

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter
December 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

Happy Holidays from the BPP Office! Thank you for your contributions to the BPP this past year. As I hope I make it apparent all year round, I am grateful for the time and attention each of you give to reviving this collection of records.

It is not only transcribing these records that gives them new life, but the excitement and enthusiasm you show by reading and sharing them with fellow participants.

I wish you all a very warm and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Jessica Zelt
BPP Program Coordinator

Announcements

- International Journal of Biometeorology published "[Weekend bias in Citizen Science data reporting: implications for phenology studies](#)," by Jason R. Courter, Ron J. Johnson, Claire M. Stuyck, Brian A. Lang, and Evan W. Kaiser in their October Issue. This paper analyses several citizen data sets including one from the BPP.
- The bottom section of our homepage has been changed to highlight different features of our website.
- In the BPP website drop-down menu under Participants, "v4 Data Entry" has been changed to "Transcribe Bird Migration Cards."
- Winger West's Bird Observer List has been updated. Click Appendix 3 in the [Training Manual](#) to view it.
- BPP webpages [Newsletters](#) and [Observer Bios](#) have been updated.
- 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.
- [LIKE US](#) on Facebook and use the page to talk with fellow participants.

What We're Working to Bring You

- 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.
- 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.

Current Progress



Current Migration Card Count:

2,747
Online Volunteers

705,883
Cards Transcribed Online

4
Office Volunteers

1,042,494
Cards Scanned

Quick Links

[Register to become an
online transcriber](#)

[Become an office
volunteer](#)

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.

Volunteer of the Month

Mary Perlick

After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1971, I worked (indoors!) for a health insurance company for 38 years, three months and fifteen days. Now that I have retired, I can spend as much time as I wish in southern Arizona hiking and watching birds.

I am in awe of the many observers who spent so much time in the field, diligently and painstakingly making their notes. These folks were out tramping in fields, woods and swamps before the invention of fleece. I wrote two of the Newsletter biographies, for Althea Sherman who was well-off and Cordelia Stanwood who was not so financially fortunate. Studying their lives and accomplishments was fascinating.

What motivates me is that our transcriptions may someday lead to research on how to decrease the rate of decline or extinction of one or more species while ensuring the industrious efforts of the observers is acknowledged.

I also enjoy reading, needlework and beading, and traveling with my husband, Wally.

Included is a portrait of a vermilion flycatcher, one of my favorite birds.



Photo by: Bartlovemagico
(Public Domain)

Observer of the Month

Theodore Sherman Palmer

Theodore Sherman Palmer was born at Oakland, California to Henry Austin and Jane Oliver Day Palmer on January 26, 1868. In 1886 they moved to Pomona, California, where Henry started a bank. He wished his firstborn, Theodore, would follow in his footsteps with a business career. Though Theodore did make an effort to please his father, working on vacations and after graduation, his other interests soon took hold.

In 1888, Palmer entered the University of California, from which he graduated in 1889. While in college, Palmer became interested in the altitudinal distribution of the flora and fauna of California mountains. At the time, this was exactly the same field of interest being investigated by C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Division of Ornithology and Mammology of the United States Department of Agriculture. Not surprisingly, the two came together and Palmer, a recent baccalaureate, was appointed Field Agent of that organization in 1889.

Dr. Merriam had planned an expedition to study the biology of Death Valley and adjacent territory in southern California. Though he took part in its early phases, Merriam had to leave in request of President Benjamin Harrison to act on the Bering Sea Commission to study fur seals and decide management strategies for the species. Instead, Palmer, one of the youngest members of the group, was made leader of the expedition. Though the reporting from that expedition was disconnected and never completed, the reports resulting from it went to creating an exhibit at The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

In Palmer's early years in Washington, he took the opportunity to further his education, receiving a M.D. from Georgetown University, though he never practiced medicine and appeared to have no intention of doing so.

Palmer worked on a variety of scientific projects, describing with E.W. Nelson, five new birds from Mexico in 1894 and contributing some short notes on bird nomenclature and distribution to 'The Auk.' Palmer also compiled the bulkiest of the survey's publications 'The North American Faunas,' no. 23, of almost one thousand pages. This was the "Index Generum Mammalium," which appeared in 1904. But, his interests led him away from the established lines of the Survey's program and into the field

[Learn More....](#)



of legislation affecting wildlife.

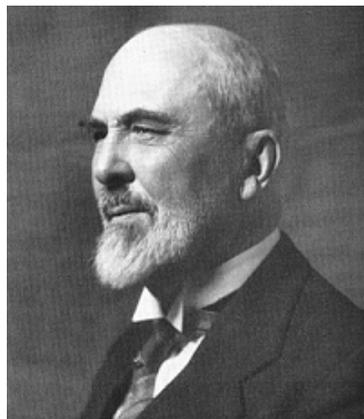
It was his unique ability for compiling and summarizing information that allowed him to prepare an unprecedented number of publications, such as: "Extermination of noxious animals by bounties" (1897); "The danger of introducing noxious animals and birds" (1899); "Hunting licenses: Their history, object, and limitations" (1904); "Private game preserves and their future in the United States" (1910); "Chronology and index of the more important events in American game protection, 1776-1911" (1912), "Bird day in schools" (1896); "Legislation for the protection of birds other than game birds" (1900); "Laws regulating the transportation and sale of game" (1900); "A review of economic ornithology in the United States" (1900); "Some benefits the farmer may derive from game protection" (1905); and "Game as a national resource" (1922).

Several of these publications were trailblazers including the 1889 paper on introductions which lead to the Lacey Act of 1900. The Lacey Act regulated the importation of noxious animals and prohibited the transportation in interstate commerce of game killed in violation of local laws. "Bird day in schools" was a precursor to the Audubon Society activities. The campaign to protect non-game birds required significant travel, first by Dutcher and Palmer and later by Palmer and Pearson. But through this work, not only was the protection of songbirds and the organization of local Audubon societies advanced, but efforts were made to enforce protective laws, establishing state warden systems and game commissions, and conservation departments.

Although working to create nationwide legislation, Palmer did not forget his hometown of Washington, D.C., where he founded the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia in 1897 and served as president from 1924 to 1941. The Association offered bird classes for teachers in D.C. schools and organized spring bird trips for anyone interested. Palmer directed the indoor programs and W.W. Cooke directed the outdoor programs.

Among Palmer's extensive array of contributions to ornithology and conservation, he also wrote the preliminary draft of the treaty for protection of birds migrating between Canada and the United States (1916); and was Chairman of the Committee [other members: A.K. Fisher; W.W. Cooke] which prepared the first regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918).

Lastly, of significant importance to Palmers contributions, was his work with Frank M. Chapman and William Dutcher to establish the first of Federal sanctuaries-- Pelican Island, Florida. The sanctuary was established to protect colonies of gulls and terns from being slaughtered by fisherman. By Executive Order (March 14, 1903), President Theodore Roosevelt, set apart the island "for the use of the Department of Agriculture as a preserve and breeding-grounds for native birds." This act later lead to fifteen additional reservations for the protection of birds under Executive Order and the beginning of the Federal Wildlife Refuge Program.



Calypte anna.

Field Report File

Map

CALIFORNIA: Cloverdale, Sonoma County.

Not very common; only two or three seen.

T. S. Palmer, April 19 - 24, 1889.

Information for the biography and picture were collected from the following resource: [Smithsonian Institution Hall of Fame: Theodore Sherman Palmer](#)

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, "The kingfisher was the inspiration for which country's transit system?" The correct answer, Japan, was sent in first by Brendan Casey. To learn more about the bullet train designed with a kingfisher-inspired train nose, to go: [discoverofdesign.com](#). Participants who also sent in a correct answer include: Anne Bruggeman, Ellen Blackstone, Valerie Knipping, Crow Vecchio, Jake Weltzin

This month's trivia question is a two part question: In Alexander Wilson's, 'American Ornithology,' Wilson's friend, George Ord, (1) attacked which American president and (2) for what, in the preface of the ninth volume?

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

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