

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter
June 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

- The BPP website is down after a hacking event several weeks ago. It is not expected that the website will be back up before next week. All BPP data is safe. We apologize to the participants who have been affected by the disruption and will send out an update when any new information is available.
- The BPP has recently received the necessary funding to continue running for an additional year (FY14). Hip-hip-hooray!
- Meetings continued this month between the BPP office, Ali Arab of Georgetown University and Robert Deleon of the Buffalo Ornithological Society to analyze NY bird migration data for an upcoming paper.
- BPP Coordinator, Jessica Zelt, will be on leave for a majority of July. Because of this, there will not be a July Newsletter. Please continue to stay in touch through email and look out for our regular Newsletters to resume in August.
- Don't forget to [LIKE US](#) on Facebook!

What We're Working to Bring You

- Secondary pages have been developed for the entire BPP website to make website navigation using our drop-down menus easier. The new pages will be unveiled shortly after our website is back up.
- 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

Jane Gillette



I am a math tutor (grades 8 and up) and artist (pen & ink and paper collage), and I bird as a hobby. I live North of Boston in MA with my wife Sylvia, an environmental educator. Every spring during migration season we go to Maine for a vacation of relaxing, hiking, art, and birding. Most years it is to Monhegan Island, ME, which is a hot spot at that time of year, especially for warblers and other smallish birds. I have spent a

lot of time trying to learn to "bird by ear" and have a notebook to keep notes about what calls sound like to me so that I can look them up in the field. Last year I thought I'd heard a Mourning Warbler, and then it took us a few days to actually see it! That was a life bird for me, and an unusual bird for the island. The Birding By Ear series and the Stokes bird call cds, as well as an app to organize the calls on my ipod, have all been a huge help to me.

I have been interested in the Citizen Science movement for a while, and like to be able to volunteer my time, but as a math tutor I do not have regular hours. I was delighted to hear about BPP (I can't remember where now, maybe Jessica was interviewed on public radio?) because I can do it whenever, including while listening to podcasts. Most of the birdcards I've

Current Progress



Photograph by John Paul Benante

Current Migration Card Count:

814,685

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....](#)

typed have been for Maine, because I was hoping to see cards from Monhegan, but I've only seen a few so far. I switched over to NY when the call went out, and have been learning some of the interesting town names in that state. But I still work on Maine when I don't want to think as hard, because I've gotten to know most of the towns and people. Sometimes I see an interesting year or date and wonder about the people who wrote the cards and what was happening at the time - when the Titanic sank, during wars, etc. I wonder if any of the listers are still alive and what it was like to keep these record on tiny cards, and I think about all the times when I fill out a form slightly differently than the instructions call for because my experience doesn't quite fit a form, and then I still get frustrated with the listers who do the same. Sometimes I run across something completely charming in the comment section, and sent it along to Jessica for the notable cards column.

I enjoy being able to track how many cards I've done, and often have some private challenge going to get to the next level. I'm so grateful to have a way to help.

Observer of the Month

Robert T. Clausen



Robert T. Clausen was born in New York City on December 26, 1911. He attended Cornell University where he received his bachelor's degree in 1933, his master's degree in 1934, and his doctorate in 1937. Clausen worked as an instructor for the L. H. Bailey Hortorium from 1937-1939. He then became an Assistant Professor of Botany in the Hortorium from 1939-1941.

In 1941, Clausen joined the Department of Botany and was eventually promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 1944 and Professor in 1949. In addition to Professor, Clausen was also appointed Curator of the Wiegand

Herbarium in 1954.

Professor Clausen's published two major works on *Sedum* (Crassulaceae): *Sedum of the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt: An Exposition of Taxonomic Methods*, published in 1959, and *Sedum of North America North of the Mexican Plateau*, published in 1975. R.T. Clausen retired in 1977. Emeritus status followed his retirement in 1977.

Information for the biography and picture were collected from the following resource: <http://bhort.bh.cornell.edu/clausen.htm>

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

Bonus Story: BPP Observer, Albert Littlefield

The Statue of Liberty became operational as a lighthouse on November 22, 1886. The American Electric Manufacturing Company maintained the light for a short time, but shortly after Christmas, Albert E. Littlefield was named the station's keeper. Littlefield is also one of the original BPP observers for New York. Because he had specialized knowledge of electricity, Littlefield received an annual salary of \$1,000, which was several hundred dollars more than



Photograph by John Paul Benante



most lighthouse keepers were paid at the time. Littlefield, his family, and his assistant keepers and their families all lived in a three-story post hospital on the northwest corner of the island. The Statue of Liberty's torch, 305 feet above sea level, contained nine electric arc lamps that could be seen 24 miles out to sea.

An excerpt from [Light House Friends](#) was used for this story.

Trivia

Last month's trivia question was, The largest known bird's nest in the United States was built by what species AND how wide did it measure?

Answer: The largest Bald Eagle nest on record, in St. Petersburg, Florida, was 2.9 meters in diameter and 6.1 meters tall. The winner this month was Barbara Curry. The correct answer was also sent in by Don Kaiser, Howard Gratz, Crow Vecchio, Rosane Guimares and Nancy Paradiso.

This month's trivia question is: What native North American bird is the most prolific breeder?

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](#).

Jessica Zelt
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U.S. Geological Survey/ Patuxent Wildlife Research Center



Photograph by Petrina Vecchio