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The **REDSTART**

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123rd National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count West Virginia Report

L. E. Helgerman

Let us look back at the 123rd Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season here in West Virginia. The seasonal counts were held between December 14, 2022, and January 5, 2023.

For the second season in a row, twenty-two counts were conducted in the state, our historic high number of counts. West Virginia began conducting CBCs in 1904 on the fifth count with one count centered on Waverly WV. Many of our counts have now been run for more than fifty years!

Just over half of our counts were conducted during the first week of count season, nine others ran before the end of 2022 and three were conducted at the tail end of the season in January 2023. Eleven of our counts (50%) were run during weekdays, which can really help during a busy holiday season.

It is also important to note that there are a few CBCs that border WV and collect data from our state. That data is not reflected in this report. Only counts with CBC center points within West Virginia are reflected in this report.

One hundred twenty-nine species were reported on count days, three species shy of last season, but still above our seasonal average during the last decade; additionally, one count week species was added to the list this season. West Virginia tallied 121,308 birds this CBC season, and the average number of species reported per count was 64.4.

Season Weather Report

Temperature Lows: Most of our counts (77%) started their mornings at or below freezing. Pendleton County (16°), Tygart Lake (15°), and Oak Hill (10°) started off chilly, while **Point Pleasant** began its count at **nine** degrees, the coldest. On the flip side, Huntington began with a warm low temperature of 41°, and even so the 52-degree reading for Elkins was the warmest low this season. The Point Pleasant 26th December count averaged as the coldest this season with a low/high range of 9–26 degrees.

Temperature Highs: Temperatures on five counts (23%) went above 49°; Inwood (61°) and Huntington (66°) had warm highs, however Elkins' 70-degree high was the warmest, making its January 3rd count the warmest this season with a temperature range of 52–70 degrees.

Weather Notes: Six counts (27%) reported at least some snow on the ground in areas, Canaan and Pocahontas Counties reported areas with 2 or more inches. Five counts (23%) reported light flurries at times, while four counts (18%) noted some light rain on and off. No severe weather was reported.

Effort Report

Participation: Seven counts (32%) had more than twenty participants in the field, Morgantown (WVMO) had the most participation, with 58 in the field. WVMOs roster included several very young up-and-coming birders. Nine counts (41%) reported 10–19 in the field, while six counts (27%) reported fewer than nine participants. Note: the National Audubon Society (NAS) recommends a minimum of 10 diurnal field participants.

Diurnal Field Effort: Ten counts (45%) contributed more than 50 hours of effort on their count days. Wheeling (71 hrs.) and Charles Town (73.75) both reported a high level of effort; nevertheless, Morgantown (102) with its many participants, reported the most hours. Our average statewide diurnal field effort this season was 48.7 hours.

Miles Tallied: Eight counts (36%) covered more than 300 miles of circle territory. Three counts (14%) reported more than 400 miles covered; Ona (411 mi.), Charles Town (429.5), and Wheeling (453.75). The average number of miles covered statewide this season was 271, which includes all modes of transportation.

Feeder Watchers: Sixteen counts (73%) had participants counting birds at their feeders and property. Morgantown, with 13 watching, included the most. Note: Feeder watchers can be very beneficial to the CBC, reporting birds from private areas that are inaccessible to the field teams.

Nocturnal Effort: Fifty-five percent of our counts reported nocturnal (owling) hours. The counts reporting the most nocturnal effort this season; Huntington (6.75 hours covering 71.25 miles) and Inwood (11.75 hours covering 75.5 miles).

123rd West Virginia State Effort Totals **Total Hours Surveying 1,072 – Total Miles Covered 5,964**

The Breakdown:

By foot: 475.0 hours - covering 414.5 miles (average .87 mph)

By car: 594.5 hours - covering 5,529.5 miles (average 9.3 mph)

ATV: 1.0 hours - covering 2.0 miles

By boat: 1.5 hours - covering 18.0 miles

Bird Reports

The avian groups in this report reflect the 2022 American **Ornithological** Society (AOS) check-list. Most species within the avian groups are placed in order of abundance.

Only Count Day data is reflected in this report unless otherwise noted. Bird Report averages noted in this report are based on the West Virginia CBC data collected during the last 10-year period. The period includes this season's data, and is based on 22 counts, the current number conducted in the state.

Codes: **HC** = High Count / **LC** = Low Count/ **CW** = Count Week / * WV CBC State or Count Record.

Geese/Swans: Canada Geese (7,394) were the third most abundant species statewide, located on all but one count. Rarer, but regular during the last 10 years, **Cackling Geese (4)** were found on the Huntington (1), Parkersburg (1), and Morgantown (2) counts. Reported most seasons, typically in low numbers, **Snow Geese (2)** were seen on the Point Pleasant (1) and Tygart Lake (1) counts.

Four counts (18%) reported **Tundra Swans (15)** during count days; Charles Town (1), Inwood (1), Morgantown (5) and Point Pleasant (8) with the majority. Additionally, Tygart Lake tallied four birds as *swan sp.* (4) on count day.

Ducks: Twenty-one species of waterfowl were reported again this season, nine dabbling and twelve diving species.

Dabbling Ducks: As expected, more **Mallards (3,538)** were reported this season than any other duck species. They were tallied on all counts and the sixth most abundant species statewide; Charles Town (321) and Ona (502) reported high totals, but the

estimated total from Point Pleasant (1,350) was the remarkable HC. Half of our counts reported **American Black Ducks (200)**, with Point Pleasant (98) again reporting the HC. Nine counts (41%) reported **Gadwall (139)**, Charleston (40) and Ona (41) boasting the HCs. Forty-one percent of our counts also tallied **Green-winged Teal (56)**, Parkersburg (22) the HC.

Other dabblers found, in order of abundance with the percentage of counts reporting them: 32% - **Wood Ducks (18)**, Charles Town (4) and Morgantown (4) having the HCs; 23% - **Northern Pintails (8)**, no HC; 14% - **American Wigeons (6)**, Point Pleasant (4) reporting the HC; 9% - **Northern Shovelers (5)**, Pendleton County (4) and Moorefield (1); and seasonally rare, only found three times in the last ten years on the WV CBC, **Blue-winged Teal (3)** were spotted on the Pipestem Area (3) count.

Diving Ducks: All three mergansers were recorded this season. Reported on 68% of the counts, **Common Mergansers (339)** were the most numerous diving species; Pipestem Area (49), Wheeling (66), and Pendleton County (66) recorded the HCs. **Hooded Mergansers (279)**, the second most-abundant divers, were seen on 77% of the counts; Pendleton County (44), Morgantown (45) and Point Pleasant (48) found the HCs. A lone **Red-breasted Merganser (1)** was reported on the Charles Town count.

A ten-year high count of **Buffleheads (222)** was tallied from just eight counts (36%); Pocahontas County (41), Morgantown (59) and Tygart Lake (62), produced the HCs. Seven counts (32%) reported seeing **Ring-necked Ducks (29)**, and Tygart Lake (8) represented the HC. Five counts (23%) reported finding **Ruddy Ducks (28)**, Point Pleasant (18) with the HC.

Scarcer divers reported this season, each found on only two counts: **Lesser Scaup (18)**, in Athens-Princeton Area (10) and Pipestem Area (8). **Canvasback (11)**, in Point Pleasant (10) and Charleston (1), **Redhead (5)** in Point Pleasant (4) and Pendleton County (1); **Common Goldeneye (5)** in Tygart Lake (4) and Point Pleasant (1), and **Greater Scaup (2)** in Huntington (1) and Parkersburg (1).

Very rare this season, a **White-winged Scoter (1)** seen on the Huntington* (1) count. **CBC Editor's Note:** This was only the fourth West Virginia CBC count-day record, the last being seventeen years ago, in the 106th CBC.

Gamebirds: The **Wild Turkey (455)** count was up this season, a four year high, with 91% of our counts reporting them; Pendleton County (46), Tygart Lake (51), and Charles Town (66) reported the HCs. Continuing to be a WV CBC rarity, only two **Ruffed Grouse (2)** were reported, both in Pendleton County. The lone **Ring-necked Pheasant (1)**, on the Morgantown* (1) count, was just the second to be reported in the last ten years on the West Virginia CBC.

Grebes: Forty-five percent of the counts reported **Pied-billed Grebes (32)** this season, with Morgantown (10) reporting the HC. A lone **Horned Grebe (1)** was reported from Tygart Lake. Very rare on the West Virginia CBC, a **Red-necked Grebe (1)** was seen on the Ohio River during the Wheeling count. **Editor's Note:** This is only the second state CBC record for this species; both were from Wheeling, with the previous sighting during the 109th CBC.

Pigeons/Doves: **Rock Pigeon (4,495)**, most counts (95%), and **Mourning Doves (2,703)**, all counts.

Rails: Relatively rare, but now reported regularly, **Virginia Rails (4)** were found on three (14%) counts: Morgantown (1), Charles Town (1) and Moorefield (2). **American**

Coots (82) were reported on just five counts (23%), with Charleston (70) reporting the most again this season,

Cranes: Always a great CBC find, two counts (9%) reported **Sandhill Cranes (55)** this season: Oak Hill* (35) and Point Pleasant* (20). **Editor's Note:** This is only the sixth occasion of this species, and the highest total number ever recorded on the state CBC. This year's count also represents new records for both WVOH and WVPP.

Shorebirds: Our common shorebird, **Killdeer (158)** numbers are at a ten-year high, with two-thirds of the counts (64%) reporting them; Huntington (38) and Pocahontas County (51) had the HCs. **Wilson's Snipes (18)** were seen on five counts (23%), with Pendleton County (9) reporting half of them. Both Inwood (1) and Morgantown (1) added **American Woodcock (2)** to their lists, a seasonally rare find.

Gulls: **Ring-billed Gulls (417)** were found on six (27%) counts, the Ohio River and Cheat Lake counts; Huntington (227) and Point Pleasant (104) recorded the HCs. Three of the river counts (14%) also reported seeing **Herring Gulls (15):** Point Pleasant (11), Wheeling (2), and Ona (2). Additionally, Morgantown noted a count-week **Bonaparte's Gull (cw)**.

Cormorants: Significantly fewer **Double-crested Cormorants (13)** were reported this season, found on only four counts (18%). Point Pleasant (8) had the most.

Herons: Eighteen counts (82%) reported seeing **Great Blue Herons (108)**, a ten-year LC; Morgantown (14), Huntington (14), Charles Town (16), and Parkersburg (17) found the most. A rarer **Great Egret (1)** was seen on the Ona* (1) count. **Editor's Note:** This was only the fifth West Virginia CBC count day record for this species and a first for Ona.

Vultures: Both vultures commonly seen in the state had dwindling numbers this season. **Turkey Vultures (1,378)** were listed on 20 counts (91%), with Huntington (156), Charleston (163), and Moorefield (282) reporting the most. **Black Vultures (645)** were seen on 18 counts (82%); Pendleton County (83), Lewisburg (98), and Moorefield (105) recorded the HCs. Both species were down 35% from last season, and were below our ten-year averages.

Eagles/Hawks: **Golden Eagles (6)** were reported on 3 counts (14%): Athens-Princeton Area (1), Moorefield (1), with Pendleton County (4) having the HC. **Note:** All Golden Eagle sightings are submitted with a National Audubon Society Rare Bird Report.

Just over half of our counts listed **Northern Harriers (23)**, with Ona (4) recording the HC. **Cooper's Hawk (57)**, as expected, is our most reported accipiter and was seen on most counts (91%). **Sharp-shinned Hawks (17)**, in contrast, were only reported from just over half of our circles (54%). Continuing their state CBC uptick, seventeen counts (77%) tallied **Bald Eagles (184)**; Moorefield (24), Charles Town (29), Pendleton County (33) and Hampshire County (40) boasted the impressive HCs. All counts reported seeing **Red-tailed Hawks (352)**, with many reporting good numbers; the counts with the most were Wheeling (29), Moorefield (30), Charles Town (32), and Morgantown (40). All but one count (95%) added **Red-shouldered Hawks (211)**; good numbers were tallied on the Point Pleasant (22), Inwood (24) Huntington (27) counts, but Charles Town (39) reported the impressive HC. One rarer seasonal buteo was reported, a **Rough-legged Hawk (1)** found on the Point Pleasant CBC. Note: **Rough-legged Hawks** have been reported seven times in the last 10 seasons, four birds being our CBC HC.

Owls: Fifty-five percent of our counts clocked nocturnal hours (owling). Six species of owls were listed this season. As normal, **Eastern Screech-Owls (82)** were the most

tallied owls, and Ona (18) reported the HC. Rounding out the top three owls: **Barred Owl (35)**, Morgantown (7) having the HC; and **Great Horned Owl (34)**, with Inwood (8) reporting the most.

Less common but found most years: **Short-eared Owls (7)** in Morgantown (3) & Point Pleasant (4); **Barn Owls (6)** in Pocahontas County (2), and Moorefield (4), and **Northern Saw-whet Owls (3)** in Tygart Lake (1) and Morgantown (2). **Note:** It is important to state that a much greater amount of effort goes into diurnal effort versus nocturnal field effort on the CBC. Thus, owl numbers are greatly affected by the seasonal effort. In addition, there are no set CBC protocols for owling.

Kingfishers: Twenty-one counts (95%) reported **Belted Kingfishers (106)**, Morgantown (16) reported the HC.

Woodpeckers: Seven species of woodpeckers were listed again this season. Woodpecker results this season were average to above average based on the past 10-year period.

The following were tallied on all counts¹, and listed in order of abundance: **Red-bellied Woodpecker (908)** with HC in Wheeling (108); **Downy Woodpecker (866)** with HC in Morgantown (88) **Northern Flicker (367)** with a tie for HC in Charles Town (42) and Inwood (42); **Pileated Woodpecker¹ (336)** with a very nice HC in Hampshire County (45); **Hairy Woodpecker (248)** with a tie for HC in Morgantown (27) and Pipestem Area (27); **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (199)** with an amazing HC in Charles Town (45). Rarer and always a nice find, seven counts (32%) reported **Red-headed Woodpeckers (35)**, a ten-year high; Pendleton County (21) recorded the most, tallying 60% of them.

Falcons: **American Kestrel (205)** numbers appear to be stable or rising on most of the 20 counts (91%) reporting them; Hampshire County (21), Moorefield (24), and Ona (25) recorded the HC. Eight counts (36%) spotted **Merlins (14)**, up 50% from the ten-year average; Charleston (5) boasted the nice HC. On the other hand, **Peregrine Falcon (4)** numbers were down this season, with only three counts (14%) locating them on count days; two more counts did report them as a CW species.

Flycatchers: Half of our counts reported seeing **Eastern Phoebes (46)**, the exact number as last season. Morgantown (8) reported the impressive HC. An exceptional rarity was reported, confirmed, and photographed this season. Two **Ash-throated Flycatchers*** (2) were discovered prior to the Charles Town (2) count, and were relocated on count day! **Editor's Note:** This was the second state record for this western *Myiarchus* flycatcher; the first record was on December 15, 1990, during the 91st CBC. Both documented accounts were located in the Charles Town circle!

Vireos: Two counts (9%) reported **White-eyed Vireos (2)** again this season: McDowell County* (1) and Morgantown (1). **CBC Editor's Note:** A vireo on a West Virginia CBC is always a nice rare find, but in the last decade **White-eyed Vireo** is becoming a regular on our state list. This was the first record for the McDowell County CBC, and the ninth season it was reported on the Morgantown count!

Shrikes: Rare on the state CBC, a **Northern Shrike (1)** was found and photographed on the Tygart Lake* (1) count. **CBC Editor's Note:** This is only the third CBC record for this species in West Virginia.

Jays/Crows/Ravens: **Blue Jays (2,467)** took tenth place this season for statewide

¹ Athens-Princeton Area dipped on **Pileated Woodpecker** on count day but did reported it as CW.

abundancy; as expected, they were found on all counts, and Pendleton County (527) reported the huge HC!

Also reported statewide, **American Crows (35,433)** were the most-abundant species this season. Large crow roosts were reported again this season from Raleigh County (17,000) and Charleston (13,200). **Editor's note:** The historic very large WVWH (Wheeling) crow roost was unfortunately not located this season. All crow roost numbers are estimates. **Common Ravens (430)**, also included on all counts, came in above our 10-year average. Hampshire County (57) and Pendleton County (56) reported the HCs.

Chickadees/Titmice: Many of the counts (77%) reported **Carolina Chickadees (1,608)**; Wheeling (205) and Morgantown (231) recorded the HCs. Just over half the counts (55%) tallied **Black-capped Chickadees (644)**, with a HC in Pendleton County (184). Fourteen percent of our counts noted their Poecile as *chickadee sp.* (59). **Tufted Titmice (2,056)** were common on all counts and Pendleton County (247) reported the most.

Horned Lark: Fluctuating yearly, **Horned Larks (130)** were only tallied on five counts (23%); Pendleton County (50) had the majority.

Kinglets: Though reported on most counts (91%), **Golden-crowned Kinglet (298)** numbers were down this season; Morgantown (55) had the most. Half of the counts reported seeing **Ruby-crowned Kinglets (62)**, above the 10-year average; Pipestem Area (13) recorded the HC.

Waxwings: Cedar Waxwing (109), another species whose numbers can vary greatly seasonally, was found on half of the counts and statewide numbers were down 96% from last season. Morgantown (20) reported the HC.

Nuthatches: With all counts reporting **White-breasted Nuthatches (1,350)**, we had above-average results this season; Pendleton County (157) and Hampshire County (161) had the HCs. Fifteen counts (68%) also reported **Red-breasted Nuthatches (157)**, which was 50 percent above our average; both Hampshire County (37) and Pendleton County (46) had high tallies.

Treecreepers: An above average number of **Brown Creepers (107)** were reported again this season, with 86% of the counts including them; Morgantown (26) had the impressive HC.

Wrens: Our most common seasonal wren, **Carolina Wren (1,367)** was tallied by all; Hampshire County (130) and Morgantown (145) reported the HCs. Above-average numbers of **Winter Wrens (103)** were found this season with 91% of the counts reporting them; Pendleton County (10), McDowell County (10), and Moorefield (12) all reported good numbers.

Mimids: Northern Mockingbirds (534) can be elusive in the winter, but were found on most counts (95%), with Charles Town (86) recording an amazing HC. Always a nice CBC find, **Brown Thrashers (5)** were reported during count days from McDowell County (1), Wheeling (1), and Lewisburg (3). Also seasonally rare, lingering **Gray Catbirds (2)** were noted on both the Raleigh County (1) and Pocahontas County (1) counts.

European Starling: The second most-abundant statewide species and found on all counts, **European Starling (21,316)** numbers were down from last season by nearly half; still, 40% of the circles tallied over 1,000 birds, with Inwood (2,600) and Moorefield (2,900) adding the most.

Thrushes: American Robin (1,945) numbers can fluctuate quite a bit on the West Virginia CBC, even with 91% of the circles posting them; numbers were nearly five times

lower than last season and below our 10-year average; Huntington (616) reported the most. With 95% of the counts finding **Eastern Bluebirds (1,446)**, numbers were steady this season; Pendleton County (165), Hampshire County (175) and Charles town (183) recorded the HCs. **Hermit Thrush (159)** numbers were down from last season's record HC, but still 50% above our 10-year average; all but one count reported them, and Moorefield (18) had a nice HC.

House Sparrow: As expected, **House Sparrows (1,761)** were on all counts; Morgantown (230) had the HC.

Pipits: Only three counts (14%) found **American Pipits (74)**: Wheeling (1), Charles Town (27), and Morgantown (46) with the most.

Finches: **American Goldfinch (1,540)** numbers appear to be steady and were tallied on all counts, Pendleton County (157) with the HC. **House Finch (1,183)** numbers have seesawed a bit during the last ten years, but appear to be back on an average track; the species was found on all counts, and Morgantown (164) had the HC.

Other finches reported by abundance: Wintering **Evening Grosbeaks (253)** were found in just four circles, a feeder watcher with an extensive feeding area on the Canaan (240) count added most of those reported. Sixty-eight percent of the counts reported seeing

Purple Finches (70); Huntington (13) reported the HC. A handful of **Pine Siskins (5)** were found on four (18%) counts. Only the Pipestem Area (1) and Pendleton County (1) counts reported rarer **Red Crossbills (2)** this season.

Sparrows: Twelve species of sparrows were listed this season. Found on all counts, the three most-abundant sparrow species had above-average totals this season. They were 1) **Dark-eyed Junco (5,198)**, with Hampshire County (729) and Pendleton County (723) recording the HCs; 2) **White-throated Sparrow (2,646)**, with Moorefield (370) and Charles Town (375) finding the HCs, and 3) **Song Sparrow (2,147)** with Moorefield (283) reporting the HC.

Continuing in order of abundance with percentage of counts reporting: 73% - **White-crowned Sparrow (472)**, with Moorefield (201) having the HC; 82% - **Field Sparrow (258)**, with Moorefield (73) recording the HC; 86% - **Eastern Towhee (221)**, with a HC in Huntington (45); 86% - **Swamp Sparrow (192)**, with Moorefield (16) again boasting the HC; 27% - **American Tree Sparrow (65)**, with Morgantown (20) reporting the HC; 68% - **Fox Sparrow (48)**, with McDowell County (12) having the HC; 23% - **Savannah Sparrow (32)**, with a HC from Moorefield (21); 23% - **Chipping Sparrow (30)**, Moorefield (12) again having the HC. A couple of rarer **Lincoln's Sparrows (2)** were reported this season, Pipestem area (1) and Parkersburg (1).

Blackbirds: Coming in just above our ten-year average, **Red-winged Blackbirds (1,121)** were found on 68% of our counts; Charles Town (357) had a nice HC. Five counts (23%) added **Common Grackles (805)**, with Inwood (750) reporting the large majority. Just under half (45%) of the counts listed **Brown-headed Cowbirds (290)**; Morgantown (133) reported almost half. Nearly a quarter of the counts (27%) reported **Eastern Meadowlarks (48)**; Point Pleasant (18) found the most. Only a handful of counts (23%) picked out **Rusty Blackbirds (36)**, and Ona (21) reported the most.

Warblers: Our winter warbler, **Yellow-rumped Warblers (231)** were way down from last season and below our 10-year average. The rarer warblers found this season included: one **Common Yellowthroat (1)** on the Morgantown count and a **Pine Warbler (1)** on the Tygart Lake count. An extremely rare, West Virginia CBC first, female **Black-throated Blue Warbler* (1)** was seen on the Canaan* count!

Cardinal: An above average number of **Northern Cardinals (3,481)** were tallied this season, bouncing back from last season, with all counts reporting them; Wheeling (346) tallied the most.

Final Notes:

Twenty Rare Bird Reports were submitted this season, I would like to thank all those participants who followed National Audubon Society's CBC protocol, and sent in those important forms.

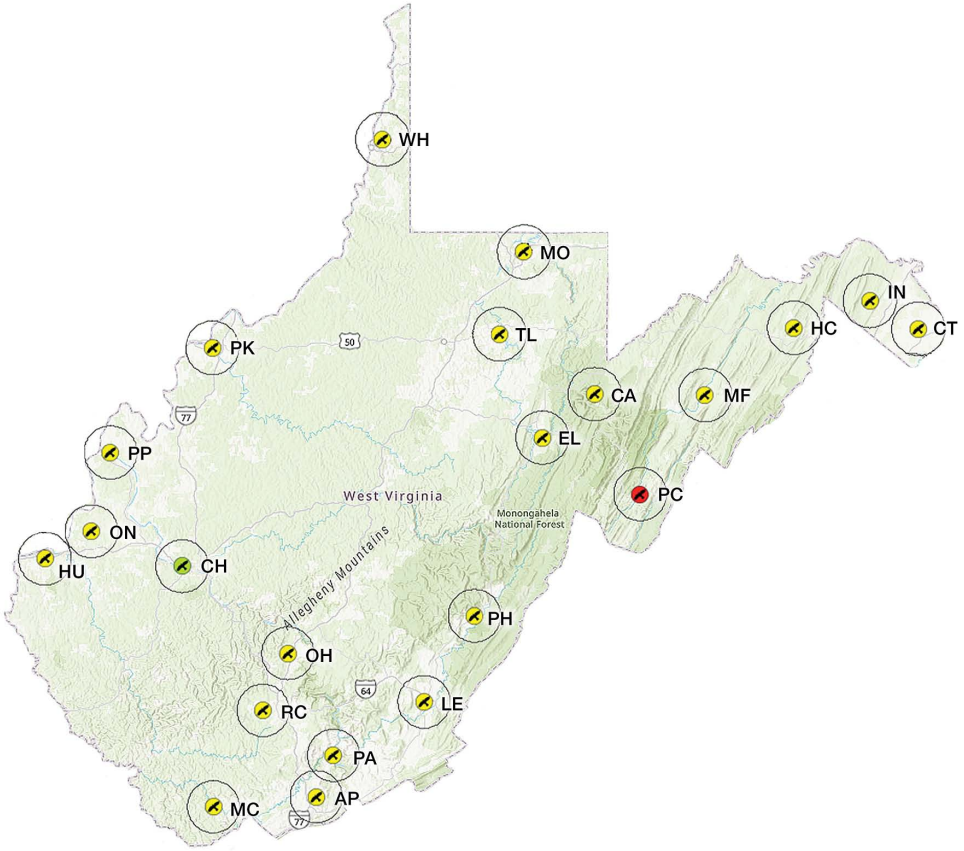
Getting the most accurate data possible on the CBC is very important. The data not only includes the species reported, but all the effort it took to find those species. All information entered is looked at closely by our current twenty-two state compilers, and then by the West Virginia State Editor before we submit our results to the National Audubon Society, adding to the 122 years of avian data previously entered. The NAS CBC is the longest running avian census in the world!

As always, please help where you can and on as many counts as possible!

For more information on West Virginia's Christmas Bird Counts and complete seasonal CBC data, go to the Brooks Bird Club website <http://www.brooksbirdclub.org/wv-cbc-results.html> Here you will find where all the West Virginia circles are located, compiler contact information, and count dates (when available) for all state counts. A complete list of the species found during the last ten seasons of the WV CBC (114th – 123rd) will be added to the BBC website soon.

This was my seventh year as the West Virginia State Editor and I would like to again give thanks to all the state compilers for their dedication and hard work. Without these committed compilers, and all their devoted participants, our state would not have been so well represented during this 123rd winter bird survey.

Wheeling, WV 26003



2022-23 West Virginia Christmas Bird Count circles

WVAP Athens-Princeton Area
 WVCA Canaan
 WVCH Charleston
 WVCT Charles Town
 WVLE Elkins Area
 WVHC Hampshire County
 WVHU Huntington
 WVIN Inwood
 WVLE Lewisburg
 WVMC McDowell County
 WVMF Moorefield

WVMO Morgantown
 WVOH Oak Hill
 WVON Ona
 WVPA Pipestem Area
 WVPC Pendleton County
 WVPH Pocahontas County
 WVPK Parkersburg
 WVPP Point Pleasant
 WVRC Raleigh County
 WVTL Tygart Lake
 WVWH Wheeling

Table 1
Species Participation Effort

123rd NAS Christmas Bird Count
Region: West Virginia
Species/Participants/Effort/Totals

Count Code	CBC Count Name	Species Day/CW	Participants Field/feeder	Parties Max	Total Hrs. Diurnal	Total Birds	Species Found in High Numbers
WVMC	McDowell County	42 CW-0	3 FW-0	2	17	613	No high count species
WVEL	Elkins Area	45 CW-1	8 FW-3	6	31.5	1631	CANG-251 EUST-350 NOCA-110
WVCA	Canaan	47 CW-2	16 FW-6	9	47	1871	EUST-236 DEJU-216 EVGR-240
WVRC	Raleigh County	50 CW-6	9 FW-2	6	38	18413	AMCR-17,000 EUST-336
WVOH	Oak Hill	51 CW-1	11 FW-3	7	29.25	2147	AMCR-347 EUST-325 DEJU-291
WVAP	Athens Princeton Area	57 CW-1	6 FW-2	4	25	1225	TUVU-112 AMCR-120
WVGH	Charleston	61 CW-0	29 FW-8	15	51.5	16073	CANG-251 ROPI-221 AMCR-13,200 EUST-655
WVPA	Pipestem Area	61 CW-3	6 FW-1	3	27.25	1647	CANG-131 EUST-205 AMGO-110
WVWH	Wheeling	62 CW-0	27 FW-3	15	71	5272	CANG-761 ROPI-458 AMCR-511 EUST-528 DEJU-282 NOCA-346
WVPH	Pocahontas County	62 CW-2	14 FW-2	6	40	3022	CANG-442 EUST-514 DEJU-418
WVLE	Lewisburg	63 CW-2	17 FW-2	10	55.5	2889	CANG-144 TUVU-128 AMCR-368 EUST-679
WVHC	Hampshire County	64 CW-0	26 FW-2	14	64.5	5399	MODO-372 EABL-176 EUST-1,275 DEJU-729 WTSP-295 NOCA-189
WVHU	Huntington	67 CW-0	18 FW-0	7	60.75	6477	CANG-633 RBGU-227 ROPI-428 AMRO-616 EUST-1,800 NOCA-216
WVTL	Tygart Lake	68 CW-1	10 FW-0	4	32.5	1869	CANG-162 EUST-212 SOSP-112
WVIN	Inwood	70 CW-1	20 FW-5	8	59.75	7258	CANG-603 MODO-248 AMRO-331 EUST-2,600 NOCA-218 COGR-750
WVPC	Pendleton County	71 CW-1	14 FW-6	11	64.25	6246	CANG-203 BLJA-527 AMCR-401 EUST-1,250 DEJU-723 WTSP-299
WVON	Ona	72 CW-0	18 FW-0	7	54.5	5078	CANG-334 MALL-502 BLJA-168 AMCR-204 EUST-1,850 NOCA-229
WVCT	Charles Town	74 CW-0	33 FW-4	10	73.75	6667	CANG-382 AMCR-325 EUST-1,600 DEJU-341 WTSP-375 RWBL-357
WVMF	Moorefield	75 CW-0	8 FW-0	5	39	7523	TUVU-282 ROPI-700 AMCR-247 EUST-2,900 DEJU-455 WTSP-370
WVPK	Parkersburg	77 CW-2	22 FW-7	9	47.5	5633	CANG-750 MALL-130 ROPI-572 AMCR-220 EUST-1,900 NOCA-196
WVPP	Point Pleasant	88 CW-0	12 FW-0	7	40	6425	CANG-838 MALL-1,350 ROPI-389 AMCR-750 EUST-824 NOCA-226
WVMO	Morgantown	90 CW-5	58 FW-13	12	102	7930	CANG-1,160 ROPI-554 AMCR-675 EUST-1,195 DEJU-325 NOCA-289

Table 2
Species Distribution and Volume

123rd Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Region: West Virginia - Species Distribution - The Widespread (62) Species
Count percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

Species found on twenty-two (100%) of the WV Counts:

1. Mallard – 3,538
2. Red-tailed Hawk – 352
3. Mourning Dove – 2,703
4. Red-bellied Woodpecker – 908
5. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 199
6. Downy Woodpecker – 866
7. Hairy Woodpecker – 248
8. Northern Flicker – 367
9. Blue Jay – 2,467
10. American Crow – 35,433
11. Common Raven – 430
12. Tufted Titmouse – 2,056
13. White-breasted Nuthatch – 1,350
14. Carolina Wren – 1,367
15. European Starling – 21,316
16. Dark-eyed Junco (S.C.) – 5,198
17. White-throated Sparrow – 2,646
18. Song Sparrow – 2,147
19. Northern Cardinal – 3,481
20. House Finch – 1,183
21. American Goldfinch – 1,540
22. House Sparrow – 1,761

Species found on twenty-one (95%) of the WV Counts:

1. Canada Goose – 7,394
2. Red-shouldered Hawk – 211
3. Rock Pigeon – 4,495
4. Belted Kingfisher – 106
5. Pileated Woodpecker – 336
6. Eastern Bluebird – 1,446
7. Hermit Thrush – 159
8. Northern Mockingbird – 534

Species found on twenty (91%) of the WV Counts:

1. Wild Turkey – 455
2. Turkey Vulture – 1,378
3. Cooper's Hawk – 57

4. American Kestrel – 205
5. Winter Wren – 103
6. Golden-crowned Kinglet – 298
7. American Robin – 1,945

Species found on nineteen (86%) of the WV Counts:

1. Brown Creeper – 107
2. Swamp Sparrow – 129
3. Eastern Towhee – 221

Species found on eighteen (82%) of the WV Counts:

1. Great Blue Heron – 108
2. Black Vulture – 645
3. Field Sparrow – 258

Species found on seventeen (77%) of the WV Counts:

1. Bald Eagle – 184
2. Carolina Chickadee – 1,608
3. Yellow-rumped Warbler – 231

Species found on sixteen (73%) of the WV Counts:

1. White-crowed Sparrow – 472

Species Found on fifteen (68%) of WV Counts:

1. Common Merganser – 339
2. Red-breasted Nuthatch – 157
3. Fox Sparrow – 48
4. Red-winged Blackbird – 1,121
5. Purple Finch – 70

Species Found on fourteen (64%) of WV Counts:

1. Killdeer – 158

Species Found on thirteen (59%) of WV Counts:

1. Barred Owl – 35

Species Found on twelve (55%) of WV Counts:

1. Northern Harrier – 23
2. Sharp-shinned Hawk – 17
3. Black-capped Chickadee – 644

Species Found on eleven (50%) of WV Counts:

1. American Black Duck – 200
2. Great Horned Owl – 34
3. Eastern Phoebe – 46
4. Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 62
5. Cedar Waxwing – 109

Table 3
123rd NAS CBC 2022 – 2023
Region West Virginia - Total Species (129) by Abundance

1. American Crow – 35,433	29. White-crowned Sparrow – 472
2. European Starling – 21,316	30. Wild Turkey – 455
3. Canada Goose – 7,394	31. Common Raven – 430
4. Dark-eyed Junco (slate) – 5,198	32. Ring-billed Gull – 417
5. Rock Pigeon – 4,495	33. Northern Flicker – 367
6. Mallard – 3,538	34. Red-tailed Hawk – 352
7. Northern Cardinal – 3,481	35. Common Merganser – 339
8. Mourning Dove – 2,703	36. Pileated Woodpecker – 336
9. White-throated Sparrow – 2,646	37. Golden-crowned Kinglet – 298
10. Blue Jay – 2,467	38. Brown-headed Cowbird – 290
11. Song Sparrow – 2,147	39. Field Sparrow – 258
12. Tufted Titmouse – 2,056	40. Evening Grosbeak – 253
13. American Robin – 1,945	41. Hairy Woodpecker – 248
14. House Sparrow – 1,761	42. Yellow-rumped Warbler – 231
15. Carolina Chickadee – 1,608	43. Bufflehead – 222
16. American Goldfinch – 1,540	44. Eastern Towhee – 221
17. Eastern Bluebird – 1,446	45. Red-shouldered Hawk – 211
18. Turkey Vulture – 1,378	46. American Kestrel – 205
19. Carolina Wren – 1,367	47. American Black Duck – 200
20. White-breasted Nuthatch – 1,350	48. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 199
21. House Finch – 1,183	49. Swamp Sparrow – 192
22. Red-winged Blackbird – 1,121	50. Bald Eagle – 184
23. Red-bellied Woodpecker – 908	51. Hermit Thrush – 159
24. Downy Woodpecker – 866	52. Killdeer – 158
25. Common Grackle – 805	53. Red-breasted Nuthatch – 157
26. Black Vulture – 645	54. Gadwall – 139
27. Black-capped Chickadee – 644	55. Horned Lark – 130
28. Northern Mockingbird – 534	56. Cedar Waxwing – 109

Table 3 (cont.)
Total Species by Abundance

57. Great Blue Heron – 108	101. Northern Shoveler – 5
58. Brown Creeper – 107	102. Common Goldeneye – 5
59. Belted Kingfisher – 106	103. Redhead – 5
60. Winter Wren – 103	104. Brown Thrasher – 5
61. American Coot – 82	105. Pine Siskin – 5
62. Eastern Screech-Owl – 82	106. swan sp. – 4
63. American Coot – 82	107. accipiter sp. – 4
64. Hooded Merganser – 79	108. Peregrine Falcon – 4
65. American Pipit – 74	109. Virginia Rail – 4
66. Purple Finch – 70	110. Cackling Goose – 3
67. American Tree Sparrow – 65	111. Blue-winged Teal – 3
68. Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 62	112. Common Loon – 3
69. chickadee sp. – 59	113. Northern Saw-whet Owl – 3
70. Cooper’s Hawk – 57	114. Snow Goose – 2
71. Green-winged Teal – 56	115. Greater Scaup – 2
72. Sandhill Crane – 55	116. duck sp. – 2
73. Fox Sparrow – 48	117. American Woodcock – 2
74. Eastern Meadowlark – 48	118. Ruffed Grouse – 2
75. Eastern Phoebe – 46	119. Gray Catbird – 2
76. Rusty Blackbird – 36	120. Ash-throated Flycatcher – 2
77. Barred Owl – 35	121. White-eyed Vireo – 2
78. Red-headed Woodpecker – 35	122. Lincoln’s Sparrow – 2
79. Great Horned Owl – 34	123. Red Crossbill – 2
80. Pied-billed Grebe – 32	124. Am. Bl. Duck x Mallard Hy. – 1
81. Savannah Sparrow – 32	125. Red-breasted Merganser – 1
82. Chipping Sparrow – 30	126. White-winged Scoter – 1
83. Ring-necked Duck – 29	127. Ring-necked Pheasant – 1
84. Ruddy Duck – 28	128. Horned Grebe – 1
85. Northern Harrier – 23	129. Red-necked Grebe – 1
86. Mallard (domestic type) – 20	130. Great Egret – 1
87. Wood Duck – 18	131. eagle sp. – 1
88. Lesser Scaup – 18	132. Rough-legged Hawk – 1
89. Wilson’s Snipe – 18	133. falcon sp. - 1
90. Sharp-shinned Hawk – 17	134. Northern Shrike – 1*
91. Tundra Swan – 15	135. Common Yellowthroat – 1
92. Herring Gull – 15	136. Black-throated Blue Warbler - 1
93. Merlin – 14	137. Pine Warbler – 1
94. Double-crested Cormorant – 13	138. Bonaparte’s Gull – cw
95. Canvasback – 11	139. blackbird sp. – cw
96. Northern Pintail – 8	
97. Short-eared Owl – 7	
98. American Wigeon – 6	
99. Golden Eagle – 6	
100. Barn Owl – 6	
	129 Species – 1 count week species

Table 4
Regional Status Report

123rd Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Region: West Virginia, Status Report
Twenty-two Active Circles
WV CBC State Editor: L. E. Helgerman

Count Code	Count Circle Name	Circle Compiler(s)	Contact Information
WVAP	Athens-Princeton Area	Ron Canterbury	ron.canterbury@uc.edu
WVCA	Canaan	Casey Rucker	autoblock@frontiernet.net
WVCH	Charleston	Doren Burrell	g.immer@doren.net
		Laura Ceperley	ceperley@gmail.com
WVCT	Charles Town	Bob Dean	bobdean52@gmail.com
WVEL	Elkins Area	Rich Bailey	richard.s.bailey@wv.gov
WVHC	Hampshire County	David Malakoff	malakoff@comcast.net
WVHU	Huntington	David Patick	patick@comcast.net
WVIN	Inwood	Bob Dean	bobdean52@gmail.com
WVLE	Lewisburg	Ben Handley	ben@potteryalley.com
		Larry Davis	anldavis@suddenlink.net
WVMC	McDowell County	Allen Waldron	awaldron@suddenlink.net
WVMF	Moorefield	Kyle Rambo	kerambo@gmail.com
		Darrell Good	darzgood@gmail.com
WVMO	Morgantown	LeJay Graffious	lejaygraffious@gmail.com
WVOH	Oak Hill	Rachel Davis	rachel@birding-wv.com
		Hilarie Jones	hljones1336@yahoo.com
WVON	Ona	David Patick	patick@comcast.net
WVPA	Pipestem Area	Jim Phillips	jimandjudyphillips@gmail.com
WVPC	Pendleton County	Fred Atwood	fredatwood@yahoo.com
WVPH	Pocahontas County	Rich Bailey	richard.s.bailey@wv.gov
WVPK	Parkersburg	Dick Esker	eskerrb@frontier.com
WVPP	Point Pleasant	Josh Holland	jhollandua@gmail.com
WVRC	Raleigh County	Allen Waldron	awaldron@suddenlink.net
WVTL	Tygart Lake	Matthew McKinney	mckinneymi@ab.edu
		Ross Brittain	rossalanbrittain@gmail.com
WVWH	Wheeling	Molly Haywood	molly.haywood@gmail.com

Table 5
123rd NAS CBC - Weather - Region WV

Count	Date	Low Temp	High Temp	AM Clouds	PM Clouds	AM Rain	PM Rain	AM Snow	PM Snow
WVMC	14-Dec	35	49	cloudy	cloudy	none	light	none	none
WVWH	14-Dec	30	32	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVCH	17-Dec	32	40	clear	clear	none	none	none	none
WVCT	17-Dec	35	44	pt. clear	pt. clear	none	none	none	none
WVHG	17-Dec	32	40	pt. cloudy	pt. cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVMO	17-Dec	30	36	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	light	none
WVPK	17-Dec	32	37	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVPA	17-Dec	29	35	pt. cloudy	pt. cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVPH	17-Dec	26	38	pt. cloudy	pt. cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVCA	18-Dec	19	28	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	light	light
WVLE	18-Dec	27	29	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVON	18-Dec	26	31	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	light	light
WVRC	18-Dec	24	28	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	light	none
WVMF	19-Dec	23	38	clear	clear	none	none	none	none
WVPC	20-Dec	16	41	pt. cloudy	pt. cloudy	none	none	none	none
WVAP	22-Dec	31	43	cloudy	cloudy	light	light/none	none	none
WVOH	26-Dec	10	26*	cloudy	cloudy	none	none	none	light
WVPP	26-Dec	9*	26*	pt. clear	pt. clear	none	none	none	none
WVTL	28-Dec	15	50	clear	clear	none	none	none	none
WVHU	2-Jan	41	66	cloudy	cloudy	none	light	none	none
WVIN	2-Jan	38	61	pt. clear	pt. clear	none	none	none	none
WVEL	3-Jan	52*	70*	cloudy	cloudy	light/none	light/none	none	none

CBC Season 12/14/22 - 1/5/23
 Count order: Date conducted
 * Low & High extremes

eBird Report March 1, 2022 – May 31, 2022

Michael Slaven

After a mild winter with little snow, the spring season continued the dry conditions. The weather affected the number and diversity of eBird reports, but there still were some highlights worth noting. Most remarkable was the spotting of a **Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*) by David Daniels at Alpine Lake in Preston County on March 3, which he subsequently reported to eBird. Daniels picked the distinctive duck out of a large floating group of Greater and Lesser Scaup in the misty lake. His careful observations and photographs (available in his eBird report) were the first documented sighting of this species in the county and the state. Tufted Ducks are a European species that are regular variants into northeastern Canada and the maritime provinces. Occasionally, they continue southward, straying into New York and further south. While the species has been seen and reported in neighboring states, Daniels was the first to see and photograph one of these rare birds in West Virginia.

Other notable reports from this season included a **Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) listed and photographed several times in six reports from April 22 to 24 in the Pipestem area in Summers County; a **Willet** (*Tringa semipalmata*) and three **Marbled Godwits** (*Limosa fedoa*) were reported by two observers in Cabell County on April 22, and a **Snowy Egret** (*Egretta thula*) was seen in Pleasants County and reported to eBird by two observers.

Spring 2023 was a moderately good season for ducks and geese compared to 2022, with slightly higher numbers and distribution than the previous season. There were multiple reports of most species, particularly the ever-present **Mallards** and **Canada Geese**, but the numbers across the duck species were generally better than the previous two seasons.

Shorebirds were also plentiful in spring 2023, with moderately strong numbers of the expected arrivals, and the welcome visits from the **Marbled Godwits**, **Dunlins**, and **Willet**. The **Snowy Egret** also was a welcome rare find.

I have decided to devote a small section of each eBird report to a slightly deeper dive into species that hold special interest to me or have significance for state birders. My first choice is the two cuckoo species found in spring in West Virginia. I have had a long-standing interest in the bird family *Cuculidae*. This group includes several North American representatives, including the Greater Roadrunner, the Smooth- and the Groove-billed anis, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and the Black-billed Cuckoo. I have been lucky enough to see several representatives of this group in the ABA area, as well as in Puerto Rico and South Korea, including the impressively large Mangrove Cuckoo, the Common Cuckoo of Asia, and the amazing Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo. My work office is decorated with a print of the Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos from an antique birding book, so I have a constant reminder of these interesting birds. My fascination with this bird family has caused me to pay great attention to its representative members in our state. West Virginia hosts Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos each season, from the latter half of April through October. These two species are loud and distinctive, and yet they are at the same time quite secretive in their habits. They are easy enough to hear

when they vocalize, but an order of magnitude harder to see, since they tend to prefer gleaning insects in the tree canopy or hiding in thick, bushy areas. Occasionally they can be glimpsed feeding on the ground, looking for insects or even small reptiles.

2023 was a good year for **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** (*Coccyzus americanus*), with 392 separate eBird reports spanning April 24–May 31. Counties where these Cuckoos were reported included Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hardy, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Marion, Mason, Mercer, Mineral, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Wayne, and Wood. Even discounting that many reports were probably submitted by members of the same birding expeditions, it is obvious that the distribution of these birds over thirty-six counties is impressive.

Black-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) also were spotted over a wide range in 106 eBird reports in the spring of 2023. Never as numerous in bird lists as Yellow-billed Cuckoos, they still were reported in twenty-two counties, beginning on April 30 through May 31. These included Barbour, Berkeley, Brooke, Cabell, Fayette, Hampshire, Kanawha, Hardy, Marion, Mason, Mercer, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Wood.

This is quite a wide distribution for these birds, and one that may be accounted for in a couple of ways. First, it was part of a good year for forest tent caterpillars and several other caterpillar species. These are a favored food source for both cuckoo species found in West Virginia. This means that the birds could maintain relatively large populations spread over a considerable portion of the state. The different caterpillar species found commonly in West Virginia tend to have cyclical boom-bust cycles that vary from 6 to 16 years. In years where the population of the caterpillars has crashed, cuckoos are more limited in numbers and distribution. In boom years the reverse applies. Cuckoos have a natural advantage over some other avian species that also prey on these caterpillars. Most species avoid the caterpillars as they grow larger, seemingly finding them distasteful. Apparently, the cuckoos do not find this a problem, and they are left with a good source of protein that they have largely to themselves.

Cuckoos historically have been denigrated for their reputation as nest parasites, but that reputation mostly pertains to the Common Cuckoo, not found in the Americas. Black-billed Cuckoos are occasional nest parasites to Yellow-billed Cuckoos and a few other birds,¹ but this is the exception, not then rule.

1 “Black-Billed Cuckoo Identification, All About Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.” 2024. , *All About Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology*. https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-billed_Cuckoo/id.

Field Notes
Spring Season
March 1 – May 31, 2023

Casey Rucker

It was the 18th driest spring in West Virginia since 1895, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University; all three months were drier than average. March and April were warmer than usual, while May was much cooler than average.

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

David Daniels discovered a **Tufted Duck** at Alpine Lake, Preston County, on March 4; his eBird report is the first report for the state. Bryan Smith spotted three **Marbled Godwits** along with a **Willet** on the Ohio River near Lesage, Cabell County, on April 22. James and Judy Phillips were alerted to a male **Painted Bunting** visiting a feeder in Pipestem, Summers County, and saw the bird on April 22; it remained for two days. The number of reports was similar to those of the previous year. During the spring season 219 species were reported in West Virginia with 34 of 55 counties contributing to our state's avian lore. Birders found 33 species of warbler during the spring season.

Geese, Swans, and Ducks – James and Judy Phillips saw a **Snow Goose** in Princeton, Mercer County, who lingered from February 22 through March 13 this spring. James Gregg spotted a **Ross's Goose** at Winfield Locks and Dam, Putnam County, on April 4. **Canada Geese** continued to be widespread. Terry Bronson saw the resident **Mute Swan** at McClintic Wildlife Management Area, Mason County, on March 20.

The **Tufted Duck** found by David Daniels in Preston County on March 4 is described near the beginning of these notes. Duck sightings in West Virginia were up compared to the prior spring, and diversity increased with 22 species reported. There were many reports statewide of **Ring-necked Ducks**. The following **ducks** were reported in five-to-nine counties during the spring: **Wood Ducks**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Mallards**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Buffleheads**, and **Hooded** and **Common mergansers**. The following species were only reported in the counties listed: **Northern Shovelers** in Kanawha (HG) and Wayne (GR); **Gadwalls** in Kanawha (LC), Mercer (JP), Ohio (PM), and Preston (DD); **American Wigeons** in Barbour (DMi), Mercer (JP), and Wood (TB); **American Black Ducks** in Mercer (JP); **Northern Pintails** in Tucker (NZ) and Wood (TB); **Green-winged Teal** in Kanawha (HG), Mason (TB, MG), Mercer (JP), and Wood (TB); **Canvasbacks** in Mason (GR, MG, JK, DP); **Redheads** in Mason (TB); **Greater Scaup** in Cabell (MG), Kanawha (RG), Mason (TB), and Preston (DD); **White-winged Scoter** in Cabell (MG); **Common Goldeneyes** in Barbour (DMi); **Red-breasted Mergansers** in Barbour (DMi), Cabell (MG), Mason (DP, MG), Summers (JP), and Wayne (GR); and **Ruddy Ducks** in Kanawha (RG) and Preston (DD).

Turkeys – Birders in many locations reported **Wild Turkeys**.

Grebes – Birders reported **Pied-billed Grebes** in seven counties, and **Horned Grebes** in six counties.

Pigeons and Doves – **Rock Pigeons** and **Mourning Doves** continued to reside throughout the state.

Cuckoos – Reports of **Cuckoos** continue to dwindle. Donny Good found the first **Yellow-billed** and **Black-billed cuckoos** of the season on April 15 around his farm in Roane County. Other reports of **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** came from three counties, and of **Black-billed Cuckoos** from only one county.

Goatsuckers and Swifts – Reports of **nightjars** continued to be sparse this spring. **Common Nighthawks** were seen in Cabell (DP) and Pendleton (CR) Counties. Kevin Campbell reported that once again **Chuck-will's-widows** began singing on Spyder Ridge, Wood County, on April 24. On May 4, David Patick found a **Chuck-will's-widow** at accustomed haunts in Mount Zion Cemetery, Mason County. Reports of **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were up a bit, coming from seven counties, while those of **Chimney Swifts** dipped, with nine counties represented.

Hummingbirds – **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving on April 14; James and Judy Phillips reported the first sighting at their feeder in Pipestem, Summers County. **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** also appeared in reports from eight other counties throughout the state.

Rails and Coots – Randy Bodkins found two **Virginia Rails** at the Mill Creek water treatment plant, Randolph County, on April 29. Laura Ceperley found a **Sora** on April 16 in Charleston, Kanawha County. **American Coot** reports were scanty as usual this spring, coming only from two counties.

Cranes – Bill Blauvelt spotted a pair of **Sandhill Cranes** at, coincidentally, Cranesville Swamp in Preston County on May 22.

Plovers – It was another sparse spring for **plovers**. **Killdeer** reports came from eight counties, and **Semipalmated Plovers** appeared in Kanawha County (HG) and Mason County (MG, JK).

Sandpipers – The **Marbled Godwits** and **Willet** found by Bryan Smith in Cabell County are described near the beginning of these notes. Fifteen **sandpiper** species made appearances in the Mountain State; reports were sparse. **Wilson's Snipe** were seen in seven counties, while **American Woodcock** and **Spotted** and **Solitary sandpipers** were observed in four. The following species were reported in one-to-three counties, as listed: **Stilt Sandpiper** in Kanawha (HG); **Dunlin** in Mason (MG, JK); **Least Sandpipers** in Kanawha (HG), Mason (DP), and Monongalia (AG); **Pectoral Sandpipers** in Greenbrier (JO); **Semipalmated Sandpipers** in Mason (MG, JK); **Short-billed Dowitcher** in Mason (MG, JK); **Lesser Yellowlegs** in Mason (MG, JK); **Greater Yellowlegs** in Greenbrier (JO), Mason (MG, JK), and Summers (JP); and **Red-necked Phalarope** in Mason (MG, JK) and Randolph (CMu).

Gulls and Terns – **Bonaparte's Gulls** inspired reports in Cabell (MG), Mercer (JP), Raleigh (MAW), and Wayne (GR) Counties. **Ring-billed Gulls** were only reported in Berkeley (WS) and Raleigh (MAW) Counties.

Richard Gregg saw the only reported **Forster's Tern** of the season, at Belle, Kanawha County, on April 5.

Loons – Derek Courtney and others from Mountaineer Audubon saw a **Red-throated Loon** at Cheat Lake, Monongalia County, on March 11. **Common Loon** reports came from Kanawha (RG), Lewis (LC), and Raleigh (MAW) Counties.

Cormorants – West Virginia birders reported **Double-crested Cormorants** in only three counties this spring.

Hérons and Egrets – LeJay Graffious listened to the calls of an **American Bittern** at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tucker County, for three nights beginning April 24; Laura Ceperley reported nesting of **Least Bittern** at Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area, Cabell County, during the spring. **Great Blue Herons** and **Green Herons** appeared widely, while a **Great Egret** was reported only in Kanawha County (RG). Terry Bronson spotted a **Snowy Egret** near Willow Island Lock and Dam, Pleasants County, on May 7. On April 15, Richard Gregg found his lifer **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** in Nitro, Kanawha County, where Josh Holland found the bird again two days later.

Vultures – Birders in four West Virginia counties reported seeing **Black Vultures**, while **Turkey Vulture** reports came from thirteen counties.

Hawks, Eagles, and Kites – Raptor reports were scanty this season. The continuing pair of **Mississippi Kites** near Scott Depot, Putnam County, were observed by Richard Gregg on May 11. **Osprey** were reported from Barbour (DMi), Kanawha (LC, RG), Mason (JK, MG), Putnam (LC), and Summers (JJP) Counties, beginning on March 7 when Janet Keating and Michael Griffith saw one at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, Mason County. **Northern Harriers** appeared in reports from Preston County (BBI), Tucker County (NZ), and Wood County (TB). **Accipiter** reports remained few this spring, with **Sharp-shinned Hawks** reported only in Jefferson (BH), Kanawha (HG), Summers (JP), and Tucker (CR) Counties and **Cooper’s Hawks** observed in Kanawha (HG), Summers (JP), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties. Reports of **Bald Eagles**, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Broad-winged Hawks**, and **Red-tailed Hawks** were relatively widespread in West Virginia during the season. On March 9, Susan Olcott watched a pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** defend their territory in a noisy aerial fight with another pair near her home in southern Monongalia County.

Owls – **Owl** reports continued to be infrequent. The **Barn Owl** *nest* near Belleville wetlands, Wood County, continued to be occupied, as reported by Terry Bronson on March 2. David Patick reported the only **Eastern Screech-Owl** of the season, at Mount Zion Cemetery in Mason County on May 4. Wilma Jarrell hosted both **Great Horned Owls** and **Barred Owls** this spring at her home in Wileyville, Wetzel County, and other reports of the two birds came, respectively, from Summers (JP) and Wood (KCa) Counties, and from Monongalia (SO), Preston (LeJ), and Roane (DG) Counties.

Kingfishers – **Belted Kingfisher** reports dipped in West Virginia this season, with reports from only six counties.

Woodpeckers – **Red-headed Woodpeckers** inspired reports in eight counties, and **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** in nine. Our state’s other five species of **woodpecker** were all widely reported.

Falcons – **American Kestrel** reports were down this spring, coming from Jefferson (WS), Kanawha (RG), and Summers (JP) Counties. The editor of these notes saw the only reported **Merlin** of the season, in Canaan Valley State Park, Tucker County, on March 22. Richard Gregg reported the lone **Peregrine Falcon** of the season, at Marmet Locks, Kanawha County on March 4.

Flycatchers – Reports of **flycatchers** dipped compared to last year. First-reported dates, counties, and observers are listed in parentheses: **Great Crested Flycatchers** (April 19, Summers, JP), **Eastern Kingbirds** (May 2, Lewis, LC), **Eastern Wood-Pewees** (May 7, Barbour, DMi), **Acadian Flycatchers** (May 6, Kanawha, LC),

Alder Flycatchers (May 14, Tucker, CR), **Willow Flycatcher** (May 14, Randolph, RBo), **Least Flycatchers** (May 7, Berkeley, MO), and **Eastern Phoebe** (March 1, Wetzel, WJ).

Vireos – Our five breeding **vireos** returned to nesting grounds throughout the state beginning on the dates listed, along with counties and observers: **White-eyed** (April 15, Wetzel, WJ), **Yellow-throated** (April 8, Kanawha, LC), **Blue-headed** (March 29, Raleigh, MAW), **Warbling** (April 30, Summers, JP), and **Red-eyed** (April 30, Summers, JP). Kevin Cade found a **Philadelphia Vireo** in Kanawha State Forest, Kanawha County, on May 5.

Shrikes – **Loggerhead Shrikes** were reported during April, in Greenbrier and Monroe Counties by Richard Bailey, and in Mason County by Gary Rankin, Janet Keating, and David Patick.

Jays, Crows, and Ravens – **Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Ravens** were reported widely throughout the state. **Fish Crows** were reported in Jefferson (WS) and Pendleton (CR) Counties.

Chickadees and Titmice – **Black-capped** and **Carolina chickadees** as well as **Tufted Titmice** were reported in their usual habitats in West Virginia this spring.

Larks – **Horned Larks** were seen in Jefferson (WS) and Mason (MG) Counties this spring.

Swallows – On March 2, Terry Bronson and members of the Mountwood Bird Club were amazed to see an early **Bank Swallow** at the Belleville wetlands, Wood County. **Tree Swallows** had already made appearances in West Virginia at the end of February, and **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** arrived on March 30 in Summers County (JP); both species appeared widely. **Purple Martins** began to arrive on April 3 in Kanawha County (LC), and were also reported in Mason (DP), Pendleton (CR), and Summers (JP) Counties. James and Judy Phillips spotted the season's first **Barn Swallow**, on March 21 near Athens, Mercer County; and **Cliff Swallows**, at Bellepoint Park, Summers County, on April 30. **Barn Swallows** made widespread returns to West Virginia this spring, and **Cliff Swallows** inspired subsequent reports from Kanawha (RG) and Raleigh (RG) Counties.

Kinglets – Birders reported **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** in six West Virginia counties during the season, and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** in only four.

Waxwings – **Cedar Waxwing** reports came from only five counties.

Nuthatches – In spite of expected irruptions this year, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were again sparse this spring, making appearances only in Berkeley (MO), Kanawha (HG), Mason (DP), Roane (LC), and Tucker (CR) Counties. The reliable **White-breasted Nuthatch** continued its widespread presence.

Creepers – **Brown Creeper** reports were also sparse this season, coming from five counties.

Gnatcatchers – On April 2 in Roane County, Laura Ceperley found a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**. **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** subsequently returned to haunts throughout the state.

Wrens – **Carolina** and **House wrens** appeared in good numbers in reports from all over the state. On April 8, Donna Mitchell found an early **House Wren** near her home in Barbour County. **Winter Wrens** were reported in Summers (JP) and Wood (JB) Counties. Aaron Graham found a **Marsh Wren** in Monongalia County during the Morgantown Birding Cup on May 28.

Catbirds, Thrashers, and Mockingbirds – During the spring season **Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, and Northern Mockingbirds** once again serenaded their breeding grounds in West Virginia.

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

Thrushes – **Thrush** reports were down a bit this spring. **Eastern Bluebirds, Wood Thrushes, and American Robins** were reported widely in their breeding areas in the state. **Veery** was reported only in Kanawha County (KC), **Swainson’s Thrushes** in Berkeley (MO), Ohio (PM), Wayne (DP), and Wood (JB) Counties, and **Hermit Thrushes** only in Tucker County (CR).

Weaver Finches – The **House Sparrow** continues to occupy our state, primarily in urban and farm settings.

Pipits – Donny Good observed **American Pipits** on April 1 at his farm in Roane County.

Finches and Allies – **Evening Grosbeaks** lingered in Greenbrier (JO), Lincoln (DP), Pocahontas (KB), Ritchie (CB), Summers (JJP), and Tucker (CR) Counties. Cynthia Burkhart hosted **Evening Grosbeaks** at her home in Ritchie County until May 13, with a high count of 35 individuals on March 25. **House and Purple finches and American Goldfinches** made appearances throughout the state. Jack O’Connell hosted at least 13 **Purple Finches** at his home in Greenbrier County on April 1. **Pine Siskins** were scarce, with reports coming only from Monongalia (SO) and Summers (JP) Counties.

Sparrows, Juncos, and Towhees – Fourteen **sparrow** species made appearances in accustomed haunts throughout our state. **Fox Sparrows** made appearances through the middle of April, in Pocahontas (KB), Randolph (NZ), Summers (JP), and Wood (TB) Counties; **White-crowned Sparrows** appeared through early May, but only inspired reports in Berkeley (MO), Jefferson (WS), and Summers (JP) Counties. Widely reported **White-throated Sparrows** also stayed through early May. Resident and returning **sparrow** species made first appearances this season in reports from the following counties: **Grasshopper** on April 11 in Barbour (DMi), **Vesper** on April 2 in Mason (MG), **Henslow’s** on May 27 in Monongalia (AG), **Savannah** on March 28 in Wetzel (WJ), and **Swamp** on March 13 in Summers (JP). **Chipping, Field, and Song sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Eastern Towhees** were already present in some areas at the start of the spring season, and by its end were reported in many areas of the state.

Chats – A **Yellow-breasted Chat** appeared on May 5 at Willa Grafton’s farm in Braxton County. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** also made an early May appearance in Monongalia County (DCo).

Blackbirds and Allies – **Bobolinks** returned to Bardane, Jefferson County, on May 2, as observed by N. Wade Snyder, and also appeared in reports from Greenbrier (JO), Preston (LeJ), and Wetzel (WJ) Counties. There were many West Virginia reports of **Eastern Meadowlarks, Orchard and Baltimore orioles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Common Grackles. Rusty Blackbirds** appeared only in reports from Kanawha (RG, HG), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (TB) Counties.

Warblers – The following **warblers**, all regular migrants through or breeders in West Virginia, made their first-of-season appearances in the following counties: **Ovenbird**: April 11, Kanawha (LC), **Worm-eating Warbler**: April 23, Kanawha (LC), **Louisiana Waterthrush**: April 3, Summers (JJP), **Northern Waterthrush**: May 8, Berkeley (AT), **Golden-winged Warbler**: May 9, Monongalia (DCo), **Blue-winged Warbler**: April 21,

Barbour (DMi), **Black-and-white Warbler**: April 6, Kanawha (LC), **Swainson's Warbler**: April 24, Wood (JB), **Tennessee Warbler**: May 7, Ohio (PM), **Nashville Warbler**: May 8, Berkeley (AT), **Mourning Warbler**: May 29, Brooke (RTo), **Kentucky Warbler**: May 7, Wayne (DP), **Common Yellowthroat**: May 7, Wetzel (WJ), **Hooded Warbler**: April 20, Roane (LC), **American Redstart**: April 18, Wetzel (WJ), **Cape May Warbler**: May 9, Monongalia (DCo), **Cerulean Warbler**: April 23, Kanawha (LC), **Northern Parula**: April 15, Kanawha (LC), **Magnolia Warbler**: May 9, Preston (LeJ), **Bay-breasted Warbler**: May 9, Monongalia (DCo), **Blackburnian Warbler**: April 23, Kanawha (LC), **Yellow Warbler**: April 16, Wetzel (WJ), **Chestnut-sided Warbler**: May 7, Ohio (PM), **Blackpoll Warbler**: May 9, Monongalia (DCo), **Black-throated Blue Warbler**: May 4, Putnam (LC), **Palm Warbler**: May 14, Wood (JB), **Pine Warbler**: March 6, Cabell (JK), **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: March 20, Mason (TB), **Yellow-throated Warbler**: April 1, Kanawha (CC), **Prairie Warbler**: April 20, Kanawha (LC), **Black-throated Green Warbler**: April 10, Summers (JP), **Canada Warbler**: May 12, Preston (AG), and **Wilson's Warbler**: May 9, Monongalia (DCo). LeJay Graffious had a ten-warbler walk at Old Hemlock, Preston County, on May 12. It was a late migration season. Only eight, or about a quarter, of these warbler species appeared on or before the "first-seen" dates in George A. Hall's *West Virginia Birds*.

Tanagers, Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings – The **Painted Bunting** seen in late April in Pipestem, Summers County, is described near the beginning of these notes. **Summer Tanager** reports were few once again this spring, coming from Cabell (DP), Putnam (LC), Wayne (JWg), and Wood (JB) Counties. **Scarlet Tanagers, Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Indigo Buntings** prompted numerous reports from birders in most parts of the state. Margaret Straley and Bob Summers watched a male **Blue Grosbeak** picking up gravel on their driveway near Spencer in Roane County, on April 23, and on May 3 Bruni Haydl hosted a **Blue Grosbeak** in her yard in Charles Town, Jefferson County. David Patick found a **Dickcissel** on Leon Ferry Road, Mason County, on May 13.

Contributors to the Spring Field Notes: Kitty Bailey (KB), Jon Benedetti (JB), Bill Blauvelt (BBl), Randy Bodkins (RBo), Terry Bronson (TB), Cynthia Burkhart (CB), Christina Carr (CC), Laura Ceperley (LC), Derek Courtney (DCo), David Daniels (DD), Donny Good (DG), Hullet Good (HG), LeJay Graffious (LeJ), Aaron Graham (AG), Richard Gregg (RG), Michael Griffith (MG), Wilma Jarrell (WJ), Janet Keating (JK), Paul McKay (PM), Donna Mitchell (DMi), Cynthia Mullens (CMu), Jack O'Connell (JO), Susan Olcott (SO), Matt Orsie (MO), David Patick (DP), James Phillips (JP), James and Judy Phillips (JJP), Gary Rankin (GR), Casey Rucker (CR), N. Wade Snyder (WS), Ryan Tomazin (RTo), Alex Tsiatsos (AT), Mindy and Allen Waldron (MAW), John Waugaman (JWg), and Nancy Zapotocki (NZ).

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ERRATUM

In “Field Notes, Winter Season, December 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023,” which appeared in the July 2023 issue (Redstart 90(3)), Hulett Good’s name was inadvertently omitted from the contributors list.

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.

2023 Calendar of Events The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.

Date	Activity	Place
January	BBC Membership Month	
January	Trip to Killdeer Plains (Contact: Dick Esker)	
February	Write article for The Mail Bag and The Redstart	
Feb. 23-24	Funk/Killbuck Marsh Field Trip (Contact: Dick Esker)	
March 10-12	Early Spring Meeting (Contact: Dick Esker).....	North Bend State Park
March 18	Waterfowl Field Trip (Day Trip)	Seneca Lake, OH
April 22	BBC/Three Rivers Bird Club (day trip)	Raccoon Creek State Park, PA (Contact Ryan Tomazin)
May 11-14	Wildflower Pilgrimage	Blackwater Falls State Park
May 13	International Migratory Bird Day (local chapters)	
June 2-10	Foray – Camp Horseshoe	Parsons, WV (Contact: Janice Emrick or Mary Murin)
Aug.-Oct.	Bird Banding – TBD	Dolly Sods
Oct. 20-22	BBC Annual Fall Meeting.....	Chief Logan State Park (Contact: Cindy Slater)
Nov. 8-12	Eastern Shore (Contact: Cindy Slater)	
Dec. 14-Jan. 5	Christmas Bird Counts.....	Statewide

BBC FORAYS

2023 Camp Horseshoe, Tucker County

2024 Camp Thornwood, Pocahontas 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, wvwarblers@hotmail.com

<http://brooksbirdclub.org>

The dates for the 2023 BBC programs may be changed if necessary. Changes will be announced on the web page or in The Mail Bag.

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