

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter  
September 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

- Many updates have been made to the BPP website over the past month including the link on the confirmation email (to v4), e-newsletters, observer bios, and the research results webpage.
- Please continue to make the switch over to the new v4 transcription page (<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BPP/v4/index.php>). Comments, questions, and complaints can all be sent to the BPP office to help us improve our interface (we're listening!).
- BPP Intern, Kamli, went on her first bird banding field trip with the PWRC Bird Banding Lab September 23rd. Among the species banded were Connecticut Warbler, Veery, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. She was also able to see one of her focal species, the Red-eyed Vireo.
- Nancy LaFleur's has been visiting the BPP Office to scan in Starling stomach content card records. Her research occurs at the interface of plant and animal ecology, and aims to understand how participation in seed dispersal mutualisms regulates the distributions and abundances of participants. Currently, she is investigating the role of seed-dispersing birds, such as the European starling, in the spread of fleshy-fruited invasive plants. She is using historical data on bird diets held by the BPP to investigate patterns in the incorporation of non-native fruits into avian diets. Her research will be added on the [Research](#) webpage as it becomes available.
- Google Analytics has been added to the BPP website. No changes will be visible by the user but we will now be able to see how visitors and transcribers use our site.

## What We're Working to Bring You

- We have been working on adding new species to the transcription sight. Keep an eye out-- you should see new options in the species drop down list over the next few weeks.
- 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

### Current Progress



### Current Migration Card Count:

2,452  
Online Volunteers

487,674  
Cards Transcribed Online

5  
Office Volunteers

1,162,483  
Cards Scanned

### Quick Links

[Register to become an online transcriber](#)

[Become an office volunteer](#)

[BPP News](#)

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[USA-NPN](#)

## Rick Blanchett



I was born in Miami and have lived in South Florida my whole life. I've always been interested in birds, feeding them since I was a kid. Besides having feeders set up, my wife and I have landscaped our front and back yard with bird and wildlife friendly Florida-native plants. It's been certified by several organizations including the University of Florida and the NWF. Working on the BPP combines two of my favorite subjects, birds and history. I find the project very relaxing and enjoy learning more about birds. As I do my transcribing, my two Caique parrots are usually there with me at my desk in front of a window overlooking the

backyard. My wife and I are members of the Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy and National Wildlife Federation and make time to go on nature walks locally and abroad, hiking trails in Panama, Ecuador, Peru and Hawaii. When doing the record transcribing, I've tried to concentrate on the Florida cards and those from Cuba and South America. Along with finding the project very relaxing, I find it very satisfying knowing that my efforts are helping to learn more about bird migration and conservation.

## Observer of the Month

### Margaret Morse Nice

Margaret Morse Nice was an intelligent and committed researcher who



contributed greatly to the study of ornithology. She was a quiet and soft-spoken person, but always self-assured if she was being undermined. She helped shape the research of ornithology with her keen observations and extensive research.

Mrs. Nice, nee Morse was born on December 6, 1883 in Amherst, Massachusetts to Anson D. Morse, a professor at Amherst College, and Margaret Duncan. Nice grew up with six brothers and sisters, Ely, William, Sarah, Katherine, Harold, and Edward.

At a young age, Mrs. Nice became interested in the environment and nature and took to carefully noting birds at the age of 13. She went to grade and high school in Amherst and graduated from Mt. Holyoke College in 1906. At Holyoke she

studied several languages including, German, French, Italian, English, and Latin, the latter of which would help her with her ornithology career.

Later on in college, her interest in natural sciences became apparent though the teachings of Henrietta Edgcomb Hooker, Professor of Botany, and Mignon Talbot, Professor of Geology and Geography. In 1910, she published an article "Food of the Bobwhite," which made people associate her with the study of birds. By that time she had already showed keen skills in field observations and organizing data.

Mrs. Nice then entered Clark University of Worcester, where she married Leonard Blaine Nice. They moved to Boston, then to Oklahoma soon after, where Leonard taught at the University of Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, Nice became interested in child psychology, and even documented her children's behaviors. Mrs. Nice was also interested in the Mourning Dove and became even more involved with birds.

Mrs. Nice got her degree in zoology at Clark in 1915 because of her study, "The Food of the Bobwhite." In 1921, she published several articles about the Mourning Dove, and soon other articles about other birds in the wet-weather



**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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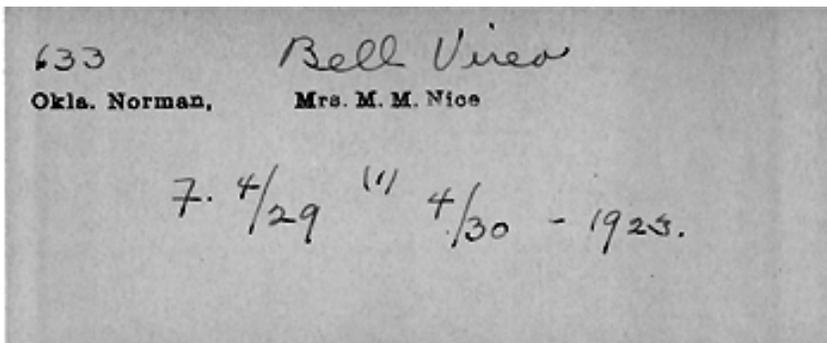
ponds and during winter. She published in several journals, such as The Auk, and Oologist. In 1924, her first publication came out called The Birds of Oklahoma, and was given great reviews because of the wide-ranging research.

They then moved to Ohio in 1927, where Leonard would teach at The Ohio State University of Columbus. Mrs. Nice continued on researching different species of birds, including Cardinals and Pileated Woodpeckers. She even returned to Massachusetts where she would study species such as Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian and Myrtle Warbler. She was especially productive in Ohio, because of the close proximity of the Olentangy River to her house. She was able to publish hundreds of articles and journals while in Columbus.

In 1931, she met Ernst Mayr at an American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) meeting, and was elected and became the first woman president of the fellowship, following her publications.

Finally, the Nice family moved to Illinois in 1936, where Leonard would teach at the Chicago Medical School. Mrs. Nice then did her fieldwork on the life of the history of the Song Sparrow. After banding and weighing a particular Song Sparrow, it died in her hands and she promised to never band another bird again. A friend, Dr. Thomas of Ohio Historical Society, persuaded her to continue because of the knowledge she would provide to the history of birds.

In later years, sadly Mrs. Nice's health began to deteriorate. She had several heart problems and eye problems that hindered her research. On June 26, 1974, Mrs. Nice died of Arteriosclerosis. Her research and time devoted to birds was a great contribution to the study ornithology, and provided a starting point in the history of birds.



Migration Card recorded by Margaret Morse Nice

This biography was written using the following resources:  
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Auk/v094n03/p0430-p0441.pdf>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret\\_Morse\\_Nice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Morse_Nice)

BPP Intern, Kamli Sirjue contributed this biography to our newsletter, thank you Kamli!

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 David Dean. The answer to the question, "How did two of the BPP's original observers, Albert K. Fisher and Edgar A. Mearns initially meet?" was that they shared a room in college at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York.

Here's this month's trivia question: According to the book, *American Wildlife & Plants, A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits*, what food consists of over 70% of Painted bunting's diet in the summer months?

Remember to send your answers to [Jessica](#).



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