

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, September 25 and was completed on Tuesday, October 2 at 7:30 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). This report does not provide information about likely escaped or released birds (e.g. various parrots and parakeets and this week Ruddy Shelduck in DE), non-established feral birds (e.g., Muscovy Duck) and introduced game birds (e.g., Ring-necked Pheasant).

The top birds this week were BLACK-HEADED GULL in DC, BROWN BOOBY\* in MD, ROSEATE SPOONBILL\* in VA, WESTERN KINGBIRD in MD, SAY'S PHOEBE\* in VA and BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER\* in DE.

Other birds of interest this week included BRANT, TUNDRA SWAN, RING-NECKED DUCK, GREATER SCAUP, SURF and BLACK SCOTERS, HOODED MERGANSER, RUDDY DUCK, HORNED GREBE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, AMERICAN AVOCET, AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER, WILSON'S and SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS, HUDSONIAN and MARBLED GODWITS, BAIRD'S and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS, LEAST, GULL-BILLED, BLACK and COMMON TERNS, BLACK SKIMMER, COMMON LOON, ANHINGA, AMERICAN WHITE and BROWN PELICANS, AMERICAN BITTERN, LITTLE BLUE HERON, GLOSSY IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, NORTHERN GOSHAWK, BROAD-WINGED HAWK, GOLDEN EAGLE, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, COMMON RAVEN, RED-BREASTED and BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES, SEDGE and MARSH WRENS, PURPLE FINCH, PINE SISKIN, CLAY-COLORED, LARK and NELSON'S SPARROWS, BOBOLINK, GOLDEN-WINGED, ORANGE-CROWNED, CONNECTICUT and MOURNING WARBLERS, SUMMER Tanager and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

A juvenile/first winter BLACK-HEADED GULL that was found at Georgetown Waterfront Park in Washington, DC on September 21 was seen there again on September 25, 26, 29 and 30 and October 1 and at the nearby Georgetown Reservoir in DC on September 29 but not, unlike last week, across the river at nearby Gravelly Point Park in Arlington, Co, VA. Human sources of food (e.g., bread) may account for the fidelity to the apparent home base in Georgetown.

On September 26 a well-described and distantly photographed BROWN BOOBY\* was reported from a vessel located a few miles south of the Bay Bridge in Anne Arundel Co, MD.

Five ROSEATE SPOONBILLS\* continue at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA, with the most recent sighting on September 28.

On September 30 a well-described WESTERN KINGBIRD was reported high in a black walnut tree looking northwest from the parking lot at Rachel Carson Conservation Park in Montgomery Co, MD.

A SAY'S PHOEBE\* was discovered along 6651 Kent Farm Road in Pulaski Co, Virginia on September 29 and briefly observed in flight there on the following day. On September 29 a SAY'S PHOEBE also was found between the two hills at the Fairfax County Landfill Cap in Lorton, Fairfax Co, VA.

On September 29 an adult male BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER\* was found at Cape Henlopen SP-The Point in Sussex Co, DE.

#### OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

During the week a small number of early arriving BRANT were seen at several locations as far south as Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA. A resident injured TUNDRA SWAN continues at Kinder Farm Park in Anne Arundel Co, MD, with the most recent sighting on September 27.

Early arriving migratory dabbling ducks included BLUE-WINGED TEAL, NORTHERN SHOVELER, GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, NORTHERN PINTAIL and GREEN-WINGED TEAL at various locations. Noteworthy diving ducks included a RING-NECKED DUCK at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on September 27 and a continuing RING-NECKED DUCK and two continuing RUDDY DUCKS at Silver Lake in Rockingham Co, VA on September 25, 26, 28 and 29 in the case of the former. A GREATER SCAUP was a surprise visitor to the Louis Y. Green Conservation Park in Montgomery Co, MD and Big Water Farm (private) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on September 29. Early SURF SCOTERS and RUDDY DUCKS were seen at several locations in Maryland and Virginia, and an early BLACK SCOTER was observed off Sunset Park in Ocean City, Worcester Co, MD on September 30. On September 28 a HOODED MERGANSER was found at the Little Creek Wildlife Area in Kent Co, DE and seen again at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA.

A HORNED GREBE was reported at Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co, MD on September 28.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS were observed at several locations in Maryland and Virginia, including Cromwell Valley Park in Baltimore Co, MD on September 28, 29 and 30 and Leesylvania SP in Prince William Co, VA on September 28.

A young COMMON GALLINULE was found at Hughes Hollow in Montgomery Co, MD on September 28 and October 1. On September 25 and 29 1-2 COMMON GALLINULES were seen at Greenfield-Botetourt Center in Botetourt Co, VA.

Four continuing SANDHILL CRANES were seen all week near a private pond along Peat Moss Road in Garrett Co, MD. In Virginia three SANDHILL CRANES passed by the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro on September 28.

Shorebird highlights during the week included the following. - Continued large numbers of AMERICAN AVOCETS at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co, DE, Prime Hook NWR-Broadkill Marsh in Sussex Co, DE and the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA, with week highs of 155, 34 and 457 individuals reported at these respective locations on October 1, September 25 and September 28, respectively. Elsewhere, five AMERICAN AVOCETS were found at Figgs Landing in Worcester Co, MD on September 28; one was found at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (access by guided tour only) in Anne Arundel Co, MD on September 29; and two were photographed at Saxis WMA in Accomack Co, VA on September 26.

- AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVERS at several locations in Rockingham Co, VA, consisting of one individual at Silver Lake and along Koogler Road on September 25 and September 24-25, respectively; three individuals in a field across from 3066-3298 Lumber Mill Road on September 30; and nine individuals at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction on September 30. An AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER also was photographed on Hart-Miller Island in the city of Baltimore, MD on October 1.

- A WILSON'S PLOVER spotted on the beach with other plovers at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on September 26.

- A SEMIPALMATED PLOVER heard and a SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER seen at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on September 30 and 25, respectively.

- A continuing HUDSONIAN GODWIT at Shearness Pool in Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on September 26; an apparent continuing HUDSONIAN GODWIT at Figgs Landing in Worcester Co, MD on September 28, and two HUDSONIAN GODWITS among the MARBLED GODWITS at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on September 28.

- 1-2 MARBLED GODWITS on Skimmer Island in Ocean City, Worcester Co, MD on September 25, 26 and 28.

- A BAIRD'S SANDPIPER along Koogler Road in Rockingham Co, VA on September 25.

- A RED-NECKED PHALAROPE at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (access by guided tour only) in Anne Arundel Co, MD on September 29.

On October 1 a late LEAST TERN was photographed resting at Tom's Cove in Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA. A late GULL-BILLED TERN was observed at this location on September 26 and at Assateague Island, Accomack Co, VA on September 28. A single BLACK TERN was reported at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD on September 26; Figgs Landing in Worcester Co, MD on September 28 and 29; Kent Point Marina in Queen Anne's Co, MD on September 30; and Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on September 28. COMMON TERNS have been unusually common in Washington, DC this migration season, with 1-3 more individuals seen off Hains Point on September 25, 28 and 29. On September 28 a COMMON TERN was photographed above Silver Lake in Prince William Co, VA, an apparent first record for this location. Farther inland seven COMMON TERNS were observed over the southern end of Deep Creek Lake and one COMMON TERN was seen over Piney Reservoir in Garrett Co, MD on September 29. On September 26 a first-record BLACK SKIMMER for the city of Baltimore, MD was photographed over Baltimore harbor from a private location at Masonville Cove.

Early COMMON LOONS were seen at several locations in Virginia and included ten individuals in flight over Leesylvania SP in Prince William Co on September 30.

There was an unconfirmed report by an observer in a boat of an ANHINGA on the north side of the South River in Anne Arundel Co, MD on September 29.

Three AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS\* were photographed well inland at Falls Mills Lake in Tazewell Co, VA on September 29. A high of 54 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were counted on Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA on September 26, 28 and 30. A summering AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD was seen most recently on September 30. On September 29 a continuing BROWN PELICAN was seen at the southern end of Deep Creek Lake in Garrett Co, MD.

An AMERICAN BITTERN was seen at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD on September 26 and the International Conservation House on Airlie Road in Fauquier Co, VA on September 30.

Noteworthy herons and egrets included several LITTLE BLUE HERONS on Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA on September 26, 28 and 30 and two LITTLE BLUE HERONS at the Duvall Farm Ponds in Talbot Co, MD on September 27. On September 27 and 28 a GLOSSY IBIS was observed with CATTLE EGRETS at North Point SP, Baltimore Co, MD.

Counters at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro, VA reported a passing MISSISSIPPI KITE and NORTHERN GOSHAWK on September 28 and October 1, respectively. BROAD-WINGED HAWKS continued their highly synchronous migration through the reporting area, with large

numbers seen at some hawk watches and other locations, including an incredible 10,154 individuals counted at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro, VA on September 26, which is the third highest daily total ever recorded at this location. Highlights at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch on this day also included 12 PEREGRINE FALCONS, the second highest daily total ever. Migrating GOLDEN EAGLES included 1-2 individuals that passed by the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch on September 26 and 28 and October 1 and a distant young GOLDEN EAGLE spotted from Bland Wade Lane in Nelson Co, VA on September 28.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER is not an especially easy bird to see in Washington, DC but single individuals were spotted at Hains Point on September 25 and Fletcher's Cove on September 27 and October 1.

Flycatcher highlights included an OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER seen along the C & O Canal-Lander in Frederick Co, MD on September 25 and 26; Hillandale Park in Harrisonburg, VA on September 28 and the Pandapas Pond Recreation Area in Montgomery Co, VA on September 29 and 30.

Lowland COMMON RAVENS included a well-photographed individual over Smallwood SP in Charles Co, MD on September 30.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES continued their southward irruption due to poor conifer seed crops in most of the eastern boreal forest and were encountered at many locations, including Rock Creek Park and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC. A BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH was seen again at Mountain Run Lake Park in Culpeper Co, VA on September 26.

A SEDGE WREN was seen at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (access by guided tour only) in Anne Arundel Co, MD and Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD on September 29 and October 1, respectively. A MARSH WREN was a first-time visitor to the U. S. Botanic Garden-Bartholdi Park in Washington, DC on September 25-28. Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC hosted 1-2 MARSH WRENS on September 29 and 30.

Early PURPLE FINCHES at many locations in the reporting area and a couple of PINE SISKINS encountered at Sunset Beach in Northampton Co, VA on September 30 suggest an irruption year for boreal forest finches, as predicted.

Three CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS were found at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on September 26, and one was relocated there on September 29. A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW also was spotted along Bay Tree Beach Road in Seaford, York Co, VA on October 1. On September 29 a LARK SPARROW was spotted with SAVANNAH SPARROWS along Back Hollow Road in Pulaski Co, VA. Sparrow highlights also included a NELSON'S SPARROW found at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD on September 27 and 29, the North Beach marsh in Calvert Co, MD on September 29; the grounds of a Residence Inn in Ocean City, Worcester Co, MD on September 29; and Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on September 30. Early LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were found at several locations in Washington DC and elsewhere during the week. The

changing of the season also was indicated by small numbers of WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS and DARK-EYED JUNCOS and other winter residents.

Migrating BOBOLINKS included two females at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on September 30.

Migratory warblers continued to move through the reporting area in good numbers and diversity. Highlights included a late GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER discovered at the Patuxent Research Refuge-Central Tract (private) in Prince George's Co, MD on September 27. An early ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was reported at 6003 Lockhouse Road in Sharpsburg, Washington Co, MD on September 26; Finzel Swamp in Garrett Co, MD on September 30; and Leesylvania SP in Prince William Co, VA on September 28. During the week the highly desired and generally uncommon and elusive CONNECTICUT WARBLER was reported at two locations in Kent and Sussex Counties in DE; two locations in Washington, DC; at least eight locations in the city of Baltimore and six counties in MD; and at least four locations in four counties in VA. CONNECTICUT WARBLER highlights during the week included a single individual at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on September 27 and 29; a single individual at Masonville Cove in the city of Baltimore, MD on September 26-29; two individuals caught at the banding station at Patuxent Research Refuge in Anne Arundel Co, MD on September 27; and three individuals seen together at Sunset Beach in Northampton Co, VA on September 29. Sightings of the similar and also highly desired MOURNING WARBLER included a young individual found at the U. S. Botanic Garden-Bartholdi Park in Washington, DC on September 25.

Late SUMMER TANAGERS included a visitor to a yard along Waterloo Drive in Talbot Co, MD on September 29 and individuals found at two locations in Virginia Beach, VA: a yard along North Landing Road on September 26 and the West Neck Creek Natural Area on September 29.

A DICKCISSEL was spotted at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD on September 26, 28 and 29; Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (access by guided tour only) in Anne Arundel Co, MD on September 29; and Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on September 29. In Virginia a DICKCISSEL was found at Willow Lake in Rockbridge Co on September 29 and heard uttering its distinctive flight call at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach on September 29. In addition, two DICKCISELS were spotted with FIELD SPARROWS at Silver Lake RP in Prince William Co on September 29.

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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, <https://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