

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, March 19 and was completed on Tuesday, March 26 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 BAR-TAILED GODWIT* and WESTERN TANAGER in VA.

Other birds of interest this week included GREATER WHITE-FRONTED and CACKLING GEESE, MUTE and TRUMPETER SWANS, EURASIAN WIGEON, GREATER SCAUP, COMMON EIDER, HARLEQUIN DUCK, BLACK SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, RED-NECKED GREBE, KING RAIL, SANDHILL CRANE, AMERICAN AVOCET, PECTORAL SANDPIPER, WILSON'S SNIPE, BLACK-HEADED, LITTLE, ICELAND and GLAUCOUS GULLS, CASPIAN TERN, RAZORBILL, RED-THROATED LOON, NORTHERN GANNET, GREAT CORMORANT, ANHINGA, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, AMERICAN BITTERN, LITTLE BLUE HERON, TRICOLORED HERON, YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, WHITE and GLOSSY IBIS, RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKES, PURPLE MARTIN, SEDGE and MARSH WRENS,

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, EVENING GROSBEAK, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING, AMERICAN TREE, VESPER and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS, EASTERN MEADOWLARK, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, BLACK-AND-WHITE, ORANGE-CROWNED and NASHVILLE WARBLERS, PAINTED BUNTING and DICKCISSEL.

TOP BIRDS

After an eight day absence of reports, on March 24 a wintering BAR-TAILED GODWIT*, a rare visitor from Eurasia, was relocated among WILLETS on the beach and mud flats near the Toms Cove Visitors Center at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA.

ON March 25 a female WESTERN TANAGER was photographed while perched on an iron fence at the Clark Yard-Windsor Point in Norfolk, VA.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Early arriving Neotropical migrants, the ongoing departure of migratory waterfowl and blooming cherry blossoms were among the seasonal indications of the formal arrival of spring during the week.

A single GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, one of the few seen in the reporting area this year, was found in a small flock of CANADA GEESE at the Ironshire Station Road Pond in Worcester Co, MD on March 24. A CACKLING GOOSE was spotted among the CANADA GEESE at Swan Harbor Farm Park in Harford Co, MD on March 22-25 and photographed in flight at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD on March 25.

Area MUTE SWANS included a single individual at the West Ocean City Pond in Worcester Co, MD on March 21, 22 and 24. TRUMPETER SWANS were seen at several locations in Maryland during the week, including a continuing tagged individual (T87) at Alter Pond along Soil Conservation Road in Prince George's Co on March 19; a single individual in flight over Tenthouse Court in Anne Arundel Co on March 19; a single individual along Wildlife Drive at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co on March 23; two individuals at the Home Depot back ponds in Edgewood, Harford Co on March 24 and 25; and two individuals at the Piney Orchard Nature Preserve in Anne Arundel Co on March 23. A small number of banded and unbanded TRUMPETER SWANS reported during the

week at several locations in Fauquier Co, VA and at a location in nearby Upperville in Loudoun Co, VA may or may not be associated with the resident population at Airlie in Fauquier Co.

Noteworthy ducks during the week included a continuing EURASIAN WIGEON at Haynes Pond in Gloucester Co, VA that was most recently seen on March 25. COMMON EIDER was relatively common during the week, with five individuals seen at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on March 23 and 24, a high of 12 individuals counted at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on March 23, 24 and 25 and 1-2 continuing individuals observed off Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA on March 22 and 24. A female HARLEQUIN DUCK was spotted at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on March 19, 23 and 25, which is the only representative of this species reported in the reporting area during the week. A continuing GREATER SCAUP was last seen at Matoaka Lake in Williamsburg, VA on March 19, as were continuing female BLACK SCOTERS at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD and a pond at 12 Stones Road in Harford Co, MD. Single LONG-TAILED DUCKS also were seen at several inland locations during the week, including at Hains Point in Washington, DC on March 19 and 25; Georgetown Reservoir in Washington, DC on March 25; Gunners Lake in Montgomery Co, MD on March 25; and Franklin Farm pond in Herndon, Fairfax Co, VA on March 23, 24 and 25. In addition, on March 25 24 LONG-TAILED DUCKS were photographed at Rocky Gap SP in Allegany Co, MD and two were found at Broadford Lake in Garrett Co, MD.

A high of seven continuing RED-NECKED GREBES were present at Broadford Lake in Garrett Co, MD through March 25, and two continuing RED-NECKED GREBES were spotted in the Susquehanna River from Lapidum and nearby Susquehanna SP in Harford Co, MD on March 19, 20 and 25. Also in Maryland, a RED-NECKED GREBE was spotted at Fort Smallwood Park in Anne Arundel Co on March 20; Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co on March 24; and Piney Run Park in Carroll Co on March 24. In Virginia a RED-NECKED GREBE was photographed at the pond by Dulles Airport in Loudoun Co on March 23, and a continuing RED-NECKED GREBE was seen at the Rivanna Reservoir from several proximate locations in Albemarle Co on March 19-22.

Encounters with as many as five KING RAILS continue to be a highlight of visits to Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William

Co, VA. At least one calling KING RAIL was recorded at Swan Farm Harbor Park in Harford Co, MD on March 24 and 25.

On March 25 two SANDHILL CRANES were photographed in corn stubble along 1-699 Foxtown Road in Garrett Co, MD.

A high of 230 and 200 wintering AMERICAN AVOCETS were reported during the week at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE and Prime Hook NWR-Broadkill Marsh, Sussex Co, DE, respectively. On March 22 110 AMERICAN AVOCETS were counted at the Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted; no public access) in Portsmouth, VA, the other principal wintering location for this species in the reporting area. Migratory shorebirds included WILSON'S SNIPE at many locations, with a high of 86 individuals counted at Oxbow Lake in Anne Arundel Co, MD on March 25, and an early PECTORAL SANDPIPER reported by several birders at Tanyard Marsh in Caroline Co, MD on March 24.

A BLACK-HEADED GULL and a LITTLE GULL were observed from riverside locations at Port Deposit in Cecil Co, MD and across the river at Lapidum or nearby in Harford Co, MD on March 19, 20, 23 and 24, and March 25 in the case of the BLACK-HEADED GULL. On March 19 and 20 a BLACK-HEADED GULL also was spotted at Back River-Diamond Point Road in Baltimore Co, MD, another good location for this species in the spring. A continuing BLACK-HEADED GULL was seen at Wolfe Neck WTP (restricted access) in Sussex Co, DE on March 19. A continuing ICELAND GULL (Kumlien's) was photographed at Ocean View Beach Park in Norfolk, VA on March 19 and Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA on March 20 and 24. On March 24 a young GLAUCOUS GULL was found at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE.

An early CASPIAN TERN was seen as far north as the Belmont Bay Marina in Prince William Co, VA on March 25.

On March 23 a continuing RAZORBILL was photographed near the pier at Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA, and on March 19 a distant RAZORBILL* was spotted in flight off Ocean View Beach Park in Norfolk, VA.

Inland RED-THROATED LOONS included a continuing individual at Hains Point in Washington, DC on March 19; two continuing individuals at a pond along 12 Stones Road in Harford Co, MD on March 19; 1-2 continuing individuals at Violette's Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on

March 19-22; and one continuing individual at the National Colonial Farm in Prince George's Co, MD on March 20. A COMMON LOON at the Georgetown Reservoir on March 23, 24 and 25 provided DC birders with the first opportunity to add this species to their year lists.

One of the more amazing migratory spectacles during the week was the continued large northward movement of NORTHERN GANNETS, with numbers in the thousands at several sea watch locations in the reporting area, including a high of 5,000 individuals reported at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on March 21.

The only GREAT CORMORANTS reported during the week were two individuals in Sussex Co, DE waters from the Lewes-Cape May ferry on March 23; a high of ten individuals at the lighthouse across from the Kent Point Marina in Queen Anne's Co, MD on March 23 and 25; and one individual at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester Co, MD on March 24.

An ANHINGA was seen at the Carson Safety Rest Area in Prince George Co, VA on March 22, 24 and 25.

A large number of AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS continue to winter at Blackwater NWR in Dorchester Co, MD, with 125 and 75 individuals reported along Wildlife Drive on March 20 and 23, respectively. A single continuing AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN was seen at Hog Island WMA in Surry Co, VA on March 20, 22 and 23.

A high of four AMERICAN BITTERNS were heard uttering this species' diagnostic pumping vocalization at the Little Creek Wildlife Area in Kent Co, DE on March 19-22. During the week an AMERICAN BITTERN also was encountered at Mullins Park in Harford Co, MD on March 23; Island Creek Circle in Talbot Co, MD on March 24; Big Water Farm (private) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on March 24; and Bles Park in Loudoun Co, VA on March 24 and 25.

In addition to a single SNOWY EGRET in each of Calvert and Talbot Counties, Maryland on May 25, noteworthy herons and egrets included a LITTLE BLUE HERON found at the Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract in Virginia Beach, VA on March 24, and a TRICOLORED HERON spotted at Assateague I. NS-Bayside Peninsula in Worcester Co, MD on March 20 and Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA on March 24. A YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-

HERON was spotted among the BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS at Baker Park in Frederick Co, MD on March 20, 22 and 25.

On March 23 an estimated 100 WHITE IBIS were photographed in flight along Riley Roberts Road at Deal Island WMA in Somerset Co, MD. A single GLOSSY IBIS was reported at Tanyard Marsh in Caroline Co, MD on March 24.

During the week the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries announced that a pair of RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS has moved into Big Woods WMA in Sussex Co, VA, which is the first documented occurrence of this species at this location and a major landmark in the DGIF's efforts to protect this federally endangered species in Virginia. Both banded birds originated from The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve, which borders Big Woods WMA.

On March 25 a banded LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was seen again along Cartersville Road in Cumberland Co, VA. On March 19 a NORTHERN SHRIKE was photographed by a private pond near the curve in Peat Moss Road in Garrett Co, MD, and on March 24 a NORTHERN SHRIKE was well photographed and banded at the Chester River Field Research Station in Chestertown, Kent Co, MD, which was only the fourth time this species has been banded there.

Early swallows included a single PURPLE MARTIN as far north as Oxbow Lake in Anne Arundel Co, MD on March 22.

A wintering SEDGE WREN at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead) in Queen Anne's Co, MD was seen most recently on March 19. A wintering MARSH WREN at Rattlesnake Spring at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA was seen most recently on March 25.

In addition to early migrants as far north as Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract in Anne Arundel Co, MD, a likely wintering BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER was seen again at Ancarrow's Landing in Richmond, VA on March 23.

On March 19 a continuing EVENING GROSBEAK was seen at feeders at 18108 Vernon Estates Drive SE in Allegany Co, MD and a private location in Howard Co, MD. In Virginia, several continuing EVENING GROSBEAKS visited feeders at a private location near Union Springs Hollow Lake in Dayton,

Rockingham Co on March 20, 23 and 24 and at 44 Longview Drive in Bath Co on March 21.

On March 20 a LAPLAND LONGSPUR and a SNOW BUNTING were spotted among the HORNED LARKS in a field along Savannah Road a short distance north of the intersection with Silver Leaf Lane in Kent Co, DE, which were the only reports of either species in the reporting area during the week.

Sightings of AMERICAN TREE SPARROW during the week outside of Garrett Co, MD included continuing individuals at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia in Clarke Co, VA on March 19 and Occoquan Bay NWR in Prince William Co, VA on March 25, and two individuals at Pennyfield Lock on the C & O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD on March 19 and 23. Noteworthy sparrows during the week also included a VESPER SPARROW photographed near a large pond along Route 761 in Campbell Co, VA on March 20, and a LINCOLN'S SPARROW photographed at CCBC Catonsville in Baltimore Co, MD on March 22 and 24 and the Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract in Virginia Beach, VA on March 24.

A continuing EASTERN MEADOWLARK was seen at Kenilworth Park in Washington, DC on March 23 and 25.

A continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was seen at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on March 19 and Cromwell Valley Park in Baltimore Co, MD on March 19 and 25. A continuing ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Washington, DC was seen most recently on March 24. Sightings of ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER in Virginia during the week included two individuals at Hog Island WMA in Surry Co on March 23 and single individuals at the 85th Street beach in Virginia Beach on March 19, Princess Anne WMA-Whitehurst Tract in Virginia Beach on March 24 and Route 40 near the crossing with the Nottoway River in Sussex Co on March 25.

A BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER that has been seen infrequently at Great Neck Estates in Virginia Beach, VA since January was seen again on March 22. A continuing NASHVILLE WARBLER was seen at the Clark Yard-Windsor Point in Norfolk, VA on March 24. Early arriving migratory warblers included a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH as far north as Great Falls NP in Fairfax Co, VA on March 24.

A continuing male PAINTED BUNTING was most recently seen visiting private feeders near Summer Walk Pond in Hanover Co, VA on March 20 and at a private, undisclosed location in Jefferson Co, WV on March 24.

A continuing DICKCISSEL was last seen visiting a feeder at 4855 Reservoir Road, NW, Washington, DC on March 19.

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, <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. 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

