

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist
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Coverage: MD/DC/N. VA/C. & S. 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, Dec 4, and was completed on Tuesday, Dec 11 at about 3:00 p.m.

Information on noteworthy birds during this week is presented below in taxonomic order, as set forth in the 2018 Clements/Cornell taxonomy.

TOP BIRDS THIS WEEK: WHITE-WINGED DOVE* IN VA, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD* in MD, EVENING GROSBEAK in MD & VA, and HARRIS'S SPARROW* in VA

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST: waterfowl, RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, shorebirds, ICELAND GULL, GREAT CORMORANT, GREEN HERON, OSPREY, GOLDEN EAGLE, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, SNOWY OWL, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, RED CROSSBILL, SNOW BUNTING, sparrows, warblers

TOP BIRDS

Although less rare in much of the reporting area, the WHITE-WINGED DOVE* seen and photographed Dec 5 around Circle Drive in Pulaski Co VA seems to be the first ever reported to eBird from far SW VA, or in the surrounding area.

A CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD* seen Dec 4-10 in Cape St. Claire MD (Anne Arundel Co) appears to be the second ever reported in MD.

EVENING GROSBEAKs have been quite uncommon in the mid-Atlantic region in recent years, but several have been seen in MD and VA the past week. In Garrett Co MD, one female was spotted Dec 5 at 123 Underwood Rd. One-two were reported Dec 7-8 near Annapolis MD (Anne Arundel Co) behind the Glue Factory (wherever that is). In Baltimore Co MD, a female was seen briefly Dec 7 N of Reisterstown. VA hosted 3 EVENING GROSBEAKs Dec 6. One was at a playground (38.391x-78.309) in Madison Co, and 2 were seen in Great Falls Forest in Loudoun Co.

A HARRIS'S SPARROW* was reported Dec 8 along Apricot Lane in Cape Charles VA (Northampton Co).

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

A ROSS'S GOOSE was seen Dec 8-10 on and around the campus of Northern Virginia Community College in Loudoun Co. Several GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were seen, all in MD: in Baltimore Co, one continuing Dec 4 at North Point SP (Todd's Inheritance and nearby fields); two in Whittier Lk Pk (Frederick Co) on Dec 9 & 10; three in Harford Co, one at Fallston Dec 5, one along Kings Arms Dr Dec 6, one along Engle Rd (Fallston) Dec 7. A CACKLING GOOSE was spotted Dec 4 around a home in Taylorstown VA (Loudoun Co). A MUTE SWAN was present Dec 4-7 in Carroll Co MD along Stone Rd, Westminster; Four more MUTE SWANS were seen Dec 8 in Queen Anne's Co at Big Water Farm (private). A TRUMPETER SWAN was seen Dec 5-7 at Lake Artemesia, Prince George's Co MD. Another TRUMPETER SWAN was present Dec 7 & 10 at Lake Brittle, Fauquier Co VA; also in Fauquier Co Dec 8 & 10 was a TRUMPETER SWAN at Clifton Institute (Restricted Access). On Dec 8 & 9, Sussex Co DE hosted at least one, possibly 3, COMMON EIDERS: at DE Seashore SP - Burton's Island; at Lewes Ferry Terminal; and at Indian River Inlet. On Dec 9 & 10, a RED-NECKED GEBE was seen near International Conservation House in Fauquier Co VA.

Two RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRDS were observed in VA Dec 8, at 16 Ox Rd, Waynesboro (Augusta Co) and Fosters Branch Rd (Albemarle Co).

A COMMON GALLINULE was seen Dec 6 at Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co MD. Up to 26 SANDHILL CRANES were counted Dec 4 - 8 along Bradshaw Rd, Kingsville MD (Baltimore Co). Smaller numbers were seen Dec 8 at Friendly Farm, Upperco (restricted access; Baltimore Co), Dec 6 along Rock Lodge Rd, Accident MD (Garrett Co), and Dec 7 at Chesapeake Beach Veterans Memorial Pk (Calvert Co).

At Bombay Hook NWR (Kent Co DE), a HUDSONIAN GODWIT was spotted Dec 4 & 8. Nearby at Bombay Hook, a MARBLED GODWIT was present Dec 4, 6, 8, & 9. On Dec 10, Assateague I. NS OSV Zone (Worcester Co MD) hosted a RED KNOT. A SPOTTED SANDPIPER was present Dec 7 near Quarry Place, Baltimore City MD.

An immature ICELAND GULL was spotted Dec 9 from Loreley Beach Community Pier (private; Baltimore Co MD). On Dec 6, 13 GREAT CORMORANTS were seen from Kent Point marina, Queen Anne's Co MD; 3 days later, only one was left. One GREAT CORMORANT was spotted Dec 9 at Bloody Point Bar Lighthouse (Queen Anne's Co MD), and the next day one was present at North Point SP, Baltimore Co. A GREEN HERON was present Dec 4 & 9 at Ashby Pond Conservancy Site (Fairfax Co VA). Lake Elkhorn (Howard Co MD) hosted a GREEN HERON Dec 5, 6, & 9. Still another was present Dec 6 at Lake Mooney Pk, Stafford Co VA.

Three single PEREGRINE FALCONS were spotted in MD: Dec 7-8 at Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (Howard Co); Dec 9 in Hydes MD along Harford Rd (Harford); and Dec 9 along Harford Rd near Gunpowder SP (Baltimore Co). Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch (Augusta Co VA) reported a GOLDEN EAGLE on Dec 4. The same day, another was reported from Poffenberger Road, near the new water tower, feeding on the ground (Frederick Co VA). Monocacy National Battlefield's Gambrill Mill Trail (Frederick Co MD) hosted a third GOLDEN EAGLE Dec 7, and a fourth was seen Dec 8 at Silver Lake RP, Prince William Co VA. Fowler Beach Rd, in Prime Hook NWR (Sussex Co DE), hosted a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK on Dec 8. Two single SNOWY OWLS were seen: one Dec 6 at Poplar Island, Talbot Co MD, the other Dec 8 at North Point SP.

Somewhat outside its expected region was a BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE seen Dec 7 at Carderock Rec Ctr (Montgomery Co MD). A BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER was seen Dec 4 at Occoquan Bay NWR (Prince William Co VA); others were seen Dec 5 at Joe & Catherine's Excellent Adventure Yard (Lancaster Co VA) and Dec 9 at Back River Diamond Pt Rd (Baltimore City).

Prettyboy Reservoir - Spooks Hill Road boat ramp (Baltimore Co MD) hosted up to 11 RED CROSSBILLS Dec 5 - 10, and up to 14 SNOW BUNTINGS were at North Point SP Dec 4 - 9.

On Dec 4, 5, & 8, Laurel Hill Equestrian Center (Fairfax co VA) had a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW. There was a NELSON'S SPARROW at North Beach marsh (Calvert Co MD) on Dec 5. Single LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were seen, Dec 7 at Blandy Experimental Farm (Clarke Co VA), and Dec 9 at Study Rd pond (Carroll Co MD).

NASHVILLE WARBLERS were reported, one Dec 5 along the Anacostia River Trail, Prince George's Co MD, another Dec 9 at Back River, Diamond Pt Rd. At Univ. MD's McKeldin Mall (Prince George's Co), a NORTHERN PARULA was seen Dec 5. Finally, on Dec 7 in a yard on Deep Creek Rd (Accomack Co VA), a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) was reported (but not confirmed).

This report was based on reports on the DE, MD, VA, and WV list servers via the ABA Internet links, from eBird Rare Bird Alerts.

The Audubon Sanctuary Shop (301-652-3606, 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, either e-mail or phone.

Thank you for your interest, and enjoy the birds.

*Of interest to the applicable records committee