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The 2008 Christmas Bird Count

Jane J. Whitaker

The 109th Audubon Christmas Bird Count was conducted from December 14, 2008, through January 4, 2009. Six counts were held December 14, three the weekend of December 21-23, five December 27-28, and seven January 2-3, 2009. This year had the highest number of counts reporting, 21, and the highest number of observers, 384. It also had the highest number of party hours involved, 905. Mineral County was the only new count (Table 1).

Table 1
Location of Participating Counts, Number of Species, Number of Birds,
Number of Observers, and Party Hours

Count Location	No. Species	No. Birds	No. Obs.	Party Hours
Athens-Princeton, WV	48	2177	6	18
Buffalo Creek, PA	66	9,403	48	116
Canaan, WV	52	1,168	6	53
Charles Town, WV	80	7,623	22	63
Charleston, WV	68	24,516	24	57
Elkins, WV	48	4,096	14	10
Hampshire County, WV	67	4,852	37	88
Huntington, WV	73	6,372	16	70
Inwood, WV	74	12,780	26	64
Lewisburg, WV	62	6,033	20	36
McDowell County, WV	39	5,269	4	12
Mineral, WV	27	628	2	4
Moorefield, WV	58	2,272	8	27
Morgantown, WV	72	3,436	20	20
Oak Hill, WV	54	2,200	9	36
Ona, WV	72	5,588	17	67
Parkersburg, WV	72	11,657	37	62
Pipestem, WV	65	3,130	16	42
Pocahontas, WV	52	1,709	19	
Raleigh County, WV	54	2,584	7	21
Wheeling, WV	57	3,509	26	39

The total number of individual birds seen was down from 172,687 to 116,299; however, Wheeling did not report the very large American Crow roost (more than 50,000 birds in the past) that it did the last few years. Fifty-seven species exhibited increases this year while only 29 species had recorded decreases in numbers.

The weather was seasonable with most counts having temperatures from the mid-20s to high 30s and 40s. Ten counts recorded temperatures with mid-50s to low 60s. Elkins reported snow, but the other 20 counts had clear to partly cloudy skies with only four reporting light rain for part of the day.

Due to the good weather, high number of counts, and observers, it is difficult to accurately compare 2008 with previous years.

The species list, Table 2, indicates appreciably higher numbers of Canada Geese (up 33%), American Black Ducks (43%), Black Vultures (32%), Red-shouldered Hawks (40%), Red-tailed Hawks (20%), American Kestrels (41%), Peregrine Falcons (166%), and Rock Pigeons (54%).

Owls also showed increases: Eastern Screech-Owls from 30 to 61, Great Horned Owls from 20 to 34, and Barred Owls from 13 to 21 individuals.

With the exceptions of Hairy Woodpeckers, which were down from 168 in 2007 to 160 this year, and Red-headed Woodpeckers that stayed constant, the woodpeckers increased in numbers: Red-bellied Woodpeckers (up 64%), Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (49%), Downy Woodpeckers (44%), Northern Flickers (44%), and Pileated Woodpeckers (29%).

The combined Black-capped and Carolina Chickadee population increased by 19% and Tufted Titmice by 29%. There were fewer Red-breasted Nuthatches, 38 as compared to 81 last year, when there was an invasion. White-breasted Nuthatches increased from 800 to 1,115. Brown Creepers increased from 48 to 84, and Carolina Wrens showed an 84% increase. There were 36% more Golden-crowned Kinglets.

There were 30% fewer European Starlings reported. Yellow-rumped Warblers increased from 116 to 427, and Eastern Towhees from 122 to 425.

There were more Chipping Sparrows (20 up from 30), Field Sparrows (178 up from 136), and 77% more Song Sparrows (1,864 up from 1,053). Dark-eyed Juncos reported were down 18% and Northern Cardinals were seen in higher numbers (2,753 up from 2,148).

Although the Red-winged Blackbird count was higher (1,108 up from 762), the Rusty Blackbird sightings decreased (35 down from 41), and Brown-headed Cowbirds were difficult to find (45 down from 2,715). The same can be said for Common Grackles (84 down from 3,573).

Northern winter migrants were the real story this year as there were 238 Purple Finch sightings (up from 58), 64 Red Crossbills and 31 White-winged Crossbills. The latter two were not observed last year. Pine Siskins invaded in large numbers (772 compared with 63 last year), and they were observed on all but two counts.

The 10 most abundant species (Table 3) were the same as last year except for

Brown-headed Cowbird, Blue Jay, and Common Grackle. These were replaced by the House Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, and American Goldfinch.

Of the 24 species observed on only one count (Table 4), 8 were seen during the count week. There were 16 species seen on all counts (Table 5).

Table 2
Species List

Species	Number
Greater White-fronted Goose*	2
Snow Goose*	2
Cackling Goose*	3
Canada Goose	7,024
Mute Swan	2
Tundra Swan*	7
Wood Duck	3
Gadwall	62
American Wigeon	1
American Black Duck	363
Mallard	2,637
Northern Shoveler*	1
Northern Pintail	12
Green-winged Teal	31
Canvasback*	10
Redhead	6
Ring-necked Duck	41
Greater Scaup*	1 cw
Lesser Scaup	13
Surf Scoter	1 cw
White-winged Scoter*	1 cw
Long-tailed Duck	1 cw
Bufflehead	90
Common Goldeneye	11
Hooded Merganser	188
Common Merganser	14
Ruddy Duck	215
Ring-necked Pheasant	1
Ruffed Grouse	10
Wild Turkey	336
Common Loon*	1 cw

Species	Number
Pied-billed Grebe	47
Horned Grebe	1 cw
Red-necked Grebe*	1
Double-crested Cormorant	2
Great Blue Heron	114
Black Vulture	336
Turkey Vulture	947
Bald Eagle	36
Northern Harrier	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	44
Cooper's Hawk	49
Goshawk*	1
Buteo sp.	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	88
Red-tailed Hawk	395
Rough-legged Hawk	3
Golden Eagle	4
American Kestrel	173
Merlin	3
Peregrine Falcon	6
Virginia Rail	2
American Coot	45
Killdeer	93
Wilson's Snipe	11
Ring-billed Gull	42
Herring Gull	13
Gull sp.	1
Rock Pigeon	6,091
Mourning Dove	3,057
Barn Owl	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	61
Great Horned Owl	34
Barred Owl	21
Long-eared Owl	2
Short-eared Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	112
Red-headed Woodpecker	11
Red-bellied Woodpecker	884
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	119

Species	Number
Downy Woodpecker	844
Hairy Woodpecker	160
Northern Flicker	489
Pileated Woodpecker	312
Woodpecker sp.	1
Eastern Phoebe	19
Loggerhead Shrike	2
Blue-headed Vireo	1 cw
Blue Jay	2,423
American Crow	18,694
Fish Crow*	3
Common Raven	151
Horned Lark	109
Carolina Chickadee	2,110
Black-capped Chickadee	522
Chickadee sp.	243
Tufted Titmouse	1,803
Red-breasted Nuthatch	38
White-breasted Nuthatch	1,115
Brown Creeper	84
Carolina Wren	1,257
House Wren*	2
Winter Wren	33
Golden-crowned Kinglet	412
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	41
Kinglet sp.	16
Eastern Bluebird	1,440
Hermit Thrush	47
American Robin	8,889
Gray Catbird	1
Northern Mockingbird	658
Brown Thrasher	3
European Starling	28,323
American Pipit*	10
Cedar Waxwing	609
Yellow-rumped Warbler	427
Pine Warbler*	2
Palm Warbler*	1
Common Yellowthroat*	1

Species	Number
Eastern Towhee	425
American Tree Sparrow	96
Chipping Sparrow	20
Field Sparrow	178
Savannah Sparrow	1
Fox Sparrow	18
Song Sparrow	1,864
Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Swamp Sparrow	121
White-throated Sparrow	1,484
White-crowned Sparrow	465
Sparrow sp.	2
Dark-eyed Junco	3,768
Northern Cardinal	2,753
Red-winged Blackbird	1,108
Eastern Meadowlark	63
Rusty Blackbird	35
Common Grackle	84
Brown-headed Cowbird	45
Purple Finch	238
House Finch	865
Red Crossbill*	64
White-winged Crossbill*	31
Pine Siskin	772
American Goldfinch	3,112
House Sparrow	3,423
Total	116,299

* Denotes species not observed on the 2007 count

cw Denotes species seen during count week, but not on count day

Table 3
Ten Most Abundant Species in Descending Order

European Starling	Dark-eyed Junco
American Crow	House Sparrow
American Robin	American Goldfinch
Canada Goose	Mourning Dove
Rock Pigeon	Northern Cardinal

Table 4
Species Observed on One Count Only

Species	Number	Count Location
Greater White Fronted Goose	2	Parkersburg
Snow Goose	2	Parkersburg
Mute Swan	3	Hampshire
American Wigeon	1	Morgantown
Northern Shoveler	1	Inwood
Greater Scaup	1 cw	Ona
Surf Scoter	1 cw	Huntington
White-winged Scoter	1 cw	Morgantown
Long-tailed Duck	1 cw	Morgantown
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Buffalo Creek
Common Loon	1 cw	Morgantown
Horned Grebe	1 cw	Huntington
Red-necked Grebe	1	Wheeling
Osprey	1 cw	Charlestown
Goshawk, Northern	1	Canaan/Tucker
Virginia Rail	2	Charlestown
Barn Owl	1	Moorefield
Short-eared Owl	2	Inwood
Blue-headed Vireo	1 cw	Pipstem
Fish Crow	3	Charlestown
Gray Catbird	1	Moorefield
Palm Warbler	1	Ona
Common Yellowthroat	1	Inwood
Sparrow, Lincoln's	1	Huntington

cw Denotes species seen during count week, but not on count day

Table 5
Species Observed on All Counts

Mallard	Blue Jay
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow
Rock Pigeon	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Mourning Dove	European Starling
Downy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow

Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal

American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

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Allegheny Front Migration Observatory: Fall Migration, 2008

Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison

Allegheny Front Migration Observatory (AFMO) conducted its 51st year of bird banding at Dolly Sods, West Virginia, this fall. AFMO is located 10 miles southeast of Davis, West Virginia. Banding began on August 15 and ended on October 22, 2008. We banded 5,653 birds of 81 species with a station effort of 72 birds per 100 net hours. The overall percentage of hatch year birds (using known age birds only) was 81.7%. Since the station's founding in 1958, 226,050 birds have been banded. The station was open for 60 days and closed 8 days due to rain. There were 9 days when over 100 birds were banded, 3 days over 200, 3 days over 300, 1 day over 400, and the best day of the season was September 14 when 621 birds were banded. The most dominant species banded on September 14 were Black-throated Blue Warbler (288), Black-throated Green Warbler (112) and Tennessee Warbler (74).

The Black-throated Blue Warbler was the most numerous species this year with 1,400 banded, which is 34.8% over the 10-year average (including 2008). It has been the leader for the past 8 out of 10 years. The Black-throated Green Warbler was the 2nd highest with 634 banded (14.2% above the 10-year average), and the Blackpoll Warbler was the 3rd highest with 586 banded (-2.9% under the 10-year running average). The Tennessee Warbler was the 4th highest with 361 banded (8.3% over the 10-year average), and the Dark-eyed Junco was the 5th highest with 332 banded (3.6% over the 10-year average). The total of the top 5 species banded was 3,313, which was 58.6% of the total birds banded this season.

The nets were closed on September 25, 26, and 27 due to rain and early on September 28 due to fog. Evidently many birds were waiting to migrate, and after feeding for several days, they were fat and ready to continue southward. This was a setup for disaster in the form of bird kills in large proportions. One of the bird tragedies occurred on September 29 at Tucker County High School, located in an isolated area on top of a mountain. Robert Tallman of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service, and others were called to investigate. Approximately 500 birds had been killed when they hit the high school. The birds were migrating in dense fog at night and became disoriented when "they encountered a dome of light thrown up by the high school's security lights." (*The Highlands Voice*, Vol. 41, No. 11, p. 2, November 2008). DNR biologists identified 31 species of birds, and these were taken to AFMO to be verified by AFMO banders and Michael Lanzone, a bander from Powermill who was at AFMO doing research (see following). Two thirds of the birds killed belonged to three species: Blackpoll (176), Black-throated Blue (72), and Cape May (67) warblers. The other species were Common Yellowthroat (42), Ovenbird (27), American Redstart (26), Red-eyed Vireo

(16), Magnolia Warbler (13), Connecticut Warbler (5), Mourning Warbler (4), Gray-cheeked Thrush (3), Black-and-white Warbler (3), Blackburnian Warbler (2), Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows, Swainson's Thrush, Ruffed Grouse, Sora Rail, Gray Catbird, Northern Waterthrush, and Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Tennessee, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. The Tucker County School Board is working with officials to remedy the lighting problem.

We were honored to have Michael Lanzone from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Powdermill Avian Research Center, Rector, Pennsylvania, and his research assistant, Emma DeLeon, carry out some of their research work at AFMO this fall. They were using portable recording chambers to record detailed samples of nocturnal flight calls. Migrating wood warblers and other selected species were first netted, documented, and banded at AFMO. Mike and Emma then placed the selected birds in their recording chamber and played previously recorded flight call notes. This often elicited calls from the birds in the recording chamber. According to Mike Lanzone, "This recording method rapidly produces many high quality recordings of the flight calls of individuals of known age and sex. Our analyses show recorded flight calls of captive birds are inseparable from those of free-flying migrants. This result is a crucial precursor for the development of automated sound analysis algorithms critical for implementing and strengthening future acoustical monitoring applications."

AFMO had two foreign recoveries this fall. An AHY female Blackburnian Warbler was banded by Paul Rodeward from Ohio State University on May 28, 2006, at Lamb's Woods, near Niles Beach, Ohio. It was recaptured and released at AFMO on September 4, 2008. A banded HY male Black-throated Green Warbler was recaptured and released at our station on September 17. It had been banded by Connie Skipper four days earlier on September 13 at Mt. Nebo Wildlife Area, 6 miles north of Oakland, MD. AFMO is about 30 miles due south of the Mt. Nebo banding station.

Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas and UCLA's Center for Tropical Research is coordinating a landbird sampling of migrating birds. Linda Lon, Ph.D., of the USFS Redwood Sciences Laboratory invited the writer (JBP) to participate in the project. This is the second year AFMO has participated. Cloacal and feather samples were collected from 93 birds of 40 species. UCLA is screening for the Avian Influenza Virus from samples taken from AFMO and other stations throughout the country.

The Flyover Count was started in 1990 and has continued every year during the fall banding season at AFMO. Results from the 2008 fall counting are summarized in "AFMO 2008 Flyover Count" by Ralph K. Bell elsewhere in this issue of *The Redstart*.

This fall, 850 people signed our visitor's book. These visitors came from 19 states; Washington, DC; and Canada, England, Germany, India, and Japan. As usual, several elementary and middle schools and colleges visited AFMO, including the Highland Adventist School from Elkins, West Virginia; Audubon Naturalist Society group; Allegheny College of Maryland forestry students; and the Georgetown University freshman group.

We thank the personnel of Monongahela National Forest Supervisor Clyde Thompson, Cheat/Potomac District Ranger Jeff Hames, Special Use Manager Laura Hise, Forestry Technicians Ed Land and John Waggy, and all others for their cooperation and help. We also thank the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources for the use of their building for storage of our banding shed. We also thank the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, the Brooks Bird Club, and many visitors and volunteers for their financial support. It is our only means of replacing our mist nets.

The banders who participated this year were Robert Dean, Kenneth and Susan Heselton, Frederick and Carol McCullough, Randy & Elizabeth Ritter (also campground hosts), Todd & Kimberly Schnopp, Charles Ziegenfus, and Station Leaders Ralph K. Bell and Joan Bell Pattison. We are pleased to welcome Todd & Kimberly Schnopp as AFMO's newest banders, who are apprenticing under the Master Permit of the writer (JBP). AFMO volunteers William Agee and Kenneth Heselton contributed countless hours of computer time and expertise to put together the bander's information. The scheduled volunteers (besides the banders) who stayed and worked for extended periods were as follows: William Beatty, Thomas and Dawn Fox, LeJay Grafiou, Jack & Joleene Minear, Timothy Newlin, Donald Pattison, Maggi Perl, Jan Runyan, Todd & Kimberly Schnopp, and Stephen Sushinski. We are grateful to Todd Schnopp who donated and constructed a much-needed new floor for the banding shed. LeJay Grafiou, Todd Schnopp, and others erected and took down the shed for the season. We want to thank all of the volunteers and other interested people who helped in many ways this year.

AFMO 2008 Bandings
Species, Number, First Banded, Last Banded, and Peak Number and Date Banded

Species	No.	First Banded	Last Banded	Peak Number & Date Banded
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Oct-5		
Merlin	1	Sep-16		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Oct-6		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Oct-12		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Sep-16	Oct-4	
Downy Woodpecker	5	Sep-29	Oct-13	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Sep-16		
Acadian Flycatcher	1	Aug-21		
Least Flycatcher	2	Aug-19	Sep-14	
Eastern Phoebe	2	Aug-21	Sep-23	
White-eyed Vireo	1	Oct-5		
Blue-headed Vireo	24	Sep-3	Oct-20	3 Oct-4, 5
Philadelphia Vireo	11	Sep-7	Sep-30	2 Sep-7, 14, 16
Red-eyed Vireo	24	Aug-24	Oct-6	7 Sep-7
Blue Jay	134	Sep-20	Oct-20	27 Oct-8
Black-capped Chickadee	17	Aug-17	Oct-12	3 Sep-20
Tufted Titmouse	13	Sep-24	Oct-22	2 Sep-24, Oct-8, 10
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9	Sep-7	Oct-11	2 Oct-5
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	Oct-5	Oct-13	
Brown Creeper	4	Oct-6	Oct-17	
Carolina Wren	3	Aug-16	Aug-30	

Species	No.	First Banded	Last Banded	Peak Number & Date Banded
House Wren	2	Sep-20	Oct-12	
Winter Wren	13	Aug-21	Oct-17	2 Aug-21, Oct-10
Golden-crowned Kinglet	273	Sep-1	Oct-22	48 Oct-17
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	179	Sep-8	Oct-20	68 Oct-6
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5	Aug-21	Oct-4	
Veery	9	Aug-20	Sep-17	2 Sep-13
Gray-cheeked Thrush	6	Sep-20	Oct-6	3 Oct-4
Swainson's Thrush	72	Aug-17	Oct-19	10 Sep-30
Wood Thrush	16	Aug-18	Oct-18	4 Sep-11
American Robin	16	Sep-4	Oct-15	6 Oct-14
Gray Catbird	19	Sep-1	Oct-18	2 Sep-14, 16, 18
Brown Thrasher	4	Sep-1	Sep-5	2 Sep-3
Cedar Waxwing	3	Aug-17	Oct-12	
Blue-winged Warbler	1	Aug-18		
Tennessee Warbler	361	Aug-23	Oct-10	86 Sep-15
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	Oct-6		
Nashville Warbler	62	Sep-3	Oct-10	14 Oct-5
Northern Parula	5	Sep-7	Sep-22	2 Sep-7
Yellow Warbler	1	Aug-16		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	63	Aug-16	Sep-23	7 Sep-5, 16
Magnolia Warbler	227	Aug-16	Oct-12	35 Sep-16
Cape May Warbler	109	Aug-16	Oct-17	25 Sep-14
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1,400	Aug-16	Oct-18	288 Sep-14
Yellow-rumped Warbler	43	Aug-16	Oct-20	9 Oct-5

Species	No.	First Banded	Last Banded	Peak Number & Date Banded
Black-throated Green Warbler	634	Aug-16	Oct-20	112 Sep-14
Blackburnian Warbler	135	Aug-17	Oct-5	22 Sep-7
Pine Warbler	2	Oct-5	Oct-20	
Prairie Warbler	2	Sep-1		
Western Palm Warbler	7	Sep-10	Oct-15	2 Sep-18, Oct-15
Yellow Palm Warbler	3	Sep-23	Oct-10	1
Bay-breasted Warbler	46	Sep-3	Oct-5	11 Sep-15
Blackpoll Warbler	586	Sep-3	Oct-15	149 Oct-5
Cerulean Warbler	1	Aug-21		
Black-and-white Warbler	30	Aug-16	Sep-30	4 Aug-17, Sep-7, 14
American Redstart	44	Aug-16	Sep-23	8 Sep-7
Worm-eating Warbler	4	Aug-18	Sep-8	
Ovenbird	114	Aug-16	Oct-5	10 Sep-10
Northern Waterthrush	5	Aug-20	Oct-1	2 Aug-20
Connecticut Warbler	6	Sep-17	Oct-5	2 Sep-18
Common Yellowthroat	147	Aug-16	Oct-10	20 Sep-8
Hooded Warbler	14	Aug-20	Oct-5	3 Sep-16
Wilson's Warbler	12	Aug-21	Sep-17	2 Sep-4, 15
Canada Warbler	12	Aug-16	Sep-14	3 Aug-19
Scarlet Tanager	16	Aug-20	Sep-16	6 Sep-14
Eastern Towhee	35	Aug-16	Oct-15	5 Oct-8
Chipping Sparrow	6	Aug-30	Oct-12	2 Sep-1, Oct-10
Field Sparrow	8	Sep-30	Oct-15	2 Oct-10
Savannah Sparrow	4	Aug-18	Sep-30	2 Sep-30

Species	No.	First Banded	Last Banded	Peak Number & Date Banded
Fox Sparrow	3	Oct-18	Oct-20	2 Oct-20
Song Sparrow	13	Aug-18	Oct-15	2 Oct-10, Oct-15
Lincoln's Sparrow	6	Sep-13	Oct-9	1
Swamp Sparrow	11	Sep-1	Oct-12	2 Sep-8
White-throated Sparrow	50	Oct-4	Oct-18	13
White-crowned Sparrow	3	Oct-11	Oct-20	
Dark-eyed Junco	332	Aug-16	Oct-22	30 Oct-17
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	11	Aug-30	Sep-16	3 Sep-8, 16
Indigo Bunting	3	Sep-4	Oct-6	
Baltimore Oriole	2	Aug-25	Sep-10	
Pine Siskin	5	Oct-20	Oct-22	3 Oct-20
American Goldfinch	2	Sep-22	Oct-4	
Total Banded	5,653			

*Note WPWA & YPWA Western (brown) and Eastern (yellow) Palm Warbler are listed separately.

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AFMO 2008 Fall Flyover Count

Ralph K. Bell

The 19th annual fall Flyover Count at AFMO on Dolly Sods, West Virginia, was started on August 14, 2008, by Don Pattison and ended over two months later on October 20 when Carol and Frederick McCullough finished the fall bird banding due to the cold weather at that high altitude.

Counts were not conducted on the eight rainy days or when everyone present was busy with the banding operation. The chief flyover counters who were on the schedule this year were Kenneth Heselton, Carol and Frederick McCullough, Jack and Joleene Minear, Donald and Joan Pattison, Maggi Perl, Elizabeth Ritter, Joan Rowe, Kimberly and Todd Schnopp, and Stephen Sushinski, aided by many other dedicated volunteers.

The count of the usual selected flyover species for this fall season is listed below with the AFMO 2007 fall season totals in parentheses. The American Goldfinch and Monarch Butterfly numbers were very low at AFMO this fall compared to 2007.

Selected Species	No.	2008 Peak Day	18-year Average
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	325	39 Sept. 13	441
Blue Jay	4,086	710 Oct. 4	5,900
American Goldfinch	493	44 Sept. 18	3,034
Monarch Butterfly	172	70 Sept. 19	1,231

The other flyovers counted this fall with the 2007 Fall Flyover totals in parenthesis are as follows: Black Vulture 6 (13), Red-tailed Hawk 3 (26), Red-breasted Nuthatch 22 (338), Turkey Vulture 44 (10), American Kestrel 3 (13), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2 (0), Osprey 8 (23), Merlin 9 (11), Eastern Bluebird 1 (4), Bald Eagle 9 (15), Chimney Swift 10 (17), American Robin 610 (176), Golden Eagle 2 (0), Northern Flicker 89 (95), Cedar Waxwing 1,529 (1,613), Northern Harrier 1 (20), Olive-sided Flycatcher 2 (0), Scarlet Tanager 7 (27), Sharp-shinned Hawk 44 (100), American Crow 8 (185), Rose-breasted Grosbeak 48 (86), Cooper's Hawk 15 (18), Tree Swallow 396 (1,373), Pine Siskin 402 (8), and Dragonflies 28 (125)

A few species are early migrants (before mid-August) and those that are later migrants (late October-November) are not counted and that no doubt distorts the count somewhat. Additional comments: One of the local ravens was noted carrying a snake, and Frederick McCullough and Todd Schnopp heard a Whip-poor-will near the station on September 1 at 6:15 a.m. as they were opening the nets.

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Three Rivers Migration Observatory: Fall Migration 2007

Ronald A. Canterbury

The 13th year of bird-banding at the Three Rivers Migration Observatory (TRMO) was another poor migration season. Drought conditions persisted throughout much of the late summer and fall at TRMO in 2007, and very hot temperatures persisted even into early and mid-September. For example, we recorded a temperature of 90° F on September 2, 2007, at the banding station. Banding was conducted on 69 days from July 25–November 9, 2007. Including 27 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that were released unbanded, 2,372 birds were captured. We handled 88 species of birds. Table 1 lists the species and number of individuals per species captured during the Autumn 2007 season. The Tennessee Warbler ($n = 443$) was the most numerous species captured.

The first significant cold front and winds out of the north, which typically are associated with migrant birds through TRMO, came on September 10 and 11. The peak banding date, however, was September 19 when 104 birds were captured. One hundred or more birds were captured only two days, September 19 and September 13, when 100 birds were netted. During the Fall 2007 season, there was an influx of Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches, but we caught relatively few of both species compared to all the reports on the birding listservs and Web pages throughout the eastern U.S. Some species such as the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Waterthrush, Chipping Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow were in low numbers for this banding station, while the numbers of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Dark-eyed Junco were above average. A Whip-poor-will was captured on September 5, and some recaptures included a Tennessee Warbler banded in 2003 and a Downy Woodpecker banded in 2001. In the Fall 2007 migration, most warbler species were late arriving at our station, especially Black-throated Green Warblers.

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

Table 1
Species List for the Autumn 2007 Season

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No. & Date
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Nov. 2		
American Woodcock	1	Oct. 20		

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No. & Date	
Mourning Dove	8	Aug. 29	Sep. 30		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	Sep. 9	Sep. 28		
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	Aug. 22	Sep. 10		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	27	July 25	Sep. 16	5	Aug. 29
Whip-poor-will	1	Sep. 5			
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	Sep. 9			
Downy Woodpecker	4	Sep. 2	Oct. 9		
Hairy Woodpecker	1	Sep. 3			
Eastern Wood-Pewee	13	Sep. 5	Sep. 24	5	Sep. 12
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Sep. 3			
Acadian Flycatcher	1	Sep. 6			
“Traill’s” Flycatcher	3	Aug. 29	Sep. 28		
Least Flycatcher	5	Aug. 31	Sep. 13		
Eastern Phoebe	21	Aug. 3	Oct. 18		
White-eyed Vireo	7	Sep. 13	Sep. 23		
Yellow-throated Vireo	6	Aug. 3	Sep. 30		
Blue-headed Vireo	19	Sep. 1	Oct. 29	4	Oct. 19
Philadelphia Vireo	2	Sep. 16			
Red-eyed Vireo	45	Aug. 1	Sep. 30	7	Sep. 2
Blue Jay	14	Sep. 17	Nov. 3		
Black-capped Chickadee	6	Oct. 27	Nov. 3		
Carolina Chickadee	25	July 27	Oct. 14		
Tufted Titmouse	27	July 31	Oct. 20	6	Sep. 30
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	Sep. 20	Oct. 9		
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	Sep. 23	Oct. 31		
Brown Creeper	2	Sep. 8	Sep. 30		
Carolina Wren	18	Aug. 21	Nov. 1	4	Sep. 1
House Wren	16	Sep. 11	Oct. 12	4	Oct. 8
Winter Wren	10	Oct. 9	Oct. 25	5	Oct. 9
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12	Oct. 25	Oct. 29	7	Oct. 29
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	61	Oct. 15	Oct. 29	19	Oct. 18
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	18	Aug. 26	Sep. 10	5	Aug. 29
Veery	3	Sep. 11	Oct. 19		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	8	Sep. 11	Oct. 1	3	Sep. 13
Swainson’s Thrush	77	Sep. 2	Oct. 13	5	Sep. 5
Hermit Thrush	5	Oct. 13	Nov. 1		
Wood Thrush	31	Sep. 13	Oct. 17	4	Sep. 14
American Robin	10	Sep. 14	Oct. 27		
Gray Catbird	72	Aug. 2	Oct. 27	4	Sep. 13

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No. & Date	
Northern Mockingbird	1	Oct. 9			
Brown Thrasher	4	Aug. 22	Sep. 30		
Cedar Waxwing	13	Aug. 13	Sep. 21		
Blue-winged Warbler	6	Aug. 1	Sep. 26		
Golden-winged Warbler	1	Sep. 9			
Tennessee Warbler	443	Sep. 2	Oct. 8	80	Sep. 18
Orange-crowned Warbler	2	Oct. 10	Oct. 11		
Nashville Warbler	13	Sep. 2	Oct. 29		
Northern Parula	5	Sep. 1	Sep. 30		
Yellow Warbler	2	Sep. 13			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	30	Sep. 2	Oct. 9	6	Sep. 13
Magnolia Warbler	54	Sep. 1	Oct. 14	4	Sep. 11
Cape May Warbler	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30		
Black-throated Blue Warbler	25	Sep. 8	Sep. 28	4	Sep. 28
Yellow-rumped Warbler	42	Oct. 9	Oct. 29	20	Oct. 19
Black-throated Green Warbler	10	Sep. 30	Oct. 10	6	Oct. 8
Blackburnian Warbler	6	Sep. 2	Oct. 5	3	Sep. 2
Yellow-throated Warbler	4	Sep. 13	Sep. 30	3	Sep. 13
Palm Warbler	28	Sep. 23	Oct. 14	4	Sep. 23
Bay-breasted Warbler	18	Sep. 12	Oct. 14	4	Oct. 14
Blackpoll Warbler	9	Sep. 26	Oct. 11		
Black-and-white Warbler	20	July 26	Oct. 6		
American Redstart	17	Sep. 4	Oct. 6		
Worm-eating Warbler	15	Aug. 3	Sep. 21		
Ovenbird	37	July 25	Sep. 27	3	Sep. 20
Northern Waterthrush	1	Sep. 1			
Louisiana Waterthrush	1	Aug. 29			
Common Yellowthroat	39	Sep. 4	Oct. 9	8	Oct. 9
Hooded Warbler	57	July 25	Sep. 26	4	Aug. 2
Wilson's Warbler	3	Sep. 2	Sep. 16		
Yellow-breasted Chat	4	Aug. 29	Sep. 26	3	Aug. 29
Scarlet Tanager	25	Aug. 29	Sep. 30	4	Sep. 2
Eastern Towhee	32	Sep. 1	Nov. 3		
Chipping Sparrow	28	Sep. 1	Nov. 2	6	Oct. 20
Field Sparrow	33	July 27	Oct. 9		
Song Sparrow	93	Aug. 3	Nov. 3	7	Oct. 29
Lincoln's Sparrow	7	Oct. 14	Oct. 31		
Swamp Sparrow	33	Oct. 19	Oct. 31	5	Oct. 29
White-throated Sparrow	7	Oct. 7	Nov. 9	15	Oct. 29

Species	Number	First	Last	Peak No. & Date	
Dark-eyed Junco	60	Oct. 9	Nov. 9	8	Oct. 9
Northern Cardinal	67	July 27	Nov. 9	8	Nov. 3
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10	Sep. 22	Sep. 27		
Indigo Bunting	44	July 25	Oct. 1	3	Aug. 31
Common Grackle	3	Aug. 22	Sep. 11		
Purple Finch	10	Nov. 3	Nov. 9		
House Finch	126	Aug. 19	Oct. 9	9	Sep. 9
American Goldfinch	215	Aug. 3	Nov. 9	35	Nov. 3

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Some Unusual and Rare Botanical Finds in 2008

Jane Whitaker and Reba Hutton

During the 2008 growing season, we were fortunate to observe several plants that we had previously seen only rarely, if at all. These plants were observed over a period of eight months from April through October. They were found over a 10-county area in West Virginia ranging from the southwestern part of the state to the northeastern counties.

Last spring the first trip to Elkins from Washington, D.C., included a stop at a shale barren near Wardensville in Hardy County. There Pussytoes Ragwort *Packera antennarifolia* was spotted on a steep bank, so steep that a spotting scope was needed to positively identify the plant and to obtain a photo. This find started our interesting botanical year.

Wayne County yielded Chain Fern (*Woodwardia aerolata*) along a roadside bank. Further down the road at East Lynn Lake, we found Climbing Fern (*Lygodium palmatum*) in abundance. It looks more like a woody vine than a fern and is undoubtedly overlooked for that reason.

Pussytoes Ragwort, May 10, 2008, on a shale barren near Wardensville. Photo by Jane Whitaker.

During the Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls, we visited Larenim Park in Mineral County. The arboretum there was the creation of botanist Melvin Brown, and it was, indeed, interesting. However, it was the adjacent shale barren that captured our attention. We saw Kate's Mountain Clover (*Trifolium virginicum*) in bloom and Shalebarren Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula*).

A cemetery in Bayard yielded Arrowleaved or Sand Violet (*Viola sagittata*). We had seen it previously on a mountainside near Dry Fork. It has a unique arrowhead shaped leaf as the name implies.

Tucker County's unusually high terrain always has surprises, and this season was no exception. Fernow Experimental Forest is the site of a large stand of Starflowered Solomon's Seal (*Maianthemum stellatum*). It was first found by BBCers along the river on the lower road of the forest during the Tucker County Foray in 2007. It is unusual in that it grows in large stands on sandbars adjacent to the river. The site where we found it had close to 1,000 plants.

The high elevation of Canaan Valley State Park is home to a rare occurrence of Fringed Gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*). Besides the petals being fringed, each blossom comes from an individual stalk. Star Violet (*Dalibarda repens*) was also found at the gentian site. It is fairly rare and can be confused with *Viola* species by the novice botanist, but it has a distinctive leaf.

Elecampe, July 22, 2008, at Dry Fork. Photo by Jane Whitaker.

Since Randolph County is the starting point of our excursions and the largest county in the state, we have often found unusual plants there. Dry Fork and the Sinks of Gandy areas yielded Glade Spurge (*Euphorbia purpurea*), Elecampe (*Inula helenium*), and Wocheiner Knapweed (*Centaurea nigrescens*). The latter had been found by Eugene Hutton in 1987 on Dry Fork, very probably at the same site where we found it in 2008. This is the same field on Dry Fork where the *Inula helenium* has been found for a number of years. The field once was an old farm site, so the plants, at least the *Inula*, may have originally been cultivated as it was once considered a medicinal plant. Our most exciting discovery, near the Sinks of Gandy, was Gray Sunflower (*Helianthus mollis*), a prairie species that has been reported for West Virginia only once in recent years.

Randolph County also has the only known site of *Orinthagalium pyrenacuim*, a European species found by Eugene Hutton in June of 1961. Surprisingly, we found Scotch Broom (*Cytisus soaptus*) in the Elkins Kroger parking lot. It is a legume, but at first glance appears to be a conifer.

Grant County usually draws botanists to Dolly Sods with its unusual alpine species, many of which we have seen in previous years. In 2008 we had the good fortune to explore a small road near Smoke Hole Caverns that yielded some exceptional finds: Rock Spike Moss (*Seliaginella rupestris*), Dwarf Hackberry (*Celtis tenuifolia*),

Silvery Nailwort, July 22, 2008, Grant County. Photo by Jane Whitaker.

Silvery Nailwort (*Paronychia argyrocoma*), Shale Barren Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*), and Angle Pod (*Maletia oblique*), which is common on the Maryland and Virginia Eastern Shore but uncommon in the mountains. Shale Barren Aster is one of the few asters that has a decidedly pleasant odor, which greatly assists in identification.

The rich flora of Pendleton County, which includes Smoke Hole Recreation Area, is always a botanical treat. It was in Smoke Hole that we finally found Shale Barren Pussytoes (*Antennaria virginica*). We had been searching for it all spring. It can be identified only by measuring the “toes.” Fern-leaved Yellow Foxglove (*Aureolaria pedicularia*) was also found in Smokehole.

Four of our rarest and most unusual finds were found in Pendleton County along White’s Run Road. Purple Bergamot (*Monarda media*), Wild Live-forever (*Hylotelephium telephioides*), Mountain Bugbane (*Actaea podocarpa*), and a first for both of us, Michaux’s Saxifrage (*Saxifrage michauxii*). The Purple Bergamot is a northern plant and has only been reported for Pendleton County and three others. Wild Live-forever was found on a high sandstone ledge and has a pink flower that blooms in the fall. The Mountain Bugbane is a high elevation plant that looks superficially like Black Cohosh and is found in the same habitat. It blooms later than Black Cohosh, but their bloom times do overlap. Positive identification must be made with a hand lens by examining the ovary. Bugbane’s ovary is on a pedestal while Cohosh’s is sessile. Unfortunately, the Bugbane seemed to prefer to grow on steep wooded banks amidst stinging nettle, which added to the difficulty of obtaining a specimen for identification. Michaux’s Saxifrage superficially resembles Lettuce Saxifrage, and it, also, must be examined under magnification to obtain positive identification. The petals of Michaux’s Saxifrage have very small yellow dots at their base. It has also been reported for Pendleton County.

Our final exciting find in Pendleton County was a fungus, *Lactarius indigo*, the Indigo Lactarius. It was large, three inches in diameter, and it exuded an indigo latex when broken. Neither of us had ever seen it before in all of our roamings.

On a fall trip to the Huntington area, we saw Wild Senna (*Senna marilandica*) in Lincoln County. At Green Bottom WMA in Cabell County, we observed Virginia Mallow (*Sida hermaphrodita*) and Annual Wormwood (*Artemisia annua*), neither of which we’d find in the mountainous counties.

We visited Barbour County along the Tygart River at Arden in late spring and found Barbara’s Buttons (*Marshallia grandifolia*) and Shrubby Yellowroot (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*). Late fall found us in Barbour County again, but this time at the Pleasant Creek WMA. Unusual plants there were Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifrage*) and (*Clematis addonsonia*), a type of Clematis that has an unusual spreading flower and seed head. With the exception of its leaves, the Burnet Saxifrage could be easily confused with Yarrow.

There were many other interesting plants we found in our travels but the ones mentioned were the most exceptional. We are already making a list of unusual and rare plants to track down in the coming year.

We use the books listed in the bibliography for identifying the plants we find.

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The Floyd Bartley Award

Rosie Campbell won the Floyd Bartley Award for 2008 with her article, “Eighteen Years of Canada Goose Observation” [*The Redstart*, 75(1), 37-43.] In making the announcement at the Brooks Bird Club Mid-Winter Meeting at North Bend State Park on March 8, 2009, Albert R. Buckelew Jr. claimed that Campbell had received more nominations for the award than any winner in recent years. There was no award for 2007.

Previous Bartley Award winners are:

1976	Ray and Jo Ashworth
1979	Harry Slack
1980	James D. Phillips
1981	J. Lawrence Smith
1982	Eugene E. Hutton
1983	Linnie Coon
1984	Patricia Temple
1985	Melvin Hooker
1987	Jonathan Minear
1988	Julie Beatty
1989	Lorraine Rollefson
1993	Ralph K. Bell
1994	Wendell Argabrite
1995	Greg Eddy
1997	Ann Pyle
1998	John Northeimer
1999	Joey Herron
2000	Anna M. McRae
2001	Gary Felton
2002	William Beatty
2003	Matthew Orsie
2004	George E. Hall
2005	Jane J. Whitaker
2006	Matthew Orsie

Field Notes Fall Season

September–November, 2008

James Triplett and Beverly Triplett

The weather in the state of West Virginia for the fall “Field Notes” period was very close to normal, according to the Northeast Regional Climate Center of Cornell University. The average temperature for the fall season was 52.6°F, and the precipitation was 6.45 inches.

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

Please note the following corrections to the Spring Field Notes in the October 2008 *Redstart*, 75(4), 184-193. Gary Felton’s record was of a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, not a **Great Black-backed Gull**. Matthew Orsie did not report a **Western Kingbird**. Please contact the editors if any corrections should be noted in the Field Notes. E-mail to jtrippy@suddenlinkmail.com, bevtrippy@suddenlink.net, or home phone at 304-345-3336.

Ducks, Swans, and Geese—**Snow Geese** were reported in three counties: Monongalia (KA), Preston (GF), and Wood (MBC). **Canada Geese** were seen in most parts of the state. **Tundra Swans** were noted in five counties: Barbour (DM), Berkley (RB), Monongalia (LeJ), Randolph (RB, MW), and Tucker (RB). In Berkley County, Rodney Bartgis saw two flocks of **Tundra Swans**. One flock had 80 birds, and the other had 103. Michael Welch had a wedge of 34 **Tundra Swans** over his house in Elkins, Randolph County. **Wood Ducks, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Green-winged Teals, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Ruddy Ducks** were noted in most areas. On November 29, James and Todd Triplett counted more than 100 **American Wigeons** at Sandstone Falls, Summers County. James Phillips, naturalist at Pipestem State Park, said that number of wigeons was probably a state record for that location and date. **Blue-winged Teal** were reported in Jefferson (MO) and Mason (TI) Counties. **Northern Pintails** were noted only by James and Judy Phillips on November 19 in Summers County. Doren Burrell observed a **Red-headed Duck** on October 3 in Mason County. Matthew Orsie saw a **Black Scoter** on November 2 and a **Lesser Scaup** on November 16 in Jefferson County. John Boback saw a **Common Goldeneye** in Monongalia County on November 23. **Ruddy Ducks** were seen in great numbers in Monongalia County on Cheat Lake. John Boback counted 759, visible from the I-68 Bridge and Sunset Marina. Boback

said, “I slogged through the muck for a half mile along the exposed muddy shoreline to get to a vantage point where I could count them. All together, there were probably a thousand ruddies on the lake today.” All three mergansers were seen during the fall. The most commonly reported were the **Hooded Mergansers**, followed by **Common Mergansers** (CD, JBT, MO, GF, MAW) and **Red-breasted Mergansers**, which were reported in Kanawha County on November 30 (JBT), Monongalia County on November 29 (GF), and Wood County on November 8 (DJE). Dick and Jeanette Esker noted that the November 8 date for the **Red-breasted** was an early date for Wood County.

Pheasants, Grouse, Turkeys and Bobwhite—Ruffed Grouse were seen in Grant (MO), Pocahontas (RT), Randolph (RT) Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB, DE) Counties. Wild Turkeys were reported in Jefferson (CD), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (MBC) Counties. Tom Igou reported a sighting of a **Northern Bobwhite** in Mason County on September 4.

Loons and Grebes—Common Loons were noted in Fayette (JBT), Jefferson (MO), Monongalia (KA), Raleigh (MAW), and Summers Counties (JJP, JBT). **Pied-billed Grebes** were common throughout the state. **Horned Grebes** were noted in Fayette, (DB), Kanawha (JBT), Mason (R2B), and Raleigh (MAW) Counties.

Cormorants, Herons, and Egrets—Double-crested Cormorants were commonly sighted throughout the state. Gary Rankin saw an **American Bittern** in Cabell County on November 10. **Great Blue Herons** were noted in seven counties: Kanawha (HG), Fayette (JBT), Mason (R2B), Preston (GF), Putnam (CE), Summers (JJP), and Wood (JB). James Phillips noted a late October 14 sighting for the **Great Blue Heron** in Summers County. Five counties reported **Great Egrets**: Cabell (GR, JBT, JS), Jefferson (MO), Mason (TI), Summers (JJP), and Wood (JE). On September 11, John Smith, James Triplett, and Beverly Triplett saw seven **Great Egrets** in a tree at Green Bottom WMA. Smith said, “I have birded this area for over 40 years and this is the greatest number of **Great Egrets** that I have seen together in one area at Green Bottom.” **Green Herons** were seen in Kanawha County (HG) and Wood County (JB, DE). Tom Igou Spotted a **Black-crowned Night Heron** on September 4 in Mason County. Jeanette Esker said, “An immature **Glossy Ibis** came to the marsh area in Williamstown, and everyone hurried over to see it, not knowing it was planning to stay for three weeks. It was reported to the West Virginia records committee.” The ibis was seen from September 22 until October 12 in the Williamstown Marsh area by the members of the Mountwood Bird Club. A **Glossy Ibis** was also seen in Mason County in October by Doren Burrell (10/3), David Patick (10/9), Matt Orsie, and Deborah Beutler (10/13).

Vultures—Black Vultures were noted in Cabell (TI), Jefferson (BH), Putnam (CE), Randolph (RT), and Summers (JJP) Counties. Bruni Haydl reported a sighting of roughly 100 **Black Vultures** in the Bolivar Heights area of Harper’s Ferry on November 9. Jim Phillips saw 12 **Black Vultures** and 80 **Turkey Vultures** over the mouth of the Greenbrier River on October 23. Rob Tallman noted a flock of over 100

Glossy Ibis, October 4, 2008, at Williamstown, West Virginia. Photo by Matthew Orsie.

vultures, both **Black** and **Turkey Vultures**, flying from a stand of pine trees at the US 219/SR 92 intersection, which then kettled over the Davis and Elkins Campus in Elkins on November 20.

Accipitridae—Ospreys were seen in the following counties during the fall season: Fayette (JBS), Grant (MO), Greenbrier (BW), Jefferson (MO, CD), Putnam (CE), and Wood (JB). **Bald Eagles** were reported in good numbers in 12 counties. On November 22, James Phillips noted that an article by Robert Tallman in the Fall 2008 *West Virginia Wildlife Magazine*, 8(2), p. 23, reported that **Bald Eagles** nesting in West Virginia had a banner year with 27 of 30 nests producing 32 young eagles. **Golden Eagles** were seen in Jefferson, Grant, and Pocahontas Counties. James Triplett and Beverly Triplett watched two **Golden Eagles**, an adult and a juvenile, at Dolly Sods at AFMO on September 24. Matt Orsie saw two **Golden Eagles**, one adult and one second or third year, along with five adult **Bald Eagles** on November 1 along the Blue Ridge in extreme SE Jefferson County. **Northern Harriers, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks** were reported in good numbers in all areas. Matthew Orsie noted that the observation group at AFMO at Dolly Sods had counted 121 **Broad-winged Hawks** by noon on September 19. The season count for **Broad-winged Hawks** at the Hanging Rock Tower was 2,218 for the observation period of August 17 through November 19.

Falcons—American Kestrels were reported in Cabell (R2B), Grant (MO), and Wood (MBC) Counties. Rob Tallman observed a **Merlin** on October 1 in Randolph County. **Peregrine Falcons** were noted in Cabell (GR), Jefferson(MO), Kanawha(JBT), Mason (DP), Ohio (PM), and Putnam (CE) Counties. On November 24, Paul McKay saw feathers and evidence of a pigeon kill from a **Peregrine Falcon** on the sidewalk in front of the CVS Pharmacy next to the Wheeling Steel Building in Wheeling. The **Peregrine Falcon** was seen high up on the front of the building. This was most likely the same falcon that was present in the same area in May, according to McKay.

Rails, Coots—A Yellow Rail was seen in Cabell County and a **King Rail** in Mason County by Tom Igou on September 4. Jon Benedetti listed a **Sora** in Wood County on October 9, a late date, in Wood County for the Mountwood Bird Club. **American Coots** were seen in most areas.

Cranes—A Sandhill Crane was reported in Preston County on November 22 (GF).

Plovers—Wendell Argabrite saw an **American Golden Plover** in Mason County on September 11. **Killdeer** were commonly reported throughout the state. Rob Tallman noted a group of at least 300 **Killdeer** in the corn stubble at Huttonsville Farm WMA on November 17.

Sandpipers—Twelve species of Sandpipers were noted in the fall. The birds and their county locations are as follows: **Spotted Sandpiper**—Jefferson (MO), Mason (DP), Pocahontas (DP) Counties; **Solitary Sandpiper**—Jefferson (MO), Mason (WA),

Pleasant (KA), and Wood (MBC) Counties; **Greater Yellowlegs**—Jefferson (MO, CD), Mason (WA), and Pleasant (KA) Counties; **Lesser Yellowlegs**—Berkley (MO), Jefferson (MO), and Mason (DP) Counties; **Sanderling**—Mason County (WA); **Least Sandpiper**—Jefferson (MO), Kanawha (HG), and Mason (WA) Counties; **White-rumped Sandpiper**—Mason County (WA); **Pectoral Sandpiper**—Mason County (GR); **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**—Mason County (WA); **Wilson's Snipe**—Berkley (MO), Cabell (DP), Mason (R2B), Pleasant (KA), and Wood (MBC) Counties; **America Woodcock**—Putnam County on November 15 (CE); and **Red Phalarope**—Cabell County. An extremely rare bird for West Virginia, two **Red Phalaropes**, an adult and an immature, spent about two weeks around the Harris Riverfront Park in Huntington, Cabell County. Gary Rankin, Simon Collier, Wendell Argabrite, and Beverly Delidow verified the birds. Several birders from around the state were able to get good looks at the birds during their two-week visit.

Gulls and Terns—**Ring-billed Gulls** were the most commonly sighted gulls around the state during the fall. Other species included **Laughing Gulls** in Brooke County on November 11 (JBo), **Bonaparte's Gulls** in Mason County on November 30 (R2B) and in Monongalia County on November 30 (JBo), and **Herring Gulls** in Brooke County on November 11 (JBo) and in Mason County on September 27 (DP).

Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves were common throughout the state.

Cuckoos—**Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were noted in Cabell (DP), Kanawha (HG), Pocahontas (DH), Wetzel (WJ), and Wood (JB) Counties. **Black-billed Cuckoos** were seen in Preston County (GF) and in Roane County. Bob Summers and Margaret Straley observed juvenile **Black-billed Cuckoos** on September 4 at their home in Roane County.

Owls—The **Eastern Screech-Owl** was the most commonly heard owl. Others noted were **Great Horned Owl** in Jefferson (CD), Kanawha (HG), and Randolph (RT) Counties, **Barred Owl** in Kanawha (JBT), Randolph (WT), and Pocahontas (RT) Counties, and **Long-eared owl** in Grant County (RB).

Nighthawks and Whip-poor-wills—**Common Nighthawks** were seen in Jefferson (MO), Preston (GF), Summers (JJP), and Randolph (RT) Counties. Barbara Sargent noted **Whip-poor-wills** in Randolph County near Alpena.

Chimney Swifts were observed in Jefferson (CD), Kanawha (HG), Preston (GF), and Wood (JB) Counties.

Hummingbirds—**Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were noted during September in Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Preston, and Wood Counties. Hullet Good said that the last date for the hummers at his home in Kanawha County was on September 23. James Phillips noted that he had at least one hummer at a feeder on October 4 in Summers County.

Belted Kingfishers were found around the entire area.

Woodpeckers—All seven species on the Brooks Bird Club *Birds of West Virginia Field Checklist* were seen during the fall months. Red-headed Woodpeck-

ers were noted in Kanawha (HG, DG), Lincoln (MP), Mason (KK), Monroe (JJP), Roane (DG), and Summers Counties (JJP). The Mt. Zion Church area in Mason County has been home to Red-headed Woodpeckers for some time.

Flycatchers—Olive-sided Flycatchers were noted in Preston (GF) and Wood (JB) Counties. **Eastern Pewees** were noted in five counties: Jefferson (CD), Kanawha (HG), Pocahontas (DH), Preston (GF), and Wood (JB, MBC). **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were observed in Cabell County on September 4 by Tom Igou and on September 14 by David Patick, who also reported a **Willow Flycatcher** on September 14. **Great Crested Flycatchers** were noted in Jefferson (MO) and Preston Counties (GF).

Shrikes—Matt Orsie saw a **Loggerhead Shrike** in Jefferson County on October 31.

Vireos—All species were noted in most areas reporting. Of special note was the listing of the **Philadelphia Vireo** in five counties: Grant on September 19 (MO), Kanawha on September 20 (HG), Lewis on October 8 (JOH), Mason on September 21 (GR), and Wood on September 4 (MBC).

Crows, Jays, and Ravens—Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Ravens were commonly sighted throughout the state. Matthew Orsie observed Fish Crows in Jefferson County on October 1. Rob Tallman said that a Common Raven dropped a softball sized hunk of deer meat from its talons right into his yard where his two dogs were lounging. “The gift from above was obviously much appreciated by the dogs!”, said Tallman.

Horned Larks were seen in Cabell (TI), Jefferson (MO), and Preston (GF) Counties.

Swallows—Gary Rankin saw more than 1,000 **Tree Swallows** at McClintic WMA on September 21. On October 7, Rodney Bartgis observed two **Cave Swallows** for about 30 minutes on an electric wire on a private farm along Shavers Run, Randolph County, giving him a great opportunity to study their field marks. Tom Igou noted **Barn Swallows** in Cabell County on September 4.

Chickadees and **Tufted Titmice** were observed in good numbers around the entire state.

Nuthatches—Red-breasted Nuthatches were noted in Jefferson (CD), Marion (JH), Preston (GF), and Randolph (RT) Counties. Jeanie and Gene Hilton had a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in their yard on October 7 in Wood County. **White-breasted Nuthatches** were common throughout the state.

Brown Creepers were reported in Braxton (DG), Jefferson (CD), Randolph (WT), Summers (JJP), and Wood Counties (NO).

Wrens—Carolina, House, and Winter Wrens were seen in good numbers in most areas. **Sedge Wrens** were seen in Cabell County on October 25 by David Patick and in Summers County on October 23 by James Phillips. Jon Benedetti saw a **Marsh Wren** at Ashton Wetlands in Mason County on October 17.

Kinglets—Golden-crowned Kinglets and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were reported in good numbers throughout the state.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were noted in Berkley (MO), Kanawha (HG) and Wood (JB) Counties.

Thrushes—**Eastern Bluebirds**, **Swainson's Thrushes**, **Hermit Thrushes**, **Wood Thrushes**, and **American Robins** were listed in most areas of the state. The **Veery** was noted in Jefferson (September 10, MO) and Preston (September 7, GF) Counties. Wilma Jarrell watched several species of thrushes drinking at a roadside water puddle on October 6. **American Robins** arrived at the puddle first, followed by three **Swainson's Thrushes**, and last, a **Gray-cheeked thrush**. James Phillips found a dead **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at the base of a window at Pipestem State Park headquarters in the morning of October 6.

Mockingbirds and Thrashers—**Gray Catbirds**, **Northern Mockingbirds**, and **Brown Thrashers** were noted throughout the state.

European Starlings were abundant in every area.

American Pipits were seen in Jefferson County on November 2 by Carol Del Colle. Gary Felton found **American Pipets** in Monongalia County on November 7 and in Preston County on October 12.

Cedar Waxwings were seen in large numbers in many areas during the fall period. Several hundred were seen in Preston County on October 26 (GF). On November 16, Hillar Klandorf watched several hundred **Cedar Waxwings** on the Evansdale Campus at WVU and the surrounding Suncrest area in Monongalia County. Bob Summers and Margaret Straley watched a band of 30 **Cedar Waxwings** on November 15. They noted that one had an orange-tipped tail instead of the usual yellow. Bob remarked that several different theories have been discussed as to the color difference, including diet and genetics. According to the diet theory, eating red berries containing the red pigment, rhodoxanthin, from Eurasian Honeysuckle, while molting, allows the orange color to develop.

Warblers—Warblers reported during the fall period are listed. Those with *no asterisk* were noted in most areas of West Virginia. David Patick, Wendell Argabrite, and Michael Griffith discovered a ***Lawrence's Warbler** at Cornstalk, Mason County on September 7. **Lawrence's Warbler** is a hybrid, produced when either a **Golden-winged** or a **Blue-winged Warbler** mates with the more common hybrid from these two, known as **Brewster's Warbler**. **Lawrence's Warbler** has the facial markings of a **Golden-winged** and the yellow coloring of a **Blue-winged**. Two areas reported ***Blue-winged Warblers**: Mason County (September 7, R2B), and Wood County (September 2, JB, and September 20, MBC). **Tennessee Warblers** were reported. Two areas reported ***Orange-crowned Warblers**: McClintic WMA, Mason County (September 21, Gary Rankin) and Preston County (October 5, GF). ***Nashville Warblers** were listed in Grant (September 13, MO), Mason (September 7, R2B, September 21, GR) Pocahontas (October 8, DH), Preston (September 7, GF), and Wood (October 2, JB) Counties. **Northern Parula Warblers** were reported. James and Judy Phillips reported a ***Yellow Warbler** at Summer County on September 8.

Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Palm Warbler were all reported. ***Bay-Breasted Warblers** were noted in Kanawha (September 28, HG), Lewis (October 8, JOH), Mason (September 7, R2B, September 21, GR), Pocahontas (October 8, DH), Preston (September 22, GF), Wetzel (September 15, WJ), and Wood (October 1 and 7, NO) Counties. ***Blackpoll Warblers** were seen in Cabell (September 19, MO), Jefferson (October 16, CD), Summers (October 14, CR), and Wetzel (September 15, WJ) Counties. **Black-and-White Warbler and American Redstarts** were reported. There were ***Prothonotary Warbler** reports from Cabell County (September 4, TI), and Jefferson County (September 7, MO). **Ovenbirds** were reported. Cynthia Ellis found a ***Kentucky Warbler** in Putnam County on September 11. Michael Griffith and Matthew Orsie noted the ***Connecticut Warbler** at AFMO among 16 other warblers on September 19. Gary Rankin found the **Connecticut Warbler** at McClintic WMA on September 21. Rankin noted that this is only the second time he has seen this warbler. **Common Yellowthroats** were widely reported. Three sightings of ***Hooded Warblers** include Mason County, (September 7, R2B, and September 21, GR), Preston County (September 7, GF), and Wood County (September 2, JB, and September 20, MBC). ***Wilson's Warblers** were found in Berkley (September 13, MO), Cabell (September 14, DP), Jefferson (September 12, BH), Mason (September 4, TI, September 21, GR), Wood (October 4, JB) Counties.

Tanagers—Scarlet Tanagers were commonly seen throughout the state. **Summer Tanagers** were noted in Kanawha (HG) and Wood Counties (JB, MBC).

Towhees, Sparrows, Juncos, Longspurs—The following were commonly reported in the state during the fall: **Eastern Towhees, Chipping Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Lincoln's Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos**. Less frequently sighted were the following: **American Tree Sparrows** in Jefferson County (MO) and Preston County (GF), **Vesper Sparrows** in Mason County (DP) and Pocahontas County (DP), **Grasshopper Sparrows** in Mason County (TI), and **Harris's Sparrow** in Berkley County (MO). Of special interest this fall was the discovery of a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** in the Cabell and Mason County areas in October. Gary Rankin found the **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** in the weeds along the south side of the Ashton wetland area on October 12. Rankin and Wendell Argabrite found both a juvenile and an adult in the area around the elementary school. Michael Griffith, Gary Rankin, and Wendell Argabrite, the "Route 2 Birders," also found the **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** at Greenbottom WMA on October 25. Several other birders from around the state also had opportunities to see this sparrow.

Cardinals and Buntings—Barbara Sargent spotted a **Snow Bunting** in Tucker County on November 16. **Northern Cardinals** were common throughout the area.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, October 13, 2008, at Ashton, West Virginia. Photo by Matthew Orsie.

Bald-headed **Northern Cardinals** seem to be more prevalent. Whether the cause is due to mites or a virus that causes the feathers on the top of the head to fall out is still being debated. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were sighted during most of the fall period. **Blue Grosbeaks** were seen during September in Mason County. **Indigo Buntings** were observed throughout the state during September and early October.

Blackbirds, Grackles, Orioles, and Meadowlarks—Bobolinks were sighted in Mason County (September 4, TI) and Preston County (September 7, GF). **Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Rusty Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds** were observed in good numbers throughout the state. Casey Rucker noted a large number of **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Common Grackles** in the Tucker County region.

Siskins, Grossbills, and Allies—Purple Finches and House Finches appeared in good numbers in the entire state during the fall. The appearance of large numbers of **Pine Siskins** began in late October and continued through November, with many remarks concerning the influx being extraordinarily high for the year. **American**

Goldfinches were in most areas, with some still feeding newly fledged young at the beginning of October in Tucker County (CR).

As usual, the **House Sparrow** was a resident statewide.

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The Rockford Christmas Bird Count took place on Saturday, December 15th in our home town of Rockford, Illinois. This is our second of four counts this season. The Birdfreak Team was split into two groups so we were able to see a wide variety of birds. It snowed from the time we began (around 7 AM) until Veery's group returned (around 5:30 PM). Veery's Team The team consisted of our sister, Susan (aka Snowy Owl), Veery's son Dakota, our dad, and two great birders that live on our street, Jack and Joyce. Dakota and Susan were on their very first Christmas Bird Count and they had a wonderful time 2009-10. 110th. 1,735. The Christmas Bird Count is remarkable not only for its size and organization but also for its longevity. Kathy Dale, who is the director of science technology for the National Audubon Society and helps manage the Christmas Bird Count database, said it was the first bird-related citizen science project of its kind in the U.S. Although a given year's count can be affected by factors like weather and participation, the long-running nature of the count allows researchers. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined. CBC in the Modern Era. Each November, birders interesting in participating in the CBC can sign up and join in through the Audubon website. From December 14 through January 5 each year tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave snow, wind, or rain, and take part in the effort. In 2009 CBC data were instrumental in the collaborative report by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - State of the Birds 2009. In 2007, CBC data were instrumental in the development of Audubon's Common Birds in Decline Report, which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years. Volunteers participate in the 2009 Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Now in its 115th year, Audubon touts the event as the largest and longest-running citizen science project in the world. (Flickr user Pacific Southwest Region). An ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History, Chapman presided over the first such bird census in 1900, which included 27 bird counters at 25 locations across North America. Teams counted every bird they heard or saw from dawn until dusk, ultimately tallying 90 species. Last year, the Audubon's Christmas Bird Count "touted as the longest running citizen science project in the world" racked up 2,403 avian species. This year's count started on December 14 and will continue until January 5, 2015. Juneau's Christmas Bird Count Overview By Mark Schwan. Thirty-six birders participated in this year's count, and birders were spread pretty thin in order to cover all areas. Given the cold weather leading up to the count, we had a respectable 72 species of birds during the day and counted more than 10,000 birds (see table for specifics). Several common species were relatively scarce, such as Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, and Steller's Jay. We had a new high count for one species, Ring-necked Duck. Two new species were added to our cumulative count-day list, Harlan's Redtailed Hawk and Wil