

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist
Date: 2/26/2019
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, February 19, and was completed on Tuesday, February 26, 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: TUFTED DUCK* in VA, ROCK WREN* and VARIED THRUSH* in MD.

Other Birds of Interest include: ROSS'S, GREATER WHITE-FRONTED, and CACKLING GOOSE, TRUMPETER SWAN, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, EURASIAN WIGEON, KING and COMMON EIDER, HARLEQUIN DUCK, BLACK SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, BARROW'S GOLDENEYE*, HORNED and RED-NECKED GREBE, VIRGINIA RAIL, SANDHILL CRANE, BAR-TAILED GODWIT*, WILSON'S SNIPE, DOVEKIE, BLACK-HEADED, ICELAND, and GLAUCOUS GULL, GREAT CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, GREAT EGRET, LITTLE BLUE and TRICOLORED HERON, SHORT-EARED and NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKE, TREE SWALLOW, MARSH WREN, EVENING GROSBEAK, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING, AMERICAN TREE and LARK SPARROW, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, BREWER'S BLACKBIRD, ORANGE-CROWNED and PINE WARBLER, PAINTED BUNTING, and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

A female TUFTED DUCK* was discovered swimming among a flock of Lesser Scaup on a small lake behind Chartway Federal Credit Union, at 5700 Cleveland St, Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 19 and was enjoyed by birders every day throughout the week.

The ROCK WREN* which has been visiting feeders in a yard in St. Mary's Co, MD for much of the winter, is now most often seen foraging on a new rock feeder on the resident's back deck, but still making rounds of the backyard, with daily visits throughout the week. Viewing of this rarity is by appointment only. Contact Kyle Rambo for a reservation and set of guidelines, at kerambo+rockwren@gmail.com. Thanks to Tyler Bell for keeping us informed, to Kyle Rambo for his willingness to lead trips, and of course to the generosity of the homeowners.

The wintering VARIED THRUSH* also being seen in St. Mary's Co, MD, was spotted most recently on Feb 22. Persons interested in looking for this bird should follow the guidelines of the homeowners of the

property and include these guidelines in any report of this bird on eBird, Facebook, or any other forum. These guidelines may be found in posts by Tyler Bell on MD Birding on Jan 9 and 23, 2019.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Four ROSS'S GEESE were seen at Accident Bittering Rd, in Accident, Garrett Co, MD on Feb 19, and refound on Feb 25. Another continued at Prime Hook Rd, Sussex Co, DE Feb 19-22, and two were seen at Cod's Rd, near Prime Hook NWR, Sussex Co, DE on Feb 19. A first-county record ROSS'S GOOSE was at Burnt Chimney, Franklin Co, VA Feb 22-24, and another continued far inland at Taylor's Mill Pond, Tazewell Co, VA on Feb 23. GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE continued this week at North Point SP, Baltimore Co, MD on Feb 21-24, and a pair continued at the Clifton Institute (restricted access) in Fauquier Co, VA on Feb 21. Twelve GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were found on Feb 24 at the New River Valley Fairgrounds Pond in Pulaski Co, VA. Six CACKLING GEESE were reported from Smith Lake, Augusta Co, VA on Feb 22.

Eight TRUMPETER SWANS were reported flying over at Tenthouse Ct, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Feb 19. On Feb 23, another continued to be seen at Alter Pond-Soil Conservation Rd, Prince George's Co, MD, and a pair continued on Merganser Pond-Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract, Anne Arundel Co, MD the same day. Two TRUMPETER SWANS were still at Clifton Institute (restricted access), in Fauquier Co, VA on Feb 23-25.

A pair of BLUE-WINGED TEAL remained at Black Marsh, Baltimore Co, MD Feb 19-22, and another continued at Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant in Roanoke City, VA, Feb 19-25. A drake EURASIAN WIGEON, seen among a large flock of American Wigeon, was reported from Deal Island WMA, Somerset Co, MD on Feb 22.

An immature male KING EIDER was reported from the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD on Feb 24. A long-staying pair of COMMON EIDERS were still being seen at Fort Monroe, Hampton, VA Feb 19-25. The only HARLEQUIN DUCK reported in the area was a first-winter male continuing at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach, VA Feb 19-25. A pair of drake BLACK SCOTERS were swimming with scaup in the Chester River Sound, Kent Co, MD on Feb 23. A pair of LONG-TAILED DUCKS were seen flying down the Potomac River at the C&O Canal-Violette's Lock, Montgomery Co, MD on Feb 23, and another lingered at East Potomac Park-Haines Point, SW DC, also on Feb 23. A continuing BARROW'S GOLDENEYE* was reported again on Feb 24 at the Elms Environmental Education Center (private), St. Mary's Co, MD.

A HORNED GREBE was still being enjoyed in western Maryland on Broadford Lake in Garrett Co, Feb 21-25. A RED-NECKED GREBE was found on the Darnestown Rd ponds (Lake Inspiration), Montgomery Co, MD Feb 22-25.

A VIRGINIA RAIL was reported from Little Island Park, Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 21, and again on Feb 24.

The pair of SANDHILL CRANES reported last week from Hughes Rd, Poolesville, Montgomery Co, MD were seen again this week Feb 19-24, feeding in adjacent cornfields. A single SANDHILL CRANE was reported from Moores Mill Rd, Rockingham Co, VA on Feb 23.

A BAR-TAILED GODWIT* was seen again, feeding with nine Marbled Godwits on mudflats south of Tom's Cove Visitor Center, Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Feb 22. It was seen again the following

day a bit further south, again in the company of Marbled Godwits. WILSON'S SNIPES were seen in good numbers at Oxbow Lake, Anne Arundel Co, MD with 17 on Feb 19 and at least 20 on Feb 21.

Three DOVEKIES were spotted flying north with Razorbills, in the surfline at Little Island Park, Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 19, while a fourth landed in the water by the pier.

A pair of BLACK-HEADED GULLS were at Wolf Neck WTP (restricted access) in Sussex Co, DE on Feb 19-25. An ICELAND GULL was seen again at the inlet in Ocean City, Worcester Co, MD on Feb 24. A continuing GLAUCOUS GULL remained in the Ocean City area, Worcester Co, MD, seen Feb 22-24. Another GLAUCOUS GULL was seen at Indian River Inlet, Sussex Co, DE on Feb 22. On Feb 25, a 1st cycle GLAUCOUS GULL was spotted on one of the concrete ships at Kiptopeke SP, Northampton Co, VA.

GREAT CORMORANTS were seen early in the week on the Bloody Point Bar Lighthouse, Kent Point Marina, Queen Anne's Co, MD. Three AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were seen swimming at Deal Island WMA-Riley Roberts Rd, Somerset Co, MD on Feb 22.

On Feb 23, four GREAT EGRETS were at Spotsylvania Sportsplex/Publix Virginia Soccer Training Center, Spotsylvania Co, VA. A LITTLE BLUE HERON flushed from the waterway at Assateague SP, Worcester Co, MD on Feb 23, while one or possibly two TRICOLORED HERONS were seen at Deal Island WMA-Riley Roberts Rd, Somerset Co, MD on Feb 22.

The only SHORT-EARED OWL reported this week was one seen flying from Plum Tree Island NWR at Messick Point, Poquoson, VA on Feb 20. A NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL was discovered as it perched about 40 feet up in a pine tree, on a field trip in western Howard Co, MD on Feb 23.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS continued at Hughes Hollow-McKee Beshers' WMA, Montgomery Co, MD, with one on Feb 21 and three seen on Feb 22. Also on Feb 22, one was seen at Hard Bargain Farm, and five were at Piscataway Park-Boardwalk Trail, both in Prince George's Co, MD, and another was at Gibson Rd, Baltimore Co, MD, the same day.

A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE that has been seen on and off since late Oct last year, was seen again on Feb 19, this time joined by a second bird! They were perched in the same field on the same bush, along Featherbed Rd (Rt 644), near Dinosaur Land and Double Tollgate (Rts 522 & 340) in Clarke Co, VA. The NORTHERN SHRIKE lingering at Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot Co, MD was seen again on Feb 21, perched atop a bush along the Wetland Overlook Loop Trail.

Spring cannot be far off when reports of TREE SWALLOWS start coming in. Three were seen foraging over Cash Lake at Patuxent Research Refuge-South Tract, Prince George's Co, MD, on Feb 23.

A MARSH WREN, spending its winter at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA, was seen again on Feb 21.

Three EVENING GROSBEAKS, a male and two females, have been coming to feeders for at least a month to a yard in Boonesboro, Washington Co, MD. To make arrangements for viewing, call Bob at 240-816-1288 or 301-432-8030. A pair of EVENING GROSBEAKS were still being seen along the C&O Canal-Riley's Lock, Montgomery Co, MD as recently as Feb 23. Five EVENING GROSBEAKS were seen resting near the top of a deciduous tree in a yard in Talbot Co, MD on Feb 25.

A LAPLAND LONGSPUR, scarce this winter, was reportedly mixed in with a flock of Horned Larks, along Strickley Rd, Augusta Co, VA on Feb 21. The faithful flock of SNOW BUNTINGS being seen on the Crystal Pier at North Point SP, Baltimore Co, MD were seen during the week with reports of at least ten on Feb 19-24.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS, another visitor from the far north, were seen in several locations this week. On Feb 20, one was at a private residence in Prince George's Co, MD. On Feb 21, another was reported from Chino Farms in Queen Anne's Co, MD and on Feb 22 one was spotted along Shriver Rd, Frederick Co, MD. A LARK SPARROW was discovered among a flock of Chipping Sparrows, at Nanney's Creek Rd, Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 24.

A BALTIMORE ORIOLE was seen on the ground under a feeder in Silver Spring, Montgomery Co, MD on Feb 23. Three BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS, two males and a female, were found at Breeze Farms, Virginia Beach, VA on Feb 24.

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was still coming faithfully to a suet feeder in Kent Co, DE, with the most recent report from Feb 20. At least one, and perhaps two, PINE WARBLERS continued at the LBJ Memorial Grove-Columbia Island Marina, SW DC on Feb 23. Individual PINE WARBLERS were visiting feeders in two separate locations in Sussex Co, DE on Feb 24.

A beautiful male PAINTED BUNTING has been visiting a feeder daily in Tracys Landing, Anne Arundel Co, MD, Feb 20-22. Another male PAINTED BUNTING was also visiting a feeder in Mechanicsville, Hanover Co, VA on Feb 24.

A DICKCISSEL, presumed to be the same bird as previously found at Fletcher's Cove (Fletcher's Boathouse) NW DC, was refound along Reservoir Rd, NW DC on Feb 21.

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, <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