

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter  
May 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*

## Announcement

- BPP webpages [Notable Cards](#), [E-Newsletters](#), and [Observer Bios](#) have been updated.
- After a few requests from volunteers, we have linked the transcription training videos to the [v4 Data Entry Page](#). Look for the training videos on the left-side panel of the page.
- If you have not already, [LIKE us](#) on Facebook!
- Our observer card collection is only 2,000 cards away from completion. Volunteers Phil Hicks and Winger West are finishing the last of the transcriptions. Janice Devine has been working in the BPP office to resolve transcription errors. Once finished, we will have a more complete idea of who our original observers were and where they collected records from.
- If you would like to take part in preparation for an upcoming research paper, please filter your transcriptions for New York migration cards. Since our first newsletter request, 52,945 NY migration cards have been transcribed. Thank you for your assistance so far!
- If at any time you experience trouble with log-in or transcription on the website, please email the [BPP Office](#) so that we can assist you.

## What We're Working to Bring You

- The BPP has temporarily taken down the dataset of verified records from our [Download Data](#) page while we implement a new automatic validation system to our database.
- We are 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

### Tara Patterson

I consider myself something of a failed scientist. Early on, I developed a strong love of animals and nature documentaries through my grandfather's influence. At various times while growing up I wanted to become a paleontologist, an astronomer, and a marine biologist; but after sampling a few geology courses in college, I settled on a double major in anthropology and English. Nineteenth-century British literature is a passion of mine. I'm intrigued by the tradition of Victorian amateur naturalists, as well as the romance of the archive.

Not surprisingly, the BPP's mission immediately appealed to me when I learned of the program through a



## Current Progress



Picture by Petrina Vecchio

## Current Migration Card Count:

2,821  
Online Volunteers

640,500  
Cards Transcribed Online

4  
Office Volunteers

1,042,494  
Cards Scanned

## Quick Links

[Register to become an online transcriber](#)

[Become an office volunteer](#)

[BPP News](#)

[Find us on Facebook](#)

## 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.

CNN.com article. The prospect of helping to breathe new life into such a robust, though near-forgotten, data set was exciting. I recognized a valuable opportunity to volunteer despite my limited scientific background. Along the way, I've been reading more about the information I've transcribed and have learned much about bird behavior, geography, and the history of ornithology. My admiration for the observers of the past and the researchers of today makes me proud to be able to contribute in my own small way.

When not transcribing, I work in the library system of The George Washington University, cheer for the Washington Capitals, and cater to the whims of my three cats and two greyhounds.

## Observer of the Month

### Eugene Pintard Bicknell

Eugene Pintard Bicknell was born at Riverdale-on-Hudson on September 23, 1859, the sixth son of Joseph Inglis Bicknell and Maria Theresa Pierrepont. He never went to college but was well-educated which was evident in his writing. Mr. Bicknell went into business at an early age, connecting himself with the financial firm of John Munroe & Co., where he eventually became a partner. On October 9, 1901 Eugene married Edith Babcock at Riverdale and together they had two daughters, Eleanor Franklin and Edith Evelyn. The same year as their marriage, they moved their home to Long Island where for a number of years Mr. Bicknell served as Vestryman of Trinity Church, Hewlett, and delegate to the Diocesan Convention.

Mr. Bicknell was interested in natural history from an early age. He was one of the few ornithologists of his time who used his field glass more than his gun and kept daily records of every species he observed. His thorough documentations of observed species were kept in his Riverdale diaries, though he also maintained a collection of local birds which were later presented to the Vassar Institute in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. During the spring and fall migration period, Mr. Bicknell would send a daily postcard to Dr. A.K. Fisher who lived about twenty miles north. In 1878, at the age of 18, Mr. Bicknell published his first technical paper, "Evidences of the Carolinian Fauna in the Lower Hudson Valley", appearing in the Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. The same year he was one of ten naturalists to organize the Linnaean Society of New York where he also served as president from 1879 to 1887. In 1882 this society published his "Review of the Summer Birds of Part of the Catskill Mountains." It was at that time he discovered Bicknell's Thrush, described by Ridgway in the 'Proceedings of the United States National Museum.'

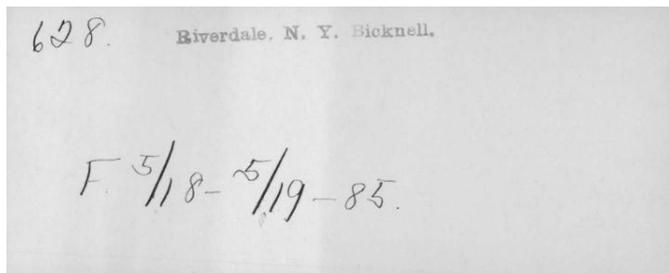
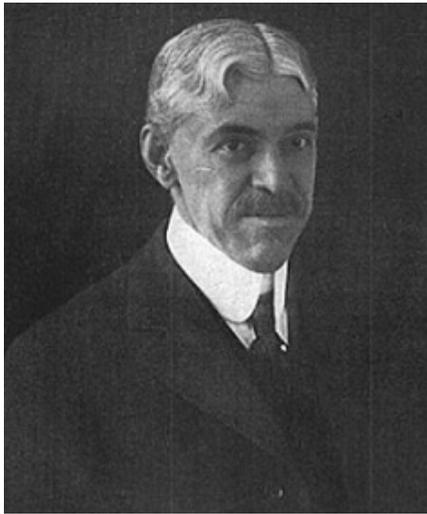
Mr. Bicknell was the youngest founder of the American Ornithologists' Union and was elected temporary secretary of the first meeting. He was also appointed to the committees on Migration of Birds and on The European House Sparrow. The second year he was appointed a member of the original committee of Bird Protection and in 1885 became secretary of that committee.

Throughout Mr. Bicknell's life, he spent more and more time devoted to the study of botany which he focused on primarily after 1895. In 1880, Mr. Bicknell was elected a member of the Torrey Botanical Club and began contributing to the Club's bulletin the same year. In 1896, he became a member of the newly organized New York Botanical Garden and also the Philadelphia Botanical Club. Later, his extensive collections of plants along with his botanical books were presented to the New York Botanical Garden by Mrs. Bicknell.

Over his lifetime, Mr. Eugene Bicknell published contributions amounted to 26 titles and installments to ornithology and natural history and 74 on botanical subjects. Mr. Bicknell was known as a modest man who rarely attended scientific meetings or mingled with fellow naturalists. Though reserved, he maintained a kind disposition and was known to help younger students. Mr. Eugene Bicknell passed away on February 9, 1925.

[Learn More...](#)





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

Crosby, M. S. (1962). In memorandum: Eugene Pintard Bicknell. *Auk*, Vol. xliii, no. 2, pp. 143-149.

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 BPP observer was the first woman associate member of the American Ornithologists' Union and the first woman elected as a Fellow of the AOU?"

The correct answer, sent in by Louise Plankenhorn, was "Florence Merriam Bailey."

The answer was also sent in by Leyla Kocaoglu, Barbara Curry, Tara Patterson and Rosane Guimaraes. Thank you to all who participated!

This month's trivia question:

How many children did Joseph and Maria Bicknell have (Eugene Pintard Bicknell's parents)?

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