

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, March 13 and was completed on Tuesday, March 20 at 8:00 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 WESTERN GREBE* in VA, WESTERN Tanager in VA and PAINTED Bunting in MD.

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), COMMON EIDER, WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, NORTHERN BOBWHITE, RED-NECKED GREBE, KING RAIL, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, AMERICAN AVOCET, LITTLE, BLACK-HEADED and ICELAND GULLS, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, AMERICAN BITTERN, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, SHORT-EARED OWL, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, LOGGERHEAD and NORHTERN* SHRIKES, COMMON RAVEN, PURPLE MARTIN, SNOW BUNTING, AMERICAN TREE, CLAY-COLORED, VESPER and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER and BLUE GROSBEAK.

TOP BIRDS

On March 17 a WESTERN GREBE* was photographed at Assawoman Island in Accomack Co, VA.

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. Another male WESTERN TANAGER was seen at a feeder at 3616 Harding Drive in Chesapeake, VA on March 15-19.

On March 15 a continuing male PAINTED BUNTING was seen at a feeder at Masonville Cove in Baltimore Co, MD.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

On March 19 a ROSS'S GOOSE, an apparent SNOW x ROSS'S GOOSE hybrid and a CACKLING GOOSE were spotted in a flock containing over 2,000 SNOW GEESE at the Cheriton Landfill in Northampton Co, VA. On March 15 a ROSS'S GOOSE flew over the College Creek hawkwatch in James City Co, VA, and on March 18 three ROSS'S GEESE were photographed in the Maury River east of Glen Maury Park in Buena Vista Co, VA. A continuing GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE was most recently seen at Piney Reservoir in Garrett Co, MD on March 18 and at Lake Vista in Bedford Co, VA on March 17. A continuing inland BRANT in Nottoway Co, VA was seen in a field near the Piedmont Geriatric Hospital in Burkeville on March 14 and 17.

Two continuing TRUMPETER SWANS at a small pond bordered by Fairview Street NW and Old Waterford Road in Loudoun Co, VA were seen most recently on March 18, and one continuing TRUMPETER SWAN was seen at the Ivy Street Ponds in Waynesboro, VA on the same day. TRUMPETER SWANS continue in Anne Arundel Co, MD, with one individual found at the Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract on March 15 and three continuing individuals seen at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center on March 17.

A continuing EURASIAN WIGEON was seen most recently at Lake Joyce in Virginia Beach, VA on March 18 and the Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary (private) in Montgomery Co, MD on March 14. On March 16 a GREEN-WINGED TEAL intergrade was reported at Oxbow Lake in Anne Arundel Co, MD.

A COMMON EIDER was seen at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on March 13, 15 and 18, and two COMMON EIDERS were spotted at this location on March 17. Sightings of WHITE-

WINGED SCOTER away from the coast included five individuals at Riley's Lock or nearby Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on March 16; a single individual at the Piney Reservoir in Garrett Co, MD on March 16; a single individual at Lake Merriweather (private) in Rockbridge Co, VA on March 16; a single individual at Mill Creek Lake Park in Amherst Co, VA on March 18; and a single continuing individual at Pohick Bay RP in Fairfax Co, VA on March 17. A continuing LONG-TAILED DUCK at Denton WWTP in Caroline Co, MD was seen most recently on March 18. On the same day a single LONG-TAILED DUCK was spotted off Hains Point in Washington, DC.

On March 15 eight NORTHERN BOBWHITES were flushed from a burning field at Chester River Field Research Center (Chino Farms) (private) in Queen Anne's Co, MD. On March 18 a single NORTHERN BOBWHITE was flushed from underbrush at Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD.

A continuing RED-NECKED GREBE was seen at the Loch Raven Reservoir-Primary Dam in Baltimore Co on March 14, and 2-3 RED-NECKED GREBES were found at this location on March 18 and 19. Also in Maryland, a continuing RED-NECKED GREBE was seen most recently at Riley's Lock or nearby Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co on March 18 and Piscataway Park in Prince George's Co on March 19, and two continuing RED-NECKED GREBES were spotted at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co on March 17. A RED-NECKED GREBE also was spotted in the Potomac River (DC waters) from the Washington Sailing Marina in Alexandria, VA on March 18.

KING RAILS continue at Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA, with two being heard from the marshes along Easy Road on March 18. Another possibly overwintering KING RAIL was heard at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on March 18 and 19. A COMMON GALLINULE continues at the Bayside Development Pond in Worcester Co, MD, with the most recent sighting on March 19.

On March 14 two continuing SANDHILL CRANES were seen in Loudoun Co, VA and in flight up the Potomac River from Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD, and on March 17 these same birds were seen again at Algonkian Nature Preserve in Loudoun Co, VA. On March 18 a SANDHILL CRANE was photographed in corn stubble in Locustville, Accomack Co, VA, and five SANDHILL CRANES were

found in the same along 177-721 Tuscarora Pike in Berkeley Co, WV.

Large numbers of wintering AMERICAN AVOCETS continue at Bombay Hook NWR and the Ted Harvey WMA-Logan Tract North in Kent Co, DE, with a high of 204 individuals reported at the latter location on March 17. In Virginia, 129 AMERICAN AVOCETS were counted during the weekly survey at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access) in Portsmouth, VA on March 15.

On March 13 a LITTLE GULL was spotted flying upstream at Lapidum in Harford Co, MD. A continuing BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen most recently at Denton WWTP in Caroline Co, MD on March 14. On March 17 and 19 a BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen at Back River-Diamond Point Road in Baltimore Co, MD, and on March 17 an ICELAND GULL (*kumlieni*) was reported at this location. A young ICELAND GULL (*kumlieni*) also was found at the Salisbury Landfill in Wicomico Co, MD on March 17. In Virginia a continuing ICELAND GULL (*kumlieni*) was seen at the 76th and 82nd Street beaches in Virginia Beach on March 15. An ICELAND GULL also was found at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on March 17.

During the week small numbers of GREAT CORMORANTS were observed at several locations in the Chesapeake Bay and expected coastal locations.

A week high 53 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were reported at Hog Island in Surry Co, VA on March 19. Wintering AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS continue at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD, with a week high 92 individuals reported along Wildlife Drive on March 16.

Encounters with AMERICAN BITTERN included continuing individuals spotted most recently on Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD on March 13 and Black Marsh in Baltimore Co, MD on March 14, and an individual found at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on March 19.

A continuing dark morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was seen at Broadkill Marsh in Prime Hook NWR, Sussex Co, DE on March 15, and light and dark morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were observed at this location on March 17. On March 16 a dark morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was reported at Mt. Nebo WMA in Garrett Co, MD.

Highlights of a survey of Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD on March 15 included 11 SHORT-EARED OWLS.

Two RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS continue to visit residential feeders at a location in Lewes, Sussex Co, DE, with the most recent report on March 17.

A continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE at the Smith Farm in Lunenburg, VA was seen most recently on March 17. A NORTHERN SHRIKE* continues at the Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA for the second consecutive winter, with the most recent sighting on March 17.

Lowland COMMON RAVENS included a single individual spotted along Route 50 west a short distance east of Jackson Creek Road and along nearby Nesbit Road in Queen Anne's Co, MD on March 18, and 1-2 individuals seen at several locations in eastern Harford Co, MD on March 16-18.

Early arriving migratory songbirds included a few sighting of PURPLE MARTINS and BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS in Virginia.

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

On March 17 a continuing SNOW BUNTING was photographed at Kiptopeke SP in Northampton Co, VA.

Highlights at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Dorchester Co, MD during the week included an AMERICAN TREE SPARROW that was seen again on March 14; a continuing CLAY-COLORED SPARROW that was seen most recently on March 18; a continuing LINCOLN'S SPARROW that was seen most recently on March 17; and a week high nine continuing VESPER SPARROWS counted on March 15. On March 13 a continuing VESPER SPARROW was relocated along Sandidges Road a short distance east of Lowesville Road in Amherst Co, VA. On March 18 a LINCOLN'S SPARROW was found along the hike-bike trail at Huntley Meadows Park in Fairfax Co, VA.

On March 13 a BALTIMORE ORIOLE returned to a residential yard along Cockerille Avenue in Takoma Park, Montgomery Co, MD.

A continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was seen most recently on Kingman Island in Washington, DC on March 18. In

Maryland a continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was seen all week in a residential yard on Sefton Avenue in north Baltimore (city), and an ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was found at Back River WWTP in Baltimore Co on March 17 and 18. Sightings of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER in Virginia included an individual photographed at Riverview Park in Charlottesville on March 17.

On March 19 a resident of Rehoboth Beach, DE was surprised to see both a continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER and a male BLUE GROSBEAK in her yard along Cornwall Avenue.

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

