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Canaan Valley Resort State Park Species Accounts: Wrens

John Northeimer and Marjorie Keatley

Species accounts are based on the 2002 and 2003 breeding bird surveys outlined in *Determining Breeding Bird Occurrence and Distribution Using Fixed-Radius Independent Double-Observer Point Counts, Canaan Valley Resort State Park, West Virginia* by Northeimer and Keatley (2022).

Three wren species were detected during the surveys: House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), and Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*). Noticeably absent was the Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Vegetation classification and mapping followed descriptions from Cowardin and Golet (1979) and Fortney (1997).

House Wren

Hall (1983) mentions the House Wren as being rare to uncommon during the summer in the Allegheny Mountain Region. However, Buckelew and Hall (1994) and Bailey and Rucker (2021) did confirm breeding in eastern Tucker County. The House Wren was recorded at 24 points during the 2002–2003 point count survey. It occurred at elevations at or below 3,320 feet in palustrine emergent (grasses, sedges, and rushes) and palustrine shrub (*Alnus rugosa*, *Crataegus* sp., *Hypericum* sp., and *Spirea alba*) vegetation types and also in areas dominated by upland herbaceous vegetation (Figure 1). Shrub was present at 14 of 24 stations where detections occurred, and 15 of 24 stations had a wet hydrologic regime. It occurred often near the boundary of different habitat types.

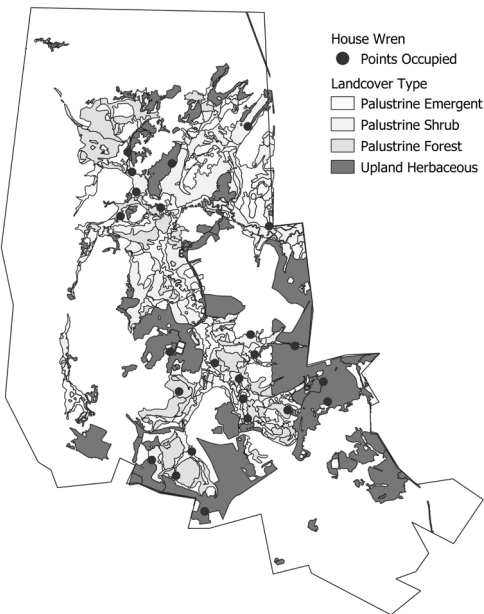


Figure 1: House Wren occurrence and habitat associations

Winter Wren

Winter wrens were recorded as possibly breeding in Tucker County during the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994). Probable breeding records were reported during the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021). The point count survey yielded detections at 15 points. Additional detections at three points during the 2001 pilot study were included in habitat associations (Figure 2). Detections occurred almost exclusively (17 out of 18 stations where detected) within hardwood—*Acer-Betula-Fagus* (53%), coniferous—*Picea-Tsuga* (30%), and mixed forests—*Betula-Tsuga* (17%), at elevations between 3,240 and 4,200 feet. One bird occurred in the transition from mixed forest (*Picea-Acer-Prunus*) to an opening with emergent vegetation (grasses and cattails). One hundred percent of detections occurred within forests with moderate to dense canopy and thirty-three percent in forests with dense canopy and a moderate understory and shrub cover. Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) occurred in the shrub layer at 67% (12 out of 18) of stations where detections occurred. Forest litter was the dominant ground cover with a mixture of mosses and woody seedlings. Figure 3 provides detailed floristic and cover density characteristics for all 18 occupied points. Individual species and cover density values represent the number of points where that element occurred out of the total number of points considered.

Winter wrens place nests in or under stumps or among the roots of upturned trees as well as in tree cavities (Ehrlich et al. 1988) and are often well hidden and the entrance difficult to locate (Harrison 1975). The authors observed a winter wren carrying food to, and disappearing within, a moss-covered tree stump on the eastern flank of Canaan Mountain during a follow-up vegetation survey. An entrance and nest could not be located.

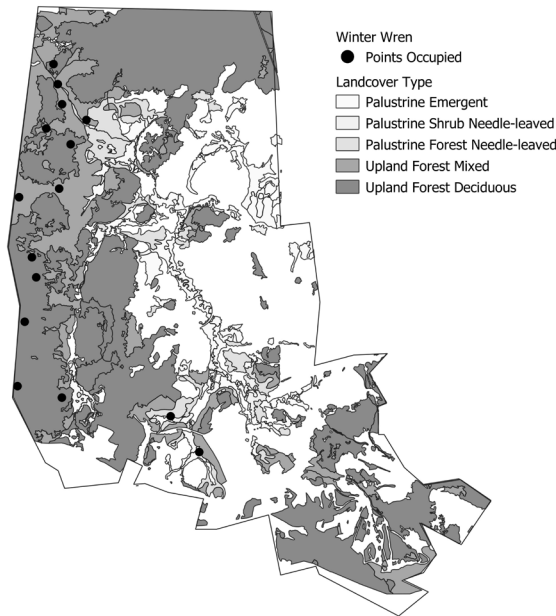
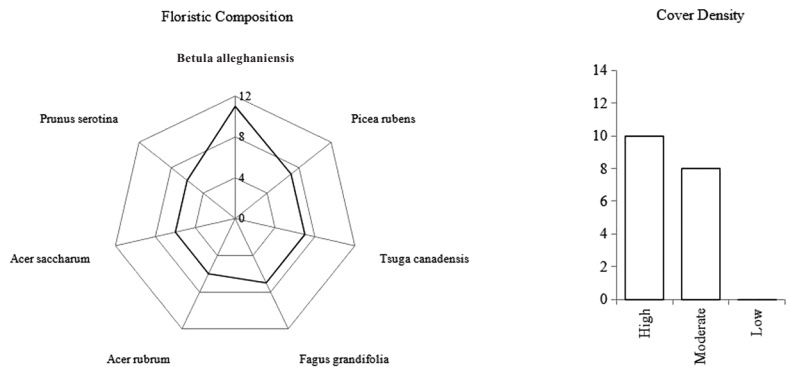
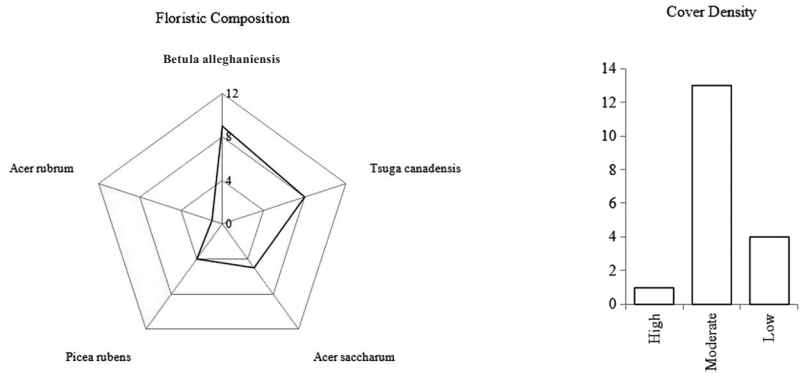


Figure 2: Winter Wren occurrence and habitat associations

Canopy



Understory



Shrub Layer

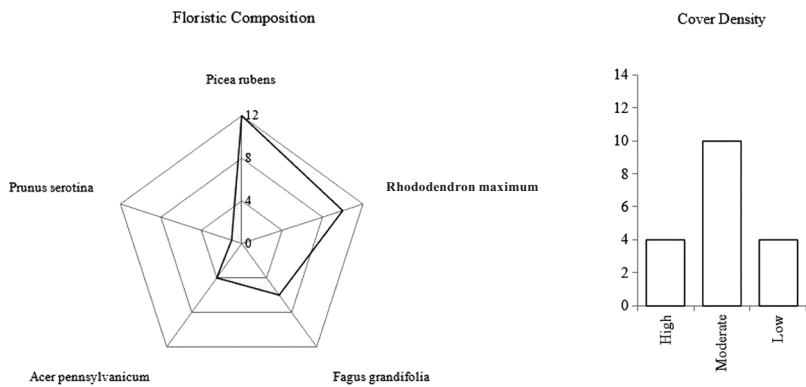


Figure 3: Winter Wren habitat floristic and vegetative cover characteristics

Sedge Wren

The Sedge Wren was recorded at two different stations just west of the park road leading to the golf course during the surveys in 2002 and 2003. Detections occurred within a mixture of wet herbaceous (grasses, forbs) and wet shrubland (*Alnus rugosa*) cover types (Figure 4). Additional detections were recorded during unlimited radius point counts conducted during 1998 and 2000 in the remote central and northern areas of the park. (Northeimer, unpublished data). These locations encompassed a more varied vegetation assemblage.

Northeimer et al. (2007) described the utility of using a GIS system to analyze the point count detections to define potential breeding areas for individual species and specifically for the Sedge Wren. This information was presented in graphic form that could be used for land management and species conservation strategies. It included all areas of the park with the habitat characteristics associated with nesting requirements of the Sedge Wren.

The only confirmed breeding record for the sedge wren recorded during the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Bucklelew and Hall 1994) was from Barbour County. No records were reported during the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021). Historical records are listed for Canaan Valley by Hall (1983). The cryptic nature and low nest site fidelity (Ehrlich, Dobkin, and Wheye 1988) may account for the low occurrence or absence during censuses. Recent observations (Slaven 2020) occurred from May through July, 2020, in the area along the road to the golf course—the same location of detections registered during the 2003 point counts.

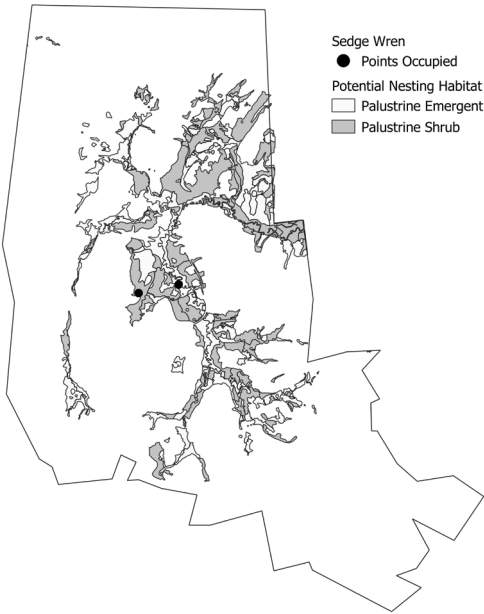


Figure 4: Sedge Wren occurrence and habitat associations

Carolina Wren

The Carolina Wren was not detected at any points for either year. This correlates with results from both the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) and the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021). Hall (1983) mentions that the Carolina Wren becomes less numerous at higher elevations and uncommon above 750 m. Chadbourne and Anderson (2015) did list the presence of Carolina Wrens within the grasslands of the Canaan Valley National Refuge during point counts conducted during 1999 and 2000, although in low numbers.

Snowy winters and cold temperatures may be the limiting factor in Canaan Valley, although a warming climate could change these distribution patterns. Matthews et al. (2004) predicts a range expansion northward and increased abundance as a result of such climate change.

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Canaan Valley Resort State Park Species Accounts: Thrushes

John Northeimer and Marjorie Keatley

Species accounts are based on the 2002 and 2003 breeding bird surveys outlined in *Determining Breeding Bird Occurrence and Distribution Using Fixed-Radius Independent Double-Observer Point Counts, Canaan Valley Resort State Park, West Virginia* by Northeimer and Keatley (2022).

Six thrush family (*Turdidae*) species were detected during the point counts: Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*), Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), and American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). Vegetation classification and mapping followed descriptions from Cowardin and Golet (1979) and Fortney (1997).

Eastern Bluebird

Bluebirds were detected at seven points during the survey. Two were occupying placed nest boxes with active nests. Interspecific competition for cavities among Bluebirds, House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), and Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) was observed in nest boxes placed and monitored within Canaan Valley Resort State Park. Bluebirds would initially occupy boxes for nesting but success depended on whether displacement occurred later from Tree Swallows and House Wrens.

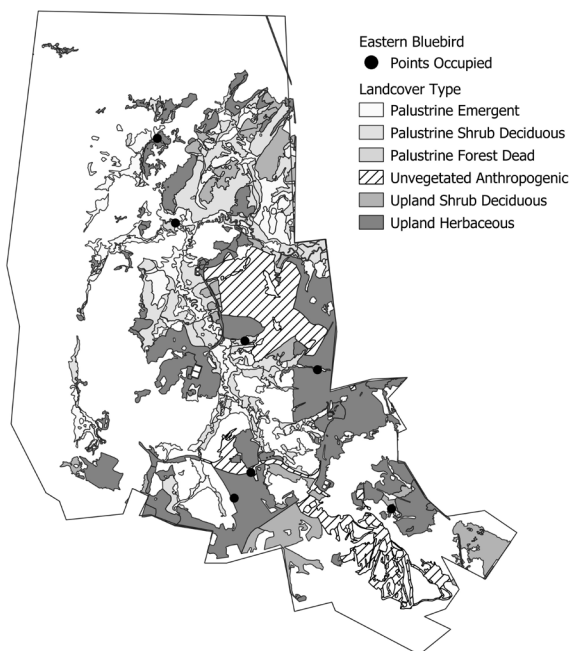


Figure 1: Eastern Bluebird occurrence and habitat associations.

Detections occurred at the border of woodlands and fields and within wet shrublands, with one location containing dead standing trees. Hall (1983) mentions that bluebirds require habitat that provides cavities in old or dying trees including dead trees killed by flooding and old snags around beaver dams, and that nests have been found in suitable habitat above 1,200 m (3,937 ft). The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021) point count surveys found nests to 1,330 m (4,364 ft), although lower densities occur at higher elevations.

Veery

An active Veery nest was confirmed during the survey. The nest was located at an elevation of 1,027 m (3,370 ft). The canopy cover was composed of Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). The understory contained Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) and the shrub layer was composed of Great Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) and Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*). Cover densities were high, low, and high—respectively—for the three layers (Figure 2).

Detections occurred at four stations within an elevation range of 1,021 and 1,231 m (3,350 and 4,040 ft) during the survey (Figure 3). Hall (1983) notes that the Veery nests at elevations as low as 300 m (984 ft) in the north but is most common above 750 m (2,460 ft). Although summer records were recorded from Tucker County, no definite nesting record existed. Confirmed breeding records were registered for Tucker County during the West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) and also during the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021).The Second Atlas found records at elevations from as low as 250 m (820 ft) with greatest abundance between 1,000 and 1,200 m (3,280 and 3,937 ft) in elevation. Singing birds have been encountered during breeding season in Blackwater Gorge, Tucker County, at elevations below 945 m (3,100 ft).

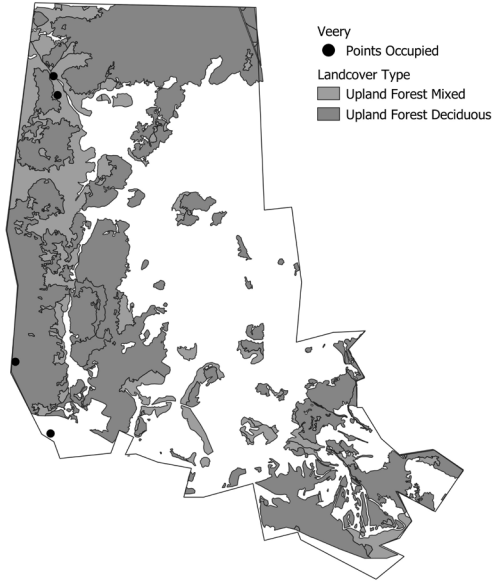


Figure 2: Habitat characteristics at confirmed nest site for the Veery.
 Figure 3: Veery occurrence and habitat associations.

Swainson's Thrush

The Swainson's Thrush was detected at two stations during the survey. Both occurred along a small tributary of the Blackwater River at elevations of 991 m (3,250 ft) and 1,021 m (3,350 ft). Additional records come from two points as a part of counts conducted in June 2006 and 2007 along Canaan Loop Road just northwest of the park on the western edge of the crest of Canaan Mountain. Both of these occurred along the North Fork of Red Run at elevations of 1,073 m (3,520 ft) and 1,091 m (3,580 ft) (Figure 4). The Swainson's Thrush has been consistently detected at the Canaan Loop Road locations during the breeding season subsequent to these counts through 2022. All four points occurred within mixed hardwood/coniferous and coniferous stands. The points within the park had a closed canopy with a low to moderately dense understory and shrub layer. In contrast, the Canaan Loop points were more open with a low density canopy layer, a moderately dense understory, and a high density shrub layer. All four points were located along the headwaters of stream tributaries.

Hall (1983) lists summer records from Tucker and Grant Counties. The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) did not find the Swainson's Thrush in either Tucker or Grant County. Probable or confirmed observations during the Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021) occurred in six counties, including Tucker (probable breeding), at elevations between 900 m (2,950 feet) and 1,350 m (4,430 feet).

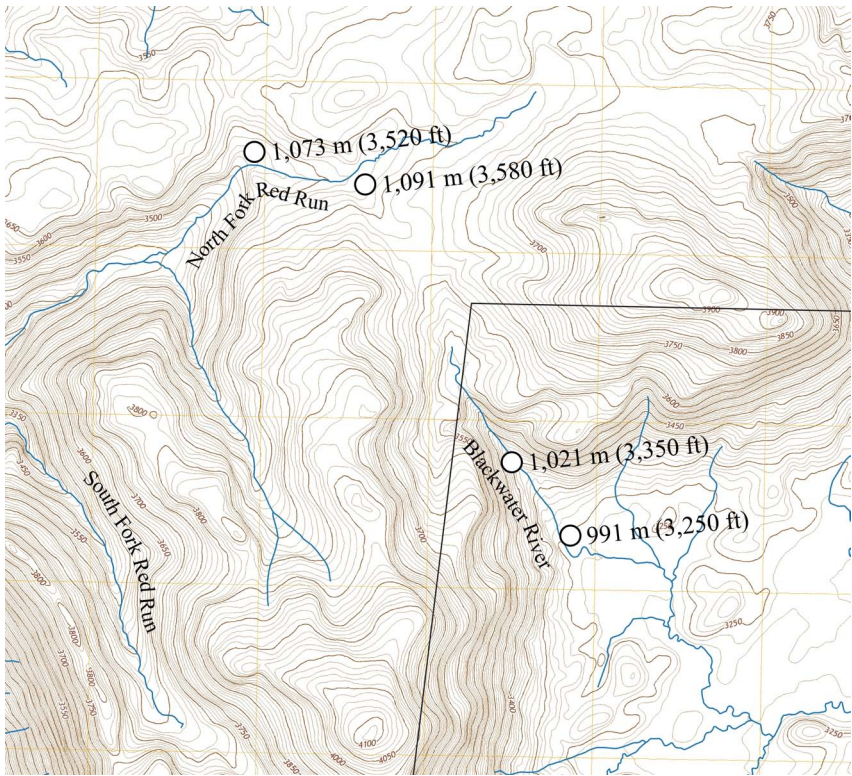


Figure 4: Swainson's Thrush locations with elevation.

Hermit Thrush

The Hermit Thrush was the most numerous of the six thrush species recorded during the survey. It was detected at 45 of the 162 points sampled (Figure 5). Most detections occurred in the upland forests (28 out of 45) with the balance occurring at lower elevations at boundaries between forests and palustrine habitats. Hall (1983) mentions that the Hermit Thrush may inhabit the edges of mountain bogs within pure spruce forests. Buckelew and Hall (1994) found that it not only occurred in mature forests but also widely in second growth. Figure 6 identifies the floristic and structural components of the Hermit Thrush's occurrence within the 28 upland forest sample points where detections occurred. Individual species and cover density values represent the number of points where that element occurred out of the total number of points considered.

Hall (1983) states that most summer records come from above 1,050 m (3,445 ft) and that the species is most numerous above 1,200 m (3,937 ft). Detections recorded during the survey occurred within an elevation range of 988–1,295 m (3,240–4,250 ft) with an average of 1,038 m (3,406 ft). Two confirmed active nests for the Hermit Thrush occurred at elevations of 994 m (3,260 ft) and 1,128 m (3,700 ft).

Hall (1983) lists definite nesting records only from Randolph and Pocahontas Counties, although he does list its presence during the summer in Preston, Tucker, and Grant Counties. The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) expands confirmed breeding to Grant, Tucker, Nicholas, and Webster Counties. The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021) greatly expands occurrence to 11 counties with an estimated population increase within West Virginia of 242 percent between atlas midpoints.

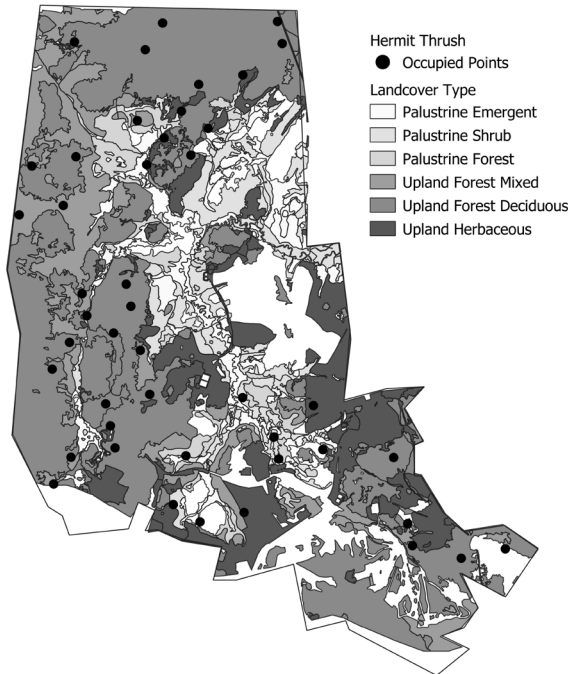
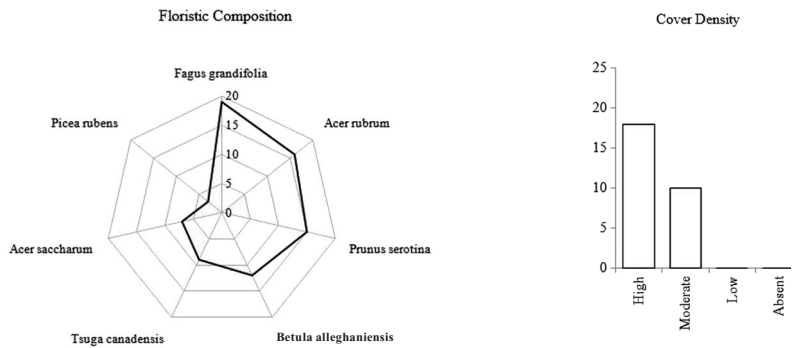
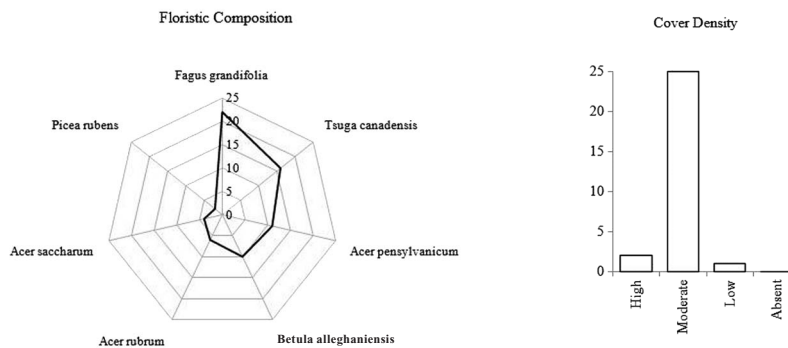


Figure 5: Hermit Thrush occurrence and habitat associations.

Canopy



Understory



Shrub Layer

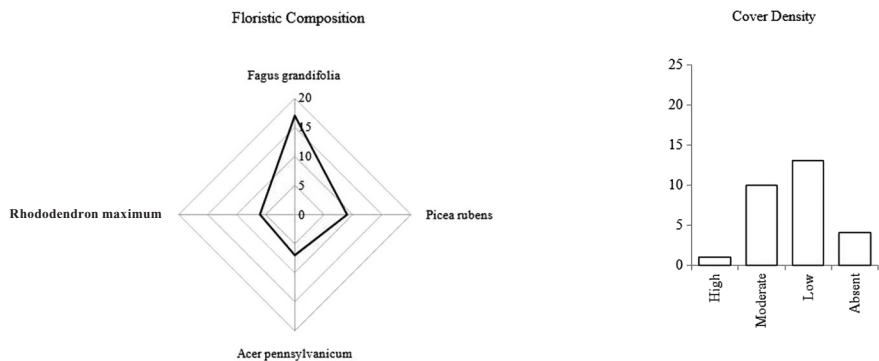


Figure 6: Hermit Thrush forest habitat floristic and vegetative cover characteristics.

Wood Thrush

The Wood Thrush was detected at only three points—two in the deciduous upland forest on the east slope of Canaan Mountain and one at the edge between upland herbaceous and deciduous forest on the eastern flank of Cabin Mountain (Figure 7). Hall (1983) states that a principal habitat factor seems to be the completeness of the canopy that provides dense shade on the forest floor.

Although found throughout the state, elevation seems to be a controlling factor in regional densities. The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) found the Wood Thrush in all parts of the state with occasional nests occurring in the spruce-northern hardwoods forest at elevations up to 1,000 m (3,280 ft). The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021) also found the Wood Thrush in all parts of the state with the highest abundance at elevations between 200–600 m (650–970 ft). Although densities generally decreased with elevational gain, individuals were found above 1,200 m (3,940 ft). The three detections during the survey occurred at elevations between 1,012 and 1,103 m (3,320 and 3,620 ft).

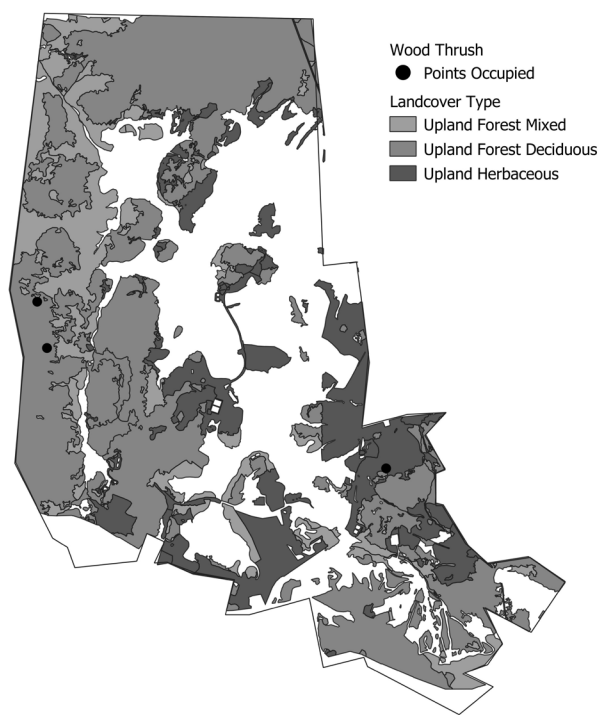


Figure 7: Wood Thrush occurrence and habitat associations.

American Robin

Hall (1983) states that a favored habitat for the American Robin contains at least some trees with grassy areas for feeding and that the species is found throughout the state at all elevations. The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (Buckelew and Hall 1994) recorded nests in forest edge, open woodlands, agricultural areas, house gardens, and urban areas that contain trees. The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia (Bailey and Rucker 2021) found breeding density highest in fragmented landscapes regardless of region but abundance declining with increasing forest cover. Point counts during the Second Atlas recorded detections at elevations up to 1,350 m (4,430 ft). Detections during the survey followed this pattern with detections occurring in a variety of habitats from palustrine shrub and forest, upland herbaceous and shrub, upland forest, and unvegetated anthropocentric landcover types (Figure 8). It occurred between elevations of 981–1,231 m (3,220–4,040 ft) with an average of 1,002 m (3,289 ft).

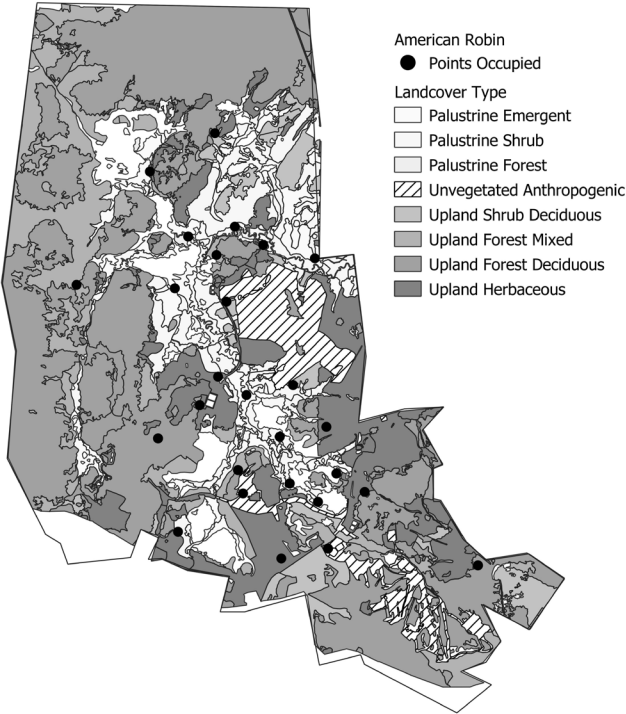


Figure 8: American Robin occurrence and habitat associations.

Sympatry

The two most numerous of the six members of the thrush family (*Turdidae*) occurring on the park were the Hermit Thrush and American Robin. The Hermit Thrush occurred mainly in the upland forests while the American Robin—a habitat generalist—occurred at lower elevations primarily in wet shrublands and shrubby fields. It also showed a preference for forest edges abutting shrublands. Figure 9 shows the distribution of the two thrushes. Their occurrence overlapped at six sample points, although only at three points in the same year.

There are many variables to consider in describing or predicting species distribution, and selection of and competition for breeding habitat. These include but are not limited to elevation, climate, habitat (structure and floristic composition), and temporal and spatial variations (Wiens 1989). Dellinger et al. (2007) describe the habitat partitioning of four sympatric thrushes in a West Virginia forest including the Veery, Swainson’s Thrush, Hermit Thrush, and American Robin. Partitioning variables included distance to edge and elevation. Hall (1983) also discusses tension between the distribution of the Veery, Swainson’s Thrush, Hermit Thrush, and Wood Thrush related to habitat and elevation. Although the Veery, Swainson’s Thrush, and Wood Thrush did occur on the park, their numbers were low and no inferences could be made regarding distribution or selection of nesting sites.

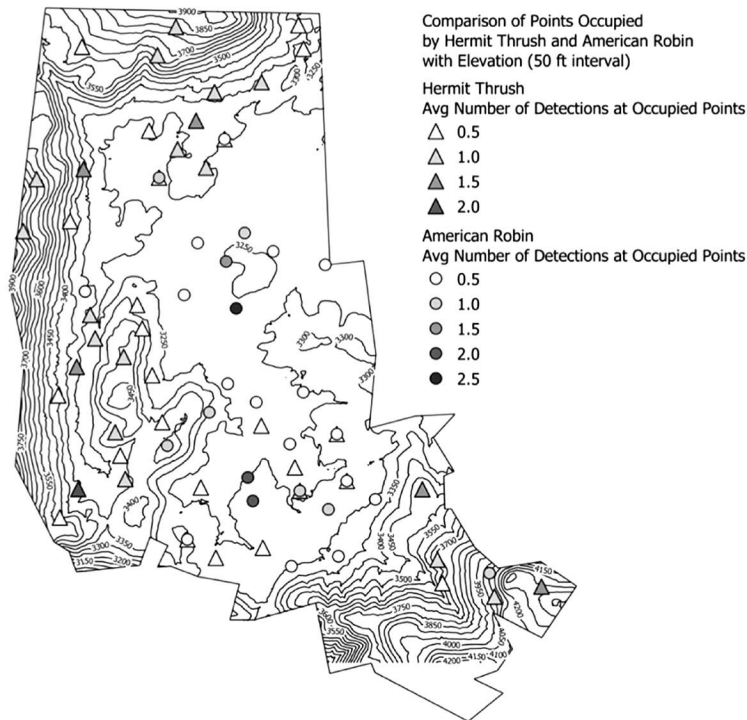


Figure 9: Combined distributions for Hermit Thrush and American Robin.

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American Ornithological Society Taxonomic Changes for 2022

Casey Rucker

The Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) published the sixty-third supplement to the AOS Check-list on August 3, and made the article publicly available immediately (Chesser et al. 2022). Among the notable changes extralimital to West Virginia was a split of Grayish Saltator into a Mexican species, Cinnamon-bellied Saltator, *Saltator grandis*, a species in northeastern South America, Olivaceous Saltator, *Saltator olivaceus*, and a species found throughout Amazonia, Blue-gray Saltator, *Saltator coerulescens*.

As has recently been the case, no species was added to or deleted from the West Virginia bird list. There is only one change to the taxonomic order of birds on the state list; the order of wrens has been reshuffled once again.

Change in taxonomic order. The order of Troglodytidae species on the West Virginia list was changed as follows:

Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Carolina Wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes hiemalis</i>
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus stellaris</i>
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>

Wil Hershberger, Secretary of the West Virginia Bird Records Committee, maintains our state list, which is available online at links located at the bottom of the page on <https://www.brooksbirdclub.org/west-virginia-bird-records-committee.html>.

Reference

R. T. Chesser, S. M. Billerman, K. J. Burns, C. Cicero, J. L. Dunn, B. E. Hernández-Baños, R. A. Jiménez, A. W. Kratter, N. A. Mason, P. C. Rasmussen, J. V. Remsen, Jr., D. F. Stotz, and K. Winker. 2022. Sixty-third supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American birds. *Ornithology* 138, ukac020. <https://academic.oup.com/auk/article/139/3/ukac020/6653407>.

eBird Report

December 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022

Michael Slaven

The winter season started on a strong note with reports and photographs of a Snow Goose and two White-winged Scoters on Alpine Lake, Preston County, on December 4. The next day, a Lapland Longspur was reported by two birders on Hogueland Lane in Grant County. The birders added another notable encounter with two Palm Warblers seen on the same day.

On December 16, a Snowy Owl was spotted in Mason County, where it was seen and photographed by several birders. January saw a return to cooler weather, but there were reports in Monongalia County from two very reliable birders that Chipping Sparrows were still visiting their feeders. This is not unprecedented behavior, but it will be interesting to see if this pattern is repeated next winter. Cackling Geese were reported in Monongalia County in January as well, and a Short-eared Owl was spotted near the Deckers Creek Trail in Preston County. All in all, it was a relatively quiet birding season until February, when more diverse numbers of species and larger numbers began to be reported. Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Redheads, Canvasbacks, Ring-necked Ducks, and Common Goldeneyes started to appear on the larger rivers and lakes. A few gulls also appeared in Ohio County, including Herring Gulls, and Great Black-backed Gulls. Double-crested Cormorants also began to be reported in early February. By the end of the month, it appeared that the woods were waking up to almost springlike conditions, with Eastern Towhees, Fox Sparrows, Common Grackles and other birds reported frequently. The winter season ended up being fairly average in the total number of species, or marginally down, depending on the taxa that are examined. All in all, there were a few notable birds, perhaps a sign that winters are becoming shorter; waterfowl numbers are probably going to reflect that change over the next few years.

As spring dawned (nearly), a revolutionary change was beginning to become apparent on eBird. Reports started to become much more common that depended on sound identifications—flight calls, songs, and the like. The first impacts of the revolutionary Merlin app were beginning to make a real difference in the ways in which birds were being reported. Merlin is a revolutionary bird identification app that can help identify birds from photographs, description and finally sound. The addition of extremely accurate sound identification made birders much more likely to report birds that were identified by vocalization, increasing the number of species likely to be reported. Overall, this was an important step, especially as more people took up birding, often without yet being connected to a network of experienced birders to help them learn bird sounds. With Merlin, many beginning birders gained confidence over their field identifications. Likewise, Merlin could give additional confirmation for birders who had learned bird sounds over long years of experience. This created a few interesting situations for state bird reviewers, as we pored through the field reports. Some observers said “detected by Merlin, did not hear myself.” Other uncommon birds began to be reported more often. Was this Merlin’s error, or were underreported birds finally getting their due? I have witnessed Merlin getting it wrong a couple of times, but only rarely.

I will take this issue up at some length in the next eBird report in *The Redstart*. Until then, happy birding! I hope to see you in the field!

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Field Notes
Winter Season
December 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022

Casey Rucker

December was the third warmest since 1895, and much drier than usual in the Mountain State, while January was much colder and wetter than average, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University. February was warmer and much wetter than average.

These notes were gathered from (a) the West Virginia Birds Listserv, sponsored by the National Audubon Society, (b) Christmas Bird Count (CBC) results, and (c) field notes submitted to the editor by email and regular mail. The full content of the notes submitted 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>, and the results of the Christmas Bird Counts may be found at <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>.

David Daniels discovered a **Northern Shrike** near the Deckers Creek Trail in Preston County on December 28, and Derek Courtney re-found the bird the next day. Overall, bird diversity was slightly up compared to the two previous winters, with 147 species reported from 30 of West Virginia's 55 counties.

Geese, Swans, and Ducks – Sightings of **geese** were once again relatively sparse in West Virginia this winter. **Snow Geese** appeared in Berkeley (CBC), Kanawha (CC, DWo, RG), Mason (MG), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties; **Ross's Geese** inspired reports from Kanawha (RG), Mason (MG, JK), and Raleigh (SWi) Counties. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported in Mason (MG, JK) and Monongalia (CBC) Counties, while the only report of **Cackling Geese** came from Gallipolis Ferry in Mason County, on January 30, as observed by Gary Rankin, Michael Griffith, Janet Keating, and David Patick. Reports of **Canada Geese** were as usual widespread throughout the state. **Mute Swans** were reported in Cabell (DP), Mason (DP, MG, GR, JK), and Summers (JP) Counties. **Tundra Swans** were observed in Berkeley (CBC), Cabell (JK), Jefferson (CBC), Monongalia (DCo), Randolph (JTr), Tucker (PH, CBC), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

Waterfowl numbers were a bit down this winter. The following species made appearances in at least ten West Virginia counties: **Gadwalls, Mallards, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Hooded and Common mergansers**, while birders in six to nine counties found **Wood Ducks, Northern Pintails, Redheads, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneyes, and Ruddy Ducks**. The following birds inspired reports from the counties listed: **Blue-winged Teal** in Hardy (CBC); **Northern Shovelers** in Cabell (MG, JK), Kanawha (RG, DWo, HG), Monongalia (CBC), and Summers (JLP); **American Wigeons** in Hardy (CBC), Jefferson (CBC), Kanawha (DG, DWo), Mason (MG, JK), and Wood (JB, CBC); **Canvasbacks** in Kanawha (DWo), Mason (GR, MG, JK, DP), Monongalia (JoH), Raleigh (MAW), and Wetzel (WJ); **Greater Scaup** in Mason (GR, MG, JK, DP), Monongalia (CBC), and Wetzel (WJ); **White-winged Scoters** in Hardy (MJ), Kanawha (RG), Monongalia (HC, DCo), and Raleigh (SWi); **Black Scoters** in Monongalia (CBC, DCo, HC); and **Red-breasted Mergansers** in Monongalia (CBC) and Wetzel (WJ).

Turkeys and Grouse – **Wild Turkey** sightings were widespread, including many on the tallies of Christmas Bird Counts. **Ruffed Grouse** reports came from Christmas Bird Counts in Pendleton and Pocahontas Counties.

Grebes – **Pied-billed Grebes** were reported widely throughout the state, while reports of **Horned Grebes** came only from Christmas Bird Counts in Monongalia, Raleigh, and Wood Counties.

Pigeons and Doves – **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continue to reside throughout the state, as reported primarily in Christmas Bird Counts. The Lewisburg Christmas Bird Count on December 19 in Greenbrier County included a **Eurasian Collared-Dove**.

Rails and Coots – **Virginia Rails** were found in Christmas Bird Counts in Jefferson and Monongalia Counties. **American Coots** inspired reports only in Kanawha (CBC), Mason (GR, JK, MG, DP), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties this winter.

Cranes – On January 27, Jack O’Connell spotted a lone **Sandhill Crane** in a field in Greenbrier County.

Plovers – Reports of **Killdeer** were down this winter, with records from only eight counties.

Sandpipers – **American Woodcock** made an unusual early (or late) appearance in the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count on December 18, which also turned up a **Spotted Sandpiper**; **American Woodcock** were also observed in February in Summers (JJP) and Wetzel (WJ) Counties. **Wilson’s Snipe** observations came from Greenbrier (JO), Pendleton (CBC), and Pocahontas (CBC) Counties.

Gulls – It was a sparse season for winter **gulls** in West Virginia once again. Birders reported **Bonaparte’s Gulls** in Monongalia (CBC), Raleigh (MAW), Randolph (CBC), and Summers (JP) Counties, and **Ring-billed Gulls** in nine West Virginia counties. **Herring Gulls** appeared in reports from Mason (GR, JK, MG, DP), Summers (JP), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties.

Loons – Reports of **Common Loons** came from Cabell (GR, JHu, BDe), Jefferson (CBC), Raleigh (CBC), Summers (CBC), Tucker (CBC), and Wood (CBC) Counties.

Cormorants – There were reports of **Double-crested Cormorants** from only four counties this winter.

Pelicans – An **American White Pelican** made a brief appearance at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, on February 20, as observed by Rennie Talbert, Janet Keating, and David Patick.

Hérons – **Great Blue Herons** appeared throughout the state this winter. A **Green Heron** was an unusual find for the Charleston Christmas Bird Count in Kanawha County on December 18. Josh Holland discovered a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, on December 18 during the Ona Christmas Bird Count, and Gary Rankin re-found the bird on the next day.

Vultures – Reports of **Black** and **Turkey vultures** came from twelve and seventeen counties, respectively.

Eagles and Hawks – **Golden Eagles** inspired reports only from Greenbrier (JO), Hampshire (CBC), Hardy (DH), Pendleton (FA, CBC), and Tucker (CBC) Counties. **Northern Harriers**, **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper’s hawks**, **Bald Eagles**, and **Red-shouldered** and **Red-tailed hawks** appeared widely throughout West Virginia during the

winter season. **Rough-legged Hawks** were once again scarce, inspiring reports only from Mason (DP, GR, MG, JK) and Monroe (JJP) Counties.

Owls – A **Snowy Owl** delighted birders in southern Mason County, as reported by Michael Griffith on December 8, and the bird was still at the same location six days later (JBT). **Barn Owls** were reported in Greenbrier (JO) and Pocahontas (CBC) Counties, and as usual in the Moorefield Christmas Bird Count in Hardy County on December 20. Reports of **Eastern Screech-Owls** and of **Great Horned Owls** came from ten and nine counties respectively. Birders in eleven counties reported **Barred Owls**. **Short-eared Owls** appeared in Berkeley County (CBC), Greenbrier County (JO), and Mason County (DP, GR, JK, ReT, MG). The lone **Northern Saw-whet Owl** found during the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count, Monongalia County, on December 18, was the only one reported this season.

Kingfishers – West Virginia birders in fifteen counties reported **Belted Kingfishers**.

Woodpeckers – **Red-headed Woodpeckers** made appearances in seven counties, and **Red-bellied Woodpeckers**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, **Downy** and **Hairy woodpeckers**, **Northern Flickers**, and **Pileated Woodpeckers** were all subjects of widespread reports in West Virginia over the winter.

Falcons – **American Kestrels** and **Merlins** were well-represented in Christmas Bird Counts and other reports in most parts of the state. Reports of **Peregrine Falcons** came from Barbour (RBo), Hardy (CBC), Jefferson (CBC), Kanawha (RG), Monongalia (CBC), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (CBC) Counties.

Flycatchers – An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** was a rare find for the Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count in Wood County on December 18. Reports of **Eastern Phoebe** came from only eight counties this winter.

Vireos – For the fifth year in a row the Morgantown Christmas Bird Count recorded **White-eyed Vireo**, this time two individuals, on December 18 in Monongalia County. Gary Rankin, John Hubbard, and Beverly Delidow spotted another **White-eyed Vireo** at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, during the Ona Christmas Bird Count on the same day.

Shrikes – **Loggerhead Shrikes** were reported by Richard Bailey in Greenbrier and Monroe Counties in December, and in the Pocahontas County Christmas Bird Count on December 18. **The Northern Shrike** found by David Daniels on the Deckers Creek Trail in Preston County on December 8 is described near the beginning of these notes.

Jays, Crows, and Ravens – **Blue Jays**, **American Crows**, and **Common Ravens** appeared in their usual haunts throughout the state. **Fish Crows** inspired only the report of the Charles Town Christmas Bird Count in Jefferson County on December 19.

Chickadees and Titmice – **Carolina** and **Black-capped chickadees** appeared in reports from their overlapping territories throughout West Virginia. **Tufted Titmice** occupied their usual spots in reports from throughout the state.

Larks – Reports of **Horned Larks** came only from Berkeley County (CBC), Hardy County (CBC), Jefferson County (WS, CBC), and Mason County (DP, MG, JsH, MG, JK).

Swallows – Michael Griffith and Janet Keating spotted the first **Tree Swallows** of 2022 on February 18 at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, and James and Judy Phillips saw at least 50 **Tree Swallows** flying over the New River in Hinton, Summers County, on March 24.

Kinglets – **Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned kinglets** were both familiar sights in most parts of the state this winter.

Waxwings – **Cedar Waxwing** sightings were up this winter, coming from fifteen counties.

Nuthatches – It was not an irruption year for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, which inspired reports in only eight counties. **White-breasted Nuthatches** were as usual widely reported throughout the state.

Creepers – Birders in sixteen West Virginia counties reported **Brown Creepers**.

Wrens – The Raleigh County Christmas Bird Count recorded a **House Wren** for the second year in a row, on December 19. The Morgantown Christmas Bird Count in Monongalia County recorded a **House Wren** as well as a **Marsh Wren** on December 18. West Virginia birders reported **Winter** and **Carolina wrens** in good numbers statewide.

Catbirds, Thrashers, and Mockingbirds – **Gray Catbirds** were recorded in Christmas Bird Counts in Monongalia and Pocahontas Counties. **Brown Thrashers** were spotted in Mason (GR, JK), Monongalia (CBC), and Wood (CBC) Counties. West Virginians reported **Northern Mockingbirds** widely in lower elevations over the winter season.

Starlings – **European Starlings** continued their widespread occupation of habitats throughout our state.

Thrushes – **Eastern Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, and American Robins** appeared in good numbers in our state this winter, mostly at lower elevations. On December 18, a **Wood Thrush** was an unusual find in the Pocahontas County Christmas Bird Count.

Old World Sparrows – Thanks to Christmas Bird Counts, we have been assured that the **House Sparrow** continues throughout the state, primarily in urban and farm settings.

Pipits – Michael Griffith, Josh Holland, and David Patick counted 77 **American Pipits** near McCausland Wildlife Management Area, Mason County, on February 5, and Gary Rankin and Janet Keating found 20 **American Pipits** in the same location on the following day.

Finches and Allies – In sharp contrast to the winter before, the only **Evening Grosbeaks** reported this winter were in the Pocahontas Christmas Bird Count on December 18. **House** and **Purple finches** and **American Goldfinches** appeared widely in West Virginia this winter. **Red Crossbills** were observed in Pocahontas County (JO, CBC), and Tucker County (HMY). **Pine Siskins** were seen in Greenbrier (JO), Kanawha (HG), Monongalia (CBC), and Summers (JP) Counties.

Longspurs – Michael Griffith, Josh Holland, and David Patick found a lone **Lapland Longspur** near McCausland Wildlife Management Area, Mason County, on February 5.

Sparrows, Juncos, and Towhees – **Chipping, Field, Fox, American Tree, White-crowned, White-throated, Song, and Swamp sparrows**, as well as **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Eastern Towhees**, appeared widely. **Savannah Sparrows** were observed in Hardy (CBC) and Mason (GR, MG, JK, DP) Counties.

Blackbirds and Allies – Willa Grafton hosted an unusual **Orchard Oriole** at her feeders in Braxton County on February 8. Reports of **Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Common Grackles** came from areas all over the state. **Rusty Blackbirds** were observed in Berkeley (CBC), Hardy (CBC), Mason (GR, MG, JK, DP), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (CBC) Counties. During the Point

Pleasant Christmas Bird Count Michael Griffith found fourteen **Brewer's Blackbirds** near McCausland Wildlife Management Area, Mason County, on December 26.

Warblers – James Phillips was astonished to find a **Black-and-white Warbler** on February 7 near Sandstone Falls, Summers County. A very late **Common Yellowthroat** was recorded in the Elkins Christmas Bird Count, Randolph County, on January 3. The Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count recorded the only **Palm Warbler** reported this season, in Wood County on December 18. Cynthia Burkhart found the only **Pine Warbler** of the season at her home in Ritchie County on January 25. Birders in lower elevations saw Myrtle-race **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at locations throughout the state.

Cardinals – Birders throughout the state reported **Northern Cardinals** in good numbers. Hullet Good hosted a late **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at his feeders in Milliken, Kanawha County, from December 4 through December 12. The Parkersburg Christmas Bird Count recorded the only **Indigo Bunting** reported this season, in Wood County on December 18.

Contributors to the Winter Field Notes: Frederick Atwood (FA), Jon Benedetti (JB), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Christina Carr (CC), Hannah Clipp (HC), Derek Courtney (DCo), Beverly Delidow (BDe), Donny Good (DG), Hulett Good (HG), Richard Gregg (RG), Michael Griffith (MG), Paula Jean Hallberg (PH), Joey Herron (JoH), Josh Holland (JsH), Diane Holsinger (DH), John Hubbard (JHu), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Mark Johnson (MJ), Janet Keating (JK), Jack O'Connell (JO), David Patick (DP), James Phillips (JP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), Gary Rankin (GR), Rennie Talbert (ReT), Jim and Beverly Triplett (JBT), Jim Triplett (JTr), Mindy and Allen Waldron (MAW), Steven Wilson (SWi), and Doug Wood (DWo).

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REDSTART EDITORIAL POLICY

Original papers in the field of natural history are published in *The Redstart*. Papers are judged on the basis of their contributions to original data, ideas, or interpretations. Scientific accuracy and clarity are most important, and to this end, an advisory board, selected by the editorial staff, will review submitted papers as needed. Papers should be submitted in Word, by e-mail if possible, to autoblock@frontiernet.net or on a CD and sent to the editor; otherwise, papers should be typewritten, double-spaced on one side of the paper only, and sent to the editor at P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884.

BROOKS BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP

The Brooks Bird Club, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose objective is to encourage the study and conservation of birds and other phases of natural history. Membership includes subscriptions to *The Redstart* and *Mail Bag* and entitles one to all the privileges offered by the Club. Classes of membership are Student, \$20; Individual, \$35; Family, \$40; Sustaining, \$60; Life, \$550; Family Life, \$700. Checks should be written payable to The Brooks Bird Club and mailed to P.O. Box 4077, Wheeling, WV 26003.

2022 Calendar of Events The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

Date	Activity	Place
January	BBC Membership Month	Wheeling, WV
January	Trip to Killdeer Plains (Contact Dick Esker)	
February	Write an article for The Redstart and Mail Bag	
Feb 24-25	Killbuck Marsh (overnight trip — contact Dick Esker)	
March 4-6	Early Spring Meeting (Contact Dick Esker)	North Bend State Park Harrisville, WV
March 12	Waterfowl Field Trip (day trip).....	Seneca Lake, OH
April 23	BBC/Three Rivers Bird Club (day trip)	Raccoon Creek State Park, PA (Contact Ryan Tomazin)
May 5-8	Wildflower Pilgrimage	Blackwater Falls State Park, WV
May 14	International Migratory Bird Day	
June 3-11	Foray – Camp Galilee.....	Terra Alta, WV (contact Janice Emrick or Ryan Tomazin)
August–October	Bird Banding	Dolly Sods, WV
October 28-30	BBC Fall Reunion & Meeting,	Hawk's Nest State Park Ansted, WV
November 9-13	BBC 90th Anniversary (Contact Cindy Slater)	
Dec. 14–Jan. 5, 2023	Eastern Shore (Contact Cindy Slater)	
	Christmas Bird Count.....	Statewide

***Due to the uncertainties of COVID-19 in 2022,
please visit the BBC website calendar for updates throughout the year.***

BBC FORAYS

2022 Camp Galilee, Terra Alta, Preston County
2023 Camp Horseshoe, Tucker County

SEASONAL FIELD NOTES DUE

Winter: March 15 Spring: June 15 Summer: September 15 Fall: December 15
MAIL TO: Casey Rucker, P.O. Box 2, Seneca Rocks, WV 26884, autoblock@frontiernet.net

ARTICLES FOR THE MAIL BAG DUE

February 15 May 15 August 15 November 15
MAIL TO: Ryan Tomazin, 348 Station St., Apt. 7, Bridgeville, PA 15017, wwwarblers@hotmail.com

<http://brooksbirdclub.org>

The dates for the 2022 BBC programs may be changed if necessary. Changes will be announced on the web page or in The Mail Bag.

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