

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, December 18, and was completed on Tuesday, December 25, 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 59th Supplement (June 2018).

**Top Birds this week were:** WHITE-WINGED DOVE\* in VA, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\* in MD, BAR-TAILED GODWIT\* in VA, SAY'S PHOEBE\* in VA, GREAT TIT\* in VA, and VARIED THRUSH\* in MD.

**Other Birds of Interest include:** SNOW GOOSE, GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, CACKLING GOOSE, TRUMPETER SWAN, REDHEAD, COMMON EIDER, all three SCOTER species, LONG-TAILED DUCK, EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE, SANDHILL CRANE, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER, MARBLED GODWIT, PURPLE SANDPIPER, gulls, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN BITTERN, GREAT EGRET, GREEN HERON, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, GLOSSY IBIS, GOLDEN EAGLE, LONG-EARED and SHORT-EARED OWL, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKE, BLUE-HEADED VIREO, wrens, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, EVENING GROSBEAK, COMMON REDPOLL, SNOW BUNTING, sparrows, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, ORANGE-CROWNED and other out-of-season warblers, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, and INDIGO BUNTING.

## **TOP BIRDS**

The WHITE-WINGED DOVE\*, a bird of the desert SW, that has been visiting a feeder in Claytor Lake, Pulaski Co, VA, continued daily Dec 18-21.

The now locally famous CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\*, a hatch-year male, continues to visit several feeders in a yard at 77 Dogwood Tree Lane, Cape St. Claire, Anne Arundel Co, MD through Dec 23. The owners ask that visitors come between 9 am and 4 pm, stay on the cement pad on the left side of the backyard, do not park in front of the home across the street, close the gate, and sign the guest book.

A BAR-TAILED GODWIT\*, likely the same individual seen in the spring, was found again during a shorebird survey at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Dec 18 and 19.

A SAY'S PHOEBE\* was found mid-day on Dec 24 along Sandiges Road (Rt 610) in Amherst Co (north of Lynchburg), VA. The bird was hanging around a brush pile near an old barn about 0.4 miles from US Rt 60. It flew back and forth across the road a few times then flew out of sight and was not relocated.

A vagrant GREAT TIT\* (*Parus major*), a Eurasian native related to our titmouse, was photographed at a feeder on the naval base in Norfolk, VA. Its provenance has not been determined, but it was very likely ship-assisted.

A male VARIED THRUSH\*, normally found in the western U.S. and Canada, was seen and photographed in a front yard on Philip Dr, St. Mary's Co, MD on Dec 22, for a first county record, and if accepted by the MDDC Records Committee, a fifth state record. The bird was relocated on Dec 23 in the woods on the left side of the house at 22070 Philip Drive in Leonardtown, MD, and again in the same neighborhood on Dec 24. The (extremely welcoming) homeowners request that birders come between 8 am and 4 pm, and park along the left side of the road between the first house on Philip and this house (both houses are on the left side). If that space is full, please try to avoid parking directly in front of another house.

## **OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST**

A large flock of 250-300 SNOW GEESE were seen in flight, away from the bay, at Dutch Gap Conservation Area-Henricus Historical Park, Chesterfield Co, VA on Dec 22. A lone GREATER

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, lingering for the past two weeks, was seen again at Fallston Road Pond in Harford Co, MD on Dec 18. A CACKLING GOOSE was reported at Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach, VA on Dec 22, another was seen on Dec 22-23 at Cumberland-Terminus, Allegany Co, MD, and another was found on Dec 24 at Belle Haven Park-North Parking area, Fairfax Co, VA.

A TRUMPETER SWAN (wing tag #T87) remains on Lake Artemesia, with sightings Dec 18-24. A pair of TRUMPETER SWANS were at the Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Dec 21, and two continued on Lake Brittle in Fauquier Co, VA on Dec 22.

A REDHEAD was seen in western MD at Rocky Gap SP, Allegany Co, on Dec 21-23. A first year male COMMON EIDER was spotted again at Phoebus Waterfront Park, Hampton, VA on Dec 22. On Dec 18, 19, 22, and 23, a pair of SURF SCOTERS were seen, continuing from last week, at Lake Frederick, Frederick Co, VA. All three SCOTER species were seen at Eastern Neck NWR in Kent Co, MD on Dec 20, with 40 SURF, one WHITE-WINGED and one BLACK reported. On Dec 20-23 an adult BLACK SCOTER was at Everett Lake in Bedford Co, VA. A male LONG-TAILED DUCK was seen and photographed at Cranberry Reservoir, Carroll Co, MD on Dec 18, while another was spotted at Liberty Corner Farm, Albemarle Co, VA on Dec 22.

A high number of 30 EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES were reported from Dayton, Rockingham Co, VA on Dec 22.

A pair of SANDHILL CRANES have been seen in the area of Poolesville, Montgomery Co, MD recently. On Dec 20 they were spotted walking and eating in a large field on the north side of Westerly Road and seen again on Dec 22.

Six BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS were spotted from the wildlife drive at Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co, MD on Dec 18. Four MARBLED GODWITS were found sleeping and preening at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on Dec 23. Notable anywhere away from the coast, a pair of PURPLE SANDPIPERS were seen along the jetty at Herrington Harbor, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Dec 19, and a single individual was at Chesapeake Beach Marina in Calvert Co, MD on Dec 20.

A lone BONAPARTE'S GULL was seen flying over with Ring-billed Gulls at Wingina Boat Ramp in Nelson Co, VA on Dec 21. On Dec 22, 61 LAUGHING GULLS were counted from Loreley Beach Community Pier (private) in Baltimore Co, MD. On the same day,

an immature ICELAND GULL was seen at the Prince William County Landfill, Prince William Co, VA. On Dec 23, two ICELAND and one GLAUCOUS GULL were reported from the same location. A LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL was reported from Leonardtown, St. Mary's Co, MD on Dec 20, in the company of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls.

As many as 17 GREAT CORMORANTS were perched on the Bloody Point Bar Light at the Kent Point Marina, Queen Anne's Co, MD, Dec 19, with a fewer number seen there on Dec 22.

A pair of AMERICAN BITTERNS were reported from Hart-Miller Island, Essex Co, MD on Dec 20. A late GREAT EGRET was reported throughout the week at Lake Artemesia in Prince George's Co, MD Dec 18-24. Another was seen at Port Mahon Rd, Kent Co, DE on Dec 19. A late lingering GREEN HERON has been reliably seen feeding, sunning, and preening in an outflow channel at the Ashby Pond Conservancy Site in Fairfax City, VA on Dec 18 and 19. A lingering immature BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was seen again in the marshy area at Culler Lake in Baker Park, Frederick Co, MD on Dec 19. A pair of GLOSSY IBIS were spotted at Chincoteague NWR-Snow Goose Pond, Accomack Co, VA on Dec 24.

On Dec 21, an immature GOLDEN EAGLE was reported from Newport News Park, Newport News, VA.

A LONG-EARED OWL was photographed at the Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Clarke Co, VA on Dec 19. On Dec 18, a SHORT-EARED OWL was hunting over the marsh at Fowler's Beach, Sussex Co, DE, and three were seen there on Dec 19.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS were once again seen in MD at Fox Chase Pond and Wetlands, in Howard Co, on Dec 19-22, and at Gibson Rd, Baltimore Co on Dec 21.

A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was discovered on Dec 23 on Bells Lane, in the area of the big pond, in Staunton, VA. The continuing NORTHERN SHRIKE was seen again at the Sully Woodlands, Fairfax Co, VA, most recently on Dec 18. A late BLUE-HEADED VIREO was located at Sandy Bottom Natural Park, in Hampton, VA on Dec 21, while another was seen at Leonardtown, St. Mary's Co, MD on Dec 24.

Lingering wrens included a HOUSE WREN continuing at the city point area of Hopewell, VA on Dec 20 and 23, another at

Eastern Regional Park, Baltimore Co, MD on Dec 20, a SEDGE WREN continuing at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead) Queen Anne's Co, MD on Dec 20, and MARSH WRENS at Swan Creek Wetland-Cox Creek DMCF (continuing) on Dec 19, another at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Clarke Co, VA the same day, and another at Baylight Rd in Baltimore Co, MD on Dec 22.

Late BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS in Virginia were found at Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Historical Park in Chesterfield Co, Dec 19-20, and a pair continuing at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond City, on Dec 22, while another was seen among a group of Yellow-rumped Warblers on the dune trail at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, VA on Dec 23.

EVENING GROSBEAKS were reported in small numbers this week. One was seen again at Gapland SP in Frederick Co, MD on Dec 18, and four females were seen the same day on private land near Union Springs dam in Rockingham Co, VA. A pair of females continue to visit feeders in the same yard as the White-winged Dove, in Claytor Lake, Pulaski Co, VA, with sightings throughout the week.

A COMMON REDPOLL was discovered feeding on seeds at the top of a sweet gum tree on the road to the marina at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax Co, VA on Dec 24.

Twenty or more SNOW BUNTINGS were at Fowler's Beach, Milford, Sussex Co, DE on Dec 18. A small flock with varying numbers continues to visit North Point SP in Baltimore Co, MD, with reports on Dec 19, 21, and 22. In Virginia, 13 SNOW BUNTINGS were along the 88<sup>th</sup> Street Beach, Virginia Beach on Dec 23.

A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was seen again at the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, Fairfax, VA, as recently as Dec 23. A VESPER SPARROW flushed up from a field with a flock of Savannah Sparrows at Sayler's Creek Road Pond in Prince Edward Co, VA on Dec 22. The adult LARK SPARROW at the National Arboretum, NE DC remains in the area of the stream restoration, seen in the company of a mixed flock of Song and White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos as recently as Dec 23. Three SAVANNAH SPARROWS were found at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, NE DC on Dec 23. A well seen and photographed GRASSHOPPER SPARROW continued in the brambles along the Anacostia River, at the National Arboretum, NE DC on Dec 23. A LECONTE'S SPARROW was found at Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract, Virginia Beach, VA on Dec 23. At least two

(one adult, one immature) WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were seen in the stream restoration area at the National Arboretum, NE DC on Dec 20, continuing through Dec 24.

An adult male YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was seen in a mixed group of blackbirds heading north at Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract, in Virginia Beach, VA on Dec 23. Another adult male was reported from Whitehall Neck Road, near the intersection with Bear Swamp Road, Kent Co, DE on the same day.

On Dec 19, a well-described YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was reported from the C&O Canal-Potomac Boat Club, NW DC, seen eating berries near the towpath.

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, found on a CBC last week, was relocated at St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's Co, MD on Dec 19. Other lingering warblers this week included a BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER at Weyanoke Sanctuary, Norfolk, VA on Dec 21, a bright adult NASHVILLE WARBLER at the National Arboretum, NE DC on Dec 20, another at Ancarrow's Landing, Richmond City, VA on Dec 22, a COMMON YELLOWTHROAT at Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA on Dec 18 and another at Chino Farms-10 acre Pond (private), Queen Anne's Co, MD on Dec 23, a CAPE MAY WARBLER eating suet at a feeder in a yard in Entwood (private), Hanover Co, VA on Dec 22 & 23, a PALM WARBLER seen at a private farm in Kent Co, MD on Dec 23, a YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER continuing at a private residence on Deep Creek Road in Accomack Co, VA on Dec 22, and a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER which was found on the DC CBC and continued at East Potomac Park-Haines Point, SW DC on Dec 19.

An out-of-season ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was visiting a feeder on Dec 18 on Westview Drive, St. Inigoes, St. Mary's Co, MD.

A late INDIGO BUNTING was discovered at Algonkian Regional Park in Loudoun Co, VA on Dec 21.

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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, <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](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