

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, April 10 and was completed on Tuesday, April 17 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 EARED GREBE in MD, WESTERN GREBE\* in VA, RUFF in DE, NORTHERN SHRIKE\* in VA and BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER\* in MD.

Other birds of interest this week included SNOW and ROSS'S GEESE, TRUMPETER SWAN, COMMON EIDER, SURF and WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS, LONG-TAILED DUCK, NORTHERN BOBWHITE, RED-NECKED GREBE, EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE, KING RAIL, SORA, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, BLACK-NECKED STILT, AMERICAN AVOCET, PIPING PLOVER, DUNLIN, ANHINGA, LITTLE, LAUGHING, ICELAND and LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS, COMMON TERN, AMERICAN BITTERN, GLOSSY and WHITE-FACED IBIS, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, SHORT-EARED OWL, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, AMERICAN PIPIT, RED CROSSBILL, AMERICAN TREE and VESPER SPARROWS, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD and ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER.

TOP BIRDS

On April 13 an EARED GREBE was spotted off the causeway at Port Lookout SP in St. Mary's Co, MD.

A likely continuing WESTERN GREBE\* was seen off the Horn Point Road boat ramp in Virginia Beach, VA on April 15.

A continuing RUFF was seen in Sheariness Pool at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on April 10 and 11. On April 15 a RUFF also was seen a short distance north of the reporting area, at the Augustine WA-Port Penn Impoundments in New Castle Co, DE.

A continuing NORTHERN SHRIKE\* was seen most recently at the Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA on April 16.

A continuing BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER\* was seen around Lewis and Market Streets in Havre de Grace, Harford Co, MD on April 10-13.

#### OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Northbound migration increased in extent and diversity during the week with first-of-season sightings of many Neotropical migrants, while small numbers of migratory waterfowl and other winter residents remained in the reporting area.

On April 13 a late SNOW GOOSE was photographed at 687 Rock Lodge Road in Garret Co, MD. On April 10 two late ROSS'S GEESE were photographed on Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD, and on April 12 one ROSS'S GOOSE made a brief appearance at a pond along Fort Lynn Road in Rockingham Co, VA.

On April 15 and 16 a young TRUMPETER SWAN was at Lake Albemarle in Albemarle Co, VA.

Lingering waterfowl also included a COMMON EIDER spotted at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on April 12. Continuing inland SURF SCOTERS were seen most recently at Blockhouse Point Conservation Park and C & O Canal-Pennyfield Lock in Montgomery Co, MD on April 11 and 12, respectively. Three continuing SURF SCOTERS were seen most recently at Centennial Park in Howard Co, MD on April 11. Inland diving ducks also included a WHITE-WINGED SCOTER at Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on April 13, and a continuing WHITE-WINGED SCOTER at Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co, MD that was seen most recently on April 10. An

inland LONG-TAILED DUCK was seen at several locations in Maryland: Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co on April 11; Fort Frederick SP-Big Pool in Washington Co on April 10; and Cavey Lane Yard in Howard Co on April 10 and 11. In Virginia, two inland LONG-TAILED DUCKS were photographed at Mill Creek Lake Park in Amherst Co on April 16.

Migratory NORTHERN BOBWHITES included two individuals that visited a yard in Lake Toano Estates in James City Co, VA on April 10 and 11. A high of nine NORTHERN BOBWHITES were flushed at the Chester River Field Research Station (Chino Farms) (private) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on April 11, 12 and 13.

On April 16 a RED-NECKED GREBE was found on Clopper Lake in Seneca Creek SP, Montgomery Co, MD.

On April 16 a first county record EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE was photographed at 3900 New Haven Drive in Bowie, Prince George's Co, MD.

KING RAILS were encountered most recently at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on April 16 and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on April 13. On April 14 and 15 a SORA and on April 15 a COMMON GALLINULE were seen at Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD. On April 15 two COMMON GALLINULES were found at the Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract (restricted access) in Virginia Beach, VA.

On April 11 and 16 1-2 continuing SANDHILL CRANES were seen at several nearby locations in Garrett Co, MD: 471-735 Peat Moss Road, a marsh along Mosser Road and 5425 Rock Lodge Road. A continuing SANDHILL CRANE also was seen at Stauffer's Marsh NP in Berkeley Co, WV, most recently on April 16.

Shorebird highlights included two BLACK-NECKED STILTS spotted at the Loch Raven Reservoir-Paper Mill Flats in Baltimore Co, MD on April 13. Three AMERICAN AVOCETS were seen at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (restricted access) in Anne Arundel Co, MD on April 12 and 13, and six AMERICAN AVOCETS visited Anderson Park in Newport News, VA on April 13. Large numbers of wintering AMERICAN AVOCETS continued in Delaware, with high counts of 300 individuals at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co on April 11 and 15, 81 individuals at Milford Neck WA-Big Stone Beach Road in Kent

Co on April 13 and 47 individuals at Prime Hook NWR in Sussex Co on April 14.

Migratory shorebirds included a PIPING PLOVER that made a rare appearance in Kent Co, DE, on the beach at the end of Bennetts Pier Road, on April 11, and a DUNLIN photographed at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on April 16.

On April 15 and 16 an ANHINGA visited Loch Raven Reservoir-Paper Mill Flats in Baltimore Co, MD. On April 13 two ANHINGAS were spotted in flight above the Stumpy Lake Natural Area in Virginia Beach, VA, and on April 15 an ANHINGA was seen over the Carson Wetland in Prince George Co, VA.

On April 10 14 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS flew over Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD. The most recent report of wintering AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD was 12 individuals on April 9.

A LITTLE GULL was spotted at the Chestertown WWTP in Kent Co, MD on April 13 and 14. On April 16 a single LAUGHING GULL was spotted among the BONAPARTE'S and RING-BILLED GULLS at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD and later in ponds across the river in Loudoun Co, VA. An immature ICELAND GULL (Kumlien's form) was observed at the Loreley Beach Community Pier (private) in Baltimore Co, MD on April 11 and 12. In Virginia an ICELAND GULL (Kumlien's form) was seen at the Walmart ponds in Colonial Heights on April 11 and Pleasure House Point in Virginia Beach on April 13. Sightings of LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL included single individuals spotted at Hains Point in Washington, DC on April 15; Thomas Johnson Bridge Fishing Piers in Calvert Co, MD on April 15; Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co, MD on April 15; and Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on April 16.

On April 14 an inland COMMON TERN was spotted at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD.

The uncommon if not rare AMERICAN BITTERN was encountered at numerous locations in the reporting area during the week. An AMERICAN BITTERN continues to be regularly seen at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC, and two were found in front of the visitors' center there on April 15. In Maryland, AMERICAN BITTERNS were found at Black Marsh and Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (restricted access)

in Baltimore Co; Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co; Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, Cavey Lane Yard and Race Road in Howard Co; Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract in Anne Arundel Co; Poplar Island in Talbot Co; and Hughes Hollow and the Blue Mash Nature Trail in Montgomery Co. In Virginia, AMERICAN BITTERNs were encountered at Huntley Meadows Park and Jackson Miles Abbott WR in Fairfax Co and Bles Park in Loudoun Co.

Noteworthy herons and egrets included 1-2 continuing GREAT EGRETS found along 471-735 Peat Moss Road and at the Mosser Road marsh and Frostburg Reservoir in Garrett Co, MD on April 10 and 11. Three LITTLE BLUE HERONS visited Bethel WMA in Cecil Co, MD on April 12. A LITTLE BLUE HERON also was found at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on April 13 and 14; Green Hills Farm Wetland in Montgomery Co, MD on April 14-16; Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD on April 15; Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on April 14; and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on April 15. Two TRICOLORED HERONS visited the Chestertown WWTP in Kent Co, MD on April 14, and on April 13 a single TRICOLORED HERON visited Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD and Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD. In addition, on April 15 and 16 a TRICOLORED HERON was observed on the grounds of a residence near Beachwood Lake in Newport News, VA. A YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON has returned to the National Zoo in Washington, DC, with sightings on April 14 and 15.

On April 15 four GLOSSY IBIS were seen in flight over Hains Point in Washington, DC. On April 10 a WHITE-FACED IBIS was photographed among GLOSSY IBIS at South Point in Worcester Co, MD.

A continuing ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was seen at the Mosser Road marsh and along Russell Road in Garrett Co, MD on April 10 and 11, respectively.

Highlights of a survey of Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD on April 13 included two SHORT-EARED OWLS.

A continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE at the Smith Farm in Lunenburg Co, VA was seen most recently on April 15.

A couple of lowland COMMON RAVENS continue in Queen Anne's Co, MD, with sightings at Terrapin Nature Park and nearby Mowbray Park in Stevensville on April 14. Two lowland

COMMON RAVENS also were seen over 12301-12331 Burnley Lane in King George Co, VA on April 14.

Encounters with AMERICAN PIPIT during the week included a single individual spotted by the lower parking lot at Fletcher's Cove on the C & O Canal in Washington, DC on April 12 and calling individuals over Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on April 13 and 14 and Hains Point in Washington, DC on April 15.

Based on recorded flight calls, 24 Appalachian or Type 1 and six Ponderosa Pine or Type 2 RED CROSSBILLS were identified at Briery Branch Gap in Rockingham Co, VA on April 14.

Sightings of AMERICAN TREE SPARROW included a high of five continuing individuals seen along 90 Weaver Street in Garrett Co, MD on April 10-15. In Virginia, a late AMERICAN TREE SPARROW was seen at the Third Winchester Battlefield in Frederick Co on April 14 and 15. VESPER SPARROW was seen at many locations, including single individuals at Hains Point, Constitution Gardens and Rock Creek Park-Dog Run in Washington, DC on April 11, 12 and 13, respectively. In Maryland, a VESPER SPARROW was seen at Patuxent Research Refuge-South Tract in Prince George's Co on April 11; Wheaton Branch Stormwater Ponds in Montgomery Co on April 12; Masonville Cove in Baltimore Co on April 13; Fort Smallwood Park in Anne Arundel Co on April 14; and Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co on April 15.

On April 16 a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was photographed in a flock of COMMON and BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES at Chesconessex Schooner Bay in Accomack Co, VA.

A continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was seen in the yard of a resident of Rehoboth Beach, Sussex Co, DE on April 12 and 15. During the week an ORANGE-CROWNED SPARROW also was seen at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on April 11; Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD on April 12; and along Windridge Way in Virginia Beach, VA on April 11-16.

Over 20 species of warbler were seen in the reporting area during the week. With the exception of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, the most conspicuous was PALM WARBLER (Eastern or Yellow), which was seen in large numbers at many locations, including 38 individuals counted at Hains Point in Washington, DC on April 15. Perhaps the most unusual

warbler sighting was a WORM-EATING WARBLER that visited a birdbath in residential yard in South Boston, Halifax Co, VA on April 15.

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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](mailto: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