

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM

[www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/)



Newsletter  
January 2014

*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

- **We are only 1,871 cards away from reaching ONE MILLION TRANSCRIPTIONS!!!** The participant who transcribes the 1 millionth card will receive a BPP prize and will be announced in the February newsletter. So keep at it, we're almost there!
- Our transcription algorithm has been changed to allow for two transcriptions of each card. Participants will notice many of the states and species that were previously unavailable in the drop-down lists are now open. (All cards must be transcribed twice by two different participants before being validated through our validate-o-rama system.)
- Sam Droege, Jessica Zelt and Jake Weltzin were on NPR's local Baltimore station last week. The segment titled, "[Changing Climate, Changing Seasons](#)," aired January 20th on WYPR's Midday with Dan Rodricks.
- Office volunteer, Robert Turk has made several updates to the BPP webpages including [Newsletters](#), [Observer Bios](#) and [Research](#). He has also made modifications to the secondary pages. Thanks, Robert!

## What We're Working to Bring You

- Computer scientist, Kevin Laurent is creating a webpage through which we will be releasing 200,000 verified BPP records. The webpage will be accessible within the next few weeks.
- A BPP volunteer satisfaction survey has been developed and will be distributed after completing internal review by USGS.
- We are working to keep all webpages up-to-date by adding content, making sure all links are functional and ensuring all pages are easy to find and use.

## Volunteer of the Month

**Bob Stone**



Bob, his wife Karen, and their grandchildren

Bob grew up in a small farming town in eastern Washington State. He

## Current Progress



Dark-eyed Junco by Crow Vecchio

## Current Migration Card Count:

**998,129**

Cards Transcribed Online

**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

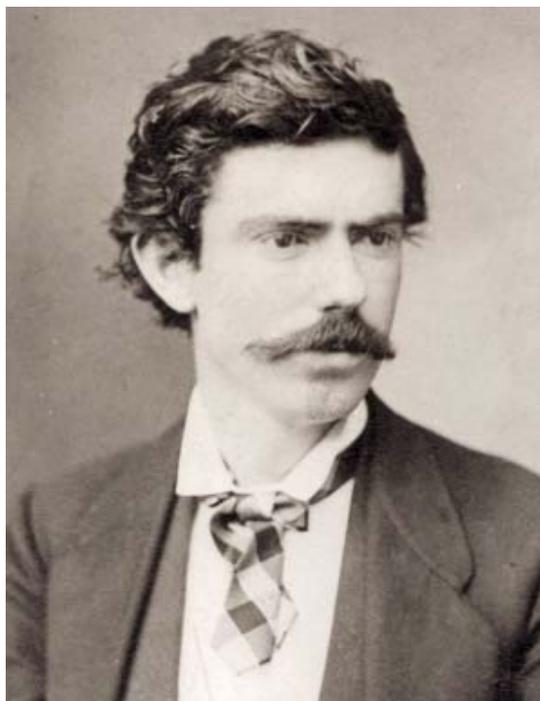
The BPP is part of the USA-NPN which brings together citizen scientists, government agencies, non-profit groups, educators and students of all ages to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States. [Learn More....](#)

received a BS in chemistry from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and MS/ PhD degrees, also in chemistry, from the University of Illinois (Champaign/ Urbana). He spent about 13 years doing R&D in the paper industry, and joined the Bureau of Engraving & Printing (BEP) in 1983. While at the BEP he managed programs for the development & implementation of security features for U.S. banknotes, and served as a U.S. representative on an international group to develop technology to deter counterfeiting using digital systems. Bob retired from the BEP in 2007 and lives in Ellicott City, Maryland. His interests are visiting grandchildren, birding, ushering at the Hippodrome & Everyman theaters in Baltimore, and genealogy. He got involved with the Phenology Program as it seemed like a good way to do something useful, involved birds, and could be done in his spare time without leaving home.

## Observer of the Month

### Robert Ridgway

Robert Ridgway, one of America's leading ornithologists, was born in Mt. Carmel, Illinois on July 2, 1850. Growing up, he became interested in birds and would sketch birds around his home in Olney, Illinois. After several years of correspondence with Smithsonian assistant secretary, Spencer F. Baird, Ridgway became a serious student of natural history. He went on to assist Baird in writing the technical descriptions and drawing the illustrations for the first three volumes of *A History of North American Birds*. He was compensated for his work with a rent-free dormitory room in the Smithsonian building. In 1874, when Ridgway was only seventeen, he was appointed Smithsonian ornithologist. After Baird's death in 1887, Ridgway assumed his role as America's leading professional ornithologist.



Picture courtesy of the [Smithsonian Institution](#)

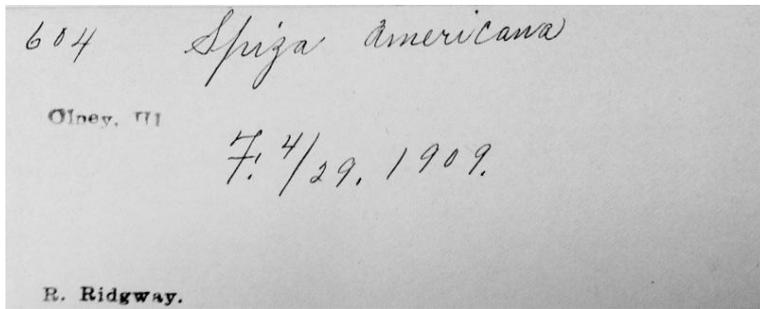
Ridgway served as curator of birds at the Smithsonian for forty-nine years.

Ridgway founded the American Ornithologist's Union in 1883 and made significant contributions to its official checklist of North American Birds, published in 1886. He was also a member of the National Academy of Science from 1926 to 1929. Ridgway published extensively in his field and related areas from 1869 to 1929. Among Ridgway's notable work, he published *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature* based on his experience with problems of color and color description in bird portraits. He also wrote an eight-volume study of *Birds of North and Middle America*.

In 1916 Ridgway retired to his home, which he named Larchmound, in Olney, Illinois to continue his research. There he developed an eighteen-acre tract called Bird Haven as a bird sanctuary and experimental area for the cultivation of trees and plants native to the region. He died on March 25, 1929. Bird Haven still remains as a memorial to this honored and beloved ornithologist.



Eastern bluebird by John Paul Benante



Sources used for this biography include:  
[The Smithsonian Institution](#) and [Ridgway.homstead.com](#)

## Trivia

Last month's trivia question, What BPP observer started the Christmas Bird Count in 1900? was answered first by Mary Small with Frank M. Chapman. The correct answer was also sent in by Bob Hartman, Chris Eberly, Hans Weber, Holly Ferkett, Rosane Guimaraes, and Chan Robbins.

This month's trivia question is: The bird mascot for this national football team is also known as an Osprey. It is an efficient hunter, known for its diet of live fish and ability to dive into water to catch them. What is its other name, used by the NFL for this species?

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](#).



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