

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, February 13 and was completed on Tuesday, February 20 at 9:30 a.m.

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 PINK-FOOTED GOOSE* in MD, SNOWY OWL in DC, MD and WV, HARRIS'S SPARROW* in MD and VA, WESTERN Tanager in VA and PAINTED BUNTING in DE, MD and VA.

Other birds of interest this week included SNOW, ROSS'S and GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, BRANT, CACKLING GOOSE, TRUMPETER SWAN, EURASIAN WIGEON, GREEN-WINGED TEAL (intergrade), WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE, RING-NECKED PHEASANT, RED-NECKED GREBE, EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE, KING RAIL, AMERICAN AVOCET, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER, PURPLE and SPOTTED SANDPIPERS, RAZORBILL, BLACK-HEADED and ICELAND GULLS, RED-THROATED LOON, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, OSPREY, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, GOLDEN EAGLE, MONK PARAKEET, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKES, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, TREE SWALLOW, AMERICAN PIPIT, RED CROSSBILL, SNOW BUNTING, AMERICAN TREE, CLAY-COLORED, VESPER, LARK, GRASSHOPPER and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD, BALTIMORE ORIOLE,

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD, ORANGE-CROWNED and YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS and SUMMER TANAGER.

TOP BIRDS

On February 17 and 18 a PINK-FOOTED GOOSE* was spotted in a large flock of SNOW GEESE on Holly Road a short distance north of Route 404 in Caroline County, MD.

Two SNOWY OWLS continue to be seen on the roof of an interior courtyard at the United States Department of Agriculture building located at 1351 C Street, SW, Washington, DC and nearby, with the most recent sighting of both individuals on February 13 and one individual on February 14-16 and 18. In Maryland a continuing SNOWY OWL was reported at Assateague I. NS in Worcester Co on February 13, 17 and 18, and a distant SNOWY OWL was seen from the Hooper's Island Bridge in Dorchester Co on February 17 and 19. In addition, on February 19 two SNOWY OWLS were seen around the nature center buildings at the south end of the campground in Assateague SP in Worcester Co, MD. A continuing SNOWY OWL along Currie Road a short distance north of Charles Town in Jefferson Co, WV was seen on February 13, 14 and 15.

A continuing HARRIS'S SPARROW* was seen most recently along a short spur to a boat ramp off the Anacostia River Trail in Prince George's Co, MD on February 15. On February 14 a HARRIS'S SPARROW was relocated at the White House Boat Ramp in Page Co, VA, apparently for the first time since late December 2017.

A male WESTERN TANAGER* has been seen almost daily since it returned to a residential feeder in Settlers' Mill, Williamsburg, VA on December 2 for the seventh consecutive winter. A female WESTERN TANAGER continues to visit a feeder at 3616 Harding Drive in Chesapeake Co, VA, with the most recent sighting on February 19. On February 18 a female WESTERN TANAGER was photographed at a feeder located on the east side of Northampton Boulevard a short distance north of the intersection with Shore Drive in Virginia Beach, VA.

A continuing green PAINTED BUNTING at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD was seen most recently on February 16. A male PAINTED BUNTING visited 2101 Princess Anne Court in Virginia Beach, VA on February 18 and a feeder located near

the intersection of Chase Point Circle and Tremont Court in Virginia Beach, VA on February 19. A male PAINTED BUNTING also continues a short distance outside the reporting area, along Dixie Line Road in New Castle Co, DE, with the most recent sighting on February 19.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

On February 16 and 17 a blue-morph SNOW GOOSE was found along 471-475 Peat Moss Road and 628-698 Norris Welch Road in Garrett Co, MD. On February 17 two ROSS'S GEESE were spotted in a large flock of CANADA GEESE at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE. On February 17 a ROSS'S GOOSE was spotted in the large SNOW GOOSE flock with the PINK-FOOTED GOOSE on Holly Road a short distance north of Route 404 in Caroline County, MD. Three ROSS'S GEESE were at Silver Lake in Dayton, Rockingham Co, VA on February 15 and 16, and one was found along Bell's Lane in Staunton, VA on February 16.

On February 15 two GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were found at Piney Run Park in Carroll Co, MD, and on February 17 and 19 four GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were seen at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD. Two GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE also were seen at Trout Run WWTP in Garrett Co, MD on February 17 and 18. In Virginia 1-2 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were found in a large flock of CANADA GEESE in a field along Indian River Road just east of North Landing Road in Virginia Beach on February 17 and 18, and one was seen at the Daleville Ponds in Botetourt Co on February 18 and 19.

A continuing inland BRANT in Nottoway Co, VA was seen along 6840-7158 W. Patrick Henry Highway on February 16 and 17.

On February 19 a CACKLING GOOSE was seen at a private pond along Peat Moss Road in Garrett Co, MD.

A continuing TRUMPETER SWAN was seen all week at the Broken Land Parkway-U.S. 29 Stormwater Pond in Howard Co, MD. In Virginia three TRUMPETER SWANS visited Turner Pond at Sky Meadows SP in Fauquier Co on February 13, and a continuing TRUMPETER SWAN was seen most recently at the Ivy Street ponds in Waynesboro and the Daleville Ponds in Botetourt Co on February 19. In addition, a continuing tagged TRUMPETER SWAN was seen at Lakeside Lake in Frederick Co, VA on February 14 and 16.

Sightings of EURASIAN WIGEON included a continuing individual at the Assowoman Wildlife Area-Mulberry Landing in Sussex Co, DE on February 13 and 19 and an individual that briefly visited a pond along Study Road in Carroll Co, MD on February 16. In Virginia, two EURASIAN WIGEON were found at Chincoteague NWR in Accomack Co on February 14 and 16-18, one was found at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access) in Portsmouth on February 15, and one was photographed at Bayville Farms Park in Virginia Beach on February 19. Noteworthy dabbling ducks also included a GREEN-WINGED TEAL intergrade found at Oxbow Lake in Anne Arundel Co, MD on February 15.

Noteworthy diving ducks during the week included a high of six and eight COMMON EIDERS at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE and Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD, respectively. Three HARLEQUIN DUCKS were spotted at Island No. 4 of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in Northampton Co, VA on February 17, and one HARLEQUIN DUCK was found at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on the same day. Sightings of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS in Maryland included a continuing individual at Piscataway Creek-Wharf Road in Prince George's Co most recently on February 18; 1-2 individuals at Piney Run Park in Carroll Co on February 13 and 17; and seven individuals at Eastern Bay in Queen Anne's Co on February 18. A WHITE-WINGED SCOTER and a continuing LONG-TAILED DUCK were seen all week at Silver Lake in Dayton, Rockingham Co, VA. LONG-TAILED DUCKS were seen at several other locations away from the coast, including 1-2 individuals at Denton WWTP in Caroline Co, MD all week, and single individuals at Piney Run Park in Carroll Co, MD, and Riley's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD most recently on February 13 and 19, respectively. Inland diving ducks also included a week high 18 COMMON GOLDENEYES at Cumberland-Terminus in Allegany Co, MD on February 19.

RING-NECKED PHEASANTS of unknown provenance continue along Allen Heights Avenue in Baltimore Co, MD and at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD, where three and one were encountered on February 19 and 15, respectively.

RED-NECKED GREBES were seen throughout the reporting area. A continuing RED-NECKED GREBE was seen at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on February 17 and 19. Three RED-NECKED GREBES were spotted in the Potomac River (DC waters)

from the Washington Sailing Marina in Alexandria, VA on February 13. Sightings of RED-NECKED GREBE in Maryland consisted of 1-2 individuals at Lapidum in Harford Co on February 14-16 and single individuals at the South Point Boat Ramp in Worcester Co on February 17; Violette's and nearby Riley's Locks on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co on February 18 and 19; and Loch Raven Reservoir-Primary Dam in Baltimore Co on February 18 and 19. In Virginia a RED-NECKED GREBE was seen at The Gardens at Sunday Park in Chesterfield on February 13; Burke Lake in Fairfax Co on February 18 and 19; Mexico Viejo in Franklin Co on February 18; and the Carvins Cove Recreation Area in Botetourt Co on February 19. In addition, on February 18 two RED-NECKED GREBES were found near the dam at the John H. Kerr Reservoir in Mecklenburg Co, VA.

A continuing EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE was observed perched on a wire at 9 West McCabe Street in Selbyville, Sussex Co, DE on February 17.

Encounters with KING RAIL included 1-2 individuals that were photographed at Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on February 17 and 19.

Noteworthy shorebirds included 57 AMERICAN AVOCETS counted at Prime Hook NWR-Broadkill Marsh on February 16, and 18 AMERICAN AVOCETS found at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access) in Portsmouth, VA on February 15. On February 14 three BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were observed in a ditch along the southern half of Egypt Road in Dorchester Co, MD. Away from the coast a continuing PURPLE SANDPIPER was seen at the Kent Point marina in Queen Anne's Co, MD on February 17 and the Hooper's Island Bridge in Dorchester Co, MD on February 19. In addition, a PURPLE SANDPIPER was spotted at the Craney Island Disposal Area in Portsmouth, VA on February 15. A SPOTTED SANDPIPER continues at the John H. Kerr Reservoir in Mecklenburg Co, VA, with the most recent sighting on February 18.

RAZORBILLS continue at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE, with 1-2 individuals seen on February 13, 17, 18 and 19. A high of five RAZORBILLS were spotted at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA on February 16 and 19.

On February 19 three continuing BLACK-HEADED GULLS were observed at Wolfe Neck WTP (restricted access) in Sussex Co, DE. A continuing BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen most

recently at Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach, VA, on February 17. An ICELAND GULL was seen at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on February 17 and 19. In Maryland a continuing ICELAND GULL (*kumlieni*) was spotted in a field across from 2968 Hunting Creek Road in Caroline Co on February 16 and along 23300-23398 Shore Highway and nearby 11255 Downes Station Road in Caroline Co on February 18. An ICELAND GULL (*kumlieni*) also was found along 31000-31044 Dover Road in Easton, Talbot Co, MD on February 16. In Virginia a continuing ICELAND GULL was spotted at Neabsco Creek in Prince William Co on February 17.

On February 14 a single RED-THROATED LOON was observed at the Choptank Marina in Caroline Co, MD, while 31 RED-THROATED LOONS were counted at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access) in Portsmouth, VA on February 15.

In addition to several coastal locations, GREAT CORMORANTS continue at the Kent Point marina and Bloody Point Bar Lighthouse in Queen Anne's Co, MD, with a high of 20 individuals counted at the latter on February 18.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS continue to winter at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD, with a week high 82 individuals counted along Wildlife Drive on February 17. On February 14 a single continuing AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was seen at Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA.

Early OSPREYS were seen at the DuPont Nature Center (Mispillion) in Sussex Co, DE on February 14, Claiborne Landing Road in Talbot Co, MD on February 18, and the Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chester, VA on February 17. Continuing ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were seen most recently at Broadkill Marsh and along Fowler Beach Road in Prime Hook NWR, Sussex Co, DE on February 19 and 18, respectively, and one of these individuals may have been seen along nearby Oyster Rocks Road on February 16, 17 and 18. On February 18 a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was seen farther north, along Port Mahon Road in Kent Co, DE. Raptor highlights during the week also included GOLDEN EAGLES in flight at Piney Run Park in Carroll Co, MD on February 13 and the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD on February 18.

On February 17 three MONK PARAKEETS of unknown provenance briefly visited a feeder at a private residence along Molly Berry Road in Prince George's Co, MD.

A continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was seen most recently at the Smith Farm in Lunenburg, VA on February 13 and along 14184-14198 Burwells Bay Road in Isle of Wight Co, VA on February 18. On February 17 a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE also was photographed along Cartersville Road a short distance south of the intersection with Oak Forest Road in Cumberland Co, VA. A NORTHERN SHRIKE* continues at the Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA for the second consecutive winter, with the most recent sighting on February 19.

Migratory BLUE-HEADED VIREOS have made it so southern Virginia, with three seen at Deep Creek Lock Park in Chesapeake and one seen along the Nature Conservancy's Darden Trail in Sussex Co on February 18.

Early TREE SWALLOWS included one individual as far north as Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on February 17.

On February 18 an AMERICAN PIPIT called in flight over Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC.

Briery Branch Gap in Rockingham Co, VA continues to be a reliable location for RED CROSSBILLS, with a high of four individuals reported on February 15 and 18.

Two SNOW BUNTINGS were found at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access) in Portsmouth, VA on February 15 and at the fishing pier at Kiptopeke SP in Northampton Co, VA on February 17 and 18.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS were seen at several locations, including a high of four individuals at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on February 14 and 17; three individuals at the Irvine Nature Center in Baltimore Co, MD on February 14, 15 and 18; a high of four individuals at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on February 14, 15 and 16; and a high of seven individuals at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA on February 18 and 19. A continuing CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was seen most recently at the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center in Fairfax Co, VA on February 19. A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was spotted at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Dorchester Co, MD on February 17, 18 and 19, and a week high nine continuing VESPER SPARROWS were counted at this location on February 19. A continuing LARK SPARROW was seen near the intersection of Valley and Meadow Roads at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC on February 18. A

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW was found at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Dorchester Co, MD on February 18 and Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on February 19. A LINCOLN'S SPARROW was seen at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Dorchester Co, MD on February 17, 18 and 19 and the VCU Rice Center in Charles City, VA on February 16.

On February 17 a continuing YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was seen at a residence in Virginia Beach, VA.

On February 19 a continuing YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was seen near the gate to the parking lot at North Point SP in Baltimore Co, MD. On February 17 and 19 a male BALTIMORE ORIOLE visited a feeder at 9824-9826 Homeland Avenue in Baltimore Co, MD. On February 16 two BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS were reported in a mixed blackbird flock in farm fields to the south of Mish Barn Road in Augusta Co, VA.

Sightings of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER included continuing individuals at a residential yard in Sussex Co, DE on February 16 and 17; North Park in Harford Co, MD on February 13 and 15; and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on February 14. On February 17 a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER visited feeders at 1500 Macalpin Court in Virginia Beach, VA.

On February 16 a female SUMMER TANAGER was photographed at a feeder at a private residence located in Pittsylvania Co, VA.

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