

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 25, 2018 and was completed on Tuesday, January 1, 2019 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 CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\* in MD, BAR-TAILED GODWIT\* in VA, SAY'S PHOEBE\* in VA, ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER\* in VA, VARIED THRUSH\* in MD, HARRIS'S SPARROW\* in VA and WESTERN TANAGER in VA.

Other birds of interest this week included SNOW, GREATER WHITE-FRONTED and CACKLING GEESE, MUTE and TRUMPETER SWANS, REDHEAD, KING EIDER, HARLEQUIN DUCK, SURF and BLACK SCOTERS, LONG-TAILED DUCK, COMMON GOLDENEYE, RED-NECKED, EARED and WESTERN GREBES, SORA, SANDHILL CRANE, RED KNOT, PURPLE SANDPIPER, PARASITIC JAEGER, DOVEKIE, RAZORBILL, BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE, BLACK-HEADED, ICELAND and GLAUCOUS GULLS, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE and BROWN PELICANS, AMERICAN BITTERN, GREAT EGRET, TRICOLORED and GREEN HERONS, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, GLOSSY IBIS, RED-TAILED HAWK ("NORTHERN"), ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, GOLDEN EAGLE, LONG-EARED OWL, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, WHITE-EYED and BLUE-HEADED VIREOS, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, SEDGE and MARSH WRENS, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, EVENING GROSBEAK, RED CROSSBILL, SNOW BUNTING, CLAY-COLORED and VESPER SPARROWS, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER and several out-of-season warblers, and PAINTED BUNTING.

#### TOP BIRDS

A continuing young male CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD\* at backyard feeders at 977 Dogwood Tree Lane in Cape St Claire, Anne Arundel Co, MD was seen through December 30 but was not seen on December 31. It is imperative that persons interested in looking for this bird follow the guidelines of the homeowners of the property and include these guidelines in any report of this bird on eBird, Facebook or other forum. These guidelines may be found on MD Birding and in most recent reports of this species on eBird under Maryland Rare Bird Alerts.

A BAR-TAILED GODWIT\* was a prominent visitor at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on December 26-31. This is likely the same bird seen there on December 1 and 18-19.

On December 25 a SAY'S PHOEBE\* found on the prior day was relocated in fields and on various perches at 487-514 Sandidges Road in Amherst Co, VA.

On December 29 and 30 an ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER\* was photographed at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA and along Crag's Causeway in Virginia Beach, VA.

A continuing VARIED THRUSH\* at 22070 Philip Drive and nearby in St. Mary's Co, MD was seen through December 30 but not on December 31, which may have been due to inclement weather. It is imperative that persons interested in looking for this bird follow the guidelines of the homeowners of the property and include these guidelines in any report of this bird on eBird, Facebook or other forum. These guidelines may be found in a post by Tyler Bell on MD Birding on December 31, 2018 titled "Varied Thrush visitation rules" and in most recent reports of this species on eBird under Maryland Rare Bird Alerts.

On December 31 a HARRIS'S SPARROW\* was photographed at feeders at 10657 Church Neck Road in Northampton Co, VA, making this the second consecutive winter in which this species has visited Virginia. It is imperative that persons interested in looking for this bird follow the guidelines of the homeowners of the property and include these guidelines in any report of this bird on eBird, Facebook or other forum. These guidelines may be found in the reports of this species filed on eBird on December 31, 2018 under Virginia Rare Bird Alerts.

A WESTERN TANAGER continues to visit back yard feeders at a residence on Lake Windsor in Virginia Beach, VA, with the most recent report on December 30.

#### OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

There were many other noteworthy birds found in the reporting area during the week, undoubtedly in part due to the increased number of birders and coverage as a result of National Audubon Society sponsored Christmas Bird Counts conducted during the week.

In addition to very large numbers of SNOW GEESE at several mid-coastal locations in Delaware and in Worcester Co, MD, a single SNOW GOOSE was found at McDonogh Pond in Baltimore Co, MD on December 27-29, and an apparent continuing single SNOW GOOSE was reported in flight near East Potomac Park in Washington, DC on December 29. A single SNOW GOOSE and a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE were photographed at the Mulwyck Lane Ponds in Fauquier Co, VA on December 30.

A continuing CACKLING GOOSE was spotted among the hundreds of CANADA GEESE at Belle Haven Park-North Picnic Area in Fairfax Co, VA on December 25, 26 and 31 and at the Cumberland Terminus in Allegany Co, MD on December 26. On December 26 four CACKLING GEESE were photographed in the retention ponds behind Lowe's on Liberty Trail in Louisa Co, VA. A single CACKLING GOOSE was found at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project-South in Loudoun Co, VA on December 28 and the Cheriton Landfill in Northampton Co, VA on December 30.

An invasive MUTE SWAN was seen at the Westminster Community Pool in Carroll Co, MD most recently on December 31 and at Lake Collusion in Calvert Co, MD on December 30. Reports of TRUMPETER

SWAN during the week included a tagged individual (T87) that was seen again at Lake Artemesia in Prince George's Co, MD on December 25.

Noteworthy ducks during the week included an inland REDHEAD found at Lake Habeeb in Rocky Gap SP, Allegany Co, MD on December 27 and 30 and a female KING EIDER spotted flying north at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, VA on December 29. The only HARLEQUIN DUCKS reported in the area during the week were two individuals at CBBT-Island No. 4 on December 26 and one individual at the Lynnhaven Inlet Flats in Virginia Beach, VA on December 31. A continuing female SURF SCOTER at inland Lake Frederick in Frederick Co, VA was seen most recently December 29. An inland BLACK SCOTER was seen again at Lake Manor in Bedford Co, VA on December 25-27 and along Temple Lake Drive in Colonial Heights, VA on December 26-28. On December 30 a continuing female LONG-TAILED DUCK was spotted on the lower pond at Liberty Corner Farm in Albemarle Co, VA. COMMON GOLDENEYES continue at the Georgetown Reservoir in Washington, DC, with one or two females seen all week.

On December 29 a RED-NECKED GREBE was seen at Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE and Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA. On December 27 and 30 an EARED GREBE was photographed at Tom's Cove in Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA. An EARED GREBE also was reported at Assateague Island NS-Bayside Point in Worcester Co, MD on December 27. On December 29 a WESTERN GREBE was photographed at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA.

A transmitter-tracked hatch-year male SORA was spotted in the marsh at Jackson Landing, Patuxent River Park, Prince George's Co, MD on December 27. On December 30 a SORA was heard at the East Beach marsh at Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co, MD.

Area SANDHILL CRANES included two continuing individuals along West Willard Road in Poolesville, Montgomery Co, MD on December 29-31.

Shorebird highlights during the week included a well-photographed continuing RED KNOT at Assateague Island NS-OSV, Worcester Co, MD on December 29. A PURPLE SANDPIPER was observed on the jetty at Chesapeake Beach Veterans Memorial Park in Calvert Co, MD on December 26, and two were spotted on the jetty at Herrington Harbor, Anne Arundel Co, MD on December 26 and 29.

PARASITIC JAEGERs were seen from shore in Virginia Beach, VA on December 29 – two at Little Island Park and one at Back Bay NWR.

On December 30 a DOVEKIE was spotted flying from the base of a jetty at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD. As a result of a large southbound movement witnessed in the Northeast in recent weeks, RAZORBILLS were observed at many locations in the reporting area, especially in Delaware, where a high of 346 individuals were counted at Cape Henlopen SP on December 30. Much smaller numbers of RAZORBILLS were observed at various locations in Maryland and Virginia during the week, with a high of 29 individuals reported at Assateague Island in Worcester Co, MD on December 28 and 100 individuals at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA on December 29.

Gull highlights included an immature BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE in flight at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA on December 29. A BLACK-HEADED GULL was spotted at Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach, VA on December 28 and the Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch in Sussex Co, DE on December 30. An ICELAND GULL (thayeri) was photographed at CBBT-Island No. 4 in Northampton Co, VA on December 26. An ICELAND GULL that was not identified to subspecies was photographed at Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co, MD

on December 30 and reported at the Salisbury Landfill-Naylor Mill Road Pond in Wicomico Co, MD on December 29. A continuing GLAUCOUS GULL was seen at the Prince William Co Landfill in Prince William Co, VA on December 30 and 31. A GLAUCOUS GULL also was reported in flight at Conowingo Dam in Harford Co, MD on December 30.

GREAT CORMORANTS were seen at several coastal and bay locations during the week, with a high of 14 individuals separated from the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS perched on the Bloody Point Bar Lighthouse off the Kent Point Marina in Queen Anne's Co, MD on December 26 and 29.

On December 31 an AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was photographed at Salisbury City Park in Wicomico Co, MD. A continuing BROWN PELICAN was seen at Assateague I. NS-OSV in Worcester Co, MD on December 29.

An AMERICAN BITTERN was seen at the Black Marsh in Baltimore Co, MD on December 26 and at Patuxent River Park-Jackson Landing in Prince George's Co, MD on December 27.

A continuing GREAT EGRET at Lake Artemesia in Prince George's Co, MD was most recently seen on December 31. Single GREAT EGRETS also were spotted this week in Montgomery Co, MD and Kent Co, DE. Two TRICOLORED HERONS were found at Deal Island WMA-Riley Roberts Road turnoff in Somerset Co, MD on December 29. On December 27 a GREEN HERON was photographed at Royal Lake Park in Fairfax Co, VA. On December 26 a continuing BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was seen at Baker Park, Frederick Co, MD.

On December 25-28 two GLOSSY IBIS were seen at Chincoteague NWR in Accomack Co, VA and three were found on December 27 and 30 at Fairmont WMA-West Impoundment in Somerset Co, MD.

A so-called "NORTHERN" RED-TAILED HAWK (*abieticola*), a dark form that is not uniformly recognized as a subspecies, was photographed at the Brown Station Road Landfill (restricted access) in Prince George's Co, MD on December 27. On the same day a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was observed in flight over agricultural fields along Lloyd Bowen Road in Calvert Co, MD. On December 26 and 27 a GOLDEN EAGLE graced the skies over the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD, where this species occurs annually in small numbers.

Although this report typically does not include information on most owls for their protection, during the week rare bird reports on eBird noted a LONG-EARED OWL flushed from a stand of red cedar along Prime Hook Beach Road in Sussex Co, DE on December 30 and a continuing LONG-EARED OWL at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA.

On December 30 a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was reported on a power line at 1287 Miles Creek Road in Mecklenburg Co, VA.

An out-of-season WHITE-EYED VIREO was photographed at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach, VA on December 29. On December 25 birders looking for a vagrant VARIED THRUSH also enjoyed watching a continuing BLUE-HEADED VIREO in a mixed-species flock at 22070 Philip Drive in St. Mary's Co, MD. A BLUE-HEADED VIREO also was found at Fairmount WMA-East Impoundment in Somerset Co, MD on December 27 and along 2800-3076 Butlers Bluff Drive in Cape Charles, Northampton Co, VA on December 31.

A continuing BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE on Wilson Court in Charlottesville, VA was seen most recently on December 31.

During the week a SEDGE WREN was discovered at several locations in Virginia Beach: along Horn Point Road on December 27 and 29, at the Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract on December 30 and False Cape SP on December 29. On December 31 a SEDGE WREN was heard near the end of Cornfield Harbor Road in St. Mary's Co, MD.

A continuing MARSH WREN at Rattlesnake Spring in Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA was seen most recently on December 30. On the same day a MARSH WREN was recorded at Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co, MD.

A wayward BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER was found at Windsor Castle Park in Isle of Wight, VA on December 25 and at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on December 29-31.

Small numbers of irruptive EVENING GROSBEAKS were found in Virginia during the week. Three visited feeders on Declan Court in Prince William Co on December 25, two visited feeders in the Brentsville area of Prince William Co on December 29 and as many as six visited feeders at a private location along Woodcock Lane in Dayton, Rockingham Co on December 25-30. Elsewhere, a single EVENING GROSBEAK was observed at a feeder at the Cape Henlopen SP Nature Center in Sussex Co, DE on December 27.

Continuing RED CROSSBILLS at Prettyboy Reservoir in Baltimore Co, MD were limited to one individual heard in flight on December 28.

As many as eight continuing SNOW BUNTINGS were found at Crystal Pier in North Point SP in Baltimore Co, MD through December 30, perhaps in part due to seed being thrown on the rocky habitat favored by this species. A high of sixteen SNOW BUNTINGS were spotted in dunes between 83rd and 88th Streets in Virginia Beach, VA on December 26 and 31, and four were found on CBBT-Island No. 4 in Northampton Co, VA on December 26. In Delaware, a high of 18 SNOW BUNTINGS were found along Fowler Beach Road in Prime Hook NWR and Cape Henlopen SP in Sussex Co, DE on December 30.

A continuing CLAY-COLORED SPARROW at the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center in Fairfax Co, VA for the second consecutive winter was seen most recently on December 31. On December 29 a VESPER SPARROW was recorded calling at an unspecified location in Worcester Co, MD.

A continuing adult male BALTIMORE ORIOLE at a residential feeder in Lincoln, Loudoun Co, VA was seen again on December 30.

Sightings of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER included at least one individual found between the Belle Haven Park-North Parking Area and the Hunting Creek Bridge in Fairfax Co, VA on December 26 and at nearby Dyke Marsh WP in Fairfax Co, VA on December 25. Sightings in Maryland included 1-2 individuals found at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co on December 29 and 30 and a single individual found at 500 Osborne Lane or nearby Mullins Park in Harford Co on December 29 and 30.

Out-of-season warblers found in the reporting area during the week included the following:

- A BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER at two locations in Cape Charles, Northampton Co, VA on December 30 and Craggs Causeway in Virginia Beach, VA on December 31, and two individuals at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on December 29.

- A NASHVILLE WARBLER at locations on Main and Taylor Streets in Chincoteague, Accomack Co, VA on December 29 and Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on December 30 and 31. Another was reported on December 26 at Summit Point in Jefferson Co, WV.

- A CAPE MAY WARBLER at the Raspberry Falls Golf & Hunt Club in Loudoun Co, VA on December 28 and a private residence in Hanover Co, VA on December 29 and 31.

- A NORTHERN PARULA on Capeville Drive in Cape Charles, Northampton Co, VA on December 30.

- A BLACKPOLL WARBLER at Little Island Park in Virginia Beach Co, VA on December 29.

- PINE WARBLERS at several locations, including four individuals at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Howard Co, MD on December 27 and five continuing individuals at the LBJ Memorial Grove/Columbia Island Marina in Washington, DC on December 30.

- A YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER at a residential feeder in Virginia Beach, VA on December 28.

- A PRAIRIE WARBLER at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, VA on December 31.

- A male WILSON'S WARBLER at Settler's Mill in James City Co, VA on December 25.

A PAINTED BUNTING was seen at private residences in Anne Arundel Co, MD on December 26, Chesapeake, VA on December 30, and Hanover Co, VA on December 27 and 30.

And finally, best wishes for a happy and peaceful new year to all!

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This week's report was based on reports on the DE, MD, VA and WV list servers, eBird records, various birding pages on Facebook and submissions to ANS.

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