

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter
April 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

- Research Article, "Reviving a Legacy Citizen Science Project to Illuminate Shifts in Bird Phenology," written by Jessica Zelt (USGS), Jason Courter (Clemson University), Ali Arab (Georgetown University), Ron Johnson (Clemson University) and Sam Droege (USGS), was accepted to the International Journal of Zoology's special issue, The Role of Citizen Science and Volunteer Data Collection in Zoological Research. The article will be posted to our [Research](#) webpage once it is published.
- We have linked our Facebook page to the BPP website header. Please [LIKE](#) us!
- If you would like to take part in preparation for an upcoming research paper, please filter your transcriptions for New York migration cards.
- Phil Hicks, Jim Gray, Janice Devine, Winger West and Robert Turk are nearing the end of transcribing our dataset of observer cards. This has become a monumental goal as they have over 6,000 cards to transcribe. The BPP is hugely appreciative for their efforts.
- On April 10th the BPP was featured on SciStarter.com and on the homepage of DiscoverMagazine.com.
- BPP Intern, Kamli Sirjue, has completed her internship, presenting her project at her school symposium last week. To take a look at her completed project, go to our [Research](#) page.
- BPP webpages [Research](#), [E-Newsletters](#) and [Observer Bios](#) have been updated.

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. Check back soon for an updated list of validated records.
- 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

Current Progress



Picture by Petrina Vecchio

Current Migration Card Count:

2,752
Online Volunteers

630,050
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](#)

Shirley Hoffman

In October 2009, when I volunteered for the program, I had no idea that I would learn so much about birds and become a birder myself! I live in Martinez, California, which is part of the Bay Area where we have several wildlife preserves and parks for birding. Meeting fellow birders and being outdoors have been a perfect way to spend my recent retirement. Now I am hooked on birds, especially hawks!

Transcribing for this program has been such a wonderful experience for me. Not only have I learned about the different bird species, but I also have enjoyed reading the cards from the 1800's and imagining what it was like to bird in that era. I can't imagine birding back then in an 1800's dress, walking around in tall grasses and swamps, getting hung up on tree limbs, etc. The binoculars must have been horrible for viewing too.

I am glad I can contribute to the well-being and preservation of the program and, of course, the birds.



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....](#)

Observer of the Month

Waldo Lee McAtee

Born in 1883, Waldo Lee McAtee's lifelong fascination with birds and the natural world began on childhood walks with his grandfather along the Mississinewa River in Marion, Indiana. After attending a lecture by American Museum of Natural History curator (and BPP observer) Frank M. Chapman at sixteen, McAtee increasingly focused on ornithology, and he enrolled at Indiana University to study biology two years later. He underwrote his education by serving as Curator of Birds for the university museum, and was hired as a temporary employee of the US Bureau of Biological Survey while still a student. McAtee joined the Bureau full time after graduating in 1904, and moved to Washington, DC with his family, where he would live and work for the next forty-three years. His 1906 master's thesis, "The Horned Larks and Their Relation to Agriculture" foreshadowed a career spent studying the food sources and economic significance of birds and other vertebrates.

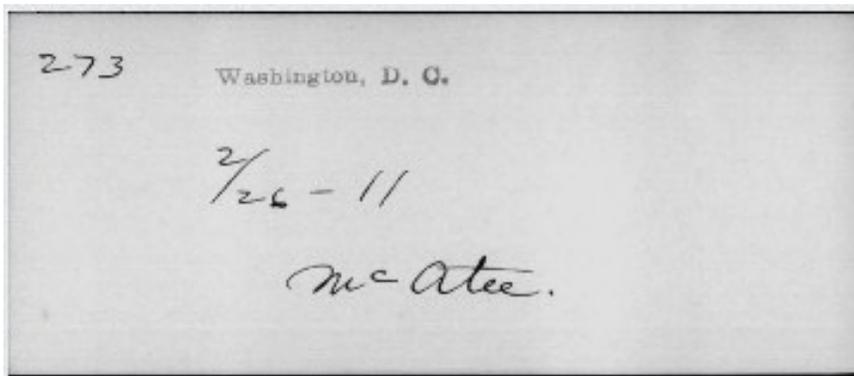
McAtee spent his entire working life as a federal employee, culminating in his appointment as technical advisor to the Chief of the Biological Survey. He also helped to found the Bureau's Division of Food Habits Research, served as its first director, and was acting custodian of hemiptera at the US National Museum from 1920-1942. At the end of his career, from 1940-1947, he was the senior editor of technical publications for Biological Survey's successor, the US Fish and Wildlife Service. He was an officer of the American Ornithological Union for almost twenty years, and was widely active in professional organizations.

McAtee was a tireless, almost obsessive, researcher and writer, and published more than 750 articles related to birds, insects, and vertebrate food sources during his career. He was the founding editor and an important contributor to *Wildlife Review* and the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, and wrote regularly for *The Auk* and other natural history periodicals. Independently, and with colleagues, McAtee was responsible for describing more than 450 species and twenty genera of insects. He also published widely on other topics (writing more than fifty articles on Indiana folklore and dialect, for example), privately printed many pamphlets of short fiction, poetry, and informal musings on professional topics, and left behind several sizable unpublished manuscripts (including a compilation of more than 67,000 vernacular names used by laymen and scientists to refer to birds) as well as correspondence with many of the important biologists of his era. His many papers are now held by the Library of Congress, Cornell,



Indiana University, UCLA, and other institutions.

McAtee retired in 1947 and moved with his wife Fannie to Chapel Hill, NC. He died there, of cancer, on January 7, 1962.



This biography was written by Ryan Shepard.

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

[Kalmbach, E. R. \(1963\). In memorandum: Waldo Lee McAtee. Auk, 80, 474-485.](#)

[Sterling, K. B. \(1997\). Waldo Lee McAtee. In K. B. Sterling, R. P. Harmond, G.A. Cevasio, & L. F. Hammond \(Eds.\), Biographical dictionary of American and Canadian environmentalists and naturalists. Westport, CT: Greenwood.](#)

[Washington Biologist's Field Club. \(n.d.\). Waldo Lee McAtee.](#)

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, "In 1936, copies of the 4th Edition of the A.O.U. Checklist for North American Birds were being sold by the A.O.U. treasurer at what price?" The answer was the edition was being sold for \$4.00 with the pocket version being sold for 50cents. The correct answer was first sent in by Patrick Johnson.

The correct answer was also sent in by Kurt Bodling and Tara Patterson.

This month's trivia question: 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?

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