

# NORTH AMERICAN BIRD PHENOLOGY PROGRAM



E-Newsletter  
July 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

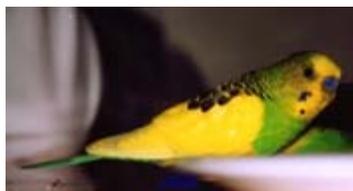
- So far, reactions have been very positive to version 4 of the transcription screen: <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BPP/v4/index.php>. Please continue to switch over to this new page since we will be deleting v3 in a few weeks. Your comments on how we can improve this page are always welcome.
- V2 has been taken down from the BPP website as we move ahead with new versions. Remember to use the new link above (and save it in your favorites!) to sign into the transcription page.
- Donald Seriff, Natural Resource Coordinator for Mecklenburg County, NC, visited the office for several days this month to compile and scan BPP records of birds observed in parts of NC and SC. Don is working to create a collection of baseline data in those areas from which to compare present day records. He is working to publish a summary of birds for Mecklenburg County as well as a separate summary for a 14-country region around Charlotte.
- Carola Haas, Virginia Tech Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology, will be presenting a poster at the annual AOU meeting in Jacksonville, FL this week on the BPP's stomach content card records. This is a separate but equally unique data set maintained by the BPP, describing the stomach contents of birds in the 1880's.
- Jessica gave a presentation to the PWRC YCC youth group on June 28th about climate change, bird monitoring programs and the BPP.

## What We're Working to Bring You

- We are working to change the allotted size of the migration card currently on the v4 transcription page after receiving some complaints that the card was being partially cut off.
- 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

### Robert Turk



Robert Turk's Pet Parakeet  
Kwerty

I am a relatively recent graduate from Towson University with Bachelors of Science in Computer Information System. While in college, I mostly studied software usability and accessibility. In fact, I had an article published concerning how well Maryland State websites can be accessed by people with visual impairments.

I decided to volunteer with the BPP mostly to keep my busy while searching

## Current Progress



### Current Migration Card Count:

2,252  
Online Volunteers

469,363  
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

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

for a job. Also, because a flock of Slate-colored juncos which has been wintering in my neighborhood, got me interested in bird migration patterns. I have also done volunteer work with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, which included trail maintenance and the construction of two shelters and one cabin. In my free time I have been tending to my garden, where I am growing a few rare varieties of hot peppers.

**monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States.**

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## Observer of the Month

### Althea Rosina Sherman

Althea Rosina Sherman was born (1853) and died (1943) in National Iowa, six miles west of the Mississippi River. Yet hers was not an insular life. This remarkable woman traveled widely, belonged to many scientific organizations, taught, sketched and was the author of several books and numerous articles.



Althea Sherman, courtesy of theonline.com

After graduating from Oberlin College in Oberlin Ohio in 1875, Miss Sherman taught for four years before pursuing art studies at the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students League in New York City. She earned her Masters in Art at Oberlin and then taught at Carleton College in MN and in Wichita KS; she was supervisor of drawing in Tacoma WA from 1892 until 1895 when she came home to assist in caring for her parents. Her sister, Amelia who was a medical doctor, shared the family home with her.

Their property, with its 162 species of birds deepened Althea's interest in birds. Although educated in art, not ornithology, her avian observations and her scholarly publications over the remainder of her life brought her considerable renown.

From November 1913 to August 1914, Miss Sherman enjoyed a 33,000 mile trip through Europe, the Middle East and Asia. She visited 20 countries and described the birds and archeological marvels in her book, *Birds by the Wayside*. The onset of World War I made it necessary to return home earlier than planned.

This opinionated observer had her own ideas about right and wrong in the world of birds; her initial admiration for house wrens turned to an implacable loathing. Several of her articles advocated removing wren boxes to reduce their predations against other birds.

Chimney swifts were another matter. In 1915 she designed and had a 28 foot-tall chimney swift tower built on the farm property in National. She used the tower to study the nesting habits of the swifts. After she died the original tower was moved and a replica was built in 2009; it is occasionally open for tours during non-breeding seasons. (Note: There is an article about modern chimney swift towers in the July/August issue of Audubon magazine. <http://www.audubonmagazine.org/web/swifftowers>.) After her death, her friend, Fred J. Pierce, edited 60 notebooks of her bird observations, into the book, *Birds of an Iowa Dooryard*.

Name of Bird		Nighthawk		Year	
Locality		National, Iowa.		1925	
Observer		Althea R. Sherman,			
First seen	Number seen	Nest seen	Became common	Last seen	Common at date
8/19	Four	8/23		9/5	
Seven was largest number seen here by me.					

Form BI-821

16-5280 GPO 1924

Migration Card recorded by Althea Sherman

Thank you Mary Perlick for contributing this observer biography to our newsletter!

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

## Trivia

Well, looks like I finally stumped you all with last month's question. The answer to the question, "Toehead was the local name for what species?" was Black-bellied Plover.

Here's this month's trivia question, remember to send your answers to [Jessica](#).

What popular sparrow was given the local name, everybody's darling?



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