

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter  
November 2012

*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

- A new "Transcribe!" button has been added to the header of the [BPP homepage](#). This will allow all users to go directly to the v4 transcription screen without having to navigate through the drop down menu.
- BPP webpage [BPP News](#) has been updated.
- From a data set of about 60,000 records, there are only 780 New York cards left to be transcribed! Wow-- great job to everyone who has contributed to this effort. Please keep transcribing to the end. We will start scrubbing the data next month.
- Remember we now have a new [Volunteer Training Manual](#) and updated FAQ sheet. You can access it through the main menu under Resources-- Training Manual, on the left-side panel of the v4 Data Entry Page and under Help on the transcription page after logging in.

## What We're Working to Bring You

- We will be updating sections on the homepage with new images and links.
- We will be changing the titled webpage "v4 Data Entry" to "Transcribe."
- BPP volunteer, Isabelle Doucet, is currently working with the BPP Office to update our volunteer training videos. We expect to unveil some of them next month.
- With the help of volunteer Janice Devine and intern Dohoon Kim, are cleaning-up the observer dataset before it is released and added to our database.
- The BPP office is starting to pull all New York migration cards for data analysis.
- 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

## Current Progress



Picture by Petrina Vecchio

## Current Migration Card Count:

**2,742**  
Online Volunteers

**696,946**  
Cards Transcribed Online

**4**  
Office Volunteers

**1,042,494**  
Cards Scanned

## Featured Article



## Mike Dillon

I'm a retired native Texan and I live in Northeast Texas. As a birder for over 25 years, I have birded around the US, but primarily in Texas. My recent emphasis has been on Odonates and have been active in adding species to county lists in the area and on other trips.

I do the BPP additions to make more information available to people. As a result of the Odonates, I have begun taking photographs, one of which is the Osprey just taken at the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch at Hazel Bazemore Park.



## Observer of the Month

### George Gordon Cantwell

Like many of his generation, George Gordon Cantwell seems to have felt the pull of the west. Born in New York, in November of 1870, by the mid-1880's he'd moved to the Minnesota/Wisconsin area, where he regularly contributed articles and photos to publications for sportsmen, ornithologists, and egg-collectors. After 6 years of amassing data, he published "A List of the Birds of Minnesota" in 1890.

The West drew him on. Cantwell moved to Colorado, to the Puget Sound area, and on to Alaska. He continued to publish amusing articles about his adventures and observations. From Juneau in 1897, he famously sent the Smithsonian the first egg ever collected from the Marbled Murrelet and noted that the native people believed the bird nested in tall trees. Incredibly, it took ornithologists more than 70 years to confirm this! (For the whole tale, see Maria Mudd Ruth's book, Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet.)

Cantwell advertised himself as a naturalist and taxidermist, but by the time he reached Alaska, he had also become a skilled outdoor photographer. When the Klondike Gold strike drew thousands of prospectors in 1898, he was ideally positioned to record the event for posterity. His photographs of the gold rush (in his book, *The Klondike: A Souvenir*) are some of the most iconic ever published.

During this short period, The Osprey lamented the absence of news from Cantwell: "The Klondike gold craze may prove of material injury to The Osprey. Shortly before the outbreak of excitement Mr. Geo. G. Cantwell promised us a series of Alaskan photographs, but as nothing has been heard of him of late we fear that he has taken the 'gold fever.'"

In the first two decades of the new century, Cantwell moved back and forth from Alaska to the Puget Sound area. He served as game warden in Seward, wrote the screenplay for a silent film ("The Golden Heart"), worked for the Federal bird refuge system along Washington's Olympic coast, and spent 5 years doing field work for the Biological Survey in the Cascades. In this last capacity, he collected many small vertebrates, among them a subspecies of meadow mouse later named "cantwelli".

In 1929, George Willett, curator of the ornithology department of the L. A. County Museum brought Cantwell in to help with the bird and mammal collections. Thus began a decade-long collaboration. Cantwell seems to have stayed in the Los Angeles area until his death in 1948.

Given a life so devoted to the work of a naturalist and taxidermist, it may seem odd that George Gordon Cantwell is most remembered for two short years during which he produced his remarkable photographic record of the Klondike Gold Rush.

We want to formally welcome Yassine Kodad to the BPP! He has recently started working with the program on a contract to help us develop our migration card verification system.

Yassine Kodad has a Master's degree in Modeling and Engineering of Mathematics from University of Hassan II Casablanca in Morocco. Over the past five years he had developed several projects in areas such as physics, mathematics, geology, and computer programming. He is interested in combining various theories and applications. Besides working with the BPP, Yassine is currently working with a professor at George Mason University in linear and non-linear optimization problems and preparing articles in advanced statistics with another professor at Georgetown University. In his free time, Yassine enjoys watching and playing soccer and is also an avid swimmer.

### Quick Links

[Register to become an online transcriber](#)

[Become an office volunteer](#)

[Like us on Facebook !\[\]\(83bbbd261710c59db0214aa27b2edc0d\_img.jpg\)](#)

### 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....](#)

But one need only look at his image of a line of hundreds of prospectors trudging up the Chilkoot Pass to understand why.

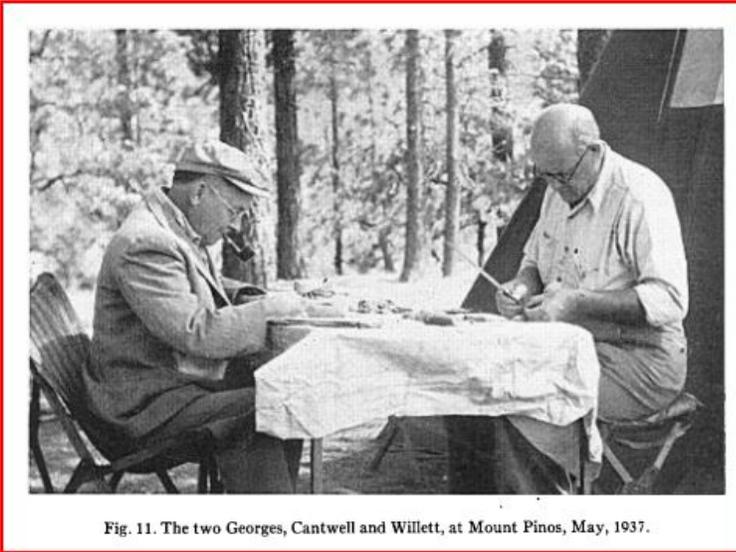


Fig. 11. The two Georges, Cantwell and Willett, at Mount Pinos, May, 1937.



**Accipiter velox** . . . . .  
**WASHINGTON: Olympic Mountains.** **Field Report File**  
  
A single bird seen in the forest at Elwha, July 22.  
Another noted along the trail of the Elwha river  
near Wolf Creek, August 13.  
Recorded again from the North Fork of the Quinault  
River, August 10.  
  
July 1-Sept. 29, 1921. G. G. Cantwell.

Huge thanks to Carol Goodman for writing this biography!

Information for the biography and picture were collected from the following resources:

- The Condor, V.48 no. 2 (1946) p.61 (Photo)
- The Osprey, V.2 no.1 (1897) "Note and Comment"
- The Klondike, a Souvenir, (1900), George G. Cantwell
- The Auk, V. XV (1898) "Notes on the Egg of the Marbled Murrelet" (Geo. G. Cantwell)
- Journal of Mammology, V1 no.4 Aug 1920: A New Meadow Mouse from the Cascade Mountains of Washington (by Walter P. Taylor)
- The Condor, V24, May 1922 (notice of Cantwell's resignation from US Biological Survey)
- The Condor, V48, no2 (1946) obituary of George Willett
- Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet, (2005) by Maria Mudd Ruth

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 former secretary of state was a famous birder?"

The correct answer was John Foster Dulles. No one submitted the correct answer for this question.

This month's trivia question:

The kingfisher was the inspiration for which country's transit system?

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



Picture by Petrina Vecchio