

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist
Date: 12/4/2018
Coverage: MD/DC/VA/central and southern DE/WV panhandle
Reports, comments and questions: voice@anshome.org
Compiler: Gerry Hawkins
Sponsor: Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central
Atlantic States (independent of NAS)
Transcriber: Steve Cordle

Please consider joining ANS, especially if you are a regular user of the Voice of the Naturalist (Individual \$50; Family \$65; Nature Steward \$100; Audubon Advocate \$200). The membership number is 301-652-9188, option 12; the address is 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815; and the web site is <http://www.anshome.org>.

This is the Voice of the Naturalist, a service of the Audubon Naturalist Society. This report covers the week starting Tuesday, November 27 and was completed on Tuesday, December 4 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). This report does not provide information about likely escaped or released birds (e.g. various parrots and parakeets), non-established feral birds (e.g., Muscovy Duck) and introduced game birds (e.g., Ring-necked Pheasant).

The top birds this week were WESTERN GREBE* in VA, WHITE-WINGED DOVE* in VA, RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD in VA, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD* in MD, PACIFIC LOON* in VA, SNOWY OWL in MD and PAINTED BUNTING in VA.

Other birds of interest this week included SNOW, ROSS'S and GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, MUTE and TRUMPETER SWANS, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, REDHEAD, COMMON EIDER, SURF, BLACK and WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS, LONG-TAILED DUCK, RED-NECKED GREBE, KING RAIL, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, AMERICAN AVOCET, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, MARBLED GODWIT, RED KNOT, SPOTTED SANDPIPER, LESSER YELLOWLEGS, PARASITIC JAEGER, AMERICAN WHITE and BROWN PELICANS, AMERICAN BITTERN, GREAT EGRET, TRICOLORED and GREEN HERONS, NORTHERN GOSHAWK, RED-TAILED HAWK (NORTHERN), ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, GOLDEN EAGLE, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKES,

BLUE-HEADED VIREO, HORNED LARK, NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, SEDGE and MARSH WRENS, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, AMERICAN PIPIT, EVENING GROSBEAK, RED CROSSBILL, PINE SISKIN, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING, AMERICAN TREE, CLAY-COLORED, LARK and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, several out-of-season warblers, including OVENBIRD and YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER, and INDIGO BUNTING.

TOP BIRDS

On December 3 a WESTERN GREBE* was photographed off 4005 Sandpiper Road in Virginia Beach, VA.

On December 1-3 a well-photographed WHITE-WINGED DOVE* visited backyard feeders on Circle Drive in Radford, Pulaski Co, VA.

Continuing RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRDS along Fosters Branch Road in Albemarle Co, VA and Ox Road in Augusta Co, VA were reported most recently on December 2.

A continuing young male CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD* was seen all week frequenting backyard feeders at 977 Dogwood Tree Lane in Cape St Claire, Anne Arundel Co, MD. The homeowners have graciously given permission for birders to visit between 9 am and 4 pm, but request that they stay on the cement pad on the left side of the backyard, not park in front of the neighbors' property across the street, close the gate and sign the guest book.

A continuing PACIFIC LOON* at Sherwood Lakes in Virginia Beach, VA was last seen on November 28.

On November 29 a SWOWY OWL was seen again this season on Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD.

On December 2 a male PAINTED BUNTING was photographed at 232-298 West Lane in Virginia Beach, VA.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

On November 30 40,000 SNOW GEESE and a single ROSS'S GOOSE flew by the Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch in Sussex Co, DE. A single ROSS'S GOOSE also was picked out of a large flock of SNOW GEESE along Fowler Beach Road in Prime Hook NWR, Sussex Co, DE on December 1 and seen far inland at a pond

near the Piedmont Geriatric Hospital in Nottoway Co, VA on November 27. A GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE was spotted offshore at the Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch in Sussex Co, DE on November 27 and at Fort Howard Veterans Park in Baltimore Co, MD on December 1. Sightings of CACKLING GOOSE included single individuals at Silver Lake in Rehoboth, Sussex Co, DE on December 2 and C. M. Crockett Park in Fauquier Co, VA on November 28.

Invasive MUTE SWANS were observed at several locations: 340-440 Stone Road in Carroll Co, MD most recently on November 28; Stansbury Park in Baltimore Co, MD on December 3; West Creek Lakes in Goochland Co, VA most recently on November 29; and the Cheriton Landfill in Northampton Co, VA on December 1. On November 30 a tagged TRUMPETER SWAN (T87) was photographed at Alter Pond along Soil Conservation Road in Prince George's Co, MD. On the same day another TRUMPETER SWAN was seen again at Shoveler Pool in Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA. On November 28 two swans that have been reported as TRUMPETER SWANS were seen again at a pond along Cold Spring Road a short distance west of Forestville Road in Rockingham Co, VA.

Six BLUE-WINGED TEAL were a surprise sighting at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, VA on December 2. Noteworthy diving ducks during the week included a REDHEAD at Matoaka Lake in Williamsburg, VA on November 30 and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on December 1. Several COMMON EIDERS were seen at the Indian River Inlet and the Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch in Sussex Co, DE on November 28 and 29 and November 30, respectively. In Virginia a high of four COMMON EIDERS were spotted at CBBT Island No. 4 in Northampton Co on December 1 and Little Island Park in Virginia Beach on December 2. A continuing young, female SURF SCOTER at Lake Frederick in Frederick Co, VA was seen all week and was joined by two young male SURF SCOTERS on December 2 and 3, a BLACK SCOTER on November 29 and 30 and a LONG-TAILED DUCK on November 30 and December 2. Another inland BLACK SCOTER was photographed at Hope of Glory Farm pond (view from road only) in Fluvanna Co, VA on December 2. A continuing WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was seen at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD on November 27-December 1. Single LONG-TAILED DUCKS also were found at the following inland locations during the week: Broadford Lake and Piney Run Park in Garrett Co, MD on November 29; Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co, MD on December 2; West Potomac Park in

Washington, DC on November 30; and Georgetown Reservoir in Washington, DC on November 30-December 3.

On November 30 two RED-NECKED GREBES were spotted in a small group of HORNED GREBES off Ocean View Road in Chic's Beach, Virginia Beach, VA.

A KING RAIL was encountered at Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on December 1 and along Wildlife Drive at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD on December 1 and 2. On November 27 a COMMON GALLINULE was spotted at the Little Creek Wildlife Area in Kent Co, DE.

Non-raptor highlights at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro, VA during the week included six southbound SANDHILL CRANES on November 28. Six continuing SANDHILL CRANES were seen along Peat Moss Road east of Rock Lodge Road in Garrett Co, MD on November 28-30. A high of eleven SANDHILL CRANES returned to a field along Bradshaw Road in Kingsville, Baltimore Co, MD on November 30-December 2. Interested birders are requested to park in the lot for the nearby church and to walk with caution to but not in the field.

A week high 83, 38 and 60 AMERICAN AVOCETS were counted at Bombay Hook NWR in Kent Co, DE, Prime Hook NWR in Sussex Co, DE and the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA, respectively. Noteworthy shorebirds during the week also included two late SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS photographed at South Point in Worcester Co, MD on November 27; four continuing MARBLED GODWITS at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on November 29-December 3; a single RED KNOT at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, VA on November 27; a SPOTTED SANDPIPER at Quarry Place in Baltimore Co, MD on November 29; and a single LESSER YELLOWLEGS among various other shorebirds at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted/no public access) in Portsmouth, VA on November 29.

On November 29 a PARASITIC JAEGER was observed offshore from a beachside location in mid-Ocean City, Worcester Co, MD.

On November 27 a distant ICELAND GULL (presumably Kumlien's) was spotted resting on the water well offshore at Fort Story in Virginia Beach, VA.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS apparently have returned to winter at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD, with 27 reported along Wildlife Drive on November 28 but only one on December 1. Two southbound AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS passed the Kiptopeke Hawk Watch in Northampton, Co, VA on November 29. A single BROWN PELICAN was seen again at Hacks Point Marina in Cecil Co, MD on November 29 and near the east end of the Rt. 231 bridge in Calvert Co, MD on December 2.

An AMERICAN BITTERN was encountered at the Little Creek Wildlife Area in Kent Co, DE on November 27 and December 3. A longstanding GREAT EGRET at Willow Lake in Rockbridge Co, VA was seen most recently on December 2. One or two TRICOLORED HERONS were found at Back Bay NWR/False Cape SP in Virginia Beach, VA on November 27 and 28 and December 2. Continuing GREEN HERONS at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD and the Ashby Pond Conservancy Site in Fairfax City, VA were seen most recently on November 27 and December 3, respectively.

Highlights at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro, VA during the week included a NORTHERN GOSHAWK and three GOLDEN EAGLES on November 28. Raptor highlights during the week also included two so-called "NORTHERN" RED-TAILED HAWKS, a distinct but not uniformly recognized subspecies that was reported along Turkey Island Road and Herman Street in Henrico Co, VA on December 2. In addition, on December 3 a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was observed foraging over the marsh near the last turn before the bridge on Fowler Beach Road in Sussex Co, DE.

Continuing RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS were seen at Fox Chase Pond and Wetlands in Howard Co, MD on November 30 and along Gibson Road in northern Baltimore Co, MD on December 1 and 2.

On December 2 a continuing LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was seen near the junction of Cartersville and Oak Forest Roads in Cumberland Co, VA. A continuing NORTHERN SHRIKE* at the Sully Woodlands in Fairfax Co, VA was reported most recently on November 30.

A late BLUE-HEADED VIREO was found at Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex Co, VA on November 28 and along Mt. Hebron Sewage Pumping Station Road in Howard Co, MD on November 29, and one or two were spotted at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on November 30 and December 1.

Area HORNED LARKS included several calling individuals in low flight over Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on December 1.

Late swallows included three NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS along Turkey Island Road in Henrico Co, VA on December 2.

Irruptive RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES continue to be seen in wooded habitats throughout the reporting area.

A SEDGE WREN was encountered again at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on November 30 and December 3 and along Magotha Road in Northampton Co, VA on December 1. A MARSH WREN continues at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clark Co, VA, with the most recent encounter at Rattlesnake Spring on December 3.

One or two continuing BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS were seen at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on November 27 and 30 and December 1, and another continuing individual was seen at Petersburg National Battlefield Park-City Point Unit in Hopewell, VA on November 29 and December 2.

Several AMERICAN PIPITS were observed in flight at the Washington Sailing Marina (DC waters) in Alexandria, VA on November 30 and Kenilworth Park in DC on December 1.

Sightings of irruptive EVENING GROSBEAKS consisted of eight individuals in spruce trees near 11204 McCormick Road in Hunt Valley, Baltimore Co, MD on December 3 and single individuals at feeders at the International Conservation House on Airlie Road in Fauquier Co, VA on November 27 and a residence in Chincoteague, Accomack Co, VA on December 2.

On December 1 a small flock of RED CROSSBILLS was again heard calling in flight at Prettyboy Reservoir in northern Baltimore Co, MD.

Irruptive PINE SISKINS continue to be encountered in the reporting area, including at Kenilworth Park and several other locations in DC during the week.

On November 27 three LAPLAND LONGSPURS were seen and heard at a field along SR 611 in Brandon, Prince George Co, VA that also contained AMERICAN PIPITS and HORNED LARKS.

Continuing SNOW BUNTINGS were seen all week at North Point SP in Baltimore Co, MD, with a high of 13 individuals counted on December 2 and 3. On November 30 a single SNOW BUNTING was flushed at Masonville Cove in Baltimore, MD. In Virginia, several SNOW BUNTINGS were found at CBBT Island No. 4 in Northampton Co on December 1 and Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach on December 2.

Highlights of a Northern Virginia Bird Club visit to the Clifton Institute in Fauquier Co, VA on December 1 included a single AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, one of the few seen in the reporting area during the week. Sparrow highlights during the week also included a well-photographed CLAY-COLORED SPARROW at a residential feeder in Wyoming, Kent Co, DE on November 27-30; a VESPER SPARROW at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad NHP in Dorchester Co, MD on December 3; a continuing LARK SPARROW near the intersection of Valley and Meadow Roads at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC on December 2 and 3; and a LINCOLN'S SPARROW at the Irvine Nature Center in Baltimore Co, MD and near Bayville Farms Park in Virginia Beach, VA on December 3. During the week birders also had to distinguish wintering NELSON'S and SALTMARSH SPARROWS at Scotts Landing in Worcester Co, MD and Pleasure House Point NA in Virginia Beach, VA.

On December 1 an out-of-season YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was photographed behind a glue factory near Joyce Layne in Anne Arundel Co, MD.

A BALTIMORE ORIOLE was seen at Petersburg National Battlefield Park-City Point Unit in Hopewell, VA on November 29, and at Ancarrow's Landing and the nearby T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge in Richmond, VA on November 30.

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was found at Cox Point Park in Baltimore Co, MD on November 29 and near the east end of the Rt. 231 bridge in Calvert Co, MD on December 2. Sightings in Virginia included a single individual at Petersburg National Battlefield Park-City Point Unit in Hopewell on November 29 and two individuals seen together at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond on November 30.

Out-of-season warblers included a continuing OVENBIRD at Sidway Farm in Rockbridge Co, VA on November 28 and December 3; a NASHVILLE WARBLER at James River Park in

Richmond, VA on December 2; one or two continuing BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on November 27 and 30 and December 1; a NORTHERN PARULA along the Anacostia River Trail in Prince George's Co, MD on December 2 and the Appalachian Trail near Harper's Ferry, WV on December 3; a PALM WARBLER at several locations; a YELLOW WARBLER along Port Mahon Road in Kent Co, DE on December 1; four continuing PINE WARBLERS at the LBJ Memorial Grove/Columbia Island Marina in Washington, DC on December 2; a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER at 1705 Burroughs Road in Virginia Beach, VA on November 28; and a WILSON'S WARBLER along Four Mile Run in Alexandria, VA on December 2.

On November 27 a late INDIGO BUNTING was spotted near the sign for the raptor trail behind the visitors center at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, 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

