

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter
December 2011

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

- Happy Holidays from the North American Bird Phenology Program! Wishing you all a warm, joyous and meaningful holiday season.
- Change in transcription protocol: All cards with multiple years or more than 4 dates, mark as a "problem card." These cards will have to be addressed in the BPP Office. Thanks in advance!
- The BPP office would like to ensure that volunteers are properly recognized for work contributed to the program. If you have registered multiple times please email [Jessica](#) to have those registrations (and your "My Stats" tally) merged.
- Thousands of new migration cards are being added online over the next several weeks. You will notice new species and locations available in the drop-down lists. Keep an eye out for these changes. Remember, as volunteers transcribe records you will also see species disappear from the drop-down lists.

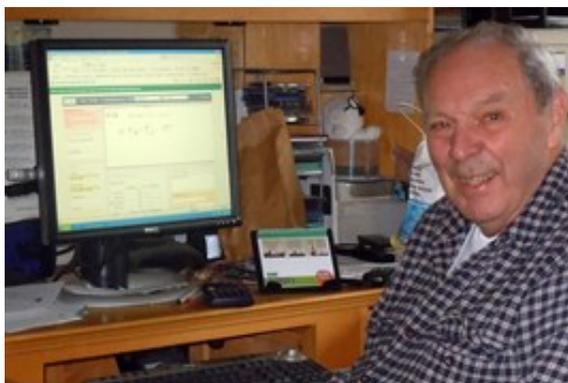
What We're Working to Bring You

- We are creating a new volunteer training manual for the v4 transcription screen.
- We are creating a system to rectify all cards marked as a "problem card" in the BPP office.
- We are working to keep the webpage up to date, add content, keep all links functional, and provide any information you need.

Volunteer of the Month

Alan McGie

Wow!, imagine my surprise when I learned I had been selected volunteer of the month. That is quite an honor. I spent my professional life as a Fisheries Research Biologist with the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife in Charleston, Coos Co., OR and Corvallis, Benton Co., OR. I retired in 1994 after 34 years of service. Since then, I have travelled to several mid-western and western states on birding expeditions.



I grew up on a farm at the outskirts of Gridley, Butte Co., CA in the Sacramento

Current Progress



Current Migration Card Count:

2,618
Online Volunteers

528,914
Cards Transcribed Online

5
Office Volunteers

1,162,483
Cards Scanned

Quick Links

[Register to become an online transcriber](#)

[Become an office volunteer](#)

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Valley. I developed an interest in birds after visiting California Fish & Game's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area west of town where thousands of ducks, geese, swans, and other waterfowl winter in the valley. My grandparents had a cabin on Butte Creek in the Sierra Nevada Mountains where I spent several summers fishing for rainbow and brown trout. This led me to a career in wildlife after earning B.S. and M.S. degrees in Fisheries from Humboldt State University in Arcata, Humboldt Co., CA in 1960 after a stint as a draftee in the U.S. Army.

I began actively birding in 1969 while working on the Oregon coast. We had hired a biologist who just graduated from the University of Wisconsin and he talked me into joining him on birding expeditions at the mouth of the Coquille River. My interest in birds leap-frogged from that point on. Several of us formed the Cape Arago Audubon Society and I had the pleasure of serving in several offices of the society in Coos Bay, including field trip chairman. I also served terms on the Oregon Bird Records Committee. Since 1982, I have maintained records of bird phenology reported in the Corvallis area.

It is always interesting to see arrival and departure records in the N.A. Phenology Program database from other parts of the U.S. and Canada and read comments recorded over the long span of years the cards were submitted. Perhaps, one of my most memorable records was a report of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker seen in a southern Florida state park in the early 1900s. I have encountered several other records that were equally amazing - at least to me.

Observer of the Month

Nathan Clifford Brown

Nathan Brown was descended from two of Maine's most prominent and prosperous families. One grandfather was an Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court. Although he lived to age 84, he was always frail and subject to frequent illness. He grew up in Portland, Maine, and it was on his father's estate in Portland that he first developed a lasting interest in birds.

Brown entered Bowdoin College in 1873. Illness prevented him from continuing, but Bowdoin nevertheless awarded him an honorary degree in 1883.

Nathan became expert at taxidermy and bird skin preservation, at which endeavors he was a perfectionist. His early work was mostly in Maine, and he continued to spend much time there throughout his life. He also

worked in Alabama, resulting in a publication described by Howell as "the first modern list of the birds of Alabama". This included the first discovery of Swainson's Warbler in Alabama, and some of the earliest studies of its habits. He also established the presence of Le Conte's Sparrow east of the Mississippi River, and its (rare) presence in central Alabama even in winter. Brown spent the winter of 1880 in Kendall Count, Texas, the first of several trips there. He investigated the range and habits of the Golden-cheeked Warbler, and also the Aimophila sparrows. Starting in 1903 and continuing intermittently for ten years, Brown worked in Kershaw County, South Carolina

Later Nathan traveled extensively in Europe, and indulged in literary work, publishing in the literary journals of the time numerous short papers on a wide variety of topics.

Nathan Clifford Brown was a Founder, Fellow, and Fellow Emeritus of the American Ornithological Union. In the later part of his life, his infirmities kept him from field work, and indeed even from reading, but despite that, he continued to maintain strong interest in the progress of American ornithology.



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.

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Melospiza l. lincolni

TEXAS Kendall County.

Feb. 25, 1880

Mar. 10, 13, 18, 1880 - N. C. Brown

Spec. Mus. Comp. Zool.

Ident. by H. C. Oberholser, 1937.

Nathan C. Brown Migration Card

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

Norton, A.H. 1942. In Memorium: Nathan Clifford Brown. AUK: 59(4):471-476

BPP office volunteer, Bob Hartman contributed this biography to our newsletter, thank you Bob!

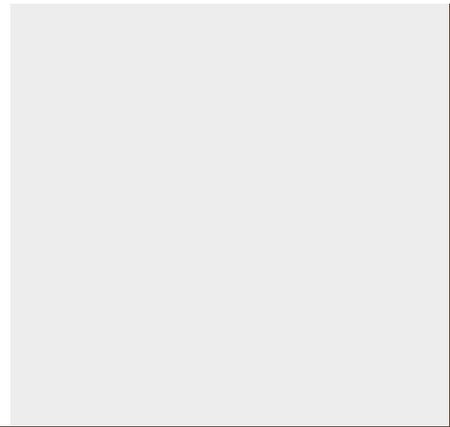
We are in need of volunteer help to put these write-ups together. If you are interested, please contact the BPP.

Trivia

Last month's question was correctly answered by Patrick Johnson. The question, "In what year did Elliott Coues write to The Auk, beginning a successful campaign to establish the taxonomic classification of subspecies?" was answered correctly with "1884."

Here's this month's trivia question: What BPP observer participated in the first Christmas Bird Count in 1900?

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