

Hotline: Voice of the Naturalist  
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(independent of NAS)  
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**NOTICE:** For more than 40 years the Voice of the Naturalist has provided DC area birders with a weekly update of notable sightings. Initially the Voice 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 WITH THIS REPORT.**

We thank all of you for your many contributions and your support, and we wish you very good birding!

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 <https://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 21, and was completed on Tuesday, May 28.

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 59<sup>th</sup> Supplement (June 2018).

Top Birds this week are PURPLE GALLINULE\* in MD and NEOTROPIC CORMORANT\* in VA.

Other Birds of Interest were waterfowl including TRUMPETER SWAN, NORTHERN BOBWHITE, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, KING RAIL, COMMON GALLINULE, SANDHILL CRANE, shorebirds including WHIMBREL, GULL-BILLED and BLACK TERNS, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, AMERICAN and LEAST BITTERNS, waders including WHITE and GLOSSY IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER, OLIVE-SIDED, YELLOW-BELLIED, and ALDER FLYCATCHERS, CLIFF SWALLOWS, CEDAR WAXWINGS, SALTMARSH SPARROW, BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE, warblers including GOLDEN-WINGED and MOURNING, SUMMER TANAGER, and DICKCISSEL.

## TOP BIRDS

A PURPLE GALLINULE\* briefly emerged from the marsh vegetation on Cash Lake at Patuxent Research Refuge-South Tract, Prince Georges Co, MD, on May 24; it was seen from the floating bridge between Cash Lake and the intake from Lake Reddington.

The record-setting NEOTROPIC CORMORANT\* discovered at Woodglen Lake, Fairfax Co, VA on May 17 was still there May 21.

## OTHER BIRDS OF INTEREST

TRUMPETER SWANS made a splash in Maryland, with May 27 reports from Lake Frank and Rock Creek Regional Park, both in Montgomery Co, as well as from Stoney Creek in northern Anne Arundel Co May 26; Fort Smallwood Park, Anne Arundel Co May 25; and St. Martin's Neck Rd, Worcester Co, May 24.

A NORTHERN PINTAIL was present May 22-25 at Constitution Gardens, District of Columbia; it was at the west end of the Reflecting Pool. On May 23, two COMMON EIDERS were swimming in a raft of BLACK SCOTERS off the north end of Assawoman Island, Accomack Co, VA.

On May 27 a NORTHERN BOBWHITE called for ten minutes at Port Tobacco River Park, Charles Co, MD.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS were still around this week, with reports from Rock Creek Park-Maintenance Yard in NW DC May 22 and 27.

A KING RAIL obligingly crossed into the open multiple times at Black Marsh trail, North Point SP, Baltimore, MD, with sightings from May 21-24. On May 23 a KING RAIL was again found at Big Stone Beach, Kent Co, DE.

A COMMON GALLINULE continued at E.A. Vaughn WMA-North, Worcester Co, MD, as of May 24.

Two SANDHILL CRANES were spotted May 25 in Accident, Garrett Co, MD.

Among the 13 species of shorebird tallied May 23 at Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, MD, were a pair of BLACK-NECKED STILTS. On May 21, four AMERICAN AVOCETS were photographed as they flew up the Potomac River from East Potomac Park--Hains Point, DC. East Potomac Park also hosted 2 BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS on May 23 and a SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER ON May 26.

WHIMBRELS showed up at a variety of watery locations, including Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, but none was a more surprising find than one that spent all day May 23 resting on a log in the Potomac River across from Violette's Lock on the C&O Canal, Montgomery Co, MD.

Huge numbers of northbound shorebirds continued to flood onto the Delaware beaches to fatten up on horseshoe crab eggs, but among thousands of RUDDY TURNSTONES, DUNLIN, SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS, and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS at places like Slaughter Beach, Sussex Co, or the DuPont Nature Center at Mispillion Light in Milford, Sussex Co, prized RED KNOTS were relatively sparse and/or disappointingly distant; birders struggled to get a good look at more than just a few.

Four AMERICAN WOODCOCKS surfaced May 25 at the G. W. Thompson WMA, Fauquier Co, VA; they were in the vicinity of the Appalachian Trail parking area.

On May 21, a GULL-BILLED TERN was reported from Assateague Island SP, Worcester Co, MD, and on May 26 two GULL-BILLED TERNS perched on a small rock pile at Hog Island, Surry Co, VA. On May 25, three LEAST TERNS were observed from East Potomac Park-Hains Point, DC.

A flock of ten AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS continued to entertain visitors to Shearneck Pool, Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, DE, with reports through May 27.

An AMERICAN BITTERN lingered at Hughes Hollow, Montgomery Co, MD, as of May 21. A LEAST BITTERN was seen at Huntly Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA, on May 26.

A SNOWY EGRET was found at the Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Clarke Co, VA on May 22. A TRICOLORED HERON was observed at Little Creek WMA, Kent Co, DE, on May 25. WHITE IBIS reports included two juveniles at Indian River Inlet, Kent Co, DE, on May 25. A GLOSSY IBIS was seen May 23 at Violette's Lock on the C&O Canal, Montgomery Co, MD.

MISSISSIPPI KITES were all around. In VA, one was reported on May 24 from Alexandria, Fairfax Co, and two adults were seen in Falls Church, in an area of Fairfax county they have frequented for the past several years. In DE, two MISSISSIPPI KITES were seen at Cape Henlopen SP, Sussex Co, May 21, and one was reported at Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, May 22. In MD, reports came from neighborhoods and parks in Anne Arundel, Frederick, Harford, and Howard Counties. In Montgomery Co a MISSISSIPPI KITE drew birders to Violette's Lock on the C&O Canal, Montgomery Co, for four days running, May 22 through May 25.

Visitors to the Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex Co, VA, reported RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS on May 25, 26, and 27.

An ALDER FLYCATCHER was calling at East Potomac Park-Hains Point, DC on May 25 and again May 26. In Maryland an ALDER FLYCATCHER visited private property in Calvert Co May 24, 25, and 26; on May 23 an ALDER FLYCATCHER was found at the Hernwood Landfill, Baltimore Co. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS showed up in the District of Columbia at Fort Dupont Park May 22 and East Potomac Park--Hains Point May 26. In Maryland OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was reported at Violette's Lock, Montgomery Co, May 22; Old Legislative Rd, Allegany Co, May 23; and Patapsco Valley SP, Howard Co, May 23. A YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was identified at Rock Creek Park, DC, on May 25.

CLIFF SWALLOWS were swirling around the Rte 328 Bridge in Caroline Co, MD, on May 23 and 27. They were also to be found at the Monocacy Aqueduct in Frederick and Montgomery Cos, MD, on May 26 and 27. CLIFF SWALLOWS are regulars at the footbridge leading to Roosevelt Island in the District of Columbia.

They're here! Big flocks of CEDAR WAXWINGS filled area trees. A group of 50 or more descended on a yard in Herndon, Fairfax Co, VA, on May 22, while an estimated 500 passed through a neighborhood Kensington, Montgomery Co, MD, throughout the day on May 24.

SALTMARSH SPARROWS continued at Slaughter Beach-Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve, with four--three together--seen on May 21 and two found on May 25.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE was reported from a variety of Delaware locations, including the Dupont Nature Center (Mispillion, Sussex Co, May 22.

Just about the only warblers still around are local breeders--but in the highlands of Highland Co, VA, that means CHESTNUT-SIDED and CERULEAN, as well as a GOLDEN-WINGED at Blue Grass Valley MOURNING at Paddy's Knob, all seen May 23.

On May 24 MOURNING WARBLER was glimpsed, and briefly sang, close to the marina bathroom at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax Co, VA. In Maryland, MOURNING WARBLER visited Owings, Calvert Co, May 24; Blandair Regional Park, Howard Co, May 25; and Indian Springs WMA, Washington Co, May 26. On May 26 a CERULEAN WARBLER was "singing nonstop" at Pretty Boy Reservoir--Hemlock Gorge Trail, Baltimore.

SUMMER TANAGER reports came from Soldiers Delight NEA May 23 and 26, and Gunpowder Falls SP May 27, both locations in Baltimore Co, MD.

A DICKCISSEL was heard singing at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Prince George's Co, MD, on May 25. Two were singing at Bristoe Station Battlefield, Prince William Co, VA, on May 27.

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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.

\*Of interest to the applicable state records committee

## \*\*SOURCES FOR BIRDING UPDATES

### eBird

Rare Bird Alerts: sightings from the previous seven days. You can choose locales--by state or county--and frequency--daily or hourly. Sign up here: <https://ebird.org/alerts>

### Email lists

va-bird: <https://mailman.listserve.com/listmanager/listinfo/va-bird>

### mdbirding:

[https://groups.google.com/forum/?utm\\_source=digest&utm\\_medium=email#!forum/mdbirding/join](https://groups.google.com/forum/?utm_source=digest&utm_medium=email#!forum/mdbirding/join)

### wv-bird:

<http://list.audubon.org/scripts/wa-AUDUBON.exe?SUBED1=wv-bird&A=1>

Lists for the entire country can be accessed from the American Birding Association: [birding.aba.org/maillist](http://birding.aba.org/maillist)

### Facebook groups

#### VA Notable Birds

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/118655321826890/?fref=nf>

Birding Virginia <https://www.facebook.com/groups/456751061044163/>

#### MD Notable Bird Sightings and Discussion Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MDRareBirdsDiscussionGroup/>

#### MD Birding

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MDBirding/>

Delaware Birding

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/delawarebirding/>

Maryland Birdwatcher's and Identification Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/860433664031234/>