

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist
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Coverage: MD/DC/VA/central and southern DE/WV panhandle
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This is the Voice of the Naturalist, a service of the Audubon Naturalist Society. This report covers the week starting Tuesday, January 9 and was completed on Tuesday, January 16, at 11:00 AM.

Information on noteworthy birds is presented below in taxonomic order, as set forth in the American Ornithological Society Checklist for North and Middle American Birds, as revised through the 58th Supplement (July 2017).

The top birds this week were KING EIDER in VA, RED PHALAROPE in DE and VA, LARK SPARROW* in DC, HARRIS'S SPARROW* in MD, SHINY COWBIRD* in MD, WESTERN TANAGER* in VA, and BLUE GROSBEAK in MD.

Other birds of interest included waterfowl, grebes, SANDHILL CRANE, gulls, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, bitterns, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, GOLDEN EAGLE, SNOWY and SHORT-EARED OWLS, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKES, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, sparrows, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, ORANGE-CROWNED and NASHVILLE WARBLERS, and PAINTED BUNTING.

TOP BIRDS

A first year male KING EIDER was off Island Number 3 of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in Northampton Co, VA on Jan 13.

Two separate reports came in this week of RED PHALAROPES. One was seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA and another at Indian River Inlet, Sussex Co, DE both on Jan 12.

The long continuing LARK SPARROW was seen again on Jan 14 at the National Arboretum, NE DC.

The continuing HARRIS'S SPARROW was still being seen along the Anacostia River Trail in Prince George's Co, MD throughout most of the week, last seen on Jan 15.

The SHINY COWBIRD continues near the intersection of Parkwood Drive and Franklin Street in Bethesda, Montgomery Co, MD, with the most recent sighting on Jan 15.

The male WESTERN TANAGER seen last week was seen again at a feeder in Yorktown, York Co, VA on Jan 10, and again on Jan 14.

A first year male BLUE GROSBEAK was seen and photographed at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Dorchester Co, MD on Jan 10.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

SNOW GEESE were seen at many inland locations, including Washington, Frederick, Carroll, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties, in MD throughout the week. ROSS'S GEESE were at Shannondale Lake in Jefferson Co, WV on Jan 9 and 11, another at the Jackson River in Alleghany Co, VA on Jan 10 and 12, and at a farm pond in Fauquier Co, VA on Jan 13. Another was at Black Hill Regional Park in Montgomery Co, MD on Jan 13 and 14, another single bird was at Fort Frederick SP-Big Pool, Washington Co, MD on Jan 14 and 15, and another lone bird was seen at the Virginia Tech-Duck Pond, Montgomery Co, VA on the same day. GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were reported from many areas throughout the region during the week, including Allegany, Howard, and Baltimore Counties in MD, Berkeley County, WV, and Prince Edward, Fauquier, Frederick, Rockingham, Augusta, Bedford Counties and Virginia Beach in VA. As many as 24 BRANT were seen at Anderson Park in Newport News, VA, while a single bird was seen at the Piedmont Geriatric Hospital Pond in Nottoway Co, VA on Jan 14 and 15. On Jan 9 a CACKLING GOOSE was seen at the Cumberland-Terminus in Allegany Co, MD and in Henrico Co, VA Jan 10, Virginia Beach, VA, and Prince William and Fairfax Counties in VA on Jan 13, and Silver Lake in Rehoboth, Sussex Co, DE on Jan 14.

TRUMPETER SWANS were seen at several locations this week, including a continuing bird at Lake Elkhorn, Howard Co, MD, through Jan 13 and in VA at Ivy Street Ponds in Waynesboro, and Mountain Run Lake Park in Culpeper on Jan 9. Six were seen at the International Conservation House, Fauquier Co, VA on Jan 11, 12 and 15.

A EURASIAN WIGEON was seen at Pohick Bay Regional Park, Fairfax Co, VA on Jan 9, 10 and 15.

HARLEQUIN DUCKS were seen at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD and at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Islands in Virginia Beach, VA both on Jan 13. LONG-TAILED DUCKS were seen at the Conowingo Dam, Harford Co, MD on Jan 9 and 14, and the C&O Canal, Frederick Co, MD on Jan 9, another at the King-Lincoln Park, Newport News, VA on Jan 9 and 10, at the Wilson Bridge in both Washington, DC and Prince George's Co, MD waters on Jan 11, and Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Fairfax Co, VA on Jan 13.

RED-NECKED GREBES were reported in low numbers this week, with one at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD on Jan 11 and 13, and another at the Indian River Inlet, Sussex Co, DE on Jan 11. On Jan 13 one was seen at Beach Plum Island Natural Preserve, Sussex Co, DE. An EARED GREBE was reported from the south end of King-Lincoln Park in Newport News, VA on Jan 9, for a possible first county record.

SANDHILL CRANES were reported from three locations this week, including one heard at Green Springs NHD-East Jack Jouett Rd. in Louisa Co, VA on Jan 10, two seen on a private farm in Montgomery Co, MD the same day, and two seen flying and calling at the Algonkian Nature Preserve-Sanctuary Trail, Loudoun Co, VA on Jan 14.

Notable gulls this week include a BLACK-HEADED GULL at Cape Henlopen State Park-Herring Point, Sussex Co, DE on Jan 11, ICELAND GULL at the Gwynns Falls Trail South, Baltimore Co, MD Jan 9 and 15, another continuing bird at the trash transfer station in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, MD Jan 9, 10, 11, 12 and 15. Another was at North East Community Park, Cecil Co, MD on Jan 9, 11 and 15. In VA, a single ICELAND GULL was seen on Jan 15 at the Walmart Ponds in Colonial Heights. Two LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were spotted at Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Jan 11. GLAUCOUS GULLS were seen at Occoquan Regional Park, Fairfax Co, VA on Jan 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15, and another at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Jan 13. A GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL was being seen at the Cumberland-Terminus in Allegany Co, MD on Jan 9, 10, and 12.

An AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was being seen and photographed at Sherwood Lakes in Virginia Beach, VA on Jan 12 and 13.

An AMERICAN BITTERN continued at Black Marsh, Baltimore Co, MD, seen on Jan 9, 10, 14 and 15, while a single LEAST BITTERN held on in the cold at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA, also on Jan 9, and again on Jan 14.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK reports came from Dulles Airport in Loudoun Co, VA on Jan 12, 14 and 15, Prime Hook NWR, Broadkill Marsh, Sussex Co, DE on Jan 12, 13, 14 and 15, and Quail Covey Farm pond in Queen Anne's Co, MD on Jan 13, and two birds nearby at Pemberton Manor on Jan 14 and 15. An adult GOLDEN EAGLE was seen and photographed along Plum Branch Rd. Campbell Co, VA on Jan 14, a first county record. Another two were seen and one photographed on Jan 15 at Gleason Knob, Garrett Co, MD.

SNOWY OWL reports came from Assateague SP-Campground, Worcester Co, MD on Jan 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15, from Dulles Airport, Loudoun Co, VA on Jan 9, 12, 14 and 15, and continuing birds at Rockingham Co, VA Jan 10, and 12, Port Mahon Rd. Kent Co, DE on Jan 13, 14, and 15, and Prime Hook NWR-Fowler Beach Rd. in Sussex Co, DE on Jan 14. SHORT-EARED OWLS were reported from Hamilton Farms in Garrett Co, MD on Jan 9, and the continuing birds being seen at the Konterra Drive fields in Prince George's Co, MD, with as many as five being seen there at dusk on Jan 10, at least two being seen on Jan 11, 13 and 14 and as many as six, or possibly seven, seen there the afternoon of Jan 15. On Jan 14 and 15 two SHORT-EARED OWLS were seen at Pemberton Manor, Queen Anne's Co, MD and on Jan 15 five were seen at Russell Rd, Garrett Co, MD.

A continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was still being seen as of Jan 9 along Langhorne Rd, Albemarle Co, VA, and the wintering NORTHERN SHRIKE was seen again on Jan 12, 13, and 14 at the Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA.

A continuing CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was seen at Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, Fairfax Co, VA on Jan 14 and 15. A VESPER SPARROW was spotted at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park in Dorchester Co, MD on Jan 10, 14 and 15, and another was seen at Bradenbaugh Flats, Harford Co, MD on Jan 10 and 15.

The only LAPLAND LONGSPUR reports this week were of three birds seen along the dunes with a flock of Horned Larks, at Prime Hook NWR in Sussex Co, DE on Jan 13, and a single bird seen in Augusta Co, VA on Jan 13.

A male BALTIMORE ORIOLE was at a feeder in Cecil Co, MD on Jan 10.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS were seen at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park in Prince George's Co, MD on Jan 10, and at the Wilson Bridge also in Prince George's County on Jan 11, and in Washington D.C. at Kingman Island South on Jan 10, and one seen in Bedford Co, VA on Jan 13. Another was seen at the Fred Archibald Audubon Sanctuary, Frederick Co, MD on Jan 15, and yet another at Mountain Run Lake Park, Culpeper, VA the same day. A NASHVILLE WARBLER was seen on Daingerfield Island, Alexandria, VA on Jan 14.

A PAINTED BUNTING was seen in Virginia Beach, VA on Jan 13.

This week's report was based on reports on the DE, MD, VA, and WV list servers, eBird records and various birding pages on Facebook.

The Audubon Sanctuary Shop (301-652-3606, <http://anshome.org/naturalist-shop>) is an excellent source for guidebooks and many other nature-related titles.

To report bird sightings, e-mail your report to voice@anshome.org. Please post reports before midnight Monday, identify the county as well as the state, and include your name and a Tuesday morning contact, e-mail or phone.

Thank you for your interest, and enjoy the birds.

*Of interest to the applicable state records committee