possible.

## Breeding Atlas Codes for OBBA2 and WVBBA2 and Preliminary OBBA2 Data

OH Code	WV Code	OBBA2 Data	Brief Code Description
Observed			
X	O	419	Within safe dates but not suitable habitat
Possible			
OS	X	11,229	Within safe dates in suitable habitat
Probable			
PO	PO	412	Pair (male and female) interacting nonaggressively, within safe dates
T1	T1	93	Territorial behavior, counter singing, interspecies aggression
T7	T7	158	Singing male present at the same location more than 7 days apart
AB	AB	6	Agitated behavior from adult, suggesting nearby nests
CC	CC	20	Courtship behavior (flight displays, courtship feeding) and copulation

OH Code	WV Code	OBBA2 Data	Brief Code Description
VS	VS	65	Visiting potential nest sites repeatedly
UN	UN	2	Used nest, OBBA classifies this as confirmed
			Confirmed
CM	CN	1	Adults carrying nest material, but nest site not observed
PE	PE	0	Gravid condition
NB	NB	1	Nest building observed at nest site
DD	DD	0	Distraction display
FY	FL	42	Recently fledged young incapable of sustained flight
CF	CF	0	Carrying food or fecal sac
	FY		Adult seen feeding fledged young, OBBA code FY
NE	NE	15	Nest with eggs or identifiable eggs shells
ON	ON	19	Occupied nest but contents not observed, adults seen entering and remaining for a period of time, exchanging duties
NY	NY	27	Nest with young (seen or heard) or identifiable dead nestlings

The OBBA2 data represent the following block numbers: No Data, 690 blocks (15.8%); Observed, 72 blocks (1.5%); Possible, 3,041 blocks (68.5); Probable, 540 blocks (12.1%); and Confirmed, 94 blocks (2.1%). The reported numbers are larger than the block numbers because of multiple reports in some blocks and upgrades in breeding evidence for previously reported data.

#### Discussion of the Data With Notes on TUVU Breeding Behaviors

Observed. There were 419 entries for this code. Adults with nestlings have scavenging territories from 8,000 to over 100,000 acres (Mossman & Hartman, 1992; Houston et al., 2011). One can safely assume that somewhere in the surrounding 8,000 to 100,000 acres there is a suitable nesting site. Given this fact, it would seem the lowest breeding code that should be applied to this species is a Possible. However, the first WVBBA only accepted Observed codes and did not permit Possible codes



for Turkey Vultures. As of this writing, how such data are to be handled for the second atlas has not been determined.

Possible. There were 11,129 entries for this category. The high soaring Turkey Vulture is ubiquitous and easily seen. Therefore, this is not a surprising number. If permitted, it should be the most common code when the cryptic nature of Turkey Vulture breeding displays and nests is factored in. However, there are two problems with this code. The first is accuracy of location. Assuming the bird seen soaring above is a breeder, it could be several breeding blocks away from its nest. The second problem is the fact that there is a good chance the bird seen is not a breeder (Mossman & Hartman, 1992; Davis, 1983b). Vultures are slow to mature and may not breed their first year. Also, late-laying or re-nesting mature females may skip the following year (Jackson, 1983).

Probable—Pair Observed. There were 412 entries for this category. The pre-nesting phase of breeding adults begins two to three weeks before egg laying. During this time, solo flights (Davis, 1983a) and pair perching near the nest site (Kirk & Mossman, 1998) are both reported. However, in a communally roosting monomorphic species where many of the birds observed may not be breeding birds and pairs regularly separate, this code should be used with caution, if at all. At the very least, the area should be surveyed for nest sites later in the season.

Probable—Territorial One. There were 93 entries for this code. The only T1 behavior reported for Turkey Vultures is intraspecific aggression. Kirk and Mossman (1998) cite a Ph.D. thesis as the only report of antagonistic nest site behavior toward intruder vultures. Unfortunately, he does not note how common such occurrences are or their nature. I have confirmed 14 nests and followed four nests for over three years, and have never seen any intraspecific aggression around any nest site. Obvious intraspecific antagonistic behavior away from communal roosting sites and feeding areas would apply to this code. If observed, a later survey would be warranted to try to upgrade the code to Confirmed.

Probable—Territorial Seven. There were 158 entries for this code. As defined—singing male present for seven or more days—this code does not apply to a monomorphic species that does not sing and therefore should not be used.

Probable—Agitated Behavior (AB). There were six entries for this code. From personal experience, if the observer is close enough to elicit agitated behavior, the nest should be easy to confirm. On June 22, 2012, while atlasing from a kayak on Mills Creek in Jackson County, West Virginia (breeding block RAVEN-3), I noted a cavity, 1 m high by 1.5 m wide and 1.5 m deep, in a sandstone cliff. As I approached, the adult flew out, landed on limb nearly above me, and proceeded to regurgitate in my direction. Had I not been able to see the single egg, an AB would have been appropriate. It should be noted that vultures will abandon a nest if disturbed early in the incubation period. Mossman and Hartman (1992) had 4 out of 42 nests abandoned from disturbance of the site early in incubation. It may be prudent to return to the area several weeks later to confirm a nest if it is not readily identifiable.

Probable—Courtship or Copulation (CC). There were 20 entries for this code. Once one understands courtship flight, consisting of follow flight and swooping (Davis, 1983a; Kirk & Mossman, 1998), it is readily recognizable and should increase the appropriate use of this code. “Follow flight” consists of the trailing bird following by 20–50 m, usually slightly above, and mimicking the lead bird’s movements. This behavior usually lasts less than a minute but may be repeated over several hours. “Swooping” occurs in half of the flights and consists of the trailing bird partially folding its wings and diving at the lead bird; it pulls up before contact. On March 21, 2012, I observed the following courtship flight from my eastern Ohio yard: pair entered my field of view heading due south, lead bird made a quick left turn, trail bird mimicked, lead bird flew straight for 80 m and made a quick right hand turn, which was mimicked by the trailing bird as it began to gain altitude, trail bird was almost directly above the lead bird by 20 m when it swooped at a steep angle, lead bird turned and rapidly dropped 3 m to the left, both birds continued over the horizon heading due south. This is a clear example of a CC code from the western edge of my home breeding block, which has a confirmed nest on its eastern edge. The turns were not the slow gliding turns usually associated with Turkey Vultures, and the flight is more active in that their wings flap noticeably more than when soaring. Whether or not this pair actually nested in the breeding block in which they were observed is another question. However, this behavior should be recorded when observed.

Probable—Visiting Nest Site. There were 65 entries for this code. As mentioned previously, both solo and paired visits to a nest site occur before incubation. However, not all Turkey Vultures roosting on or near abandoned buildings are using them as nests, even if they are present several days in a row. This code is appropriate if vultures are seen entering or leaving a cavity, be it a cave entrance, hollow log, or window of an abandoned house. Many of these entries can be upgraded to a Confirmed by a later visit.

Probable—Used Nest (UN). There were two entries for this code. Given the fact that Turkey Vultures do not build nests and occupy the nest site for nearly three months, this code has an appropriately low number. I have found egg fragments in house closets in August, so UN should not be totally ruled out.

Confirmed—Carrying Materials (CM) (nest site not observed) and Nest Building (NB). There was one entry for each of these codes. CM is never appropriate. Without further details, NB is questionable and a code entry of Occupied Nest (ON) would be more accurate. Turkey Vultures may rearrange the substrate but they do not build nests in a traditional sense. Vultures are cavity nesters. Their preferred nest site is a cavity in rock substrate, a cave, or a fissure. They will use any cavity of appropriate size including closets in abandoned houses, heart rot in standing or downed trees, grapevine thickets, and under fallen trees (Jackson, 1983; Mossman & Hartman, 1992). If TUVU are seen in a cavity rearranging detritus, a return trip is warranted two weeks to two months later to upgrade the sighting.

Confirmed—Distraction Display and Carrying Food. There were no entries for either code. Since Turkey Vultures do neither of these behaviors, these codes should not be used. Although having decomposing carrion regurgitated on you certainly qualifies as distracting, if that happens to an observer, a higher code surely applies. All other Confirmed codes are self-explanatory and should be very accurate.

### Improving WVBBA Data

The Observed versus Possible debate is going to be decided by the administrators of the atlas. Any Turkey Vulture seen soaring above during safe dates most certainly meets the atlas definition of a Possible breeder. Whether this code has any scientific validity is another question. Observed is the more accurate of the two possible codes.

Looking at the 756 probable codes from OBBA, the Pair Observed reports (412) are suspect and the Territorial 7 reports (158) are invalid as defined. Potentially, 54% of Probable codes are suspect and 19% are invalid. How can atlasers mitigate this high percentage of suspect data?

Of the seven Probable codes, one is invalid (T7), two are suspect in most cases (PO and T1), and two are valid but rarely observed (AB and UN). The best way to improve the data is to concentrate on learning courtship flight (CC) and nest site preferences (VS). Remember that Probable codes are valid before and after safe dates.

Turkey Vultures are performing courtship flights well before many species have entered their safe dates. Start observing them in mid-March. Atlasers should key in on pairs where one appears to be following the other and watch for uncharacteristically sharp turns. Swooping behavior is definitive and occurs 40% of the time.

Numbers for visiting nest sites can also be increased. On March 18, 2012, I observed a single vulture perched in a tree 20 m from a known Ohio nest site and two days later a colleague observed a pair flying low over the site. Atlasers should survey forest areas where vulture singles or pairs are seen roosting or circling at treetop height. There are a limited number of cavities suitable for this large bird, allowing the observer to survey an area quickly. The same applies to abandoned buildings. Turkey Vulture singles or pairs on or near buildings should be watched. Buildings with three or more vultures on or near them are communal roosting sites and not nesting sites. Entering or exiting an opening is definitive for a visiting nest site code.

The number of confirmed blocks in the OBBA2 was at 2%. There were 94 blocks represented by 105 Confirmed codes. One entry, carrying materials, is invalid, and 14 codes (11 blocks) or 14% were entered by this author. How can atlasers improve this Confirmed percentage? An easy way is to upgrade Probable sightings. If a VS code is entered, the atlaser is encouraged to visit the site between one and three months later to upgrade the sighting to Confirmed.

The most obvious nest sites are abandoned buildings. In an area in Illinois, 70% of the abandoned structures in appropriate habitat had vulture nests (Buhnerkempe & Westemeier, 1983). I regularly looked in, watched, or asked about abandoned buildings. Building nest sites I located were in or near wooded areas that lacked human disturbance in most cases. Human disturbance does not include vehicles or roads. Five of the nests were on the second floor or in the attic, one was in a barn loft, one was in a corn crib, and one was on bare dirt. All of the nests I found were in corners or secondary cavities, such as a closet. The atlaser does not need to enter a building to confirm nesting. A couple of strong raps on the floor or side will elicit a hiss response in older chicks.

Turkey Vultures generally exchange nest duties once a day between 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. (Davis, 1983a). A vulture seen entering or exiting an opening in an abandoned building at this time qualifies for an Occupied nest code. Any vulture seen entering a large wooded area at this time should be noted and the area searched for a possible nest. I found two natural cavity nests this way.

Natural cavity nests are both visually and physically hard to find. Coleman and Fraser (1989) had 100% of the nests found during his study in southern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland located in rock cavities. The nests were in large tracts of forest lacking roads and buildings. These areas are not normally amenable to survey by standard atlasing methods. The chance of finding a nest is increased by closely observing vulture behavior.

As noted above, paired flights low above the tree line circling a discreet area should be investigated. Single vultures flying into a wooded area should also be surveyed. Potential survey sites should be investigated in the order they are preferred by Turkey Vultures: rock cavities, hollow trees, dense snags and, finally, under large downed trees.

Turkey Vulture adults visit the nest an average of three times a day once the chicks are two weeks old. One parent is usually in the area a third of the day, but there is very little interaction between parents. When returning to the nest, vultures tend to circle the area, going from perch to perch, for an average of 16 minutes (Davis, 1983a). Davis also notes vultures sometimes return to the nest area shortly before a thunderstorm.

The low Probable and Confirmed breeding numbers of such a large ubiquitous species are partly the result of the factors discussed previously. In this author's opinion, the last, and likely the most important factor, is bias. There is nothing romantic or beautiful about this underappreciated scavenger. Appreciating Turkey Vultures and learning their behavior is something all atlasers can do.



A Turkey Vulture nest site in Jackson County, West Virginia. Photo by Scott Pendleton.

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## Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2011

Ronald A. Canterbury

This report summarizes the 17th year of bird banding at the Three Rivers Migration Observatory (TRMO). The station was operated 65 days from August 3–October 23, 2011, although nearly one third of these days the nets were opened only a few hours per day due to severe thunderstorms and/or high wind. Overall, the 2011 fall season was relatively wet.

The August weather was relatively hot and dry, and followed the hottest July ever recorded for most of the continental United States. Because of the very hot and dry July conditions, no banding was carried out in July. The first cold front came on August 9–12, but produced no movement beyond the resident species and a few early August migrants (species that typically move out of the northern latitudes relatively early and at the end of breeding season, such as the Prairie Warbler). Wind from Hurricane Irene reduced banding on only one day, August 27. Despite slightly cooler nights in the third week of August, not much bird movement was observed. Nets were closed on three days in August due to severe thunderstorms.

No banding was carried out from September 1–2 due to a heat wave, and very little netting was conducted during most of September 4 and September 5 due to heavy rain from tropical storm/depression Lee. A cold front started on September 5, and along with rain from tropical depression Lee, persisted through September 8. Early September was above average in temperature, but much of the last two thirds of the month was cooler and wetter than average. The station was closed on several days in September due to high winds and severe thunderstorms. A second cold front began pushing through the area on September 14 and brought the first overnight/early morning temperatures in the 40s °F of the season. This front produced very few migrants from the north. Brisk, windy days of September 30–October 2 curtailed much of the banding activities on those three days, and a cold front during September 30–October 3 produced little bird movement. Light, blowing snow with no accumulation occurred as early as October 1. Much of October was relatively warm and dry. The weather from October 4–12 was above average in temperature.

During the Fall 2011 season, we captured 1,234 birds, including 48 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that were released unbanded. The number of types of birds handled was 82 species. Table 1 list the species and number of individuals per species captured during the season, and Figure 1 shows the number of birds captured per day. According to Figure 1 the pattern was relatively typical with the peak in the middle to near the third week of September (Peak flight appeared to be September 18–21).

As usual, the Tennessee Warbler led the way with 263 individuals captured. Unusual was the capture of a Winter Wren in late August. A very late Prairie Warbler

captured on October 18 was also noteworthy. In comparison with numerous fall banding seasons at this station, the 12 Baltimore Orioles on August 8 and 14, 2011, were unusual (Table 1). We didn't collect enough data, especially with the low number of banding days in October, to adequately assess the flights of sparrows and finches.

Andrew Canterbury, Karen Daniel, Randy Daniel, 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 Fall 2011 Season

Species	Number	First Date	Last Date	Peak No. & Date
Mourning Dove	2	Aug. 10	Sep. 13	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	Sep. 21	Oct. 1	
Eastern Whip-poor-will	2	Aug. 23	Sep. 14	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	48	Aug. 3	Sep. 25	5, Aug. 16
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	Sep. 18	Sep. 27	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Oct. 3	Oct. 23	
Downy Woodpecker	5	Aug. 8	Oct. 3	
Hairy Woodpecker	3	Aug. 8	Oct. 22	
Northern Flicker	1	Aug. 30		
Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	Aug. 26	Sep. 26	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Aug. 23		
Traill's Flycatcher	3	Aug. 29	Sep. 19	
Least Flycatcher	2	Aug. 27	Sep. 19	
Eastern Phoebe	9	Sep. 21	Oct. 15	3, Oct. 2
White-eyed Vireo	6	Aug. 12	Oct. 9	
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	Aug. 4	Sep. 19	
Blue-headed Vireo	30	Aug. 5	Oct. 23	5, Sep. 29
Red-eyed Vireo	28	Aug. 5	Oct. 18	3, Aug. 8
Blue Jay	7	Sep. 24	Oct. 22	
Carolina Chickadee	14	Aug. 4	Oct. 17	5, Sep. 24
Tufted Titmouse	12	Sep. 4	Oct. 23	4, Oct. 3
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	Sep. 19	Oct. 9	
House Wren	5	Sep. 6	Sep. 30	
Winter Wren	2	Aug. 29	Oct. 9	
Carolina Wren	13	Aug. 4	Oct. 12	3, Oct. 2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5	Aug. 12	Sep. 27	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	14	Oct. 8	Oct. 22	4, Oct. 12



Species	Number	First Date	Last Date	Peak No. & Date
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	23	Oct. 8	Oct. 23	6, Oct. 12
Veery	3	Sep. 3	Sep. 30	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	12	Sep. 18	Sep. 30	3, Sep. 19
Swainson's Thrush	85	Sep. 7	Oct. 8	12, Sep. 23
Hermit Thrush	4	Sep. 27	Oct. 12	
Wood Thrush	7	Sep. 19	Oct. 9	
American Robin	30	Aug. 8	Oct. 18	3, Sep. 28
Gray Catbird	29	Aug. 3	Oct. 17	4, Sep. 22
Northern Mockingbird	2	Oct. 3	Oct. 22	
Brown Thrasher	4	Sep. 16	Oct. 2	
Cedar Waxwing	16	Aug. 3	Oct. 1	10, Oct. 1
Ovenbird	30	Aug. 3	Oct. 8	5, Sep. 14
Worm-eating Warbler	12	Aug. 5	Sep. 29	3, Sep. 14
Northern Waterthrush	4	Sep. 21	Sep. 28	
Blue-winged Warbler	5	Aug. 4	Aug. 17	3, Aug. 17
Black-and-white Warbler	19	Aug. 14	Sep. 29	7, Sep. 21
Tennessee Warbler	263	Sep. 6	Oct. 9	34, Sep. 20
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	Oct. 3		
Nashville Warbler	7	Sep. 13	Sep. 29	
Mourning Warbler	1	Sep. 6		
Common Yellowthroat	32	Aug. 4	Oct. 22	7, Sep. 18
Hooded Warbler	28	Aug. 3	Sep. 26	6, Sep. 20
American Redstart	28	Aug. 27	Sep. 27	4, Sep. 18
Cape May Warbler	10	Aug. 27	Sep. 30	
Northern Parula	3	Sep. 26	Oct. 3	
Magnolia Warbler	19	Sep. 4	Oct. 8	3, Sep. 26
Bay-breasted Warbler	11	Sep. 7	Oct. 7	
Blackburnian Warbler	6	Aug. 22	Sep. 27	
Yellow Warbler	1	Aug. 23		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	14	Sep. 7	Sep. 23	5, Sep. 23
Blackpoll Warbler	10	Sep. 21	Oct. 17	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	18	Sep. 8	Oct. 15	3, Sep. 19
Palm Warbler	12	Sep. 15	Oct. 12	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	7	Oct. 17	Oct. 23	
Yellow-throated Warbler	2	Sep. 7	Sep. 24	
Prairie Warbler	2	Aug. 6	Oct. 18	
Black-throated Green Warbler	16	Sep. 3	Sep. 30	6, Sep. 19
Wilson's Warbler	6	Sep. 12	Sep. 29	
Yellow-breasted Chat	2	Sep. 11	Sep. 26	

Species	Number	First Date	Last Date	Peak No. & Date
Eastern Towhee	20	Aug. 4	Oct. 16	5, Oct. 3
Chipping Sparrow	7	Sep. 29	Oct. 12	
Field Sparrow	13	Aug. 3	Oct. 18	4, Oct. 1
Song Sparrow	27	Aug. 21	Oct. 22	8, Oct. 1
Lincoln's Sparrow	4	Oct. 2	Oct. 15	
Swamp Sparrow	3	Oct. 1	Oct. 9	
White-throated Sparrow	16	Oct. 9	Oct. 23	4, Oct. 15
Dark-eyed Junco	7	Oct. 15	Oct. 23	
Scarlet Tanager	31	Aug. 4	Sep. 29	8, Aug. 8
Northern Cardinal	21	Aug. 6	Oct. 22	5, Oct. 17
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	3	Sep. 13	Sep. 21	
Indigo Bunting	32	Aug. 4	Sep. 29	4, Sep 18
Baltimore Oriole	12	Aug. 8	Aug. 14	8, Aug. 8
Purple Finch	4	Oct. 9	Oct. 17	
House Finch	7	Sep. 24	Oct. 23	
American Goldfinch	16	Aug. 12	Oct. 22	6, Oct. 15

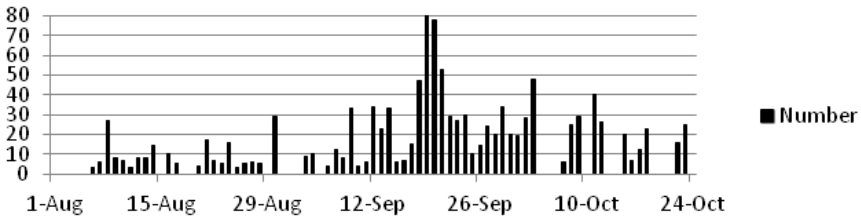


Figure 1. Number of birds captured per day in Fall 2011 at TRMO.

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## 16<sup>th</sup> Report of the West Virginia Bird Records Committee March 2012

The West Virginia Bird Records Committee (WVBRC) held its annual meeting in conjunction with the Brooks Bird Club Mid-winter Meeting at North Bend State Park on March 3, 2012. At the meeting, one new committee member was elected to replace an outgoing member while new officers were selected for the upcoming term. Discussion was held of replacing nine species on the review list. The committee also took action on five record submissions. All records accepted were placed on the Review List (“West Virginia Birds With Less Than Five Records” list).

### Records Accepted:

**Harlequin Duck** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) (2011-1). See the 15<sup>th</sup> WVBRC report for 2011 (WVBRC 2011). This January 12, 2011, record, accepted in March 2011, is included again in this report so that all birds seen in a given year appear together in the report. Wendell Argabrite’s report included several excellent photographs of the ducks on the water and in flight.

**Franklin’s Gull** (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) (2011-2). This is the third sighting of this gull accepted by the records committee. The Franklin’s Gull was first seen on May 3, 2011 by Wendell Argabrite who photographed and submitted the report, and later by Michael Griffith and David Patick who also submitted a report. The observers were complimented on the thoroughness of their submissions, which included excellent descriptions and supporting photographs. The bird was observed on the Ohio River at the Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam between the hours of 2:15 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

**Western Meadowlark** (*Sturnella neglecta*) (2011-3). The Western Meadowlark was placed on the Review List by a vote of the committee. This is the first record for West Virginia since being reclassified as a Review List species. Betsy Reeder reported this bird to N. Wade Snyder who submitted the report to the committee. Snyder photographed and made video recordings of the bird, which included the bird singing. It was observed by Snyder on June 6, 2011. The bird was also observed by Wendell Argabrite, Derek Courtney, LeJay Graffious, and Matthew Orsie. (Note: Betsy Reeder heard a Western Meadowlark in the same field on June 28, 2012.)

**Brown Pelican** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) (2011-4). Mark T. Scott photographed the Brown Pelican on Bluestone Lake at 1 p.m. on June 6, 2011. The bird was also observed by Jeff Hansbarger. Scott’s excellent photograph of the pelican sitting on a buoy was submitted to the committee. This is the first record for West Virginia.

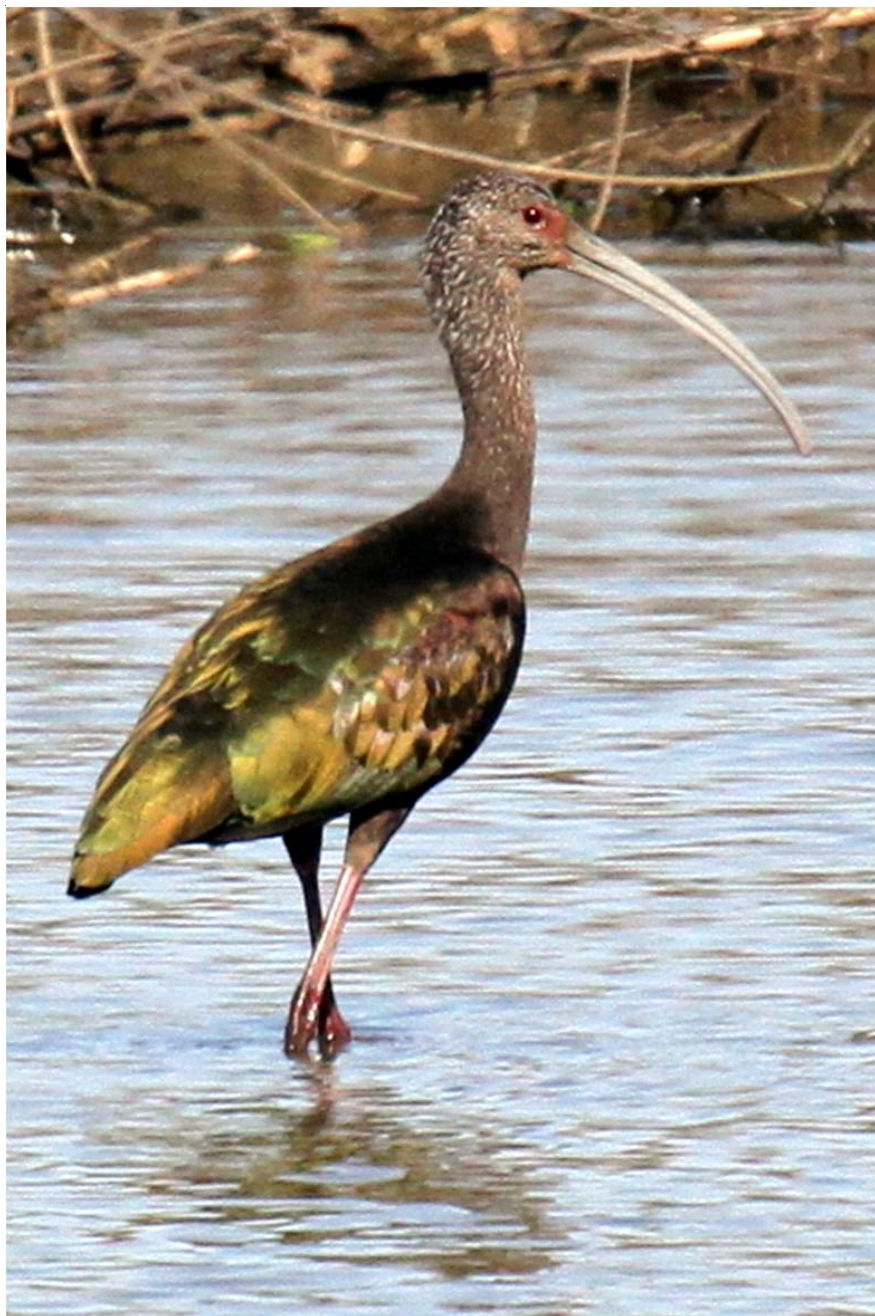
**Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*) (2011-5). This is the second record for the state. The first was on September 29, 1967 (Conrad, 1968). Wendell Argabrite photographed the godwit at the Apple Grove Fish Hatchery in Mason County on



Brown Pelican, a state record photographed by Mark T. Scott on a buoy on Bluestone Lake, June 6, 2011.



A second record for West Virginia, this Hudsonian Godwit was photographed by Wendell Argabrite at the Apple Grove Fish Hatchery in Mason County on September 20, 2011.



This White-faced Ibis, a West Virginia state record, was photographed by Wendell Argabrite on the Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area in Cabell County on October 25, 2011.

September 20, 2011, and submitted the report. Other observers were Derek Courtney, Michael Griffith, David Patick, and Gary Rankin.

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*) (2011-6). The committee accepted Wendell Argabrite's report as the first record of a White-faced Ibis for West Virginia. His report was supported by photographs and other observers: Michael Griffith, Gary Rankin, and David Patick. The bird was seen in the Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area in Cabell County on October 25, 2011.

Other business:

1. The committee discussed a proposal by Matthew Orsie to place the following birds on the West Virginia Review List: Western Kingbird, Black-billed Magpie, Bewick's Wren, Bohemian Waxwing, Bachman's Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, and Pine Grosbeak. After discussion, the recommendation was accepted by a members' vote.
2. Discussions were held to encourage persons submitting reports to include a detailed written report and use photographs to back up their verbal descriptions.
3. Nominations were opened for a new committee member to replace outgoing member, LeJay Graffious. David Patick was duly elected by the committee. The committee expresses gratitude to all members who have volunteered their service to the WVBRC.
4. An election was held to select the chair and vice-chair. Casey Rucker as chair and Rob Tallman as vice-chair were unanimously elected.
5. Recognition was also given to Wendell Argabrite for his service as a nonvoting secretary and keeper of the official lists of West Virginia Birds.
6. Recognition was also given to the Brooks Bird Club for their continued support and Web page service.

#### References

- Conrad, C. L. (1968). Hudsonian Godwit a West Virginia record. *The Redstart*, 35(1), 59.
- West Virginia Bird Records Committee. (2011). 15<sup>th</sup> report of the West Virginia Bird Records Committee, March 2011. *The Redstart*, 78(2), 58-63.

Submitted by LeJay Graffious, chair and WVBRC members Casey Rucker; Matthew Orsie; Rob Tallman; Gary Rankin; Wil Hershberger; William Tolin; Cindy Ellis, alternate; and Wendell Argabrite, secretary.

## A.O.U. Taxonomic Changes for 2012

Albert R. Buckelew Jr.

Important goals of modern taxonomy are to arrange organisms in order from those descended from and most closely related to the earliest organisms in a taxonomic group to those descended from organisms that came later in the evolution of organisms, and to place organisms in groups all of which are descended from a common ancestor. Our checklist order for birds reflects the results of this work. Based on DNA analysis and other techniques, the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Committee on Classification and Nomenclature publishes a report of their findings in *The Auk* annually. Changes in the AOU checklist order and nomenclature for 2012 that most affect West Virginia birders are discussed here (Chesser et al., 2012).

The order Falconiformes, including the falcons, and the order Psittaciformes, including the parrots, are believed now to be closely related to the Passeriformes, the perching birds. As a result, the falcon family, Falconidae, has been moved to follow the woodpecker family, the Picidae, with the Psittaciformes following after the falcons.

The sequence of the genera in the wren family, the Troglodytidae, is changed such that the Carolina Wren and Bewick's Wren now follow the Marsh Wren.

Although peafowl are not on the West Virginia checklist, it is interesting to note that the English name of *Pavo cristatus* has been changed from Common Peafowl to Indian Peafowl. The scientific names of a number of West Virginia birds have been changed as a result of taxonomic studies. Readers should consult the *AOU Checklist of North American Birds* online for the approved scientific names of our birds. Some of these changes were made to correct Latin grammar; for example, the scientific name *Porphyrio martinica*, the Purple Gallinule, is changed to *Porphyrio martinicus*. Other nomenclatural changes are made in taxonomic grouping at the genus level; for example, the genus name of the Chuck-will's-widow and Eastern Whip-poor-will is changed from *Caprimulgus* to *Antrostomus* and the genus of the Purple Finch and House Finch is changed from *Carpodacus* to *Haemorhous*.

As is our practice, *The Redstart* will use the new checklist placement of the Falconidae and the new sequence for the Troglodytidae.

### Reference

Chesser, R. T., Banks, R. C., Barker, F. K., Cicero, C., Dunn, J. L., Kratter, A. W., Lovette, I. J., Rasmussen, P. C., Remsen, Jr., J. V., Rising, J. D., Stotz, D. R., &



Winker, K. (2012). Fifty-third supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list of North American Birds*. *The Auk*, 129(3), 573-588.

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## Field Notes Spring Season

March 1–May 31, 2012

Casey Rucker

The warm winter of 2011–2012 led into West Virginia’s warmest March on record. April was slightly cooler than March, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University, followed by a warmer-than-usual May. April was also dry, with the state averaging only 74% of normal precipitation, but March and May were slightly wetter than usual.

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: <http://list.audubon.org/archives/wv-bird.html>. Breeding records are written in italics in these field notes.

On May 29, Sam Droege of Beltsville, Maryland, discovered a **Black Rail** near Capon Bridge, in Hampshire County. The bird was the celebrity of the season, drawing birders from far and near and remaining past the end of May. If accepted, it will represent the second record for **Black Rail** in West Virginia. Overall, 243 species were reported from 42 counties in the state. Birders found 35 species of warbler plus one hybrid during the spring season.

**Ducks, Swans, Geese**—On March 3, Michael Griffith saw a pair of **Snow Geese** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County. David Myles saw a flock of more than 100 **Snow Geese** fly over his home in Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, on March 17. On March 26, Terry Bronson found a blue-morph **Snow Goose** among a flock of **Canada Geese** near Burke Road, Preston County, and six days later Gary Felton saw both a **Snow Goose** and the season’s only reported **Ross’s Goose** in central Preston County. **Canada Geese** were as usual widespread throughout the state. On April 8, David Myles found this spring’s only **Tundra Swan** on the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County, and the bird remained through April 15, as reported by Matthew Orsie.

Sightings of ducks this spring were slightly down from the moisture-laden season of the year before. There were many reports statewide of **Wood Ducks, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, Hooded, Common, and Red-breasted Mergansers**, and fewer of **Gadwalls and Ruddy Ducks**. There were reports from four counties each of **Redheads**: Jackson (BSMS), Putnam (CE, KK), Summers (MAW), and Tucker (SF, KDz) Coun-

ties, and of **Greater Scaup**: Berkeley (DM), Grant (FA), Monongalia (DCo), and Preston (GF) Counties; and from three counties of **Common Goldeneyes**: Barbour (TB), Jackson (DG), and Monongalia (TB) Counties. Cynthia Ellis, Randy Urian, Ben Borda, and Beverly Wright found the season's only reported **Canvasbacks** at Winfield Locks in Putnam County on March 1. On April 1, Derek Courtney found a **Long-tailed Duck** on Tygart Lake, Taylor County, and Matthew Orsie reported that Joette Borzik and Chuck Parker had found three **Long-tailed Ducks** on Bloomery Road, Jefferson County. **Long-tailed Ducks** were reported from Jefferson County through mid-April (DHa, CD, JBz, EK). Derek Courtney saw both a **Surf Scoter** and a **Black Scoter** on Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on April 1, and Matthew Orsie reported on April 23 that Josh Vance had seen a **Surf Scoter** on Sleepy Creek Lake in Berkeley County. On March 13, William Tolin found 18 **Lesser Scaup** on Tygart Valley River in Randolph County. On May 27, Randy Bodkins found a **Common Merganser** with 10 *chicks* on the Lower Shavers Fork near Bowden, Randolph County.

**Quail**—On May 26, Carol Del-Colle had the rare pleasure of hearing a **Northern Bobwhite** calling from her field in Summit Point, Jefferson County. **Northern Bobwhites** also occasioned reports in Berkeley (MO), Mason (MG, WA), Preston (SO), and Taylor (DCo) Counties. Several reporters questioned the wild origins of the observed birds.

**Pheasants, Grouse, Turkeys**—Birders throughout the state reported **Wild Turkeys** and, in appropriate habitat, **Ruffed Grouse**.

**Loons, Grebes**—Eight counties hosted **Common Loons** this spring. A few **Common Loons** were seen late in the season: on May 14 in Summers (JJP) and Monongalia (TB) Counties and on May 22 in Mason County (MG, WA). There were numerous sightings of **grebes** this spring, with reports of **Pied-billed Grebes** and of **Horned Grebes** from 14 and 15 counties, respectively.

**Cormorants**—West Virginia birders reported **Double-crested Cormorants** in 14 counties.

**Bitterns, Herons, Egrets**—On March 26, Terry Bronson saw his first West Virginia **American Bittern** from the Deckers Creek Trail near Reedsville in Preston County. **American Bitterns** also appeared in three other counties: Barbour (TB), Jefferson (DHa, MO), and Tucker (KDz). On March 29, John Waugaman heard a **Least Bittern** at Greenbottom WMA, Cabell County. Rennie Talbert flushed a **Least Bittern** at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam in Mason County on April 15. **Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Green Herons** appeared throughout the state. Carol Del-Colle and Matthew Orsie reported the only **Snowy Egret** of the season, on May 8 at Stauffer's Marsh in Berkeley County. Two days earlier Matthew Orsie also reported the season's lone **Little Blue Heron** on the Shenandoah River, Jefferson County. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith discovered two adult **Cattle Egrets** at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County, during their big day birding trip on May 12.

The next day, N. Wade Snyder discovered a **Cattle Egret** at Little Beaver State Park, Raleigh County. The lone **Black-crowned Night-Heron** of the spring was reported by Michael Griffith, who saw the bird fly over Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on May 4.

**Vultures**—Birders in 15 counties reported seeing **Black Vultures**, while **Turkey Vulture** reports came from 26 counties.

**Hawks, Eagles**—On May 13, Frederick Atwood reported seeing a **Mississippi Kite** on Hogueland Lane near Cabins, Grant County. **Osprey** and **Bald Eagles** were reported throughout the state, generally in small numbers. On March 16, Bruni Haydl observed a **Bald Eagle** *feeding a chick in a nest* on the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County. Dick and Jeannette Esker were joined by Pat Collins to see a **Bald Eagle** *chick in a nest* several miles below Belleville Lock and Dam, Jackson County, on May 15. A pair of **Northern Harriers**, *nesting this spring* in Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, prompted many reports (CR, BSMS, HMy, MC, DH). **Northern Harriers** also appeared in reports from Grant County (FA), Hardy County (FA), Mason County (DP, WA, MG), Pocahontas County (DP), and Randolph County (SK, BSMS). **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and **Cooper's Hawk** reports were widespread throughout the state. On April 8, Robert Summers and Margaret Straley reported a **Northern Goshawk** at the crest of Allegheny Mountain on U.S. 33, at the border of Pendleton and Randolph Counties. Birders in most parts of the state reported **Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks**. As might be expected in an unusually warm spring **Rough-legged Hawks** appeared to depart early, with the only reports coming from Randolph County (RBo) on March 1 and from Tucker County (CR) on March 2. Herb and Sarah Myers saw a pair of **Golden Eagles** soaring over Snowy Mountain Road in Pendleton County on March 6, and **Golden Eagles** were also reported in Calhoun County (TF), Hardy County (DH, MO, FA) Pocahontas County (CR), Preston County (DCo), and Tucker County (LC, CR).

**Rails, Coots**—The **Black Rail**, first reported on May 29 by Sam Droege, was heard by many pilgrims, and occasionally seen, during the last two days of the spring season. **Virginia Rails** made appearances in Cabell County (MG, DP, GR, JWg, BDe, JJH) and Jefferson County (MO, JBz, RTo) and **Sora** only in Cabell County (MG, WA, GR, JWg, SA). Gary Rankin, John Waugaman, Beverly Delidow, and John and Jeanne Hubbard discovered a **Common Gallinule** at McClintic WMA, Mason County, during their century day count on May 5. As usual, **American Coots** appeared in reports from throughout the state.

**Cranes**—Diane Holsinger saw four **Sandhill Cranes** fly over Corridor H near Moorefield, Hardy County, on May 9, and on May 13, Herb Myers found a lone **Sandhill Crane** at Canaan Valley State Park, Tucker County, as part of his territory on an International Migratory Bird Day count.

**Plovers**—David Patick and Wendell Argabrite found the season's only reported **Black-bellied Plover** at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County, on May 19. There were

sightings of **Semipalmated Plovers** in several locations in Mason County during May (MG, WA, DP, GR), and other **Semipalmated Plover** reports came from Berkeley (MO), Grant (FA), and Greenbrier (BWi) Counties. **Killdeer** were well represented with reports from 21 counties.

**Sandpipers**—Seventeen sandpiper species appeared this spring. Observers reported **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Wilson's Snipe**, and **American Woodcocks** from at least 12 counties each. **Greater Yellowlegs** were seen in nine counties, while **Lesser Yellowlegs** and **Least Sandpipers** occasioned reports in eight counties each. Gary Felton found the only **Upland Sandpiper** of the season, in Preston County on April 15. At Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam in Mason County, Wendell Argabrite saw the season's only **Western Sandpiper** on May 14, as reported by Michael Griffith, and on the same day, they both saw a lone **Stilt Sandpiper**, the only representative of its species in West Virginia reports this spring. **Dunlin** appeared in Mason County from mid-April through mid-May, as reported by Michael Griffith and David Patick. On May 22, Matthew Orsie found the state's only reported **Short-billed Dowitcher** of the season at Archer's Rock Pond in Berkeley County. Other **sandpipers** that were reported in seven or fewer counties included **Willetts**, in Randolph (RBo), Summers (JP), and Wayne (MG, WA) Counties; **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, in Berkeley (MO) and Mason (MG, WA, DP, GR) Counties; **White-rumped Sandpipers**, in Jefferson (MO) and Mason (MG, WA, GR) Counties; and **Pectoral Sandpipers**, in Marion (JoH) and Tucker (BSMS) Counties. Michael Griffith and Wendell Argabrite found the season's lone **Red-necked Phalarope** near Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County, on May 23. Kevin Cade shared his campsite in Cranberry Glades, Pocahontas County, with a displaying **American Woodcock** on May 11.

**Gulls, Terns**—**Bonaparte's** and **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported widely throughout the state, and **Herring Gulls** were reported in three counties: Jefferson (CD), Mason (GR, JWg, BDe, JH), and Preston (GF). Tern sightings increased this spring from those of last year. Birders in Mason (WA, MG, TI) and Monongalia (TB) Counties found **Caspian Terns**. James and Judy Phillips found a **Black Tern** in the Pipestem Area, Summers County, on May 12 while competing in the BBC Cup. During the weekend of April 21, Larry Metheny saw a **Common Tern** at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County. Reports of **Forster's Terns** came from Hardy (DH), Mason (MG, WA), Preston (GF), Wayne (GR), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

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

**Cuckoos**—Both **Yellow-billed** and **Black-billed Cuckoos** began to arrive throughout the state in late April, and by the end of the season **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** had been reported in 18 counties, and **Black-billed Cuckoos** in 12 counties.

**Owls**—Matthew Orsie reported seeing one of the Moorefield, Hardy County, **Barn Owls** on March 30. On May 9, Joette Borzik saw a *fledgling* **Eastern Screech-**

**Owl** poking its head out of the nest box in her yard in Jefferson County. Birders in three other West Virginia counties reported **Eastern Screech-Owls**: Berkeley (BD), Summers (JJP), and Wetzel (WJ). On April 2, Bruni Haydl saw a **Great Horned Owl chick in a nest** near her home in Charles Town, Jefferson County, and **Great Horned Owls** also appeared in reports from Berkeley (BD), Grant (FA), Preston (GF), and Wayne (GR) Counties. **Barred Owl** reports were widespread as usual, with sightings in 15 counties. The author of these notes heard a **Long-eared Owl** in Canaan Valley State Park, Tucker County, on March 31, and Matthew Orsie found two **Short-eared Owls** near Old Fields in Hardy County on March 30. **Northern Saw-Whet Owls** made appearances in Pocahontas County (DP, WA, MG, KC, JBo), Preston County (DCo), and Tucker County (MO).

**Goatsuckers, Swifts—Common Nighthawks** continued to be relatively scarce, with appearances beginning early May, in Cabell (DP, BBo, TI), Jefferson (DH), Nicholas (JCS), and Putnam (KK) Counties. Cynthia Ellis heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** calling outside her home in Red House, Putnam County, on the early date of April 1, and she assured readers that her report was no joke. Overall, **Eastern Whip-Poor-Wills** were seen and heard in many parts of West Virginia this spring, with reports from 15 counties. **Chimney Swifts** began to return during the middle of April, and by mid-May there were 20 counties with reports of this species.

**Hummingbirds—Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving in mid-April, and inspired reports from 18 counties throughout the state.

**Kingfishers**—There were reports of **Belted Kingfisher** in 18 counties.

**Woodpeckers**—Our state's seven species of **woodpeckers** were all widely reported, with sightings of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in eight counties: Berkeley (PS), Hardy (DC), Jefferson (JBz, MO), Kanawha (HG, KC, CE), Monongalia (TB), Pendleton (FA), Preston (TB), and Ritchie (MO), and **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** in ten: Grant (FA), Jefferson (DM, JBz, CD, EK), Kanawha (CE), Monongalia (TB), Pendleton (HMy), Randolph (RT, HMy), Summers (JJP), Tucker (CR, KDz, HMy, MC), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB). On March 15, Hullett Good found *nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers* at his farm in Frame, Kanawha County.

**Falcons**—Jeff Del Col watched three male **American Kestrels** *competing for the favors of a female with aerobic displays* in Philippi, Barbour County, on March 17. West Virginia birders reported **American Kestrels** in most parts of the state. For the third year in a row, there have been multiple sightings of **Merlins** in Canaan Valley, Tucker County, beginning March 15 (CR, RBo). **Merlins** were also spotted in Mason County (BSMS), Monongalia County (DCo), Preston County (GF), and Wayne County (GR). **Peregrine Falcon** sightings came from Greenbrier County (CR), Mason County (MG, WA), Summers County (JJP), Wetzel County (WJ), and Wood County (MO).

**Flycatchers**—Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers** appeared in reports from Pocahontas County (KC, KH), Wayne County (BDe), and Wetzel County (WJ).

Common throughout the state were **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Willow Flycatcher**, **Least Flycatcher**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Kingbird**. There were reports in only four counties for **Alder Flycatcher**: Braxton (WG), Pocahontas (KH), Preston (TB, GF), and Tucker (MC, HMy, MO). On March 1, Lynne Wiseman reported the season's first **Eastern Phoebe** at the tunnel on Bakerton Road in Jefferson County. Not too far away, Elliot Kirschbaum added **Least Flycatcher** to his yard list in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County, for his 105<sup>th</sup> species, on May 1.

**Shrikes**—There were multiple reports of **Loggerhead Shrike** this spring at the now-familiar locations near Candlewood Drive in Jefferson County (CD, MO, DHa), and on Hogueland Lane, Grant County (FA). There were also two reports of **Loggerhead Shrikes** in Pocahontas County (RBi, JBo) during the season.

**Vireos**—It was an early spring for **Blue-headed Vireos** in West Virginia, with returnees arriving in many counties during the latter half of March, two to four weeks ahead of first arrivals the year before. Our other four breeding **vireos**, **White-eyed**, **Yellow-throated**, **Warbling**, and **Red-eyed**, returned to nesting grounds throughout the state beginning in mid-April. **Philadelphia Vireos** passed through our state between May 4 and 9, as reported from Mason (GR, JWg, BDe, JJH), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties. Wilma Jarrell saw a **Yellow-throated Vireo** *finishing a nest* on May 1 in northeastern Wetzel County. On the same day, at Prickett's Fort State Park, Marion County, Joey Herron recaptured a **White-eyed Vireo** that he had banded at the same spot three years earlier. He wondered how many miles the bird had flown in the interim.

**Crows, Jays, Ravens**—**Blue Jays**, **American Crows**, and **Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. There were **Fish Crows** only in Jefferson County, prompting reports throughout the spring season (DHa, MO, SS, CD, JBz, EK). On March 5, Deborah Hale saw 80 **Fish Crows** along the Shenandoah River in Harpers Ferry.

**Larks**—Observers reported **Horned Larks** in Grant County (FA), Jefferson County (MO), Mason County (DP, WA, MG), and Ohio County (JBo).

**Swallows**—**Tree Swallows** had already made several appearances in West Virginia amid mild temperatures before the spring season began. Generally, **Purple Martins**, **Tree Swallows**, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**, **Cliff Swallows**, and **Barn Swallows** were widespread in their return to West Virginia. Reports of **Bank Swallows** came from Berkeley County (MO), Cabell County (MG, WA), Jefferson County (DHa, JBz, MO, SS), and Mason County (MG, WA).

**Paridae**—**Black-capped** and **Carolina Chickadees** were reported in their usual bifurcated habitats in our state this spring. **Tufted Titmice** appeared throughout the state as well.

**Nuthatches**—Birders reported **White-breasted Nuthatches** widely this spring season, while **Red-breasted Nuthatches** appeared in reports from Grant County (FA),

Greenbrier County (RBi), Pocahontas County (DP), Preston County (DCo), Putnam County (CE), Randolph County (HMy), and Tucker County (HMy, MC).

**Creepers**—**Brown Creepers** seemed to be uncommon this spring, with reports coming only from Grant (FA), Jefferson (DHa, JBz, ), Pocahontas (DP), Preston (DCo, LeJ), Raleigh (WS), Randolph (HMy, RT), and Tucker (CR) Counties.

**Wrens**—**House Wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state. **Winter Wrens** were reported in Brooke (TB), Grant (FA), Jefferson (JBz, MO), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas (DP, JBo), Preston (DCo, LeJ, SO, TB), Randolph (HMy, RB), Tucker (MC, HMy), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties. Reports of **Marsh Wrens** came from Cabell County (BSMS) and Mason County (MG, WA). **Carolina Wrens** were widely reported.

**Gnatcatchers**—Beginning in early April, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** returned to breeding grounds throughout the state.

**Kinglets**—**Ruby-crowned Kinglets** appeared in reports from throughout the state, and reports of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** came from Barbour County (JD), Grant County (FA), Jefferson County (DHa, JN), Monongalia (TB), Pocahontas County (DP, KH), Preston County (DCo, LeJ), Randolph County (RB), Tucker County (CR, MC), and Wetzel County (WJ).

**Thrushes**—Seven species of **thrush** were found in West Virginia this spring. John and Caroline Snyder saw their year's first **Eastern Bluebird fledgling** in a nest box in their yard in Nicholas County on April 28. **Eastern Bluebirds**, **Wood Thrushes**, and **American Robins** were seen, as usual, throughout most reporting counties, while fewer counties saw reports of **Hermit Thrush**. **Veeries** appeared in reports from Cabell County (TI), Mercer County (JP), Monongalia County (TB, LeJ), Preston County (GF), Randolph County (SK, HMy), and Tucker County (SK, HMy, MC, MO); and **Swainson's Thrushes** made appearances in only five counties: Berkeley (MO), Monongalia (TB), Pendleton (FA), Pocahontas (KH), and Wetzel (WJ).

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

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

**Pipits**—**American Pipits** made appearances only in Mason County (MG, WA, JWg, BDe, JJH) and Wetzel County (WJ).

**Waxwings**—By the end of the season **Cedar Waxwing** reports were widespread among reporting counties.

**Warblers**—On May 20, Matthew Orsie found a "**Brewster's**" **Warbler** for the third year in a row in George Washington National Forest in southern Hardy County. Susan Olcott saw a "**Brewster's**" **Warbler** near Valley Point, Preston County, on May 29. The following warblers, all regular migrants through or breeders in West



Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Ovenbird**: April 12, Cabell (SA); **Worm-Eating Warbler**: April 3, Jefferson (JBz); **Louisiana Waterthrush**: March 13, Calhoun (TF); **Northern Waterthrush**: April 21, Summers (JJP); **Golden-winged Warbler**: April 27, Raleigh (WS); **Blue-winged Warbler**: April 4, Wayne (MG); **Black-and-white Warbler**: April 4, Wayne (MG); **Prothonotary Warbler**: April 16, Jefferson (CD); **Swainson's Warbler**: April 20, Fayette County (RB); **Tennessee Warbler**: April 22, Cabell (DP, MG); **Nashville Warbler**: March 25, Kanawha (JW); **Mourning Warbler**: May 12, Pocahontas (DP, WA, MG); **Kentucky Warbler**: April 19, Marshall (SSh); **Common Yellowthroat**: April 15, Cabell (MG); **Hooded Warbler**: April 16, Cabell (MG), Preston (LeJ), and Randolph (HMy); **American Redstart**: April 20, Wayne (MG); **Cape May Warbler**: April 28, Berkeley (MO); **Cerulean Warbler**: April 7, Kanawha (KC); **Northern Parula**: April 7, Cabell (DP, WA, MG); **Magnolia Warbler**: April 21, Preston (LeJ); **Bay-breasted Warbler**: May 5, Berkeley (MO); **Blackburnian Warbler**: April 20, Wayne (MG); **Yellow Warbler**: April 7, Cabell (DP, WA, MG); **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: April 15, Preston (LeJ); **Blackpoll Warbler**: April 28, Cabell (TI); **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: April 25, Kanawha (CE); **Palm Warbler**: April 10, Jefferson (JBz); **Pine Warbler**: March 1, Putnam (KC); **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: March 1, Putnam (KC); **Yellow-throated Warbler**: March 21, Raleigh (WS); **Prairie Warbler**: April 15, Berkeley (MO); **Black-throated Green Warbler**: March 25, Wayne (DP, MG); **Canada Warbler**: May 7, Preston (TB) and Raleigh (HMy); **Wilson's Warbler**: May 5, Jefferson (MO) and Wetzel (WJ); and **Yellow-breasted Chat**: April 22, Cabell (DP, MG). With a few notable exceptions, these arrivals took place before the "first-seen" records listed by George A. Hall in *West Virginia Birds*. On May 2, Jon Benedetti found 16 **warbler** species in McDonough Park, Wood County.

**Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos, Longspurs**—**Eastern Towhees** appeared at the beginning of the spring season and were reported from all areas of the state. Sixteen species of sparrow made appearances in accustomed haunts throughout our state. Sandy Fenstermacher reported the season's lone **American Tree Sparrow** on March 7 in Fayette County. **White-throated Sparrows** were present through early May; **White-crowned Sparrows** lingered till later in the month, and both species were widely reported. The only reports of **Clay-colored Sparrow** this spring came from Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, as first found by Herb Myers on May 6, and subsequently reported by Marquette Crockett and Matthew Orsie as well. On April 15, Susan Aaron found a **Lark Sparrow**, a life bird for her, at Rotary Park in Huntington, Cabell County. Resident, migrant, and returning **sparrow** species made first appearances this season in reports from the following counties: **Chipping** on March 2 in Jefferson (BH), **Field** on March 1 in Marshall (SSh), **Vesper** on March 28 in Wetzel (WJ), **Savannah** on March 22 in Wood (JB), **Grasshopper** on April 7 in Preston (DCo), **Henslow's** on April 21 in Preston (LeJ), **Fox** on March 5 in

Cabell (TI) and Summers (JJP), **Song** on March 1 in Marshall (SSh), **Lincoln's** on May 1 in Wetzel (WJ), **Swamp** on March 5 in Jefferson (DHa), and **Dark-eyed Junco** on March 7 in Jefferson (DHa). On May 14, LeJay Graffious reported that he had persuaded a neighboring farmer in Brandonville, Preston County, not to mow a field where **Henslow's Sparrows** were *breeding* until after nesting season.

**Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings**—**Summer Tanagers** were observed in six counties in the western half of the state: Barbour (MG), Lincoln (CE), Monongalia (LS), Wayne (BDe), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB). Twenty counties saw reports of returning **Scarlet Tanagers**, the first of which was on April 17 in Summers County by James Phillips. **Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. On May 5, Gary Rankin saw two **Blue Grosbeaks** at Ashton Wetlands in Jefferson County, and Matthew Orsie saw them near Candlewood Drive in the same county the next day. Frederick Atwood found at least three **Blue Grosbeaks** on Hogueland Lane near Cabins, Grant County, on May 13. Matthew Orsie saw a **Dickcissel** at Candlewood Drive, Jefferson County, on May 23, and he found another one on Hogueland Lane, Grant County, on May 26. Elliot Kirschbaum and Carol Del-Colle also saw the **Dickcissel** at Candlewood Drive.

**Icterids**—**Bobolinks** returned to eight reporting counties, with an early first appearance on April 28 in Tucker County, where a group of birders including the author of these notes found them during a bird walk at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. 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 six counties: Cabell (MG), Jefferson (DHa, JBz, MO), Pendleton (RBi), Preston (TB, GF, SO, DCo, LeJ), Tucker (CR), and Wetzel (WJ).

**Finches, Allies**—**Red Crossbills** prompted reports in Pocahontas (RBo, DP, KC, JBo) and Randolph (RT, RB, WT) Counties. On May 27, John Boback found more than 41 **Red Crossbills** along the Scenic Highway in Cranberry Glades, Pocahontas County. Mary Grey spotted the only **Common Redpoll** of the season at her feeders in Wheeling, Ohio County, on March 10. **Purple Finches, House Finches, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches** appeared in reports from appropriate habitats throughout the state.

**Weaver Finches**—The **House Sparrow** continues to colonize our state, primarily in urban settings.

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