

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter  
April 2013

*With the help of volunteers worldwide, the North American Bird Phenology Program is working to understand the scale of global climate change and how it is affecting bird populations across North America*

## Announcements

- If you would like to take part in preparation for an upcoming research paper please filter your transcriptions for Maryland migration cards. Thank you in advance for your participation!
- Kevin Laurent and Yassine Kodad have validated 204,115 BPP bird migration cards using the validate-o-rama system. This system compares multiple transcriptions completed for each migration card for matches. They are currently developing a webpage to display and download the data.
- The [Newsletters](#) and [Directions](#) webpages have been updated.
- [LIKE US](#) on Facebook so you can use the page to talk with fellow participants, read relevant articles and learn about what is happening in the BPP Office.

## What We're Working to Bring You

- Volunteer, Robert Turk is creating a new map for the [Maps](#) webpage which will allow volunteers to see how many cards have been validated through the validate-o-rama system.
- The BPP Office is currently cleaning-up the New York data set that was transcribed by volunteers over the past several months. It will then be sent on to Robert Deleon at the Buffalo Ornithological Society for analysis.
- The BPP Office is developing a participation survey to gather feedback from those who use the website, transcription page, and interact with program staff.
- Volunteers and staff continue to rectify errors in the observer data set. The data set will eventually be released on the BPP website as well as integrated into the BPP database.
- We are always working to keep the webpages up-to-date, by adding content, keeping all links functional and secure, and providing assistance as needed.

## Volunteer of the Month

**Gene K. Hess**



I began birding in 1977 and have birded around the country and to a lesser extent Canada, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe. My birding was focused primarily on my home state of Delaware resulting in my co-authoring the Birds of Delaware. When I learned about the phenology program, soon after it started, I realized that I had to help get the data online that we found

## Current Progress



Photograph by John Paul Benante

## Current Migration Card Count:

**2,498**  
Online Volunteers

**789,701**  
Cards Transcribed Online  
**4**  
Office Volunteers

**1,042,494**  
Cards Scanned

## Quick Links

**Register to become an online transcriber**

**Become an office volunteer**

**Like us on Facebook**

## USA-NPN



### USA-NPN

The BPP is part of the USA-NPN which brings together citizen scientists, government agencies, non-profit groups, educators and students of all ages to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States.

to be so useful in writing the Birds of Delaware. This occurred shortly after I retired from the Bird Department at the Delaware Museum of Natural History, after 35 ♦ years as Collections Manager, to accompany my wife to South Dakota. I now volunteer as a collection manager at the Museum of Geology, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. Additionally, I am involved with local birders running weekly bird surveys in two of our parks and a fall hawk migration count. I serve as a board member for the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, and have served as Vice President of the Northern Hills Bird Club. I remain involved with the Delaware birding community by continuing to be the editor for the society's journal, *Delmarva Ornithologist*.

## Observer of the Month

### Allan Cyril Brooks



Photograph by William Edwin Gledhill for *The Condor*, 1913

Allan Cyril Brooks was born on February 15, 1869 in Etawah, India where his father, William Edwin Brooks, was a civil engineer with the Indian Railways while also studying the birds of India. William was a tremendous influence on his son's life and career, connecting him with his acquaintances in the field of ornithology. Allan went to school in England (1873-1881) where he studied the bird life of the Northumberland moors. Allan's father introduced him to Henry Seebohm from whom he learned egg-collection and John Hancock who taught Allan butterfly collection. After William Brooks settled in Ontario, Allan moved there to study birds. In 1885 while in Canada, Allan learned specimen collecting and skinning techniques from Thomas McIlwraith. In 1887, the family moved to Chilliwack, British Columbia where Robert Ridgway,

the American ornithologist helped Allan identify birds early in Brooks' life and had shown appreciation for his art work.

Allan began his career as a specimen collector and game hunter, providing specimens to the Victoria Memorial Museum and private collectors. His interest in wildlife painting grew throughout his upbringing and he had interest in turning his talents into a career. Though many wildlife artists in the United States were able to support their interest in art, Allan struggled to do so. William Brewster wrote to him in 1895 that he could help him make the artwork paying if Brooks could work harder. He then made some watercolors for Brewster earning about three dollars for each illustration. Brooks later contributed illustrations to periodicals such as *Recreation* and *St. Nicholas Magazine*. His first big commission was for a book by William Leon Dawson. Dawson had sought the work of Louis Agassiz Fuertes but found him too expensive. After completing the commission Allan was subsequently able to find more more work. In 1921, part of his home was burned down. In this fire, he lost many of his old notes and books including a series on Indian birds that he had since the age of 3. In 1926 he married his wife Marjorie. That same year, Allan illustrated Taverner's "Birds of Western Canada" (1926). In 1927 he moved to Brownsville, Texas where he worked on illustrations for volume 3 of "Birds of Massachusetts," a work that had been interrupted by the death of Louis Fuertes. After Fuertes' death in a road accident, Allan was commissioned to complete the plates for "Birds of Massachusetts," cementing him as distinguished bird artist. He later completed for "Birds of Canada" (1934).

Information for the biography and picture were collected from the following resource:  
[Jean Webber, "Major Allan Brooks of Okanagan Landing," Royal British Columbia Museum: Living Landscapes.](#)

Brooks, Marjorie (1938). "Allan

### Learn More....



Photograph by John Paul Benante



Brooks: A Biography". The Condor 40 (1): 12-17.  
Harris, Harry (1946). "An appreciation of Allan Brooks, Zoological artist: 1869-1946". The Condor 48 (4): 145.

Painting provided by [TheCanadaSite.com](http://TheCanadaSite.com)

Eastern Bluebird Painting by Allan Brooks We are in need of volunteer help to put these write-ups together. If you are interested, please [contact](#) the BPP.

## Trivia

Last month's trivia question was, What bird was given the local name, "Throat-cut?" The correct answer, Rose-breasted Grosbeak was sent in first by Patrick Johnson. Bill Heck, John Habig, Virginia Rosenberg and Jade Hems also sent in the correct answer.

This month's trivia question is: What bird flies at the highest altitude between its nesting and wintering grounds?

Remember to send your answers to [Jessica](#). The first person to email a correct answer will receive a BPP prize!

As always, if you have any questions, comments, suggestions or complaints, please [contact me](#). Sincerely,

Jessica Zelt  
Program Coordinator  
North American Bird Phenology Program  
U.S. Geological Survey/ Patuxent Wildlife Research Center



Photograph by Petrina Vecchio