

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist  
Date: 5/21/2019  
Coverage: MD/DC/VA/central and southern DE/WV panhandle  
Reports, comments, questions: [voice@anshome.org](mailto:voice@anshome.org)  
Compilers: Rick and Nancy Sussman  
Sponsor: Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central  
Atlantic States (independent of NAS)  
Transcriber: Steve Cordle

Please consider joining ANS, especially if you are a regular user of the Voice of the Naturalist (Senior \$35; Individual \$50; Family \$65; Nature Steward \$100; Audubon Advocate \$200). The membership number is 301-652 9188, option 12; the address is 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815; and the web site is <http://www.anshome.org>.

This is the Voice of the Naturalist, a service of the Audubon Naturalist Society. This report covers the week starting Tuesday, May 14, and was completed on Tuesday, May 21, 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).

**For nearly 40 years the Voice of the Naturalist has provided DC area birders with a weekly update of notable sightings. Initially it was a unique resource, and each Tuesday report was eagerly awaited and devoured. Today the birding community has access to an abundance of information, often instantaneous, and it is time: THE VOICE OF THE NATURALIST IS RETIRING at the end of May.**

Top Birds this week were: WHITE-WINGED DOVE\* in DE, WILSON'S PLOVER\* in DE, NEOTROPIC CORMORANT\* in VA, WHITE-FACED IBIS\* in VA, SWALLOW-TAILED KITE in MD, and BICKNELL'S THRUSH\* in VA and MD.

Other Birds of Interest include: late and lingering waterfowl, HORNED and RED-NECKED GREBE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, KING RAIL, SORA, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, shorebirds, GULL-BILLED and BLACK TERN, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, LEAST BITTERN, WHITE and GLOSSY IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, OLIVE-SIDED and ALDER FLYCATCHER, PHILADELPHIA VIREO, RED-BREASTED and BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH, WINTER and SEDGE WREN, AMERICAN PIPIT, SEASIDE and NELSON'S SPARROW, SWAINSON'S, CONNECTICUT, MOURNING, and WILSON'S WARBLER, SUMMER TANAGER, and DICKCISSEL.

## TOP BIRDS

A WHITE-WINGED DOVE\* showed up at a feeder in a yard in Millsboro, Sussex Co, DE on May 20, to the astonishment of both the homeowner and the four Mourning Doves on the ground beneath it.

A WILSON'S PLOVER\* was discovered (and photographed) during a shorebird survey at South Bowers Beach, Kent Co, DE on May 17, a long-awaited 1<sup>st</sup> state record.

A NEOTROPIC CORMORANT\* was spotted at Woodglen Lake, Fairfax Co, VA on May 17, and continued through May 20, marking a 2<sup>nd</sup> state record.

A breeding-plumaged adult WHITE-FACED IBIS\* was found at Chincoteague NWR-Wildlife Loop, Accomack Co, VA on May 19. It was off the trail leading to the beach from the back of the wildlife loop, with 20 Glossy Ibis.

A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE was seen (and photographed) flying right next to Konterra Drive over the adjacent fields, a bit south of Van Dusen Road, in Laurel, Prince George's Co, MD on May 15. Another was seen and photographed flying over Wheaton Regional Park, Montgomery Co, MD on May 17.

A BICKNELL'S THRUSH\* was photographed and recorded from Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Virginia Beach, VA on May 14 and 15. Another well-documented BICKNELL'S THRUSH\* was reported from Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 16.

## OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

Lots of late and lingering waterfowl were widely reported throughout the week. Highlights included: BLUE-WINGED TEAL continuing in Augusta Co, VA on May 14, a pair of NORTHERN SHOVELERS at Chincoteague NWR-Wildlife Loop, Accomack Co, VA on May 18, three GADWALL seen at Finzel Swamp, Garrett Co, MD on May 16, and another at Rockingham Co, VA on May 14 and 15, AMERICAN WIGEON at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA on May 15, a late CANVASBACK at Dulles Airport Pond, Loudoun Co, VA on May 15, and another in Frederick Co, VA on May 14-18, a RING-NECKED DUCK on May 15 in Frederick Co, MD and another in Baltimore Co, MD at Middle Branch Park on May 18, and a first-year male SURF SCOTER at Queen Sound Landing in Accomack Co, VA on May 17. Late BUFFLEHEADS and COMMON MERGANSERS were seen in many widely scattered locations throughout the area.

A HORNED GREBE was spotted at Herrington Harbor, Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 18. Another HORNED GREBE, in breeding plumage, was found off the tip of East Potomac Park-Hains Point, SW DC on May 19. A late RED-NECKED GREBE continued at Talbot Co, MD through May 16.

A big push of BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS came through this week, with many reports from all over the region. One was seen at Luria Park, Fairfax Co, VA on May 15, and on May 16 one was at Assateague SP, Worcester Co, MD, one was at Franklin Point SP, Anne Arundel Co, MD, another was spotted in Hanover Co, VA, and one was seen at Theodore Roosevelt Island, NW DC. One was seen at Lake Artemesia, Prince George's Co, MD on May 17 and on May 18 one was seen skulking in Kenilworth Park NE, DC, while another was at the Rock Creek Park-Maintenance Yard in NW DC the same day. Three were reported from VA on May 18; one was seen at Back Bay NWR in Virginia Beach, one was at Chippokes Plantation SP, Surry Co, and another at Green Spring Garden Park in Fairfax Co.

A well-documented KING RAIL was seen and photographed at Southwest Area Park, Baltimore Co, MD on May 16 and another was heard from Big Water Farm (private), Queen Anne's Co, MD on May 17 and 18. A SORA was reported from Barke's Garden, Gose Mill Pond, Tazewell Co, VA on May 14, and one was heard at Cedar Run (private) in Fauquier Co, VA on May 19.

A COMMON GALLINULE continued at the Mason Dixon Farm Pond (private), Frederick Co, MD on May 14 and two were heard at E.A. Vaughn WMA-North, Worcester Co, MD on May 15-18.

SANDHILL CRANE reports came from the Harry James Road area of St. Mary's Co, MD on May 14, one seen flying over the intersection of Padonia and York Roads, Baltimore Co, MD on May 15, one at Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co, MD on May 18, and another seen flying over I-95 in Bel Air, Harford Co, MD the same day.

Shorebirds are IN! A BLACK-NECKED STILT was seen at Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, MD on May 15. AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS were back at DuPont Nature Center-Mispillion, Kent Co, DE on May 18, and at Cape Henlopen Beach, Lewes, Sussex Co, DE on May 19. A flock of 32 BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS contained a single AMERICAN-GOLDEN PLOVER, flying out from Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, MD on May 15. The yearly, epic feeding-frenzy of shorebirds was at a peak during the full moon this week, in many spots along the Delaware shore. DuPont Nature Center at Mispillion Light in Milford, Sussex Co, DE, was an excellent place to view the birds coming to feed on the billions of horseshoe crab eggs being laid, with flocks of RUDDY TURNSTONES, RED KNOTS, DUNLIN, and SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS making up the majority. A DUNLIN was at a pond at West Friendship Field, Howard Co, MD on May 14. On May 19, a pair of WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS continued at Oakwood Drive Pond in Rockingham Co, VA, and a single WESTERN SANDPIPER was discovered at Homestead Farm (restricted access), Montgomery Co, MD on May 16. A late WILSON'S SNIPE was at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 16. A WILSON'S PHALAROPE continued all week at Leonard's Pond, Rockingham Co, VA,

with reports from May 14-18 and another was at Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, MD on May 15.

On May 18, a GULL-BILLED TERN was reported from Bombay Hook NWR-Raymond Pool, seen from the observation tower. A pair of BLACK TERNS were seen at Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, Rockingham Co, VA, on May 14-17. Another was spotted over the water from the Fort Smallwood Park hawk watch in Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 17, and one was seen bathing on the edge of a sand spit on May 18 at Prime Hook NWR, Sussex Co, DE.

On May 15, a group of twelve AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS, flying in two separate flocks, were over Latimer Siding Road, Northampton Co, VA. A flock of ten AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS made for some lively entertainment at the Fort Smallwood Park hawk watch in Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 17. And on May 18, another flock of ten were seen swimming in Shearness Pool at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE, to the delight of many visiting birders.

A LEAST BITTERN was seen and heard at the Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Clarke Co, VA on May 15, for a first county and regional record. It was found again on May 18.

An immature WHITE IBIS was spotted at Cape Henlopen SP-Gordon's Pond, Sussex Co, DE on May 17. A GLOSSY IBIS was discovered at Hughes Hollow-McKee Beshers WMA, Montgomery Co, MD on May 14 and continued through May 17.

MISSISSIPPI KITES were active this week, with many birds on the move. A single bird was observed in flight at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel Co, MD on May 16. On the following day, individuals were seen at the Fort Smallwood Park hawk watch, Anne Arundel Co, Perryman Park, Harford Co, and Terrapin Park, Queen Anne's Co, all in MD. On May 19 there was a large movement of MISSISSIPPI KITES going north, with eight spotted in quick succession, one after another (five in sight at one time!) and then another kettle of four, for a total of twelve, over a home in Calvert Co, MD. The same day, a record daily high of eleven were spotted going past the hawk watch at Fort Smallwood SP, in Anne Arundel Co, MD. The following day, May 20, an unprecedented record number of them were seen from there, a total of 24 birds! Twelve were seen in the first 45 minutes, and at one point, seven were in view at once. The previous seasonal record was 16 birds, so this was a very exciting day to be there. In Virginia MISSISSIPPI KITES were seen over a home in Henrico Co on May 14, with another there on May 15, one reported from Newport News Park, Newport News, VA on May 17, and from the Rivanna Trail in Charlottesville, VA on May 18.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS were reported from Finzel Swamp, Garrett Co, MD on May 15, Meadowside Nature Center, Montgomery Co, MD on May 17,

and Silver Lake Regional Park, Prince William Co, VA on May 18. ALDER FLYCATCHERS were heard at Bristoe Station Battlefield, Prince William Co, and Greenbriar Park, Charlottesville, both in Virginia on May 18.

A PHILADELPHIA VIREO was seen feeding on a caterpillar in a tulip poplar tree in Williamsburg, James City, VA on May 17.

Numerous sightings of lingering RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES came in the week from scattered locations throughout the region. A BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH was still being seen in Charlottesville, Albemarle Co, VA, May 14-17.

A very late WINTER WREN was singing along the stream in front of the lime kiln in the early morning on May 17, at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD. A SEDGE WREN continued to be heard at Finzel Swamp, Garrett Co, MD on May 15.

An AMERICAN PIPIT was seen and heard flying over at West Friendship Field in Howard Co, MD on May 15 and 16.

A well-described NELSON'S SPARROW was briefly seen and heard at the Boardwalk Bridge in Accomack Co, VA on May 18 and 19. A SALTMARSH SPARROW was enjoyed by many birders at Slaughter Beach-Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve on May 16, and another was spotted in the marsh at DuPont Nature Center (Mispillion) on May 19, both in Sussex Co, DE.

Warbler migration is winding down as many head north to their breeding grounds. A SWAINSON'S WARBLER continued at Jefferson NF-Deerfield Trail, Montgomery Co, VA with sightings for May 14-17. One was singing at Littleton Hunt Club Lane, and another was singing at Cool Spring Road where it crosses the swamp, both in Sussex Co, VA, on May 20. A well-described CONNECTICUT WARBLER surprised a birder at Jefferson NF, Bedford Co, VA on May 16. MOURNING WARBLERS, typically late migrants, were reported this week from several locations. On May 17 one was seen at Blandair Regional Park, Howard Co, MD, and another the same day at Greenbriar Park in Charlottesville, VA. On May 18, a stunning male MOURNING WARBLER was photographed at a backyard water feature in a yard in Harrisonburg, Rockingham Co, VA. A male WILSON'S WARBLER, always scarce in the east in spring, was seen foraging in willows at Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach, VA on May 15.

A SUMMER TANAGER continued at Fort DuPont Park, SE DC on May 14, and one was seen at the Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area, Kent Co, DE the same day. On May 16, a male SUMMER TANAGER was seen at a private residence in Warren Co, VA.

A DICKCISSEL was heard singing at Saint Jerome Neck Road, St. Mary's Co, MD and another was at the Underwood Road area in Howard Co, MD,

both on May 14. Three DICKCISSELS were at Bristoe Station Battlefield, Prince William Co, VA on May 18 and 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](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