

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 31 and was completed on Tuesday, August 7 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 59th Supplement (June 2018).

The top birds this week were FRANKLIN'S GULL* in DC and VA, BROWN BOOBY* in MD and ROSEATE SPOONBILL* in VA.

Other birds of interest this week included TRUMPETER and TUNDRA SWANS, AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, RING-NECKED DUCK, BUFFLEHEAD, BLACK SCOTER, HOODED MERGANSER, RUDDY DUCK, HORNED GREBE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, COMMON GALLINULE, AMERICAN COOT, AMERICAN AVOCET, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, RUDDY TURNSTONE, SANDERLING, WHITE-RUMPED and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, WILLET, WILSON and RED-NECKED PHALAROPES, PARASITIC JAEGER, LAUGHING GULL, GULL-BILLED, BLACK, FORSTER'S and SANDWICH TERNS, COMMON LOON, WILSON'S STORM-PETREL, GREAT CORMORANT, ANHINGA, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, LEAST BITTERN, LITTLE BLUE and TRICOLORED HERONS, WHITE IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, COMMON RAVEN, HORNED LARK, RED-BREASTED and BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES, VESPER SPARROW, DARK-EYED JUNCO, SUMMER Tanager and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

Late in the day on August 3 a FRANKLIN'S GULL* was spotted among the LAUGHING GULLS foraging off Hains Point in Washington, DC. On August 4 and 5 presumably this same bird was photographed among the LAUGHING GULLS loafing on the Hunting Creek mudflats a short distance downriver from Hains Point in Fairfax Co, VA.

An immature BROWN BOOBY* that was first found on July 29 was seen again in flight on August 1, 3 and 4 from Love Point (primarily to the east) and Ferry Point Park in Queen Anne's Co, MD. On August 4 a BROWN BOOBY* also was reported from Ferry Point Park visiting distant pound nets off Eastern Neck NWR that were deemed to be in Kent Co, MD waters.

A continuing ROSEATE SPOONBILL* was seen at Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA on July 31 and August 1 and 4.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Two continuing TRUMPETER SWANS were seen at the Owensville Road Pond in Anne Arundel Co, MD on July 31 and August 1. An injured TUNDRA SWAN continues at Kinder Farm Park in Anne Arundel Co, MD, with the most recent sighting on August 1.

A continuing AMERICAN BLACK DUCK was most recently seen at the North Beach marsh in Calvert Co, MD on August 5. Out-of-season diving ducks in the reporting area during the week included a continuing RING-NECKED DUCK at Lock Raven Reservoir-Loch Raven Point in Baltimore Co, MD on July 31; a continuing BUFFLEHEAD at the Konterra Drive fields and ponds (private) in Prince George's Co, MD on August 2; and two continuing BLACK SCOTERS on the south side of Kent Narrows in Queen Anne's Co, MD on August 5. In addition, continuing RUDDY DUCKS were at the Little Creek Wildlife Area-South Impoundment in Kent Co, DE on July 31; Loch Raven Reservoir in Baltimore Co, MD on July 31; and the Duvall Farm Ponds in Talbot Co, MD on August 2. An out-of-season HOODED MERGANSER was photographed at Chincoteague NWR in Accomack Co, VA on August 5.

An out-of-season HORNED GREBE was reported off Clairborne Landing in Talbot Co, MD on August 5.

On August 5 a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO was reported at Fort Frederick SP-Big Pool in Washington Co, MD.

COMMON GALLINULES were reported at several locations in Maryland, including two individual along Wildlife Drive in Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD on August 2. AMERICAN COOT continue at Constitution Gardens on the Mall in Washington, DC, with 1-2 individuals reported on August 2 and 6.

AMERICAN AVOCETS were seen at several coastal locations in Delaware during the week, including week highs of 80 individuals at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co on August 4 and 5 and 43 individuals at Prime Hook NWR in Sussex Co, DE on August 5. In Virginia, 432 AMERICAN AVOCETS were counted at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA on August 2. The farthest away from the coast of the inland SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS during the week was an individual at Falls Mill Lake in Tazewell Co, VA on August 1. An inland WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER was spotted in a flooded field along Long Green Lane in Frederick Co, VA on July 31 and August 2. On August 3 a SANDERLING also was found far inland at the Youghiogheny Reservoir-Old Morgantown Road in Garrett Co, MD.

Perhaps the most noteworthy RUDDY TURNSTONE in the reporting area during the week was an individual seen on August 4 in flight off the tip of Hains Point in Washington, DC that flew across the Potomac River to below the high tide line on the shore by National Airport (which also is in DC), where it was well photographed by a kayaker and also seen and photographed by him there on the following day. Shorebird highlights in DC during the week also included a SEMIPALMATED PLOVER and a SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER in flight off the tip of Hains Point on August 4. A small number of LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS were spotted among the SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS during the week at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co, DE (high of ten individuals on August 4), Prime Hook NWR-Prime Hook Beach Road in Sussex Co, DE (one individual on August 6) and Chincoteague NWR in Accomack Co, VA (one individual on August 2). A continuing inland WILLET was seen at the King Family Vineyard in Albemarle Co, VA on August 1. A WILSON'S PHALAROPE was found at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA on August 3, and a continuing RED-NECKED PHALAROPE was seen at Cape Henlopen SP-The Point in Sussex Co, DE on July 31 and August 5.

On August 1 two PARASITIC JAEGERS were observed flying over Sussex Co, DE waters from the Lewis-Cape May Ferry.

A LAUGHING GULL was observed far inland at Briery Creek WMA-Causeway Area in Prince Edward Co, VA on July 31 and August 1.

During the week multiple GULL-BILLED TERNS were reported at several locations in southeastern Virginia: Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, Queen Sound Landing in Accomack Co and Fort Monroe in Hampton. In addition, a single GULL-BILLED TERN* was photographed at Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA on July 31. Outside of its southeastern Virginia stronghold a single GULL-BILLED TERN was spotted at Prime Hook NWR-Prime Hook Beach Road in Sussex Co, DE on August 4 and 6.

Small numbers of BLACK TERNS were seen at several coastal locations in DE, MD and VA, with a high of 23 individuals reported far over the ocean from km 8-9 at Assateague I NS in Worcester Co, MD on August 5. A single BLACK TERN also was seen at Tower Gardens in Queen Anne's Co, MD on August 3 and 4. On August 3 two FORSTER'S TERNS were reported at the Youghiogheny Reservoir-Old Morgantown Road in Garrett Co, MD. A SANDWICH TERN was among the five species of terns off the end of Bivalve Wharf Road in Wicomico Co, MD on August 2.

A COMMON LOON was seen at Delaware Seashore SP-Burton's Island in Sussex Co, DE on July 31 and August 1 and at the nearby Lewes Ferry Terminal on August 1.

On August 6 41 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS were observed in Worcester Co, MD waters from a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency ship.

A continuing out-of-season GREAT CORMORANT at Cape Henlopen SP in Sussex Co, DE was seen at the Point on July 31 and the Fishing Pier on August 1, 2 and 4.

ANHINGAS continue at the Stumpy Lake Natural Area in Virginia Beach, VA, with 1-2 individuals seen in flight on August 1 and 3-6.

A single AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN continues along Wildlife Drive in Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co, MD, with the most recent sighting on August 2.

Area LEAST BITTERNS include a continuing individual heard at Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD on August 3.

A continuing LITTLE BLUE HERON was at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on July 31 and August 1, 4, 5 and 6, and likely the same bird was seen at Kingman and Heritage Islands Park in DC on July 31. On August 1 a LITTLE BLUE HERON was observed on a golf course in Loudoun County, VA across from Seneca Lock on the C & O Canal.

An inland TRICOLORED HERON* was at Lake Arnold at Blandy Experimental Farm in Clark Co, VA on August 2-5; and two inland TRICOLORED HERONS* were at Mill Creek Lake in Amherst Co, VA on August 4 and 5. A TRICOLORED HERON also was reported at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area-Twin Spur Gap in Chesapeake, VA on August 5. In Maryland, a TRICOLORED HERON was found at Tower Gardens in Queen Anne's Co on August 1; Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co on August 3; and Patuxent River Park in Prince George's Co on August 4. In addition, two TRICOLORED HERONS were found at the North Beach marsh in Calvert Co, MD on August 5.

The northernmost WHITE IBIS in the reporting area during the week were 23 individuals on the campus of the University of Delaware-College of Marine Studies in Sussex Co, DE on August 3.

MISSISSIPPI KITE sightings in Virginia included 1-4 individuals along Artillery Road and Apollo Drive in Hampton all week; four individuals along Shamrock Court in Fauquier Co on July 31; three individuals at Ridgeway Park in Hampton on August 1; and one individual in flight above 1500 Seaford Road in York Co on July 31. Farther north in Virginia a MISSISSIPPI KITE was photographed at the Bristow Road Sod Farm in Prince William Co on August 4, and 1-2 MISSISSIPPI KITES continue at Green Spring Garden Park in Fairfax Co.

The early stages of raptor migration were indicated by reports of SHARP-SHINNED and BROAD-WINGED HAWKS at several locations.

On August 5 a continuing COMMON RAVEN was observed being chased by crows along 401 Thompson Creek Road in Stevensville, Queen Anne's Co, MD.

On August 4 two HORNED LARKS were found by a kayaker above the high tide water line of the Potomac River by National Airport (and thus in VA).

A continuing out-of-season RED-BREASTED NUTHACH visited a feeder along Forge Ct in the Whitaker Woods subdivision in Cecil Co, MD on August 3-5. On July 31 one of several continuing BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES was encountered at the Milford Neck Wildlife Area-Big Stone Beach Road in Kent Co, DE. In Virginia, a continuing BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH was seen at Mountain Run Lake Park in Culpepper on July 31.

On July 31 two likely breeding VESPER SPARROWS were seen along 2234-2298 Peterman Road in Baltimore Co, MD. An out-of-season DARK-EYED JUNCO was seen at Brookfield Park in Fairfax Co, VA on August 2.

There were several reports of early migratory warblers during the week, including WORM-EATING WARBLER, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, AMERICAN REDSTART and YELLOW, YELLOW-RUMPED and BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS.

On August 2 an adult male SUMMER TANAGER was observed singing along the Red Trail at Soldiers Delight NEA in Baltimore Co, MD.

DICKCISSELS continued at several locations in the reporting area, with multiple (three or more) individuals encountered along Underwood Road in Howard Co, MD on July 31 and August 3 and 5 and at Bristoe Station Battlefield in Prince William Co, VA on August 4.

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