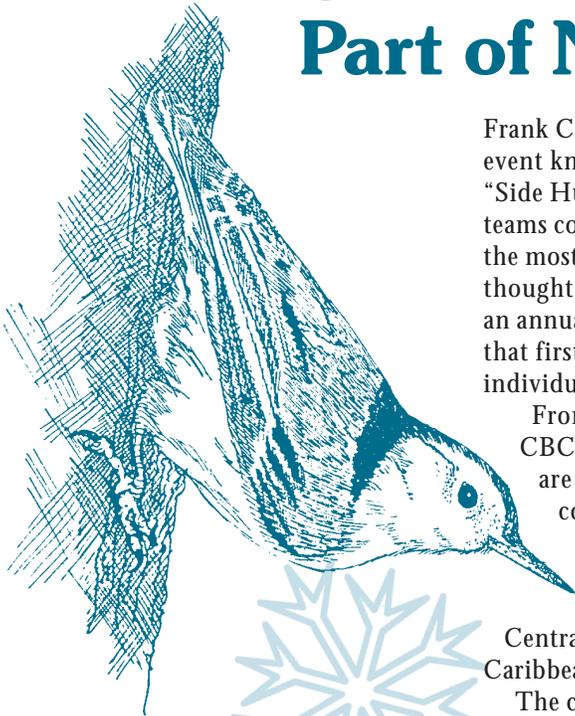


## West Virginia's Christmas Bird Count Part of Nationwide Project



**T**he neotropical migrants have long headed back to their wintering grounds, the days are getting shorter, the air is getting colder and the snow is beginning to fly: Christmas is just around the corner. Birding is over for the season, right? Not so! One of the biggest birding events of the entire year is ready to take place – The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC).

Every year for the last one hundred years, birding enthusiasts have gathered together during the Christmas season to count birds. This event, coordinated by the National Audubon Society, is now known as the oldest and largest continuous wildlife survey in North America. The first CBC was conducted in 1900 and was coordinated by ornithologist

Frank Chapman in protest to an annual event known as the “Side Hunt.” The “Side Hunt” was a contest in which two teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds. Chapman and others thought that it would be better to hold an annual count instead of a shoot. In that first CBC, 27 birders conducted 25 individual counts and tallied 90 species.

From that first count in 1900, the CBC has grown tremendously. There are now over 50,000 people that conduct 17,000 counts each year.

Counts are conducted in all 50 states, every Canadian province, and in many parts of Central and South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands.

The count protocol is simple. Counts are conducted within a 15-mile diameter circle, and birders try to cover as much area within that circle as possible within a 24-hour period. All individual birds seen or heard are counted and each species is recorded.

Counts are conducted in a variety of ways including on foot, from cars, or by watching backyard feeders. At the end of the count day, members of the count group get together to tally the total number of birds and species observed within the circle. These data are then sent to the compiler for that circle to be reviewed and submitted to the National Audubon Society (NAS).

The NAS compiles all data from the count circles and the results are then published in the National Audubon Society Field Notes. The data collected during each year's CBC are used to help

determine early winter bird distribution patterns and population trends for many species of birds.

There are 17 CBC's conducted across West Virginia each year. These include: Canaan Valley, Charles Town, Charleston, Hampshire County, Huntington, Inwood (Berkeley County), Lewisburg, McDowell County, Morgantown, Oak Hill, Ona (Cabell County), Parkersburg, Pendleton County, Pipestem State Park Area, Raleigh County, Wheeling and the state's newest CBC in the Elkins Area.

The Elkins count has been conducted for over 20 years but has never been an official National Audubon Society CBC. This year's count will be the first official CBC in the Elkins area.

Take time this busy holiday season to ease the doldrums of winter and to get away from all the hustle and bustle of the shopping malls to take part in the largest and oldest wildlife survey in North America: The Christmas Bird Count.

*For information on a count near you, contact your local bird club or the WVDNR at PO Box 67, Ward Road Elkins, WV 26241, 304-637-0245, or [rtallman@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:rtallman@dnr.state.wv.us).*

— Rob Tallman

### Inside this issue...

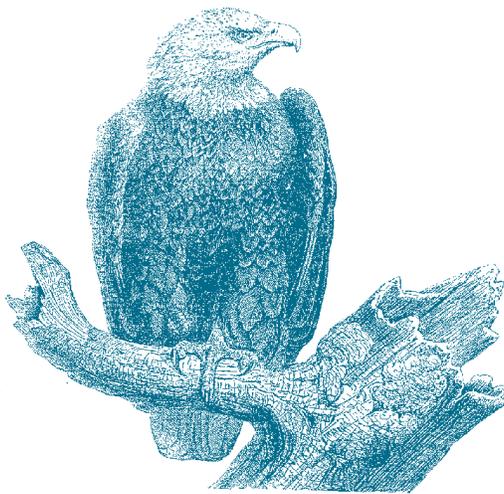
- \* Balsam Fir Study, Pg.5
- \* Eagle Update, Pg. 2
- \* Insects in Winter, Pg. 4

## Banner Year For Bald Eagles In The Mountain State

A record number of bald eagle nests fledged an unprecedented number of young eaglets in West Virginia during the 2001 breeding season according to WVDNR Wildlife Biologist Craig Stihler. Twelve nesting pairs of eagles were located and monitored during spring and early summer.

Eleven of these nests were successful, and a total of 21 young eagles took to the Mountain State skies this year. In 2000, eight nests produced 13 fledgling eagles.

The one unsuccessful nest this year was located on Blennerhassett Island in the Ohio River, and is the first confirmed nesting of bald eagles in the state's Ohio River Valley. This was the



first nesting attempt for this pair, and it is not unusual for a pair to fail to produce young during their first season. Biologists are optimistic that this pair will return to the area to nest again in 2002, hopefully with a more successful outcome. In fact, three adults have been recently sighted carrying nest material to this nest!

All other nests in West Virginia are located in the Potomac River drainage in the state's Eastern Panhandle.

Once widespread across the United States, bald eagle populations declined due to habitat loss and degradation, persecution, and, in a final blow, the

effects of pesticides like DDT that disrupted the birds' reproductive systems.

In 1969 the bald eagle was designated as an endangered species in the lower 48 states. A ban on DDT in the early 1970's, increasing water quality, and protection of the birds and their nest sites have resulted in increasing eagle populations. In 1995, the US Fish and Wildlife Service "downlisted" the bald eagle from endangered to threatened status.

Although it is likely that bald eagles nested in West Virginia during colonial times, there is no documentation of nesting eagles in the state prior to 1981. In that year, the state's first confirmed eagle nest was discovered along the South Branch of the Potomac River; the state's second nest was discovered in 1987. Since then, West Virginia's eagle population has continued to increase as the young eagles raised in West Virginia are becoming old enough to produce young of their own.

WV Division of Natural Resources biologists monitor nesting bald eagles each spring. Please report observations of nesting eagles to: Bald Eagle Report, WV DNR, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241 or call (304) 637-0245.

### CARA Update

Although the main CARA bill is stalled right now in Congress due to recent events, some additional funding was passed in this year's Interior Appropriations Bill. Eighty-five million will be available this fiscal year for "State Wildlife Grants," with \$5 million of this available to Indian Tribes.

As of this writing it is unclear what West Virginia's share will be or how it will be administered, although instead of last year's 75:25 match (federal to state) there is to be a 50:50 match with a 75:25 match for planning projects.

However, Congressional action is expected soon on Senate Bill 990, called the American Wildlife Enhancement Act of 2001. This bill authorizes an appropriation of \$350 million for vitally needed state fish and wildlife conservation and related recreation and education programs. These funds will be funneled through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account, a sub-account of the Pittman-Robertson Act, as are this year's CARA funds. This could mean around \$3 million for West Virginia, but again it is a one time appropriation. There appears to be growing support for this bill, so now is the time to contact your Senators and urge them to cosponsor this bill.

### Bird and Bat Educational Trunks Available to WV Teachers

Everything you need to teach grades K-6 about neotropical birds or bats is included in each fun-filled educational trunk. These interdisciplinary, literature-based units provide a holistic, hands-on experience that will foster awareness, tolerance and appreciation of migratory birds or bats. Trunks contain teacher's guides, books, posters, felt storyboards, badges, student research kits, cassette tapes, games, puppets and more.

Trunks are available for loan to educators state-wide with a \$25 deposit which will be returned when the trunk is returned and inspected. Return postage is the responsibility of the borrower (approximately \$10-15). Educational trunks are loaned for a 3-week period only and teachers will receive the manual two weeks in advance of the reservation date.

For an application write, call or e-mail the WV Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Program, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241; (304)637-0245; jcutright@dnr.state.wv.us.



## Rare Species at a Glance

### Candy darter

**Scientific name:** *Etheostoma osburni*

**State status:** Rare in West Virginia, with around 40 collection sites. Populations appear to be stable in West Virginia.

**Global status:** Rare throughout its range, and possibly declining in Virginia.

**General description:** The candy darter is a small fish, rarely reaching four inches. Darters can be recognized by their two dorsal fins (the front low and spiny, the rear high and soft) and their large pectoral fins. Candy darters can be identified by the five black saddles which begin in front of the first dorsal fin and end in front of the tail. In spawning season, the males can be identified by blue-green bars bordered by brilliant red bars, which are surrounded by white.

**Habitat:** This fish can be found in the riffles and runs of small cool and warm water streams. Adults are usually found in the fastest flowing water.

**Total range:** The candy darter is found in only the upper Kanawha River system of Virginia and West Virginia, with nearly 80% of the population being in West Virginia.

**State range:** The species is restricted to the Bluestone, Gauley, and Greenbrier river drainages and has been

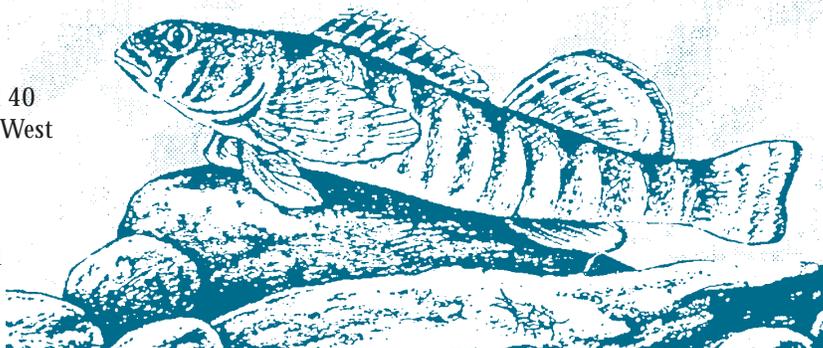


Illustration by Brad Basil

collected in the following counties: Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas, Nicholas and Webster.

**Threats to the species:** Changes to water quality and temperature can impact this species. Stream alteration activities such as changes to the stream channel or bank (adding boulders or removing trees which provide shade and bank stabilization) have severe negative impacts on candy darters and other species living in small streams.

**Best time to look:** This fish can be found any time of the year, but look for the striking male during the spring spawning season.

**Sources:** WVDNR - West Virginia Nature Notes: Rare species fact sheet for the candy darter.

### Northeastern bulrush

**Scientific name:** *Scirpus ancistrochaetus*

**State status:** Extremely rare in West Virginia, with just three occurrences.

**Global status:** Rare throughout its range. This species is federally endangered.

**General description:** Northeastern bulrush is a sedge, and can grow up to 50 inches tall. It is characterized by clumps of long, slender leaves and drooping clusters of spikelets which contain minuscule flowers. Not all plants will have spikelets, but they can still reproduce by growing new stems from their roots; or from stem nodes, which can root when plants are knocked over.

**Habitat:** In West Virginia, this sedge grows in small black ponds in forested areas. It can tolerate periodic changes in the water level, but would not be able to survive if the ponds were drained.

**Total range:** Northeastern bulrush is found in the

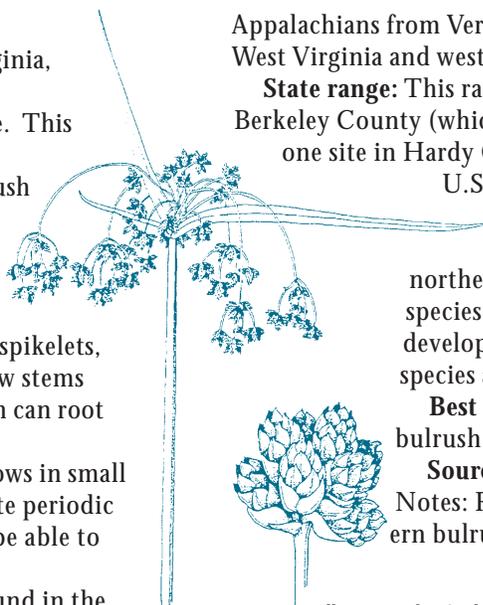


Illustration by Gayle Bisbee

Appalachians from Vermont and New Hampshire south to West Virginia and western Virginia.

**State range:** This rare plant is found at two sites in Berkeley County (which are just one mile apart) and from one site in Hardy County. The Hardy County site is on U.S. Forest Service property.

**Threats to the species:** Anything which impacts the ponds where northeastern bulrush grows can affect this species. Off-road vehicle use, logging, development and competition from other species are threats in West Virginia.

**Best time to look:** Look for northeastern bulrush during the spring, summer and fall.

**Sources:** WVDNR - West Virginia Nature Notes: Rare species fact sheet for the northeastern bulrush.

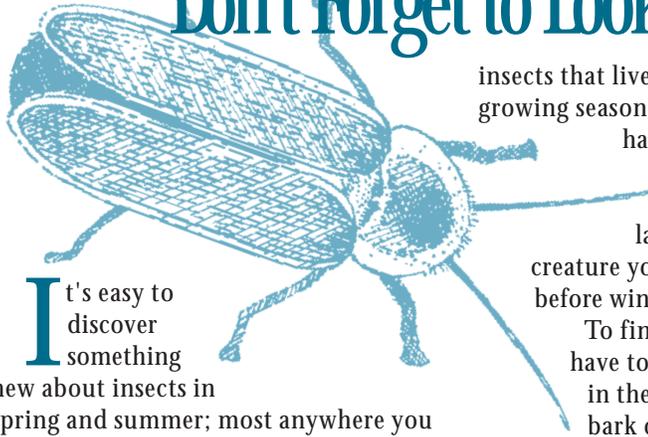
--Barb Sargent



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Day at the Lower Capital Rotunda, Charleston  
Wednesday, February 27, 2002

# Don't Forget to Look For Insects in the Winter



**I**t's easy to discover something new about insects in spring and summer; most anywhere you look, some six-legged critter, winged or wingless is hopping, buzzing, whizzing or crawling by. But during the bleak days of winter, the whirl of dragonflies, the determined march of ground beetles, and the myriad waltzes of butterflies have disappeared.

Unlike the monarch butterfly that migrates before winter, many insect species spend the winter near the vicinity of their summer habitat. If you were to visit a pond near a woodland, you could find the winter stage of most

insects that live in the open during the growing season. The catch is, you would have to look more carefully, and become familiar with the egg, pupa or larval stage of the adult creature you enjoyed observing before winter.

To find insects in winter you have to look under leaf litter, dig in the soil, look under loose bark on trees or dig into the mud around the edge of seeps, streams or lakes. Very often insects leave their eggs or pupa on the surfaces of tree branches, on dead wood or even under rocks. You would be surprised how much you could observe by simply walking slowly through a garden or woodland.

Some insects do spend the winter in the adult stage. For example, ground beetles burrow deep into the woodland soil, waiting for the warm temperatures to thaw the ground in spring. The

firefly, which is a type of beetle, also burrows into the ground for winter. However, you might also find the short worm-like larval stage of fireflies in the soil right in your own backyard.

According to DNR biologist Tom Allen, our native species of butterflies spend the winter in a wide range of stages. Some of the skippers spend the winter in the caterpillar stage, tightly rolled up in a dead leaf on a twig or branch. The mourning cloak butterfly and other angle wings spend their winter as adults nestled under loose bark or in hollow trees. Our seven native species of swallowtail butterflies overwinter in the chrysalis stage. The brown or green chrysalis is attached to a twig by a silken pad, and supported by a silk thread or girdle. Look for them on tree trunks or under loose siding near the bottom of buildings.

Remember those large, beautiful yellow grasshoppers you saw flying over

*Continued to page 6*



## WV Wildlife Viewing Guide: Muskingum Island NWR

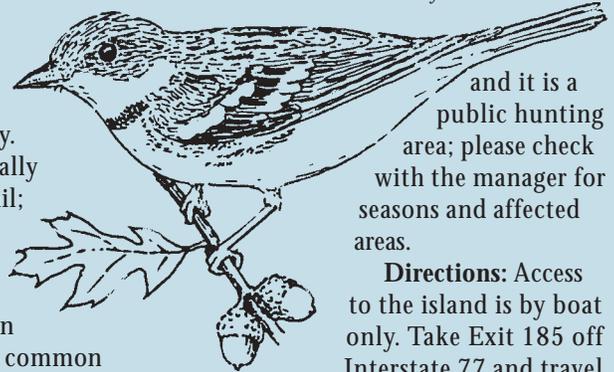
**Description:** Muskingum Island is one of 19 islands, stretching 362 miles along the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to Kentucky, that make up the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Unlike the more accessible Middle Island, Muskingum is accessible only via a 2-mile boat trip from Williamstown. This island is a mixture of immature and mature bottomland hardwoods, late successional old field openings and sandy beaches. There are scattered large sycamores and cottonwoods on the island; one sycamore has a 22-foot circumference.

**Viewing Information:** More than 260 species of birds, 40 species of mammals, 50 species of fish, and more than three dozen species of mollusks occur in the refuge, many of them on Muskingum Island. The shallow waters of the Ohio support some of the richest diversity of freshwater mussels in the United States; 28 species live here. In summer, search the beach for their

discarded shells that have been left by foraging muskrats. Although muskrats are primarily nocturnal they are sometimes seen during the day. Identify a muskrat by its laterally compressed, sparsely haired tail; their dens are large mounds of vegetation.

Two of West Virginia's most beautiful warblers nest in the island's interior, one fairly common to the state, and one rare. A small, light blue bird with a black breast band identifies the more common male cerulean warbler; the rarer male prothonotary warbler's head and underside are brilliant yellow. Bank swallows nest on the main channel side of the island. Watch for them as they search for insects over the island's water and fields.

**Special Note:** There are no commercial boats to this island; viewers must provide their own boat transportation. This is a natural area with no facilities



*Cerulean Warbler by Sam Norris*

and it is a public hunting area; please check with the manager for seasons and affected areas.

**Directions:** Access to the island is by boat only. Take Exit 185 off Interstate 77 and travel

north 1.4 miles to Williamstown. Turn left onto Riverside Road immediately before the bridge (don't cross bridge). There is a public boat ramp in Williamstown.

**Ownership:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (304) 422-0752

**Closest Town:** Williamstown.

*Editor's Note: The WV Wildlife Viewing Guide by Mark Damian Duda is available at bookstores throughout the state and can be purchased from the WV DNR by calling (304)637-0245.*

## Study Documents Unique, But Threatened Balsam Fir Stands Of WV's Highlands

The balsam woolly adelgid may not be as well-known as the gypsy moth, but it is wreaking havoc on the unique balsam fir communities of West Virginia's high elevations. The trees are threatened by a minute but major pest that infests and destroys fir stands.

The insect, a close relative to the aphid, is wingless and covered with white strands of a wool-like waxy substance. Only about 1 mm long, it sucks the sap from living trees and, while feeding, injects saliva which increases the tissue growth of the tree. A population of adelgids feeding on a single healthy tree grows quickly, until the bark appears coated with minute cotton balls or bits of wool.

According to Washington State University entomologist Dr. Art Antonelli, the injury can eventually obstruct the flow of water and nutrients between the roots and crown of the tree, and within two to three years, the tree can die.

The trees they are attacking in the Mountain State are a species of true fir, found in the isolated high elevation bogs and swamps of north-central West Virginia. Located at the southern extent of its range, there is genetic and morphological evidence supporting recognition of distinct subspecific status. *Abies balsamea* var. *phanerolepis* is sometimes known as the "Canaan Valley" balsam and has been recognized as superior Christmas tree stock. Unfortunately, while the "Canaan Valley" balsam's reputation as a hardy, adaptable tree is growing, its survival in West Virginia is threatened.

Graduate student Leah Ceperley, awarded a research grant from the WVDNR, is researching the types and health of the balsam fir communities located largely in the state's high elevation wetlands. "During the last decade, a decline in live mature firs in WV has reinforced their imperiled status," according to Ceperley. "The balsam

woolly adelgid threatens the health and existence of the fir stands and their associated communities."

The woolly adelgid is an exotic species, brought in on nursery stock from Europe, Ceperley explains. "It has already killed most of the Fraser fir in the Smokies. European firs are naturally resistant to the insect, but North American firs are not and die quickly."

Nearly every natural stand of balsam in the state has adult trees that are dying or already dead, at least in part because of adelgid damage, she says. "The fir communities are suffering massive death, with those impacted stands highly visible because they are snags or stands of balsams with orange needles."

During the summer of 2000,

*Classifying and assessing the populations of balsam fir can be a valuable step towards creating a conservation plan for these unique communities.*

Ceperley observed balsam populations in WV that showed signs of decline presumably caused by woolly adelgid infestation. While a 1975 study that showed one wetland having a 26-50 percent canopy cover by fir trees, by last year that percentage had been reduced to less than 10 percent. "As the older canopy trees have died, the community is converting to a dominantly herbaceous cover type. Standing snags of *A. balsamea* reflect its former presence in the area."

The balsam firs found in the Mountain State had been relatively healthy until the last decade. "Field surveys

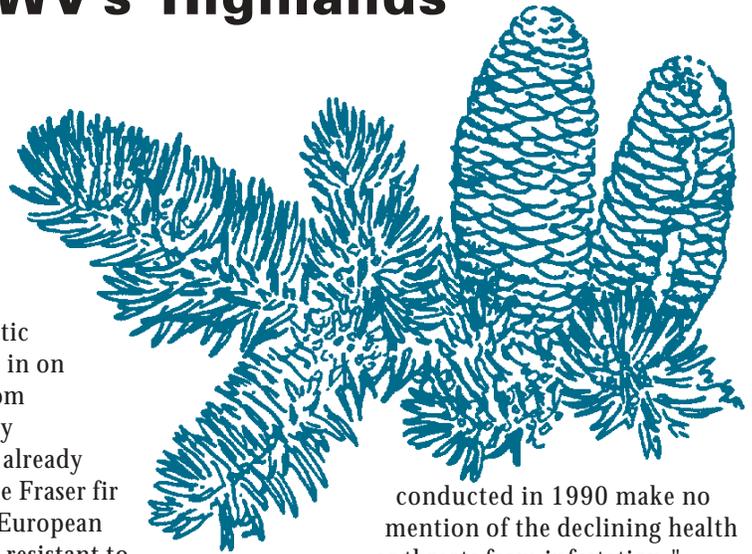


Illustration by Sam Norris

conducted in 1990 make no mention of the declining health or threats from infestation,"

Ceperley points out. "And no systematic study has evaluated the health of these balsam fir stands since the infestation began."

In addition, the type of wetland community in which the WV balsam species is found may differ from that of its more northern cousin. "Classifying the current components of the West Virginia stands can help prioritize them for protection," says Ceperley. "This classification may also provide information valuable for monitoring changes in stands infested by the adelgid and for future restoration efforts."

While she points out that there has been no success with adelgid control measures on natural stands, there are other methods to help strengthen balsam populations. Researchers are finding that while the adelgid attacks adult trees, they seem to have less effect on young trees; the biggest threat to young trees is deer browsing. Currently the WVDNR, the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Canaan Valley State Park are building exclosures to keep deer from eating balsam seedlings. "Overabundant deer in the Valley decimate balsam seedlings, the next generation of fir. Keeping the deer away from a few seedlings will hopefully give them a chance to grow to maturity and produce cones before succumbing to the adelgid."

Now in the final stages of her project, Ceperley has been mapping out the

(Continued to page 6)

*Insects, Continued from page 4*

the weeds in old fields, often near ponds? Well, they are more than likely living in the ground as eggs. During the fall months, the female grasshoppers drilled little holes in the earth and deposited her tiny eggs for a long winter sleep. In the spring those eggs will hatch into miniature grasshoppers, called nymphs. Some insects have only three stages of metamorphosis, adult, egg and nymph. The nymphs will feed, grow, and shed their skins (molt), repeatedly through the summer until they reach their adult size.

What about those magnificent dragonflies which zoom around ponds and streams all summer? Would you believe you could find them in the mud at the bottom of a body of water? The behavior and appearance of the nymph stage of dragonflies more aptly fit the name of dragon. The nymph looks more like a terrestrial insect with its six legs; dull brownish colors and armored looking body. Its head bears a lower lip shaped like an arm with hooks used for catching tadpoles and insects.

Dragonfly nymphs may spend a long time in a dormant stage at the bottom of the pond. In the spring they emerge and begin feeding. They grow and shed their skins as they grow. In the spring or summer when a dragonfly nymph is ready for its last molt it will crawl out of the water onto a plant stem. Its exoskeleton will split open and an adult dragonfly will crawl out, wait for its wings to dry and begin a summer-long

feeding frenzy.

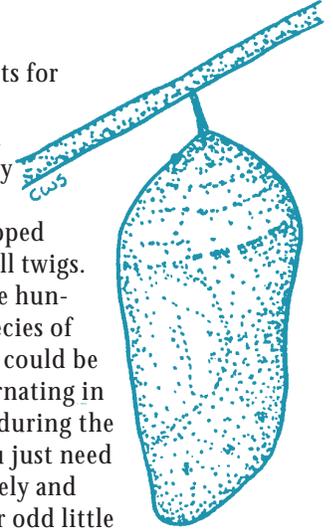
One of the most exciting insect finds in the winter is a case of praying mantis eggs. In the fall an adult female mantid deposits foamy liquid on a plant stem. She then deposits her eggs into the foamy mass. After the eggs are deposited, the mass hardens leaving the eggs well protected from predators and the cold. These dome shaped masses look just like a clump of hardened grayish sea foam that range from one-half inch to an inch across.

Most of us are all too familiar with those cottony tents constructed by eastern tent caterpillars in the forks of branches on wild black cherry trees. Hundreds of tiny caterpillars emerge from the tents during the day to feed on leaves of the cherry trees. At night and during adverse conditions, they retreat

into the tents for shelter. In winter, look for the shiny brown egg masses wrapped around small twigs.

There are hundreds of species of insects that could be found hibernating in plain sight during the winter. You just need to look closely and carefully for odd little shapes and structures on plants, under rock ledges or leaf litter and in the soil. So, don't let the presumed scarcity of living things keep you indoors this winter.

--Emily Grafton

*Balsam Study Continued From Page 5*

balsam fir stands in Canaan Valley and Blister Run while noting the adelgid abundance and fir canopy decline. She has found that some trees do not seem to be as easily killed by the adelgids, giving hope that a very small number of trees may have resistance to the insect.

The products of her study will include a community classification and descriptions for each of the fir stands, GIS maps of the fir communities, element occurrence transcription forms for the communities described, and

baseline plots and data for future monitoring of the adelgid infestation and impacts.

"Impacts of the woolly adelgid and the possible resulting extinction of *A. balsamea* in WV provide a timely opportunity to study the fir community's species composition and overall health," Ceperley believes. "Classifying and assessing the populations of balsam fir can be a valuable step towards creating a conservation plan for these unique communities."

--Nanci Bross-Fregonara

**Who Wants To Be A Biologist?**

Due to an earlier than expected publication deadline for this issue, the Fall trivia winner had not been chosen yet! You may remember that the question was: What is the smallest owl found nesting in West Virginia? The answer is the Northern Saw-whet Owl. This little owl measures only 7 to 8 1/2 inches tall and nests in the higher Allegheny Mountains. The winner which will have been chosen by the time you receive this mailing will

receive a *West Virginia Watchable Wildlife Viewing Guide* and we will list both contest winners (Fall and Winter) in the Spring 2002 issue.

Thank you all for playing!

**Here's this issue's question:**  
*What was the chemical pesticide used following World War II, thought to be nontoxic and applied on agriculture crops that causes egg shell thinning on many birds of prey which greatly reduced their populations?*

**Official Rules:**

Clearly print your answer on a postcard along with your name, address and phone number and send it to: WV DNR, Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Newsletter, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241, **Attention: trivia contest.** or email [nbrossfregonara@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:nbrossfregonara@dnr.state.wv.us).

Only one postcard will be accepted per household, per question.

Postcards for this issue's contest question must be postmarked by **January 15, 2002** and this issue's winner will be sent the **WV Watchable Wildlife Guide**.

Please do not call our office and ask for the answers. That would be too easy, but you can visit our website:

[www.dnr.state.wv.us](http://www.dnr.state.wv.us) and search for clues.

Employees of the WV DNR and the Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Program and their families are ineligible. Each winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by the postmarked deadline.

# Plant Lore of the Mountains

## A Winter Walk May Bring Visions of Beechdrops

From late fall through early spring one is likely to walk by but overlook a colony of branched, slender-brown stalks growing at the base of a beech tree (*Fagus grandifolia*). Sometimes only one or two stalks may be present. In late summer, these curious little plants called beechdrops (*Epifagus virginiana*) have a spongy texture with a dull-purplish to brown color. Even during their growing season, people often overlook these obscure flowers.

This herbaceous, annual plant makes its living parasitizing the roots of beech trees. It will grow on a tree of any size and has been known to parasitize one-year old seedlings. A growing plant inserts a root-like structure called a haustorium into a beech root, absorbing enough nutrition to sustain itself. The genus *Epifagus* is derived from the Greek word "epi" which means upon, and the Latin "fagus" meaning beech.

Beechdrops belong to a whole family of plants that live as root parasites. They do not produce chlorophyll so consequently lack any green color. This lack of "greenness" is one reason that many people overlook them. When first observed, many people think beechdrops look like a fungus.

Beechdrops range in height from about five inches to a foot and a half. The skinny-tubular branches bear small, scale-like leaves pressed flat against the

stem. Tiny flowers occur singly or in spikes. Looking through a hand lens an individual flower is quite beautiful. The flowers are tubular and bear two lip-like projections. The flowers produce nectar to attract winged pollinators, but only the upper flowers produce seeds.

It is believed that raindrops disperse the seeds and that they germinate in spring. Plant development moves slowly through the growing season. By July, the whole plant is still only a half-inch in height and appears on the surface of the ground as a small white tubercle. Beechdrops do not fully mature until mid to late August. They bloom from August to October, and by the end of November the plant turns dark brown and brittle.

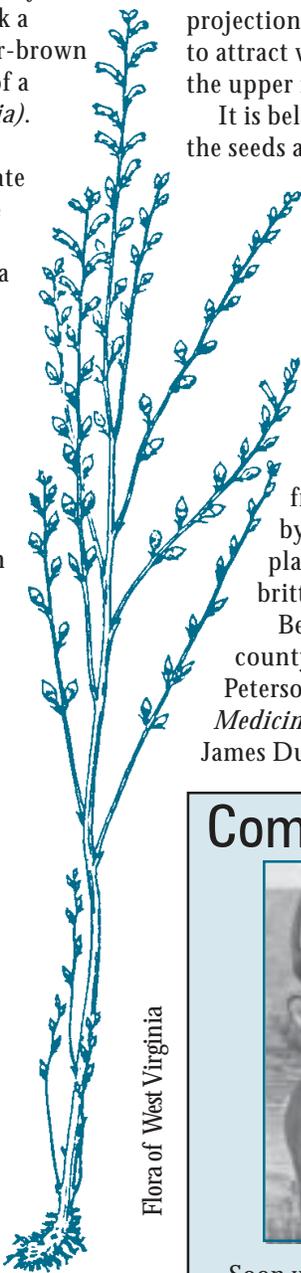
Beechdrops occur in every county of West Virginia. The Peterson Field Guide, *Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants* by Steven Foster and James Duke states that the species

ranges from Ontario south to Florida, and as far west as Louisiana. They indicate that this plant was once used medicinally to treat diarrhea, dysentery, mouth sores and externally on cold sores. Native Americans steeped the whole plant in hot water for a tea. Beechdrops tea tastes bitter, so people dried the plant before using it to lessen the bitterness.

Though beechdrops live as a parasite on beech trees they do not damage the trees. Each plant dies at the end of the growing season. This is a good thing considering the fact that the underground portions of beechdrops grows throughout the life of the plant, sometimes encasing and constricting the root it is parasitizing. If beechdrops were a long-lived perennial, it could eventually kill its own source of food.

Beechdrops and its relatives in the Broomrape family are one of nature's many anomalies. New things may yet be discovered about the pollination mechanisms, seed dispersal and the genes that control its growth. The next time you see a beech tree look for beechdrops.

--Emily Grafton



Flora of West Virginia

### Coming Soon To a DMV Office Near You!



Soon wildlife enthusiasts will have the opportunity to purchase a new West Virginia wildlife license plate that features a white-tailed buck standing alongside a mountain stream. The plate was created by Tom Allen, designer of the state's rose-breasted grosbeak plate.

The wildlife license plate fees include the \$30 annual registration fee, a \$15 annual fee which goes to the Nongame Wildlife fund and a one time \$10 fee. Thus the total cost of the plate will be \$55 the first year and \$45 for renewal in subsequent years.

## Kids Crafts

### Remember Wildlife During the Holidays

Now that winter and the holiday season are upon us and we have finished decorating our Christmas trees, it's time for creating a Christmas tree for wildlife. The following ideas are just a few simple ways kids of all ages can create treats for our feathered friends.

Find a small tree in your yard or nearby that you can observe from a window in your house and decorated it with edible treats for our wildlife.

- String a line of popcorn with peanuts and bits of dried fruit and wrap it around the tree.

- Take an old bagel, have an adult slice it very thin, spread peanut butter on both sides and sprinkle it with bird seed. Take a piece of string or colorful

ribbon and hang it on the tree.

- Use a slice of bread to make different shapes with cookie cutters. Let the bread sit for a day or so until it gets hard.

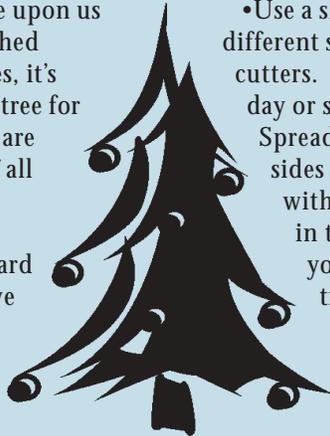
Spread peanut butter on both sides and sprinkle or dip it with bird seed. Poke a hole in the top and string it on your wildlife Christmas tree.

- Take a pine or spruce cone, attach a ribbon to it, spread more peanut butter on it and sprinkle it

with bird seed and hang it on your tree.

Now sit back on a comfortable chair in your warm, cozy house and watch your presents disappear from your wildlife Christmas tree!

--Jim Fregonara



#### WV Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage News



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