

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist  
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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, Dec 11, and was completed on Tuesday, Dec 18, at 11 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).

Top birds this week are BARROW'S GOLDENEYE\* in MD, WHITE-WINGED DOVE\* in VA, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\* in MD, YELLOW RAIL\* in VA, SNOWY OWL in MD, NELSON'S SPARROW in MD, and WESTERN TANAGER in VA.

Other Birds of Interest include SNOW GOOSE, ROSS'S GOOSE, GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, TRUMPETER SWAN, SURF and BLACK SCOTERS, LONG-TAILED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, MARBLED GODWIT, PURPLE SANDPIPER, BLACK-HEADED GULL, GREAT CORMORANT, NORTHERN SHRIKE\*, nuthatches, wrens including SEDGE WREN, EVENING GROSBEAK, RED CROSSBILL, PINE SISKIN, SNOW BUNTING, sparrows, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, warblers, and PAINTED BUNTING.

#### TOP BIRDS

A BARROW'S GOLDENEYE\* was found Dec 12, in the company of COMMON GOLDENEYES, at Fishing Point at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, St. Mary's Co, MD.

A WHITE-WINGED DOVE\* continues its daily visits to a feeder at Claytor Lake, Pulaski Co, VA.

Well into its second month, a banded CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\* makes regular visits to feeders at 77 Dogwood Tree Ln, Cape St Claire, Anne Arundel Co, MD. The hospitable homeowners welcome observers between 9 am and 4 pm, but ask that they stay on the cement pad on the left side of the back yard, not park in front of the house across the street, close the gate, and sign the guest book.

Report of a briefly glimpsed YELLOW RAIL comes from Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA. The bird flushed across the road at the entrance to the Wildlife Drive at sunset on Dec 11.

A SNOWY OWL perching on a harbor light in the Chesapeake Bay drew many birders to Sandy Point SP, Anne Arundel Co, MD, on Dec 13. On Dec 14 the SNOWY OWL was seen on the westbound span of the Bay Bridge (Queen Anne's Co, MD).

A NELSON'S SPARROW was a fine consolation prize for birders searching, unsuccessfully, in heavy fog, for the Snowy Owl at Sandy Point SP on Dec 14.

A WESTERN Tanager was photographed at Lake Windsor, Virginia Beach, VA, Dec 13.

#### OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Among the thousands of SNOW GEESE wintering in the mid-Atlantic, at least one has made its way to DC. This SNOW GOOSE (perhaps the same immature bird photographed last week at Constitution Gardens) could be seen Dec 16 from East Potomac Park-Hains Point, DC, as could two LONG-TAILED DUCKS.

A ROSS'S GOOSE that was frequenting the campus of Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun Co, VA, was last reported Dec 11.

Single GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were sighted in MD at Whittier Lake Park, Frederick Co, and a field near North Point SP, Baltimore, both on Dec 12, as well as at Yellow Bank Rd fields, Calvert Co, Dec 16 and 17, and Crosby Rd, Kent Co, on Dec 16.

Several locations in Fauquier Co, VA, showcased TRUMPETER SWANS: as many as six birds at the Clifton Institute (private access) Dec 13; two at Lake Brittle Dec 14 and 15; seven in The Plains Dec 16; two at Lake Ashby Dec 17; and a dozen at Airlie House (restricted access) Dec 17. A tagged TRUMPETER SWAN (T87) continued at Lake Artemesia, Prince George's Co, MD, through Dec 17.

Three SURF SCOTERS at Lake Frederick, Frederick Co, VA, were still present as of Dec 16; two were reported Dec 17. A BLACK SCOTER found Dec 14 was a first for Masonville Cove (M-F 9-4, Sat 9-1, Closed Sun) in Baltimore Co, MD.

Two LONG-TAILED DUCKS were spotted at Piscataway Park, Prince George's Co, MD, Dec 17. A LONG-TAILED DUCK continued at Centennial Park, Howard Co, MD, through Dec 11.

A COMMON GALLINULE was seen and photographed Dec 16 at Little Creek WA, Kent Co, DE.

Two SANDHILL CRANES flew over the Poolesville Golf Club, Montgomery Co, MD, Dec 16. Through the week as many as three dozen SANDHILL CRANES gathered in fields off Bradshaw Rd in Kingsville, Baltimore Co, MD, with the latest report from Dec 16.

Four MARBLED GODWITS were present at Raymond Pool, Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on Dec 16.

Three or four PURPLE SANDPIPERS were found at Herrington Harbor, Anne Arundel Co, MD, Dec 16 and 17.

A BLACK-HEADED GULL was feeding over a farm pond at Curles Neck Farm (restricted access), Henrico Co, VA, on Dec 16.

An AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN seen at a great distance made its way to Hog Island WMA, Surry Co, VA, Dec 16.

At least ten GREAT CORMORANTS were gathered at the Bloody Point Bar lighthouse, Queen Anne's Co, MD, on Dec 13.

The NORTHERN SHRIKE that has been hanging out at Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA, was most recently reported Dec 14. A NORTHERN SHRIKE was seen Dec 12 at Piney Reservoir, Garrett Co, MD.

On Dec 15, Big Stone Beach Rd in Milford Neck WA, Kent Co, DE, played host to three species of NUTHATCH: RED-BREASTED, WHITE-BREASTED, and BROWN-HEADED, as well as four species of WREN: WINTER, SEDGE, MARSH, and CAROLINA. A SEDGE WREN was again found at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead), Queen Anne's Co, MD, Dec 14. A MARSH WREN continues at Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke Co, VA, with reports from Dec 16 and 17.

EVENING GROSBEAK sightings were sparse this week: in MD, single birds in Garrett Co Dec 11, Washington Co Dec 14, and Montgomery Co Dec 17; on Dec 11, two birds in the Brentsville area of Prince William Co, VA, and four at Falls Ridge Preserve in Montgomery Co, VA.

A small flock of RED CROSSBILLS continued to frequent Prettyboy Reservoir in northern Baltimore Co, MD, with reports through Dec 16.

A dozen PINE SISKINS have been regulars this week at feeders in Alexandria, VA. PINE SISKINS were spotted Dec 13 at Pinehurst Parkway Park and Dec 14 at Masonville Cove, both in Baltimore, MD.

Small numbers of SNOW BUNTINGS have been working the beach/dunes junction along the oceanfront at the northern end of Virginia Beach, VA (between 82nd and 85th Sts), Dec 12 to 15. Small flocks of SNOW BUNTINGS are also flitting around Assateague Island NS, Worcester Co, MD.

An AMERICAN TREE SPARROW was discovered at Poplar Neck Marsh, Caroline Co, MD, Dec 11. A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was seen at Curles Neck Farm (restricted access), Henrico Co, VA, Dec 16. On Dec 11 a VESPER SPARROW was spotted near the guard shack at the Oaks Landfill, Montgomery Co, MD. The continuing LARK SPARROW at the National Arboretum, NE DC, showed up again near the stream restoration area on Dec 16, and also on Dec 14 along with a WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. On Dec 17, the National Arboretum, NE DC, hosted a GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. On Dec 16 a LINCOLN'S SPARROW posed for photos at the Thalweg Farm, Cecil Co, MD.

Two immature BALTIMORE ORIOLES, male and female, were a nice find on the Northern VA Bird Club's Dec 12 trip to the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, Fairfax Co, VA. On Dec 15, a female BALTIMORE ORIOLE was observed at Oxon Hill Farm, Prince George's Co, MD.

Lingering warblers this week included TENNESSEE, seen at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax Co, VA, Dec 12, and again on Dec 16, when it gave a brief look near the entrance to Haul Rd. A NASHVILLE WARBLER appeared at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, NE DC, Dec 16. A YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER, a CBC find, was seen at East Potomac Park-Hains Point, DC, near the golf course clubhouse, Dec 16 and again Dec 17. An adult male WILSON'S WARBLER was a good find at Gunpowder Falls SP-Sweet Air, Harford Co, MD, Dec 17.

Additionally, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS were seen in a number of locations this past week.

Single PAINTED BUNTINGS brightened several private feeders to our south in Virginia: in Hopewell, Virginia Beach, and Chesapeake. 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, email or phone.

Thank you for your interest and enjoy the birds.

\*Of interest to the applicable state records committee