

BIRDS

of West Virginia

CHECKLIST



WEST VIRGINIA

DNR

WVdnr.gov

Birding in the Mountain State

West Virginia, with its temperate climate, diverse vegetation and dramatic topography, plays host to numerous species of birds throughout the year. Watch eagles soar over the Potomac River, listen to the songs of warblers courting in dense conifer forests atop the Allegheny Mountains, see woodpeckers probe the bark of oak trees for insects, visit a high elevation wetland to glimpse a bittern, or watch a gull resting on a migration stopover along the Ohio River. These and many other natural wonders await even the casual bird watcher in West Virginia.

This checklist includes 256 species most often encountered in the state, although many can only be found during certain times of year or in particular places, and others only make occasional appearances. Don't count on seeing them all, but with some patience, a little travel and some early mornings, you should encounter and check off a good number of them. Finding birds is often a matter of location, location, location. As you visit more places, you'll encounter a greater variety of birds. A good place to start is at home; as you become familiar with local birds, it gets easier to spot the less-common visitors.

If you're new to birding, a field guide or a birding app for your phone can help get you started. Most birders rely on binoculars, but birding by camera is becoming more popular every year. The website eBird.org, hosted by the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology, is a popular platform for submitting and viewing bird records and includes apps for IOS and Android. It can provide birders with both their own lists of sightings and the expected species in a given location. Additional apps, such as Audubon, Merlin and iNaturalist, can help with bird and birdsong identification. Read the American Birding Association Code of Ethics and follow its guidelines.

To join others interested in birds and birding, consider joining the statewide Brooks Bird Club (BrooksBirdClub.org) or a local chapter or club. In addition, the West Virginia Bird Records Committee maintains the complete state bird list, as well as complete lists of rare species. Please report sightings of rare birds in accordance with the committee's procedures.

Codes

NOTE: Abundance codes represent statewide generalizations and may not apply in a given location. Seasons of occurrence are approximate and individuals may appear in unexpected places and at unexpected times.

ABUNDANCE CODES

C	Common: frequently encountered in appropriate habitat
F	Fairly common: regularly found in appropriate habitat
U	Uncommon: found in small numbers or only in certain habitats
R	Rare: typically found only a few times a year, in very small numbers, or only in specific locations

SEASONS

SP	Spring: March through May
SU	Summer: June through August
AU	Autumn: September through November
WI	Winter: December through February

ADDITIONAL CODES

*	Neotropical migrant; designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
†	Breeds



Great crested flycatcher

Doug Jolley

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

GEESE, SWANS AND DUCKS

<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Goose*	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Ross's Goose*	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater White-fronted Goose*				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Cackling Goose*				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Mute Swan	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Tundra Swan	F		F	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck*†	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Teal*†	U	R	U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shoveler*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Gadwall*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Wigeon*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Black Duck†	U	R	U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Pintail*	U		R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Green-winged Teal*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Canvasback*	U		R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Redhead*	U		R	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck*	F		U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Scaup	U		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Scaup*	F		R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Surf Scoter*	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Scoter	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Scoter	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Duck	R			R
<input type="checkbox"/> Bufflehead*	F		U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye*	U		R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Merganser†	F	R	U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Merganser*†	F	U	U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser*	U		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Duck*	U		U	U

QUAIL

<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Bobwhite†	R	R	R	R
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SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

TURKEY, GROUSE AND PHEASANTS

<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey [†]	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse [†]	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant [†]	R	R	R	R

GREBES

<input type="checkbox"/> Pied-billed Grebe ^{*†}	F	R	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Grebe	R		R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe	R		R	R

PIGEONS AND DOVES

<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon [†]	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Collared-Dove [†]	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove ^{*†}	C	C	C	C

CUCKOOS

<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Cuckoo ^{*†}	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-billed Cuckoo ^{*†}	U	U	U	

NIGHTJARS

<input type="checkbox"/> Common Nighthawk ^{*†}	R	R	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chuck-will's-widow ^{*†}	R	R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Whip-poor-will ^{*†}	U	U	R	



Joey Herron

Hooded mergansers

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

SWIFTS

<input type="checkbox"/> Chimney Swift**	C	C	F	
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HUMMINGBIRDS

<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-throated Hummingbird**	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Hummingbird*			R	R

RAILS AND COOTS

<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Rail**	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Sora**	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Gallinule**	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot**	U	R	U	U

CRANES

<input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane*	R	R	R	R
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PLOVERS

<input type="checkbox"/> Black-bellied Plover*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Killdeer**	C	C	C	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Plover*	R		R	



WV Department of Commerce

Killdeer

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
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SANDPIPERS

<input type="checkbox"/> Upland Sandpiper*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stilt Sandpiper*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanderling*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunlin*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baird's Sandpiper*			R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Sandpiper*	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-rumped Sandpiper*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pectoral Sandpiper*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Sandpiper*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-billed Dowitcher*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Woodcock†	U	U	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Snipe*†	U	R	U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper*†	F	R	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper*	F		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Yellowlegs*	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Yellowlegs*	U		U	

GULLS AND TERNS

<input type="checkbox"/> Bonaparte's Gull*	U		U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull*	F		F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Herring Gull*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-backed Gull	R			R
<input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Tern*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Tern*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Forster's Tern*	R		R	

LOONS

<input type="checkbox"/> Common Loon*	U		U	U
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CORMORANTS

<input type="checkbox"/> Double-crested Cormorant*	U	U	U	U
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SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

HERONS AND EGRETS

<input type="checkbox"/> American Bittern*†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Bittern*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron*†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret*	U	U	U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Blue Heron*		R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-crowned Night-Heron*	R	R	R	R

VULTURES

<input type="checkbox"/> Black Vulture*†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Vulture*†	C	C	C	C

HAWKS AND EAGLES

<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey*†	F	U	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle*	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Harrier*†	U	R	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk*†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk*†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Goshawk†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi Kite*†	R	R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-winged Hawk*†	F	U	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Hawk				R

OWLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Owl†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Screech-Owl†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Owl				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-eared Owl*†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-eared Owl*				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Saw-whet Owl†	R	R	R	R

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI
KINGFISHERS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Belted Kingfisher*†	F	F	F	F
WOODPECKERS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*†	U	U	U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker†	F	F	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker†	F	F	F	F
FALCONS				
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel*†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Merlin*†	R	R	R	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine Falcon*†	R	R	R	R
FLYCATCHERS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Flycatcher*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kingbird*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Olive-sided Flycatcher*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Wood-Pewee*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Flycatcher*†	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acadian Flycatcher*†	C	C	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alder Flycatcher*†	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Willow Flycatcher*†	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Least Flycatcher*†	F	F		
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Phoebe*†	C	C	C	U
VIREOS				
<input type="checkbox"/> White-eyed Vireo*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Vireo*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-headed Vireo*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Philadelphia Vireo*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Warbling Vireo*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo*†	C	C	C	

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
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SHRIKES

<input type="checkbox"/> Loggerhead Shrike*†	R	R	R	R
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JAYS, CROWS AND RAVENS

<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish Crow†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Raven†	F	F	F	F

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Chickadee†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse†	C	C	C	C

LARKS

<input type="checkbox"/> Horned Lark†	R	R	R	U
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SWALLOWS

<input type="checkbox"/> Bank Swallow*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Swallow*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Rough-winged Swallow*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Martin*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Swallow*†	U	U	U	



Loggerhead shrike

WV Department of Commerce

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
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KINGLETS

<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet*	U		U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet*†	F	U	F	F

WAXWINGS

<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing*†	C	C	C	F
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NUTHATCHES

<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch†	C	C	C	C

TREECREEPERS

<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper†	U	U	U	U
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GNATCATCHERS

<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher*†	C	C	C	
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WRENS

<input type="checkbox"/> House Wren*†	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Wren*†		R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Wren*	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Wren†	C	C	C	C



Cedar waxwings

Doug Jolley

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
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CATBIRDS, THRASHERS AND MOCKINGBIRDS

<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird*†	C	C	C	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher†	C	C	C	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Mockingbird†	F	F	F	F

STARLINGS

<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling†	C	C	C	C
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THRUSHES

<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Veery*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray-cheeked Thrush*	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Thrush*†	F	U	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush*†	U	U	U	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Thrush*†	C	C	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin*†	C	C	C	C

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow†	C	C	C	C
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PIPITS

<input type="checkbox"/> American Pipit*				R
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FINCHES

<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak	R			R
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Crossbill†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Crossbill				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin*†	U	R	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch*†	C	C	C	C

LONGSPURS AND BUNTINGS

<input type="checkbox"/> Lapland Longspur				R
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Bunting				R

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

SPARROWS, JUNCOS AND TOWHEES

<input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper Sparrow*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipping Sparrow*†	C	C	C	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay-colored Sparrow*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow*†	C	C	C	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow*	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	U		U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco*†	C	F	F	C
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow*	F		F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow	C		C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Vesper Sparrow*†	R	R	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Henslow's Sparrow†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah Sparrow*†	U	U	U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow*†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln's Sparrow*	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Swamp Sparrow*†	U	U	U	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee†	C	C	C	F

CHATS

<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-breasted Chat*†	U	U	R	
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BLACKBIRDS AND ALLIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink*†	U	U	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Meadowlark*†	F	F	F	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard Oriole*†	F	F	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Oriole*†	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird*†	C	C	C	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird*†	C	C	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird	R		R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle†	C	C	F	F

NEW WORLD WARBLERS

<input type="checkbox"/> Ovenbird*†	C	C	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Worm-eating Warbler*†	F	F	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Louisiana Waterthrush*†	F	F		
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Waterthrush*†	R	R	R	

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI

NEW WORLD WARBLERS continued

<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-winged Warbler*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Warbler*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white Warbler*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prothonotary Warbler*†	R	R	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Warbler*†	R	R		
<input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee Warbler*	F		F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange-crowned Warbler*			R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nashville Warbler*†	U	R	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Warbler*	R		R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Warbler*†	U	U	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky Warbler*†	U	U	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat*†	C	C	C	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Warbler*†	C	C	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Redstart*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cape May Warbler*	U		F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cerulean Warbler*†	F	F	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Parula*†	C	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia Warbler*†	F	U	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bay-breasted Warbler*	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackburnian Warbler*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Warbler*†	C	C		
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackpoll Warbler*	U		U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Blue Warbler*†	F	F	F	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler*	U		U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Warbler*†	U	U	U	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler*†	F	U	F	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-throated Warbler*†	F	F	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Warbler*†	U	U	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Green Warbler*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Warbler*†	U	U		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Warbler*	R		R	

SPECIES NAME	SEASONAL ABUNDANCE			
	SP	SU	AU	WI
TANAGERS, CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS AND BUNTINGS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Tanager*†	U	U	R	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal†	C	C	C	C
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak*†	F	F	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Grosbeak*†	U	U	U	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting*†	C	C	C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dickcissel*†	R	R	R	

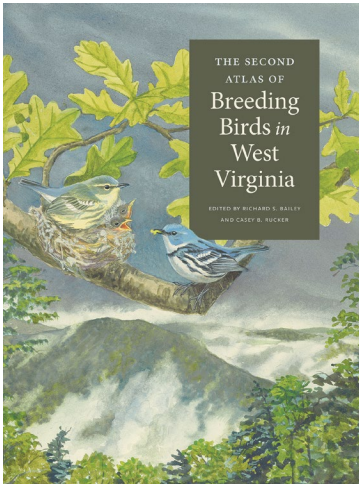


Joey Herron

Chestnut-sided warbler

Home reference

A comprehensive home reference about the state's nesting birds, "The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia," published in 2021, is now available at [PSUpres.org](https://psupress.org) or can be ordered through your bookstore.



West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Section
Wildlife Diversity Program
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Cover: Wood thrush. Photo by Wil Hershberger.

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, services and programs to all persons without regard to sex, race, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, disability or other protected group status.

10M 08/2022