

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist
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Coverage: MD/DC/VA/central and southern DE/WV panhandle
Reports, comments and questions: voice@anshome.org
Compiler: Gerry Hawkins
Sponsor: Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central
Atlantic States (independent of NAS)
Transcriber: Steve Cordle

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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, May 8 and was completed on Tuesday, May 15 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 PURPLE GALLINULE* in MD, RUFF in MD and HARRIS'S SPARROW* in MD.

Other birds of interest this week included SNOW GOOSE, MUTE SWAN, TRUMPETER SWAN, CANVASBACK, REDHEAD, WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, RED-NECKED GREBE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, KING RAIL, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, BLACK-BELLIED and SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS, WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER, WILSON'S PHALAROPE, COMMON TERN, ANHINGA, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, AMERICAN and LEAST BITTERNs, LITTLE BLUE HERON, YELLOW CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, WHITE, GLOSSY and WHITE-FACED IBIS, SWALLOW-TAILED and MISSISSIPPI KITES, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, OLIVE-SIDED, YELLOW-BELLIED and ALDER FLYCATCHERS, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, PHILADELPHIA VIREO, COMMON RAVEN, BICKNELL'S THRUSH, AMERICAN PIPIT, RED CROSSBILL, EASTERN TOWHEE, LINCOLN'S and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD, BOBOLINK, ORANGE-CROWNED, GOLDEN-WINGED, MOURNING and CERULEAN WARBLERS and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

A continuing PURPLE GALLINULE* at Fort Smallwood Park in Anne Arundel Co, MD was seen most recently on May 8.

On May 11 a female RUFF was found along Figgs Landing Road in Worcester Co, MD.

After a long period with no reports a continuing HARRIS'S SPARROW along a short spur to a boat ramp off the Anacostia River Trail in Prince George's Co, MD was seen again on May 9.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

On May 11 a continuing SNOW GOOSE was at a pond along Lake Drive and two MUTE SWANS were at a pond along Burbage Road in Worcester Co, MD.

Sightings of TRUMPETER SWAN included a continuing individual in the Moorman River in Albemarle Co, VA on May 8 and two individuals that were reported again at the Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract in Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 8.

Late waterfowl also included two CANVASBACKS at Hart-Miller Island in Baltimore Co, MD on May 14 and a female REDHEAD along 2438 Bittinger Road in Garrett Co, MD on May 12. A WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was seen at Cape Henlopen SP-The Point in Sussex Co, DE on May 11; Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on May 12; and Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co, MD on May 8. LONG-TAILED DUCKS were found at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on May 12 (1); North Beach in Calvert Co, MD on May 9 (6) and Lake Holiday (gated community/restricted access) in Frederick Co, VA on May 8 (1).

On May 9 a late RED-NECKED GREBE was photographed in the Severn River from the end of Wilson Road in Crownsville, Anne Arundel Co, MD.

For the second consecutive week migrating BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS were relatively conspicuous, with sightings including single individuals at Hains Point in Washington, DC on May 13 and 14 and the Rock Creek Park Nature Center area in Washington, DC on May 11.

KING RAILS continue to be encountered at Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA, with six heard or seen on May 13. On May 10 a COMMON GALLINULE was found on Hart-Miller Island in Baltimore Co, MD, and two were found there on May 14. A COMMON GALLINULE also was found at Deal Island-Green Dumpster Road in Somerset Co, MD on May 11 and Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on May 14.

On May 9 a resident of Wyoming, Kent Co, DE observed a SANDHILL CRANE flying over his yard. A continuing SANDHILL CRANE was seen along Rock Lodge Road in Garrett Co, MD on May 8 and 10.

On May 10 two BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were observed flying up the Potomac River and briefly veering into Loudoun Co, VA from Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD. Inland plovers also included a SEMIPALMATED PLOVER spotted at West Potomac Park in Washington, DC and Mountain Run Lake Park in Culpeper, Virginia on May 13. Sightings of WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER included an individual at a puddle on the west side of Route 213 a short distance south of the intersection with White Hall Road in Cecil Co, MD on May 8 and an individual at a pond at private Oakwood Farm in Rockingham Co, VA on May 8-13. On May 12 a WILSON'S PHALAROPE was spotted in Sheariness Pool at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co, DE.

On May 11 15 COMMON TERNS were seen flying up the Potomac River from Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD.

ANHINGAS were observed at several locations in Virginia, including two individuals at the Caron Wetlands in Prince George Co on May 11; 11 individuals counted at the Harwoods Mill Reservoir in York Co on May 14; and two individuals at Newport News Park in Newport News on May 13.

On May 9 seven AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were photographed in flight above the Colonial National Historical Park-Colonial Parkway in James City Co, VA. A single AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was reported along Wildlife Drive at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co. on May 12.

An AMERICAN BITTERN was encountered at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co, DE on May 9; Little Creek Wildlife Area in Kent Co, DE on May 11 (three individuals); Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on May 13; Occoquan Bay NWR in

Prince William Co, VA on May 14; and Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on May 10. During the week the uncommon LEAST BITTERN was reported at a small number of locations: Bombay Hook NWR and Milford Neck WA-Big Stone Beach Road in Kent Co, DE, Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD, Gunpowder Falls SP in Baltimore Co, MD, Patuxent River Park-Jackson Landing in Prince George's Co, MD, Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA, Dyke Marsh WP in Fairfax Co, VA and Back Bay NWR and Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract in Virginia Beach, VA.

Noteworthy herons and egrets included two continuing LITTLE BLUE HERONS at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on May 10 and a YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON that made an appearance at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on May 13 and the West Ocean City-Park and Ride in Worcester Co, MD on May 14.

On May 12 seven WHITE IBIS flew over Burton's Island Causeway in Sussex Co, DE. On May 13 two GLOSSY IBIS flew over Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA. A WHITE-FACED IBIS was spotted at E. A. Vaughn WMA in Worcester Co, MD on May 11, 12 and 14 and along Green Dumpster Road on Deal Island in Somerset Co, MD on May 11 and 12.

On May 11 a distant SWALLOW-TAILED KITE was spotted at the College Creek Hawkwatch in James City Co, VA. During the week returning MISSISSIPPI KITES were seen at several locations as far north as northern Virginia and farther north in flight over residences located in Baltimore and Carroll Counties Maryland.

Noteworthy sightings of RED-HEADED WOODPECKER included 1-2 individuals at the Milford Neck Wildlife Area-Big Stone Beach Road in Kent Co, DE on May 11 and 12 and one individual along Pickering Beach Road in Kent Co, DE on May 9.

An OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was encountered at several locations, including Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on May 14; Audrey Carroll Sanctuary in Montgomery Co, MD on May 13; Chincoteague NWR-Woodland Trail in Accomack Co, VA on May 13; James River Park in Richmond, VA on May 11; and along 289 Woods Lane in Giles Co, VA on May 13.

A YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was reported at several locations, including Hains Point in Washington, DC on May 13 and 14. Encounters with migrating ALDER FLYCATCHERS during the week included two or more individuals at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC on May 13 and 14 and Huntley Meadows Park in Fairfax Co, VA on May 14.

On May 9 a continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was seen at Mutton Hunk Fen State Natural Area Preserve in Accomack Co, VA.

The uncommon PHILADELPHIA VIREO was reported at several locations, including Piney Run Park in Carroll County, MD on May 14 and Taylor's Island-North Point Road in Dorchester Co, MD on May 12.

A continuing COMMON RAVEN was seen at Terrapin Nature Park in Queen Anne's Co, MD on May 8.

The extremely rare BICKNELL'S THRUSH was heard singing at 710 Dices Spring Road in Augusta Co, VA on May 9 and seen at Weyanoke Sanctuary in Norfolk, VA on May 14.

On May 12 a late AMERICAN PIPIT was spotted on a beach at Aquia Landing SP in Stafford Co, VA.

Multiple RED CROSSBILLS were encountered at several locations in Virginia, including private Skylark Farm along the Blue Ridge Parkway in extreme western Nelson Co on May 8 and Paddy Knob in Bath Co on May 13. RED CROSSBILLS also continue at Briery Branch Gap in Rockingham Co, VA, with 14 individuals counted on May 10.

A pale-eyed EASTERN TOWHEE, a representative of an out-of-range southern subspecies, was photographed at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on May 12. LINCOLN'S SPARROW was seen at several locations, including Rock Creek Park Nature Center area and Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, DC on May 14; Susquehanna SP in Harford Co, MD on May 13; and the Dry Seneca Trail in Montgomery Co, MD on May 13. Sparrow highlights also included a late WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW at several locations, including Hains Point in Washington, DC on May 13.

On May 11 a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was spotted in flight at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA. More conspicuous were migrating BOBOLINKS, which were seen at many locations

and in several cases high numbers, such as the 50 individuals reported at the Underwood Road area in Howard Co, MD on May 12.

During the week double digits of warbler species were routinely recorded at many locations in the reporting area, with a high of 25 warbler species reported at Susquehanna SP in Harford Co, MD on May 13. Highlights included late ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS found at Hains Point in Washington, DC on May 14 and Pennyfield Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on May 13, and a GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER found at Patuxent Research Refuge-Central Tract (restricted access) in Prince George's Co, MD on May 12. A rare TENNESSEE WARBLER was seen at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on May 11. The always desired MOURNING WARBLER was found at several locations in Maryland, including Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co on May 11 and 14; Great Seneca Greenway Trail in Montgomery Co on May 11; Union Mills Homestead Park in Carroll Co on May 11; Lake Artemesia in Prince George's Co on May 8; Black Hill RP-Ten Mile Creek area in Montgomery Co on May 11; Wilson's Mill Trail in Montgomery Co on May 13; Susquehanna SP in Harford Co on May 13; Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract in Anne Arundel Co on May 13; Patuxent Research Refuge-Central Tract (restricted) in Prince George's Co on May 12; and Big Water Farm (private) in Queen Anne's Co on May 14. In Virginia a MOURNING WARBLER was found at Paul State Forest in Rockingham Co on May 10; Clark's Crossing Park in Fairfax Co on May 13; Bles Park in Loudoun Co on May 13 and 14; Algonkian RP in Loudoun Co on May 14; and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince George Co, VA on May 12.

CERULEAN WARBLERS were seen at expected locations, with two or more individuals reported at a location in Reisterstown in Baltimore Co, MD on May 12; Manahan Road in Frederick Co, MD on May 14; and the Underwood Road area in Howard Co, MD on May 11 and 12.

DICKCISSELS were seen at many locations, with multiple sightings including seven individuals near the intersection of Keysville and Sixes Bridge Roads in Carroll Co, MD on May 11; three individuals at the Underwood Road area in Howard Co, MD on May 13; three individuals along 725 Phelps Road in Bedford Co, VA on May 14; and a week high six individuals at the Bristoe Station Battlefield in Prince William Co, VA on May 13. DICKCISSEL is not an easy species to encounter in DC, but several calling individuals were

observed in flight over Battery Kemble Park and Hains Point in Washington, DC on May 12 and 13, respectively.

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