

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, April 16, and was completed on Tuesday, April 23, 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 Bird(s) this week was: BAR-TAILED GODWIT* in VA.

Other Birds of Interest include: TRUMPETER SWAN, CANVASBACK, REDHEAD, GREATER SCAUP, WHITE-WINGED and BLACK SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, RING-NECKED PHEASANT, EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE, COMMON NIGHTHAWK, EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL, CHIMNEY SWIFT, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, rails, UPLAND SANDPIPER, WHIMBREL, HUDSONIAN GODWIT, STILT and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, PARASITIC JAEGER, BONAPARTE'S and BLACK-HEADED GULL, terns, NORTHERN GANNET, ANHINGA, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, AMERICAN and LEAST BITTERN, GREAT EGRET, TRICOLORED HERON, CATTLE EGRET, YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, WHITE and GLOSSY IBIS, BROAD-WINGED HAWK, SHORT-EARED OWL, LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKE, COMMON RAVEN, CLIFF SWALLOW, BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH, wrens, VEERY and other thrushes, EVENING GROSBEAK, PURPLE FINCH, PINE SISKIN, sparrows, BOBOLINK, warblers, and BLUE GROSBEAK.

TOP BIRD

The BAR-TAILED GODWIT* was seen again at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co VA, feeding in Swan Cove on Apr 16-21. This bird was first discovered here in spring, nearly a year ago.

OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

A pair of TRUMPETER SWANS were seen again at the Home Depot back ponds and fields in Harford Co, MD on Apr 17, and another pair continued at Tenthouse Court, Anne Arundel Co, MD the same day. Two others were still at Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Apr 18.

Late CANVASBACKS continued at North Beach, Calvert Co, and Patuxent Research Refuge-North Tract, Anne Arundel Co, both in MD on Apr 17 and 18. A lingering REDHEAD was reported from a location in Talbot Co, MD on Apr 17. A GREATER SCAUP was seen diving at Herrington Manor SP-Lake Herrington, Garrett Co, MD on Apr 17. WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were seen in Sussex Co, DE at Delaware Bay, Lewes, on Apr 18, and at the Indian River Inlet on Apr 19 and 20. A female BLACK SCOTER was seen again, swimming near the dam at Piney Run Park, Carroll Co, MD on Apr 17. Lagging LONG-TAILED DUCKS were seen at the Indian River Inlet in Sussex Co, DE on Apr 19, and at the Assateague SP-Causeway, Worcester Co, MD on Apr 21.

Carroll County was the place for RING-NECKED PHEASANTS this week, with one continuing at Little Pipe Creek Park, Carroll Co, MD on Apr 17, and another standing on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Carroll Co, VA on Apr 21.

A single EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE was seen in flight and photographed sitting on a wire just outside Prime Hook NWR in Eastwind, Sussex Co, DE on Apr 17.

An early COMMON NIGHTHAWK was reportedly flying north over Rock Creek Park, NW DC on Apr 22. On Apr 18, two EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILLS were heard singing in the restricted area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Harford Co, MD.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS and RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS were reported throughout the region this past week, to the delight of many birders. Four parts water and one part white sugar, mixed, is the traditional recipe for hummingbird feeders.

On Apr 18, a CLAPPER RAIL was reported from Sandy Point SP in Anne Arundel Co, MD. Two KING RAILS were reportedly heard at the American Chestnut Land Trust-North in Calvert Co, MD on Apr 17. Two VIRGINIA RAILS were seen and heard grunting in their namesake state at Chincoteague NWR-Marsh Trail, Accomack Co, on Apr 18 and 19. On Apr 20 another was heard but not seen at Occoquan Bay NWR, Woodbridge, Prince William Co, VA. A SORA continued at White's Mill Trail, Fauquier Co, VA on Apr 21.

A lone UPLAND SANDPIPER was discovered at the Southern Gap Business Park, Buchanan Co, VA, in the far western part of the state, on Apr 20. Two WHIMBRELS were seen at Ted Harvey WMA-Logan Lane Tract-South, Kent Co, DE on Apr 16, and a HUDSONIAN GODWIT was at Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD on the same day. An early near-breeding plumaged STILT SANDPIPER was seen at Shirley Plantation (restricted access) Charles City, VA on Apr 20. Groups of between 80-100 or more SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS were reported from Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE on Apr 16.

PARASITIC JAEGERs were noted from Cape Henlopen SP-Herring Point and Delaware Bay, Lewes (from the ferry), Sussex Co, DE on Apr 18, and on Apr 20, an amazing twelve were seen from Little Island Park, Virginia Beach, VA, possibly setting a new spring high-count for the state.

A lingering BONAPARTE'S GULL was seen again at International Conservation House, Airlie, Fauquier Co, VA on Apr 20, and a continuing BLACK-HEADED GULL was at Rosehaven Memorial Park, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Apr 18.

Quite a few tern species were reported this week. Four LEAST TERNS were seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Apr 18, and one was at Camp Pendleton State Military Reservation (restricted access), Virginia Beach, VA on Apr 19. Two more LEAST TERNS flew over a yard at Windsor Point, Norfolk, VA also on Apr 19. Four GULL-BILLED TERNS were spotted at Craney Island Disposal Area (restricted access), Portsmouth, VA on Apr 18. An early BLACK TERN was reported from Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on Apr 18. A single COMMON TERN was seen in flight at the end of Twin Pines Road, Talbot Co, MD on Apr 16. An inland FORSTER'S TERN was at the International Conservation House, Airlie, Fauquier Co, VA on Apr 19, and on Apr 20, a ROYAL TERN was seen flying over heading NW from Governor Bridge Natural Area, Prince George's Co, MD. A SANDWICH TERN was reported from Cape Charles Coastal Habitat Natural Area Preserve, Northampton Co, VA on Apr 21.

A pair of NORTHERN GANNETS were seen from Long Bridge Park, Arlington, VA on Apr 19.

Four reports of migrating ANHINGAS came in this week from Virginia. Six were reported flying over Appomattox County Community Park, Appomattox Co, seven were reported from Grist Mill Park, Fairfax Co, and a pair were spotted high in flight over a home in Virginia Beach, all on Apr 18. On Apr 21, two ANHINGAS returned to Stumpy Lake Natural Area in Virginia Beach, VA, a traditional spot for them in recent years.

A flock of a dozen AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were seen in flight over the Chesapeake Ranch Estates in Lusby, Calvert Co, MD, heading west,

on Apr 17. On Apr 20, nine AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were reported from Morgantown, Charles Co, MD.

An AMERICAN BITTERN was seen again at the King Family Vineyard (view from Roseland Farm Lane only) on Apr 16 and 17 while another was seen at Bles Park, Loudoun Co, VA on Apr 16-21. On Apr 21, an AMERICAN BITTERN was discovered "hiding in the open" in a flooded section of the C&O Canal-Antietam Creek, Washington Co, MD. An early LEAST BITTERN was heard at Fishing Creek WMA, Bestpitch, Dorchester Co, MD on Apr 16. Two GREAT EGRETS were a good find at Peat Moss Road, Accident, Garrett Co, MD on Apr 16. A TRICOLORED HERON continued at North Beach-marsh, Calvert Co, MD on Apr 22. A CATTLE EGRET was found on Apr 20 at Gravelly Point (in DC waters) SW DC, flying over the river from Hains Point (East Potomac Park) towards Gravelly Point. A YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON remained throughout the week at the Atlee walking path, Carroll Co, MD.

Between one and three WHITE IBIS were reported from the Dividing Creek Road area of Somerset Co, MD Apr 19-21. Three GLOSSY IBIS were at St. Jerome's Neck Road, St. Mary's Co, MD on Apr 17, and one was nearby at Camp Winslow Road, St. Mary's Co, on Apr 19. On Apr 20, a surprising 150 were counted at Assateague Island, Accomack Co, VA.

BROAD-WINGED HAWKS have been drifting through in small numbers, so the 345 counted on Apr 16 from the Fort Smallwood Hawk Watch, Pasadena, Anne Arundel Co, MD was exciting.

A SHORT-EARED OWL was seen and photographed high in flight, heading north, over the Potomac River, from Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Fairfax Co, VA on Apr 19.

A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE continued at King's Road (private property), Lunenburg Co, VA on Apr 19. A lingering and late NORTHERN SHRIKE, seen as recently as Apr 17, was at Sully Woodlands, Fairfax Co, VA.

COMMON RAVENS were widely reported in Maryland this week, with one seen carrying carrion off the road in Indian Head, Charles Co, on Apr 16, two at Gunpowder Falls SP, Harford Co, on Apr 17, one at Conowingo Dam and two at Swan Harbor Farm Park, Harford Co, on Apr 20, one flying over a yard mid-day in Woodbine, Carroll Co, on Apr 21, and another over a yard near Liberty Reservoir, Baltimore Co the same day.

A pair of CLIFF SWALLOWS returned to their traditional breeding site at the Rt 328 Bridge in Caroline Co, MD on Apr 21, and another was seen the same day at Shirley Plantation (restricted access), Charles City, VA.

A BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH was still being seen at Mountain Run Lake Park, Culpeper Co, VA, most recently on Apr 19.

The effervescent singing of HOUSE WRENS was heard throughout the region this week, as they returned to breed. A late WINTER WREN remained in a yard in Calvert Co, MD on Apr 18, and another was at Governor Bridge Natural Area, Prince George's Co, MD on Apr 20. A SEDGE WREN was singing at Finzel Swamp on Apr 22, in Garrett Co, MD. A MARSH WREN which spent the entire winter at Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Clarke Co, VA, was seen again on Apr 16.

A VEERY was seen at Huntley Meadows Park-Hike and Bike Trail, Fairfax Co, VA on Apr 17, and another was heard at the C&O Canal-Mile 110, Washington Co, MD on Apr 18. On Apr 20, a SWAINSON'S THRUSH was reported from Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA. WOOD THRUSHES were seen and heard from Rock Creek Park, NW DC, as early as Apr 16.

EVENING GROSBEAKS were still being seen this week, with reports of four at a feeder in Bath Co, VA and four continuing in a yard in Union Springs, Rockingham Co, VA both on Apr 19, and two remained at Burke's Garden-Gose Mill Pond, in Tazewell Co, VA on Apr 20.

Many people are still enjoying PURPLE FINCHES at their feeders, especially the beautifully brilliant males; some could even be heard singing. Reports of record numbers for many yards came in throughout the week. A migrating PINE SISKIN was spotted in a treetop at Rock Creek Park-Maintenance Yard, NW DC, on Apr 19, and another was heard as it flew over a yard in Kent Co, DE, on Apr 21.

An AMERICAN TREE SPARROW was reported from Licking Hole Creek, Albemarle Co, VA on Apr 16. A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW showed up in a yard in Pasadena, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Apr 17, to the delight of the homeowners. The bird remained for others to enjoy through Apr 22. Another CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was reported from Big Waters Farm (private) in Queen Anne's Co, MD on Apr 18. A pair of VESPER SPARROWS were seen at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center-Prince George's Co, MD on Apr 17 and 18. A second VESPER SPARROW was seen at East Potomac Park-Hains Point SW DC, also on Apr 17.

A pair of early BOBOLINKS were seen at Shirley Plantation (restricted access), Charles City, VA on Apr 20.

Warbler migration is ramping up, with many species being reported throughout the region. Rock Creek Park in NW DC has been productive, but any area, especially with nearby water, is worth checking.

A BLUE GROSBEAK was seen in a yard in Sussex Co, DE on Apr 16, and another was singing at Lake Artemesia, Prince George's Co, MD on Apr 19.

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. 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