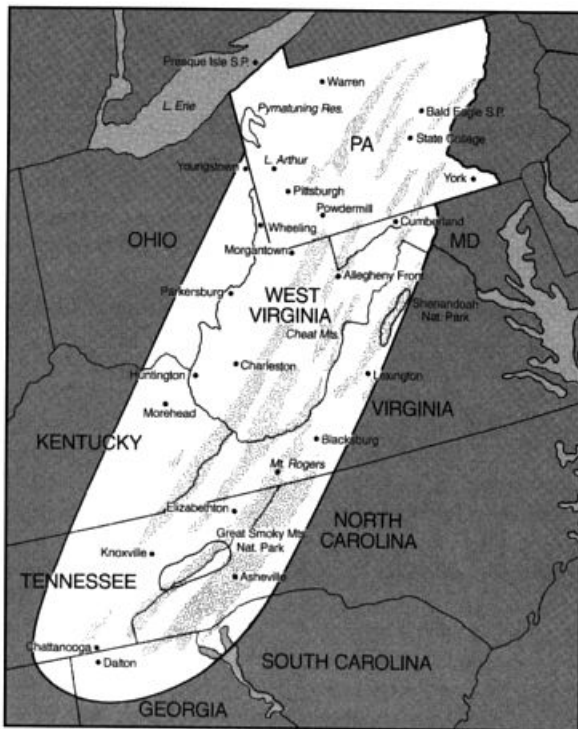


# Appalachia



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August was hot and rainy over most of the Appalachian region, but by mid-September conditions were somewhat cooler and drier than usual, especially in the south. There were no substantial fallouts of migrating passerines until mid-September, leaving observers with the impression that the migration was (despite sightings of some significant rarities) rather ordinary. Quantitative data from the region's two long-term banding stations, Powdermill Nature Reserve at Rector, Pennsylvania, and the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, Grant, West Virginia (90 mi. sse. of P.N.R.) also reflected the general lack of any substantial migrant fallouts. At Powdermill the 6148 birds banded this season was average compared with the past ten years (RCL, RM); at Allegheny Front the 3007 birds banded was 52% of the long-term average (GH). Despite their close geographical proximity, banding totals for the two stations pro-

vided a contrasting view of the migration of several species. Mild weather patterns in October and November also allowed many diving ducks and other waterfowl to pass over Appalachia without stopping, especially the diving ducks, scoters, and mergansers. Irruptive species, in general, were scarce, especially the northern finches.

**Abbreviations:** A.E.M.O. (Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, Grant, WV); P.N.R. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector, Westmoreland, PA); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle State Park, Erie, PA); T.R.M.O. (Three Rivers Migratory Observatory, Raleigh and Mercer, WV).

## Loons Through Vultures

A systematic waterbird count at P.I.S.P. included a total 31 Red-throated Loons 22 Oct–26 Nov (JM), but apparently none was observed s. of L. Erie this season. A fallout of 301 Common Loons occurred at Booker T. Washington S.P., TN, 7 Nov (KC), and 66 were on Boone L. 18 Nov (ATy); a flight of 70 loons passed over Indiana, PA, 11 Nov (MH), and 70 were on Deep Cr. L., MD, 12 Nov (FP). An exceptional find was a **Yellow-billed Loon** at

Chickamauga L., TN, 6 Nov (†KC, LW, JH, JC), only one record of the species has been accepted by the Tennessee Bird Records Committee. Pied-billed Grebes peaked at 100 on Tamarack L., Meadville, PA, 23 Nov (IF), and the maximum Horned Grebe count was 201 at Booker T. Washington S.P. 6 Nov (KC, LW). Three Red-necked Grebes at P.I.S.P. 22 Oct–26 Nov (JM) were the only reports. Three Eared Grebes were on L. Oneida, Butler, PA, 10 Sep (ph. DD, DY) and up to 6 were present 10 Sep+ (WC, RK) at S. Holston L., TN, where the species has now been observed in seven consecutive years. An American White Pelican at Stuarts Draft, VA, 26 Nov established the first *Augusta* record of the species (ph. APL, et al.). A heavy flight of Double-crested Cormorants passed through the Region in early Oct: 160 were at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta*, VA, on the 7th (*vide* YL); in w. Pennsylvania, 1004 cormorants were counted 8 Oct in the Pymatuning L. region (RFL), 668 passed by the Brady's Bend hawkwatch along the Allegheny R. (MM), and 100 stopped on L. Arthur (DD).

In addition to several sightings of American Bittern in nw. Pennsylvania wetlands, where they breed, migrants were at Brady's Bend 8 Oct (MM), N. Branch, *Alleghany*, MD, 7 & 21 Oct (JBC), Hooper Lane, *Henderson*, NC, 15 Oct (WF, BO), and Shady Valley, TN, 30 Sep–24 Oct (HPL, BS). A Least Bittern was at P.I.S.P. 28 Aug (BG), 3 were near Shanghai, *Berkeley*, WV, 22 Sep (SM), and one was at Amnicola Marsh, *Hamilton*, TN, 1 Oct (KC). An obliging **Great White Heron**, first reported in Jul, remained near Brevard, NC, through Nov (NS). Great Egrets were more common and widespread than usual, with a high of 220+ at Rankin Bottoms, TN, 25 Aug (RK et al.). A Snowy Egret was at Rankin Bottoms 17–19 Aug (RK); another was at Hendersonville, NC, 6–9 Sep (WF). Ten Cattle Egrets were listed at Rankin Bottoms 25 Aug (RK). On 15 Aug at least 26 Green Herons were attracted to an abundant minnow supply at the Oakland, MD, water-treatment plant (FP). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was at Bald Eagle S.P., PA, 14 Sep (CH), and an adult was at nearby Stormstown on the 15th (DBr). An imm. White Ibis was in *Washington*, TN, 20 Aug (*vide* RK); even more exceptional was one at Mifflintown, PA, Sep 20–24 (*vide* ATr). At Shenango Res., *Mercer*, PA, a *Plegadis* ibis, believed to be a Glossy, was found 23 Sep (SB, NT, m.ob.). There were two imm. **Wood Storks** in the Region, one in *Greene*, TN, 5 Sep (BS et al.), the other at P.I.S.P. 12 Oct–11 Nov (RSe, RN, DBo, m.ob.). Black Vultures continued to expand their range northward, with 22 listed at the Allegheny Front hawkwatch,

Bedford, PA, (TD), and one at McDonough W.A., Wood, WV, 27 Sep (*vide* JE). At Allegheny Front 1043 Turkey Vultures were listed (TD), while a roost along the New R. at the VA/WV line contained 365+ birds (JP).

### Waterfowl

A Greater White-fronted Goose was a rare find at Swoope, VA, 24–26 Oct (YL). Small numbers of Snow Geese were widely reported, with high counts of 40 at P.I.S.P. 11 Nov (JM) and 16 at Soddy Mt., TN, 27 Nov (WH). A Ross's Goose appeared at North Park, Pittsburgh, 2 Nov+ (*vide* PH), and another was at Knoxville, TN, 1–8 Nov (DE). An early Brant was at P.I.S.P. 17 Oct (DH), 30 were there the 28th (JM), and 2 were at nearby Roderick W.R. 5 Nov (JTC); 21 were at Yellow Cr. S.P., PA, 28 Oct, in addition to singles 12 & 18 Nov (MH). The main flight of Tundra Swans crossed w. PA 4–24 Nov, with thousands on the 11th, including 1000 at Greenlick L., Fayette (*vide* DBy), 300 at Stone Mt. hawkwatch (GG), 200 at Franklin (JSt), and 241 in Allegheny (PH); 450 swans stopped at Prince Gillitzin S.P. 24 Nov. (JSa).

Wood Ducks were abundant in Pennsylvania: 350 were on Tamarack L., Meadville, 24–30 Sep (RFL), and an evening

roost count at Pymatuning listed 1106 entering the refuge 8 Sep (TM). High counts of Gadwall included 85 at Pymatuning 19 Nov (RFL) and 68 at Deep Cr. L., MD, 23 Nov (FP). Two early Northern Shovelers were at P.I.S.P. 24 Aug (DBo), and a peak count of 142 was made at Pymatuning 5 Nov (TM). Sixty Northern Pintails were on Tamarack L. 10 Oct, and 150 Green-winged Teal were there 9 Oct (RFL). An early Ring-necked Duck was at P.I.S.P. 27 Aug (JM), but fewer than normal were seen during migration, the high count being just 164 at Broadford, Garrett, MD, 23 Nov (FP). The P.I.S.P. waterbird count listed 17 Surf Scoters 29 Oct–26 Nov, and one was on the Allegheny R. at Verona 11 Nov (SK). Three early White-winged Scoters were at P.I.S.P. 16 Sep (RSr) and 11 were tallied on the waterbird count 21 Sep–26 Nov (JM). A Black Scoter was at Booker T. Washington S.P., TN, 5–7 Nov (KC), with 10 counted at P.I.S.P. 12–20 Nov (JM, MF). The Long-tailed Duck flight was especially poor; high counts s. of L. Erie were 3 at Franklin, PA, 25 Oct (JSt) and 4 at Boone L., TN, 21 Nov (HPL, BS). There were 1322 Hooded Mergansers at Pymatuning 16 Nov, but a lackluster Red-breasted Merganser flight peaked there yielded only 41 on 19 Nov (RFL). There were 500 Ruddy

Ducks at Tamarack L. 23 Nov (RFL) and 200 at Somerset, PA, 22 Nov (TM).

### Raptors Through Gulls

A heavy Osprey flight through w. Pennsylvania included 88 birds at the Allegheny Front hawkwatch (TD) and 104 at Stone Mt. (GG). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was in Sevier, TN, 6 Aug (JSk) and another was well-described from Girard, Erie, PA, 10 Sep (*vide* JM). Bald Eagle counts included a record 33 at Stone Mt. (GG) and 34 at Allegheny Front (TD). Northern Goshawks were widely reported in the n., including 9 at Stone Mt., 15 at Allegheny Front; in the s. one was in Carter, TN, 16 Sep (*vide* RK). Good Broad-winged Hawk counts included 1313 at A.F.M.O. 6–26 Sep (JG) and a record 1635 at Stone Mt. (GG); 5 late birds were at Booker T. Washington S.P., TN, 10 Oct (*vide* KC). A Rough-legged Hawk reached Polk, Venango, PA, 11 Oct (JSt); they were widespread in the north by month's end; in the s. one was spotted at Soddy Mt. 15 Nov (WH). An early Golden Eagle was at Allegheny Front 6 Sep, and a record 128 passed that station by season's end (TD); 8 were at Hanging Rock, Monroe, WV, 15 Nov (JPh), and 2 were at Soddy Mt. 7 Oct (WH). A gray **Gyrfalcon** seen by six observers as it made several passes at an owl decoy at Hanging Rock 22 Sep (+JPh) would be a first for West Virginia, if accepted.

An imm. King Rail was seen openly wandering about the bird-banding net lanes at P.N.R. on several occasions 10–13 Sep (RCL, RM). Both Soras and Virginia Rails were widely reported from within the Region. The high count for Common Moorhen was 26 at Hartstown Marsh, Crawford, PA, 9 Sep (MB); a pair with 3 young 11 Aug in s. Lawrence represented the southernmost breeding confirmation in w. Pennsylvania (BD). On 20 Nov, 1155 Sandhill Cranes were estimated at Hiwassee W.R., TN (WA). A female **Whooping Crane** that stopped in Greene, TN, 24–27 Nov (DM, RK) surprised birders and researchers alike. One of a pair from the introduced Florida population, she and her mate had wandered on their own to Michigan for the summer and started back toward Florida together in late Nov. Radio-tracking showed that the pair became separated near Lake Erie, but the female successfully made her way back to Florida after her unprecedented stopover in the Appalachian region.

There were some good fallouts of shore-birds locally, including 17 species that came down during a rainstorm 6 Aug at Big Beaver wetlands, Beaver, PA (BD, JF). Among many reports of Black-bellied Plovers was a high count of 17 at Hooper Lane, NC, 31 Aug (WF,



This immature (note the pale bill and feathered head) Wood Stork at Presque Isle State Park, Erie, 1 October–11 November 2000 established the first record for northwestern Pennsylvania. Photograph by Jerry McWilliams.

BO) American Golden-Plovers totaled 12 at P.I.S.P. 12 Sep–10 Oct (JM), one was at Pymatuning 22 Sep (RFL), 3 were at Mt. Lake, MD, 3–5 Oct (FP), one was at Rankin Bottoms, TN, 23–26 Aug (*fide* RK), and 6 were at Hooper Lane 17 Sep (WF, BO). On 1 Sep some 500 Killdeer were counted flying over St. Paul, *Somerset*, high in the Pennsylvania mountains (TM). Single American Avocets were at P.I.S.P. 24 Aug (*fide* JM) and Yellow Cr. S.P., PA, 21 Sep (*fide* PH); in Tennessee, 8 were on S Holston L. 10 Aug (HPL) and 3 were at Brainerd Levee 6 Nov (BW). Two Willets were at Rankin Bottoms, 19–28 Aug (RK). A Hudsonian Godwit was a rare find at P.I.S.P. 21 Sep–1 Oct (ph. JM, CG), as was a Red Knot there 4 Sep (JM). Up to 5 Stilt Sandpipers frequented Rankin Bottoms 25–31 Aug (RK), 2 were in *Beaver*, PA, 6 Aug (BD), and one was at N Branch, MD, 16 Sep (JBC). Ten Buff-breasted Sandpipers were at Hooper Lane 28 Aug (WF, BO), one was in *Transylvania*, NC, 21 Sep (BM), ≤11 were at Rankin Bottoms, TN, 25–31 Aug (RK), and one was at Youghiougheny Res., MD, 5 Sep (JBC). Three Wilson's Phalaropes were at Shade Mt., *Jumata*, PA, 12 Sep (*fide* ATr), and one was at Pymatuning 16 Sep (RFL). A Red Phalarope stopped at Brevard, NC, 10 Nov (ph. BM. NS, WF), providing the second *Transylvania* record. The only Laughing Gull was at L. Arthur, PA, 1–4 Oct (MH, LW). Two Little Gulls were at P.I.S.P. 22 Oct, with a single there 18 Nov (JM). A Black-headed Gull was at P.I.S.P. 17 Oct (DH); another was on the Ohio R at McKees Rocks 30–31 Oct (SK). At Pymatuning 780 Bonaparte's Gulls and 2300 Ring-billed Gulls were listed 19 Oct (RFL).

### Doves Through Thrushes

Well-established in Chattanooga, Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to expand their range in se. Tennessee; the first record for *Rhea* occurred 8 Oct (DT). Single **Common Ground-Doves** at Middle Run, *Clarion*, PA, 30 Aug (JF) and Mifflintown 6 Sep (Atr) were well n of their normal range. One or 2 Snowy Owls frequented P.I.S.P. 31 Oct+ (JM); one was in Pittsburgh 14–16 Nov (PH). The only record for Long-eared Owl came from P.I.S.P. 5–6 Nov (DD). Five Short-eared Owls were at Volant, *Lawrence*, PA, during Nov (*fide* PH), singles were at Barkyville, *Venango*, PA, 23 Nov (Jst) and P.I.S.P. 25 Nov (Jst, KG). Seventy-five Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded at Shaver's Cr. Environmental Center, *Huntingdon*, PA, 1 Oct–15 Nov (*fide* GG), and 4 were banded at A.F.M.O. 21 Aug–28 Oct (GH). Two late Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were at Chattanooga 24 Oct (CW).

Increasingly, Appalachian birders are faced with challenging late-fall hummingbird identifications. A probable imm. **Calliope Hummingbird** was at a feeder in *Transylvania*, NC, 26 Oct–21 Nov (†ph. NS, v.o.). Two Rufous Hummingbirds were banded in Knoxville (*fide* RK). A *Selasphorus* was at Signal Mt., TN, 16–26 Oct (*fide* KC), one was at Connetsee Falls, NC, in mid-Oct (NS), and one was at Greensburg, PA, late Oct+ (*fide* LC).

Scarce in recent years in Pennsylvania, Olive-sided Flycatchers were at Franklin 26 Aug (Jst), P.I.S.P. 28 Aug (RSr), Pittsburgh 4 Sep (MF), and Jacksonville, *Indiana*, 8 Sep (MH); in the s. one was at Jackson Park, NC, 3 Sep (WF, BO). Banding totals for *Empidonax* flycatchers at P.N.R. were a mixed bag; an average 50 Yellow-bellieds and 16 Acadians were banded, 35 Traill's was well above average, and 42 Leasts was well below average for the past four decades (RCL, RM). A Western Kingbird at Penns Valley, *Centre*, PA, 7–9 Oct (GG, v.o.) was the season's only report. Single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were at Charleston, *Bradley*, TN, 2 Aug (JW) and Brainerd Levee 7 Oct (RK). The first report of Northern Shrike was from P.I.S.P. 2 Nov (KG), and there were scattered records as far s. as Whipple Dam S.P., *Huntingdon*, PA (GG), by mid-month. Several observers mentioned a poor Blue Jay flight along the mountain ridges; at A.F.M.O. only 229 were counted (over 18,700 were recorded there in 1999; GH). A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches was close to their nest site in Red R. Gorge, *Wolfe*, KY, 25 Aug (FR); an early migrant appeared at Bushy Run S.P., PA, by 2 Aug (MM), but numbers otherwise were generally low. A small population of Brown-headed Nuthatches persisted in the Kingston/Oakridge area of ne. Tennessee (RK). Sedge Wren sightings included 1–2 at Shady Valley, TN, 16 Sep–25 Oct (HPL, RK) and ≤10 at Brainerd Levee 18 Sep–26 Oct (KC). Several observers considered Ruby-crowned Kinglet numbers low; the 65 banded at A.F.M.O. was 44% below average (GH), but 164 was an average total at P.N.R. (RCL, RM). The 39 Gray-cheeked Thrushes banded at P.N.R., equal to the long-term average, was nonetheless the best fall total there since 1991 (RCL, RM), but only 6 were netted at A.F.M.O., 52% below average (GH). Single Bicknell's Thrushes were banded at T.R.M.O. 2 & 4 Oct (RC). The Swainson's Thrush flight was good at P.N.R., with 289 banded 4 Aug–14 Oct (RCL, RM), 40% above the 40-year average and 160% above the average of the most recent ten years. In contrast, 211 at A.F.M.O. represented a decline of 22% over the average of the past ten years (GH). At P.N.R. a record

60 Wood Thrushes were banded, 167% above the long-term average and the highest total since 1983 (RCL, RM).

### Warblers Through Finches

Four Golden-winged Warblers were at Jackson Park, NC, 8 Sep (WF); a late bird was at Austin Springs, *Augusta*, VA, 16 Sep (YL) and 2 were at Booker T. Washington S.P., TN, 18 Sep (KC). A Brewster's Warbler was banded at P.N.R. 15 Sep (RCL, RM) and a Lawrence's Warbler was in *Augusta*, VA, 28 Aug (*fide* YL). A total of 382 Tennessee Warblers was banded at T.R.M.O. 31 Aug–14 Oct (RC), but just 38 were banded at P.N.R. and 190 at A.F.M.O., both well below average. A late Tennessee was at McDonough W.A., *Wood*, WV, 27 Oct (*fide* JE). Other late warblers included a Yellow at T.R.M.O. 1 Oct (RC), a Chestnut-sided at P.N.R. 27 Oct (RCL), and a Magnolia in *Hamilton*, TN, 26 Oct. (JC). Fall banding totals at P.N.R. for Northern Parula (9), Magnolia Warbler (383), and Black-throated Green Warbler (121) were the highest there in 40 years (RCL, RM). With just 50 banded at A.F.M.O., Cape May Warblers were 79% below the ten-year average, and 162 Blackpoll Warblers were down 76% (GH); both species were banded in below-average numbers at P.N.R. as well (RCL, RM).

A Clay-colored Sparrow was at Hooper Lane, NC, Oct 13–16 (WF, BO), and another was at Polk, PA, 17 Oct (DH). Late Henslow's Sparrows include one at Brainerd Levee, TN, 7 Oct (DT), one at Shady Valley, TN, 29 Oct (HPL), and one banded at P.N.R. 28 Oct (RCL, RM). Unprecedented numbers of Le Conte's Sparrows were in e. Tennessee, with at least 5 birds scattered over four counties in late Oct and early Nov (*fide* RK); in Pennsylvania one was at Polk 15–18 Oct (Jst, KG). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was banded at P.N.R. 30 Sep (ph. RCL, RM), one was at Polk, 24–26 Oct (Jst), one was at Shady Valley, TN, 15–27 Oct (HLP, BS), and 3–4 were in *Sevier*, TN, 15 Oct–5 Nov (DT). Dark-eyed Juncos were comparatively late and scarce as migrants through P.N.R. (RCL, RM), but the 325 banded at A.F.M.O., including both residents and migrants, was 40% above average (GH). An Oregon Junco was at Saybrook, *Warren*, PA, 30–31 Nov (CNe). A Snow Bunting reached *Anderson*, TN by 1 Nov (CNi); another was at Black Balsam Knob, *Haywood*, NC, 4 Nov (ph. ES, TH). A late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Signal Mt., TN, 1 Nov (*fide* KC). Two Blue Grosbeaks visiting a feeder in Harborcreek, PA, 11 Aug were well n. of their usual range, and 2 at N. Branch, *Garrett*, MD, established a new county record (JBC). The 110 Indigo Buntings in millet fields at Berlin, PA, 25 Sep represented

a high count for that area (JPa). The Dickcissel that frequented a feeder in Brevard, 21 Nov+ (BM) represented a first record for *Transylvania*, NC. A flock of Baltimore Orioles at Jackson Park, NC, 6 Sep contained a remarkable 40+ birds (WF, BO, RSv); a late oriole was at a feeder near Franklin, PA, 18–20 Nov (JSt, KG). Single Brewer's Blackbirds were rare finds at Moraine S.P. 22 Oct (PH) and Indiana, PA, 16 Nov (SG). Northern finches were scarce: small flocks of Red Crossbills were seen at A.F.M.O. in Sep (GH), but none was reported from elsewhere in the Region. Pine Siskins were widely reported as far s. as Tennessee, but numbers were generally low, with a maximum of 30 near Polk, PA, 21 Oct (JSt). Evening Grosbeaks remained unreported at season's end.

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# Western Great Lakes



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**W**eather and migration were unremarkable until late September, when multiple jaegers, flocks of Sabine's Gulls, and an Arctic Tern were found at Wisconsin Point on Lake Superior. Except in Michigan, the lack of sig-

nificant fronts produced poor hawk migration. A major weather system in early October produced a week of below-normal temperatures in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but waterbirds, shorebirds, warblers, and sparrows still lingered in all three states.

Later in October, several days of strong southwesterly flow apparently propelled an incredible array of vagrants to the region. Hummingbirds and flycatchers caught the

"Sonoran Express" to Wisconsin. During the last 10 days of October, the Badger State recorded Broad-billed Hummingbird, multiple *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, and Fork-tailed and Ash-throated Flycatchers! The *coup de grace* was delivered on Thanksgiving weekend when a Rufous-crowned Sparrow inexplicably appeared at a feeder. Including Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, as many as four species were added to the Wisconsin list!

At about the same time as Wisconsin's first, Minnesota had its second Ash-throated Flycatcher. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Black-headed Gull, and Painted Bunting were also outstanding in Minnesota. Michigan had several exceptional rarities, headlined by the first Manx Shearwater for the Region; third state records of Swallow-tailed Kite and Common Ground-Dove also galvanized observers.

**Abbreviations:** C.C. (Concordia College, Ozaukee, WI); Horicon (Horicon N.W.R., Dodge, WI); H.R.N.R. (Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, MN); M.C.G.I. (Milwaukee Coast Guard Impoundment, WI); Shiawassee (Shiawassee N.W.R., Saginaw, MI); S.M.R.R. (Southeast Michigan Raptor Research, including Lake Erie Metropark and Pte. Mouillee HQ, Wayne, MI); Wisc. Pt. (Wisconsin Point, Douglas, WI); W.P.B.O. (Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Chippewa, MI).