

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, January 29 and was completed on Tuesday, February 5, 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).

The top birds this week are BAR-TAILED GODWIT* in VA and VARIED THRUSH* in MD.

Other birds of interest include SNOW, ROSS'S, GREATER WHITE-FRONTED, and CACKLING GEESE, MUTE and TRUMPETER SWANS, GREATER SCAUP, COMMON EIDER, HARLEQUIN DUCK, WHITE-WINGED SCOTER and other ducks, HORNED and RED-NECKED GREBES, SANDHILL CRANE, THICK-BILLED MURRE, RAZORBILL, gulls including BLACK-HEADED, ICELAND, and GLAUCOUS, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, OSPREY, raptors including GOLDEN EAGLE, SHORT-EARED OWL, NORTHERN SHRIKE, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, HORNED LARK, EVENING GROSBEAK, COMMON REDPOLL, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING, CLAY-COLORED, VESPER, and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, PAINTED BUNTING, DICKCISSEL, and PINE SISKIN.

TOP BIRDS

A BAR-TAILED GODWIT* continues at Chincoteague NWR-Tom's Cove, Accomack Co, VA, with reports from Jan 29 and Feb 4.

The VARIED THRUSH* found in the Leonardtown area of St. Mary's Co, MD, in late December was seen again Feb 2; this week it showed up across the street from 22070 Philip Drive. Persons looking for this bird are asked to follow the access

guidelines, which may be found in posts by Tyler Bell on MD Birding, most recently on Feb 2, and to include these guidelines in any report.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

While SNOW GEESE by the thousands have been flooding the Eastern Shore, two of them--one white and one blue--notably made it to Baltimore: they were reported at Prettyboy Reservoir (Gates 36-37) on Feb 3.

A continuing ROSS'S GOOSE was seen through the week at Whittier Lake, and in a marshy area bordered by Rocky Springs Road and Rosemont Avenue, in Frederick Co, MD.

Two GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were reported Jan 30 at the Clifton Institute (restricted access) in Fauquier Co, VA. A GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE was found in Howard Co, MD, in fields north of Jennings Chapel Rd. In Baltimore, MD, a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE was seen Feb 3 at North Point SP, in the first field south of the park entrance and, on Feb 4, at Todd's Inheritance Historic Site.

CAACKLING GEESE were found at several locations in Northern Virginia during the week: in Fairfax Co at Dyke Marsh WP Jan 31; Burke Lake Park Feb 1; and Belle Haven Park--Picnic Area Feb 4; and, in Prince William Co, at Silver Lake RP on Feb 4.

A MUTE SWAN continues at Piney Run Park in Carroll Co, MD, with the most recent sighting from Feb 4. Other MUTE SWAN sightings include one from the C&O Canal (MP 107-108) in Washington Co, MD, Feb 2, and one from Fort Howard Park in Baltimore Feb 3.

The tagged TRUMPETER SWAN (T87) visited Alter Pond along Soil Conservation Road in Prince George's Co, MD on Jan 29 and 31 and Feb 3.

An inland GREATER SCAUP was found at Elizabeth Mills Riverfront Park, Loudoun Co, VA on January 31. At least 2 COMMON EIDERS were present at Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA, through the week. A single HARLEQUIN DUCK was reported from Lynnhaven Inlet in Virginia Beach, VA Feb 3. On January 30 a WHITE-WINGED SCOTER showed up at Burke Lake, Fairfax Co, VA. On Feb 2, 4 WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were at Quarry Lake in Baltimore, MD. And on Feb 1 a WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was photographed at West Potomac Park, DC.

One upshot of last week's frigid temperatures was a waterfowl bonanza, with hundreds of ducks gathering on the Potomac River in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. Three LONG-TAILED DUCKS headlined the rafts that could be seen from West Potomac Park on Feb 3. Other ducks in the mix that day included GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, MALLARD, CANVASBACK, some 600 LESSER SCAUP, 60 BUFFLEHEAD, COMMON GOLDENEYE, COMMON and RED-BREASTED

MERGANSER—and 1 RUDDY DUCK. One LONG-TAILED DUCK also made it to Riley's Lock on the C&O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD, Feb 2 and 3.

Smaller bodies of water in the area also benefited from the phenomenon. A LONG-TAILED DUCK showed up at Burke Lake Park, Fairfax Co, VA, on Feb 2. Gunner's Lake in Germantown, Montgomery Co, drew CANVASBACK and REDHEAD. Further south, more than 40 COMMON GOLDENEYES and more than 60 HOODED MERGANSERS flocked to Lake Monticello (gated community/ restricted access) in Fluvanna Co, VA on Jan 31.

A RED-NECKED GREBE along with a HORNED GREBE were also to be seen on the Potomac in DC, reported from West Potomac Park on Feb 1 and East Potomac Park—Hains Point on Feb 3 and 4.

SANDHILL CRANES continue to visit fields along Harry James Road in St. Mary's Co, MD, with a report from Feb 3.

A THICK-BILLED MURRE was noted at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD on Feb 3. Two RAZORBILLS were seen off the jetty at Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE Feb 3. Two RAZORBILLS were reported from Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 2.

On Feb 2 a BLACK-HEADED GULL was dip-feeding with 5 BONAPARTE'S GULLS at Pleasure House Point NA in Virginia Beach. On Feb 3 a BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen again at Wolfe Neck WTP (restricted access), Sussex Co, DE. In Maryland ICELAND GULLS showed up at Lorely Beach Community Pier (restricted access) in Howard Co on Feb 2; and at the Salisbury Landfill-Naylor Mill Road Pond, Wicomico Co, on January 29.

On Feb 3 a LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL visited Franklin Manor, Anne Arundel Co, MD.

In Worcester Co, MD, GLAUCOUS GULLS were spotted at the Ocean City Inlet Jan 29 and Feb 4, at the West Ocean City Marina on Jan 29 and 30 and Feb 4, and at Ocean City's Sunset Park Feb 2 and 3. A GLAUCOUS GULL was also spotted at Lorley Beach, Baltimore Co, on Jan 29.

During the week small numbers of GREAT CORMORANTS were seen at several expected coastal locations in DE, MD, and VA.

Two AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were observed flying low over the water at Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach, Feb 2.

An early OSPREY was reported from Milton, Sussex Co, DE, on Feb 4.

A GOLDEN EAGLE was in the air over Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot Co, MD, on Jan 31 and Feb 3 and 4. GOLDEN EAGLES were also reported from two

Virginia locations on Feb 3: James Madison's Montpelier in Orange Co and Mountain Run Lake Park in Culpeper Co.

A pair of PEREGRINE FALCONS were seen Jan 30 from the W&OD trail in Ashburn, Loudon Co, VA, flying between the electric towers and the cliffs of the quarry. A PEREGRINE FALCON was reported Feb 3 at Occoquan Bay NWR, Prince William Co, VA.

Two SHORT-EARED OWLS—one perched on the ground and one soaring against a clear blue sky--were a highlight of a Feb 2 Montgomery (MD) Bird Club trip to Oaks Landfill (restricted access). The outing was raptor-rich: multiple NORTHERN HARRIERS, RED-TAILED and RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS, COOPER'S HAWK, and MERLIN.

A NORTHERN SHRIKE was an exciting find at Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot Co, MD, on Jan 29, and it gave excellent views thereafter. As of Feb 4 it could be seen between the start of the trail from the parking lot and the first viewing platform. A NORTHERN SHRIKE is back for the third year at Sully Woodlands in South Riding, VA, where on Feb 2 it was vigorously singing.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH sightings include 4 birds at Prettyboy Reservoir in Baltimore on Feb 3; 2 at MP 39 on the C&O Canal, Montgomery Co, MD, Feb 3; and 4 at Flint Hill, Fairfax Co, VA, Feb 4.

An EVENING GROSBEAK continues to entertain visitors at a private residence in Howard Co, MD, with reports through Feb 4. On Feb 2 EVENING GROSBEAKS visited a private feeder in Washington Co, MD.

On Jan 31 a COMMON REDPOLL was reported at a feeder in Howard Co, MD. COMMON REDPOLLS are also being seen just outside the reporting area in Northern Delaware.

On Feb 3 two LAPLAND LONGSPURS were picked out of a flock of HORNED LARKS on Savannah Rd in Dover, Kent Co, DE.

A flock of up to 10 SNOW BUNTINGS has been flying around North Point SP, Baltimore Co, MD, with reports through Feb 4. On Feb 3, a dozen SNOW BUNTINGS were seen at Black Marsh, Baltimore. On Jan 31 a single SNOW BUNTING flew past a store on Price's Distillery Rd in Damascus, Montgomery Co, MD. A dozen or more SNOW BUNTINGS continue to enliven the 85th St beach in Virginia Beach, VA, with reports through Feb 4.

A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW spending its second consecutive winter at the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center in Fairfax Co, VA was seen again Feb 2. The VESPER SPARROWS wintering at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad NHP in Dorchester Co, MD, were reported Jan 31 and Feb 3. LINCOLN'S SPARROW was reported by

CCBC Catonsville, Baltimore Co, MD, on Feb 2, and at Blue Mash Nature Trail, Montgomery Co, MD, on Jan 29 and Feb 3.

On Feb 3 a YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was reported from the canal south of Browns Island in Richmond, VA.

A female BALTIMORE ORIOLE brightened a feeder in Dover, DE, on Feb 1.

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was found at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore, on Jan 31.

A male PAINTED BUNTING visited a feeder at a private location in Hanover Co, VA on Feb 2, and a male PAINTED BUNTING was again observed at a feeder in Chesapeake, VA on January 29. A female PAINTED BUNTING--a "greenie"--visited a feeder at a private residence in Virginia Beach Feb 2 and 3.

The out-of-season DICKCISSEL enjoyed last week along the C&O Canal near Fletcher's Cove in Washington, DC, was still around as of Feb 4.

A PINE SISKIN was reported from Belle Haven Park, Fairfax Co, VA, on Feb 4. Also on Feb 4, a flock of 8 PINE SISKINS were seen in Ellicott City, Howard Co, MD; they were in a Norway Spruce at the intersection of Font Hill and Carrigan Drives.

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. 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