

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, August 21, and was completed on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, 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 BIRD this week was a continuing WOOD STORK* in MD.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST were over-summering waterfowl, SANDHILL CRANE, AMERICAN AVOCET, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER, AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, HUDSONIAN and MARBLED GODWIT, BAIRD'S SANDPIPER, both DOWITCHER species, WILSON'S PHALAROPE, PARASITIC JAEGER, CASPIAN, BLACK, and FORSTER'S TERN, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, LEAST BITTERN, TRICOLORED HERON, WHITE IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, MERLIN, OLIVE-SIDED, YELLOW-BELLIED, and LEAST FLYCATCHER, RED-BREASTED and BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH, SEDGE WREN, PINE SISKIN, HENSLOW'S SPARROW, BOBOLINK, migrating warblers, and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRD

An immature WOOD STORK* first found on Aug 19, was seen again on Aug 21 and 22 at various location near the intersections of Bethel and Ruhland Rds, Frederick Co, MD.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

A single BLUE-WINGED TEAL was seen at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA on Aug 24, and four were seen the same day at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA. A pair of GADWALL were reported from Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DCMF, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Aug 24. A female or eclipse plumaged male AMERICAN WIGEON was at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE and a single GREEN-WINGED TEAL was seen at Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA both on Aug 24. A lone LESSER SCAUP was reported from Rockingham Co, VA on Aug 22, and a RUDDY DUCK was there the same day.

The pair of SANDHILL CRANES that have been spending the summer in Rockingham Co, west of I-81 in NW VA, were seen again on Aug 22.

Five AMERICAN AVOCETS were seen at the Jamestown Island-Causeway, James City Co, VA, on Aug 22, and a lone bird was seen near the Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach, VA on Aug 23.

A pair of BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were reported from Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DCMF, Anne Arundel Co, MD on AUG 21, 22, and 24. A molting adult AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER was seen at the Sherwood Gate field, Northampton Co, VA on Aug 21. A SEMIPALMATED PLOVER was seen on an exposed mudflat from the Washington Sailing Marina, in DC waters (SW), on Aug 26.

A HUDSONIAN GODWIT was reported from Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on Aug 24, and was still being seen at Sheariness Pool on Aug 26. Three HUDSONIAN GODWITS were seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Aug 26. A MARBLED GODWIT was found at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA and seen daily through Aug 27. An adult BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was seen and well photographed at Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on Aug 22. On Aug 23 and 24, another BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was spotted at the North Beach marsh in Calvert Co, MD. Further east, a BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Aug 26. Four SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were seen at Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on Aug 22, and a pair of LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS were reported from Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access), Portsmouth, VA on Aug 23. Both SHORT-BILLED and LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS were seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Aug 26. A single WILSON'S PHALAROPE continued on Aug 21 at Swan Creek Wetland-DMCF, Anne Arundel Co, MD, and five were seen on Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on Aug 22. Nine WILSON'S PHALAROPES were actively feeding, running after insects in the wet short grass, at Chincoteague NWR in Accomack Co, VA on Aug 26.

Two PARASITIC JAEGERs, one light adult and one dark individual, were seen at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD, late in the afternoon on Aug 22. Another PARASITIC JAEGER was reported from Chincoteague NWR-Beach (Parking Lot 1), Accomack Co, VA, on Aug 27, gliding close to the water and occasionally attacking terns.

Three CASPIAN TERNS were seen flying down the Potomac River from Algonkian Regional Park in Sterling, Loudoun Co, VA on Aug 24. BLACK TERNS were widely reported this week, with one seen in a (private) flooded field in Rockingham Co, VA on Aug 21, another seen flying down the Potomac River from East Potomac Park-Hains Point SW DC the same day, and four seen feeding on the Susquehanna Flats off Perryville Community Park, Cecil Co, MD on Aug 22, with at least one continuing there the following day. On Aug 26, ten BLACK TERNS were reported from Smith Mountain Lake, Franklin Co, VA, in the western part of the state. On Aug 21, a single FORSTER'S TERN was seen as it dropped into Nelson Lake, in Nelson Co, VA, staying for only five minutes, for a possible first county record.

An out-of-season GREAT CORMORANT was seen again, perched on a piling at Cape Henlopen SP Fishing Pier, in Sussex Co, DE on Aug 24. An immature GREAT CORMORANT was seen on a piling NW of the beach at Point Lookout SP, St. Mary's Co, MD on Aug 25.

An AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was seen and photographed in the water upriver from the parking area at Staunton View Public Use Area, just north of Clarksville, in Mecklenburg Co, VA on Aug 26.

A continuing LEAST BITTERN was seen again in Stuart's Draft, Augusta Co, VA on Aug 25. On Aug 23, three TRICOLORED HERONS were seen at North Beach marsh, Calvert Co, MD. The next day, an immature WHITE IBIS was seen at the same location. Another immature WHITE IBIS was seen at New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve, in Mathews Co, VA, on Aug 27.

An adult MISSISSIPPI KITE was spotted in Richmond, Henrico Co, VA on Aug 21. On Aug 23, a flyover MISSISSIPPI KITE was seen at Mid-Lothian Mines Park, in Chesterfield Co, VA, and on Aug 24, a juvenile was seen flying over the intersection of Highway 29 and Fontaine Rd, in Albemarle Co, VA. The three monitored MISSISSIPPI KITE nests in Fairfax Co, VA, all inside the beltway, each successfully fledged one juvenile this summer.

Unlike most previous years, nesting was early, with fledging occurring before the end of July.

Early SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS were reported from Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Aug 21 and from Wheaton Regional Park, Montgomery Co, MD on Aug 23.

MERLINS were reported from Druid Hill Park and Mt. Vista Park, both in Baltimore Co, MD on Aug 23, and from Horsepen Run Trail in Loudoun Co, VA the same day. On Aug 24 another MERLIN was seen at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD.

Always a delight to see, OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were spotted at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD on Aug 22, Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA on Aug 24, and Little Bennett Regional Park, Montgomery Co, MD on Aug 25. Another was seen further east, foraging from dead branches in a regrowing lumbered area, in Gloucester Co, VA on Aug 25. YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS were reported from Governor Bridge Natural Area, Prince George's Co, MD on Aug 21, Sunset Beach, Northampton Co, VA on Aug 23 and Deal Island dove hunting area, Somerset Co, MD on Aug 25. A LEAST FLYCATCHER was also reported from Sunset Beach in Northampton Co, VA on Aug 23.

Continuing and increasing reports of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES bode well for an invasion year. What follows are just some of the reported birds; on Aug 22, three were at the Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of VA in Clarke Co, another was heard and seen briefly at the National Zoo in NW DC on Aug 23, two were at Rocky Gorge Reservoir-Supplee Park, Prince George's Co, MD and another at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD on Aug 24, while another was at Assateague Island NS-Bayside Point, Worcester Co, MD the same day, and two were reported from the Clifton Institute (restricted access) in Fauquier Co, VA on Aug 25. A BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH was still being seen and heard at Big Stone Beach, Milford, Kent Co, DE, on Aug 24 and 25.

A pair of SEDGE WRENS continued to be heard and sometimes seen at the Aquatic Resources Education Center in Woodland Beach, Kent Co, DE, on Aug 22. A single bird was being reported there Aug 23-26.

Two PINE SISKINS were seen and heard at Cross Junction, Frederick Co, VA on Aug 23 and one there on Aug 24.

Two HENSLOW'S SPARROWS were reported from Old Legislative Rd, Allegany Co, MD on Aug 23, with four being seen there on Aug 24.

A small flock of eleven BOBOLINKS were heard and then seen at the USDA, Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Jefferson Co, WV on Aug 21.

Migrating warblers were seen during the week at many locations across the area, in mostly small numbers, indicating they are not fully on the move through our area yet. Hotspots this week included Rock Creek Park, in NW DC, with activity centered mostly at the Maintenance Yard and Nature Center areas, Monticello Park in Alexandria, VA, Susquehanna SP in Harford Co, MD, Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD, and Assateague Island NS, Worcester Co, MD.

DICKCISSELS continued to be seen along the Underwood Rd area in Howard Co, MD with three seen there on Aug 22.

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