

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, July 24, and was completed on Tuesday, July 31, at 9:00 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).

TOP BIRDS: RUFF in DE, BROWN BOOBY* in MD, ROSEATE SPOONBILL* in VA, and SWALLOW-TAILED KITE* in VA.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST: ducks, RING-NECKED PHEASANT, COMMON NIGHTHAWK and EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, shorebirds, BONAPARTE'S GULL, terns, ANHINGA, LEAST BITTERN, SNOWY EGRET, LITTLE BLUE HERON, TRICOLORED HERON, YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, WHITE IBIS, GLOSSY IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, MERLIN, WILLOW FLYCATCHER, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, PINE SISKIN, SAVANNAH and SALTMARSH SPARROW, and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

A RUFF continued to be seen at Bear Swamp, Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on July 24 and 25.

An immature BROWN BOOBY* was seen and photographed (from a boat) flying and feeding in the waters north of Love Point, Queen Anne's Co, MD early on the morning of July 29.

An immature ROSEATE SPOONBILL* turned up shortly before noon on July 25 at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA, and was seen again on July 26, 27, and 29.

An adult SWALLOW-TAILED KITE* was seen and photographed soaring over fields and trees in Burkeville, Nottoway Co, VA, just before noon on July 29.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Over-summering ducks continued this week, including a male RING-NECKED DUCK reported from Loch Raven Reservoir, Baltimore Co, MD on July 24, 25, and 29, and from Lake Holiday (gated community/restricted access), Frederick Co, VA on July 26, a SURF SCOTER at Franklin Manor (residential community), Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 28, a pair of WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS at the Choptank River-Rt 50 Bridge, Talbot Co, MD on July 29, a female BLACK SCOTER at Terrapin Nature Park, Queen Anne's Co, MD on July 28, a BUFFLEHEAD at the Konterra Drive ponds (private property) in Prince George's Co, MD on July 26, and a RUDDY DUCK at the C&O Canal-Violette's Lock, Montgomery Co, MD on July 24.

A RING-NECKED PHEASANT was seen and heard along the edge of a field along State Route 650, Surry Co, VA on July 26.

Two COMMON NIGHTHAWKS flew over the parking lot at Patuxent Research Refuge-South Tract, Prince George's Co, MD early in the morning on July 29. A pair of EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILLS were heard singing simultaneously at dusk on July 29, at the Aberdeen Proving ground "whip area", Harford Co, MD.

An immature COMMON GALLINULE was found on Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD during the weekly survey there on July 26.

The continuing pair of SANDHILL CRANES in Rockingham Co, VA were seen again on July 28.

Shorebirds are on the move, with many species turning up in appropriate habitat throughout the area. Highlights included five (two adults with three juveniles) BLACK-NECKED STILTS at Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, Mathews Co, VA on July 28, and a single flying by the beach at Assateague Island NS-Ferry Landing, Worcester Co, MD also on July 28. A single AMERICAN AVOCET was seen and photographed from a kayak as it flew over the Potomac River near National Airport, SW DC on July 28.

Two BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS flew up the Potomac River at the C&O Canal-Violette's Lock, Montgomery Co, MD on July 24. A single BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER was reported from Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF on July 30. SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS were reported from several areas, including one at Quillen's Pond, Augusta Co, VA on July 26.

A HUDSONIAN GODWIT continued near Sheariness Pool, Bombay Hook, Kent Co, DE on July 25. An early RUDDY TURNSTONE flew south past Sandy Point SP, Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 27. A pair of WESTERN SANDPIPERS were reported from Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, Mathews Co, VA on July 28, and a SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER was seen flying up the beach at Sandy Point SP, Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 24. A RED-NECKED PHALAROPE continued at Cape Henlopen SP-The Point, Sussex Co, DE on July 29 and 30.

A BONAPARTE'S GULL was seen again at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF, Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 27.

GULL-BILLED TERNS were seen at Sheariness Pool, Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on July 25, 27, and 29, at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA on July 28, and at Prime Hook NWR-Fowler Beach Road, Sussex Co, DE on July 30. An adult BLACK TERN was seen on Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on July 26. A pair of COMMON TERNS were seen flying over Delaware Bay, Milford Neck Wildlife Area-Big Stone Beach Road, Kent Co, DE on July 29. Four FORSTER'S TERNS were seen over the Potomac River from the C&O Canal-Violette's Lock, Montgomery Co, MD on July 24, and five were seen (by the same observer) at the VA-Loudoun Lowes Island ponds, Loudoun Co, VA on July 25. 34 ROYAL TERNS were tallied on the weekly survey of Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on July 26.

ANHINGA reports this week were all from the southern Chesapeake Bay region of Virginia. On July 26, one was seen at the Carson Wetland, Prince George Co, VA and another the same day at Lake Wright, Norfolk, VA. On July 28, another was reported flying over the reservoir at Bethel Park, Hampton Co, VA.

A LEAST BITTERN was seen from the viewing platform on the main road at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA on July 29.

The annual post-breeding wandering of long-legged waders, mostly young, immature birds, continues. An immature SNOWY EGRET was hunting in a shallow rain pool at the polo fields along Hughes Road, Montgomery Co, MD on July 28. On July 24, a

continuing immature LITTLE BLUE HERON was seen well inland at Smithleigh Lake, Augusta Co, VA, first seen on July 22. Two immature LITTLE BLUE HERONS were at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, NE DC on July 27, and one remained on July 28 and 29. An immature TRICOLORED HERON was found on the weekly survey at Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on July 26 and another was discovered at Lake Elkhorn, Howard Co, MD, feeding in the forebay area, just behind the rock dam, on July 27, and relocated on July 28. A juvenile TRICOLORED HERON was seen at North Beach-marsh, Calvert Co, MD on July 29. A well-described CATTLE EGRET was seen flying across a field before landing, along Bleak Ridge Road, Pulaski Co, in western VA.

Immature Night-Herons like to show up in unusual places, as evidenced by an immature YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON that was seen walking around in front of a birders house in Pasadena, Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 28 before being flushed by a neighbor walking to a car. A juvenile YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was seen by a kayaker along the Potomac River near Daingerfield Island, SW DC on July 28. Another juvenile YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON delighted homeowners by landing on the rip-rap on the edge of their property in Crisfield, Somerset Co, MD on July 29.

Two immature WHITE IBIS continued to be seen at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA July 24-26. Two WHITE IBIS were seen in flight at Fort Smallwood Park, Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 28. Another, an immature bird, was seen flying out of a pond at Ward Road, Calvert Co, MD the same day. An adult WHITE IBIS was seen at Milford Neck Wildlife Area-Big Stone Beach Road, Kent Co, DE on July 29. A GLOSSY IBIS was also seen at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA July 24-26.

On July 27, two MISSISSIPPI KITES were seen at a known location in Fauquier Co, VA, and on July 28, 29, and 30 an adult was seen and photographed in Hampton, VA.

Two MERLINS continued to be seen around 4th Street, Oakland, Garrett Co, MD on July 24 and 27.

Often hard to identify this time of year, a silent but very well-described juvenile WILLOW FLYCATCHER was seen at Azalea Park, Charlottesville, VA on July 26, and another gave enough of a song to help with its ID at Truitt's Landing, Assateague Island NS, Worcester Co, MD on July 28.

Judging by several early reports, this could be a good year for RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES in our area. Not too unusual considering the location, three were at Whitetop Mountain SE, Grayson Co, VA, near Mt. Rogers, on July 27, and another was heard at high elevation at Smyth Co, VA the same day. On July 28, a continuing RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH was seen eating suet in a yard in Whitaker Woods, Cecil Co, MD, and another was seen and heard singing from treetops near the hiking path at Patapsco Valley SP-Hilton Area, Baltimore Co, MD the same day.

Two PINE SISKINS were feeding on black-eyed Susan flower heads in the company of American Goldfinches at a home in Henrico Co, VA on July 27.

Reports of SAVANNAH SPARROWS came from birders working on the Virginia breeding bird atlas in Loudoun, Co, VA on July 26 and Fauquier Co, VA on July 27. Another SAVANNAH SPARROW was seen on July 28 feeding and in flight at the Rt. 309 Pond (S), Queen Anne's Co, MD. On July 28, a "worn and scraggly" looking SALTMARSH SPARROW was seen at Prime Hook NWR-Fowler's Beach Road, Sussex Co, DE.

DICKCISSELS continued to be seen along the Underwood Road area of Howard Co, MD throughout the week, and a male was singing mid-day in a non-mowed section of a large field along Old Country Road, Bedford Co, VA on July 26. On July 29, a singing male was found at Bristoe Station Battlefield, Prince William 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