



VIRGINIA BIRDS

A quarterly journal of ornithological sightings in the Commonwealth
published by the Virginia Society of Ornithology



Volume 16 • Number 2

Fall Records • August–November 2019

Virginia Birds Regions

Cities/towns numbered on map

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Abingdon | 18. Franklin | 31. Norton | 42. Tazewell |
| 2. Alexandria | 19. Fredericksburg | 32. Petersburg | 43. Virginia Beach |
| 3. Bedford | 20. Galax | 33. Poquoson | 44. Waynesboro |
| 4. Blacksburg | 21. Hampton | 34. Portsmouth | 45. Williamsburg |
| 5. Bristol | 22. Harrisonburg | 35. Radford | 46. Winchester |
| 6. Buena Vista | 23. Hopewell | 36. Richmond | |
| 7. Cape Charles | 24. Lexington | 37. Roanoke | |
| 8. Charlottesville | 25. Lynchburg | 38. Salem | |
| 9. Chesapeake | 26. Manassas | 39. South Boston | |
| 10. Chincoteague | 27. Manassas Park | 40. Staunton | |
| 11. Clifton Forge | 28. Martinsville | 41. Suffolk | |
| 12. Colonial Heights | 29. Newport News | | |
| 13. Covington | 30. Norfolk | | |
| 14. Danville | | | |
| 15. Emporia | | | |
| 16. Fairfax | | | |
| 17. Falls Church | | | |



Virginia Birds

Editors

Bill Williams

billwilliams154@gmail.com

Louise Menges

louisemenges6@gmail.com

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Adam D'Onofrio

James Fox

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Send reports and photographs to the Regional Editors. Photographs should be the highest electronic quality possible.

Send with release form, which can be found on the VSO web site:

<http://www.virginiabirds.org/publications/photography-release-forms/>

Articles for consideration can be sent to billwilliams154@gmail.com.

Season

Fall (Aug–Nov)

Winter (Dec–Feb)

Spring (Mar–May)

Summer (Jun–Jul)

Reports due to Regional Editors

15 Dec

15 Mar

15 Jun

15 Aug

Terms and Abbreviations

Species name in **bold** first time mentioned (VARCOM Review Birds **BOLD CAPS**); county names are in *italics*.

Abbreviations

ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
et al.	and others
f.	female
<i>fide</i>	vouched by
FOS	First of Season
Ft.	Fort
Gold Book	<i>Virginia's Birdlife, An Annotated Checklist</i> . Virginia Avifauna No. 7, Fourth Edition, 2007.
Hwy.	Highway
Is.	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
junc.	junction
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
Ln.	Lane
MAPS	Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship
m.	male
m. obs.	many/multiple observers
Mt.	Mountain, Mount
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NP	National Park
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	photographed by (initials)
Pk.	Park
Pt.	Point
R.	River
Rd.	Road
Res.	Reservoir
RP	Regional Park
Rte.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
VARCOM	Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDGIF	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
v. r.	voice recording
vid. r.	video recording
VSO	Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
*	specimen collected

On the cover: Virginia's first verified Anna's Hummingbird photographed by David Boltz at a private residence at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 5 Dec

The Home Stretch: Virginia's Final Breeding Bird Atlas Season

By Ashley Peele, PhD, VABBA2 Coordinator

On a warm morning in June, three women found themselves searching a grassy ditch line for car keys. This particular grassy ditch sits along a road in the middle of a VA Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) priority block near South Boston. The three women included a new project volunteer, the State Coordinator (she who dropped the keys!), and a friendly passerby who stopped to help them search. The first two arrived at this grassy roadside in search of new breeding records, one of 5 Atlas rally teams searching for new breeding bird records in this under-birded corner of the southern Piedmont. The third decided to stop upon seeing two strangers with binoculars staring at the ground with unusual interest. After about 30 minutes, two exciting things occurred. First, the good Samaritan found the keys by a nearby fence line. Second, the two birders detected a male Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrows singing in the adjacent field.

The moral of this tale? Birding in new areas is exciting for many reasons, but especially for the opportunity to find new species... and old keys.

Last summer marked the fourth field season for the VA Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) project and was unique from the first three field seasons in many ways. During those early years of the project, volunteers did a good job of collecting breeding bird data in many regions of the state, but these were naturally closest to VA's larger cities and towns. Areas outside of these populated zones received much less birding effort and as a result, sections of the Commonwealth remained under-birded. These regions, including the southern Piedmont and southwestern mountains and valleys, are characterized by both very low human population densities and very important bird habitats.

Why does bias in the distribution of breeding bird data matter to the VABBA2 project?

In general, survey bias in the spatial distribution of data (clumped effort) can impact a range of factors, including accuracy of species distribution maps, population estimates, etc. More specifically, several key habitat types were underrepresented in the Atlas dataset at the start of 2019. For simplicity, the project classified these as 'open habitats', a catch-all for grasslands, agricultural fields, early successional scrub and woodland, etc. From a species perspective, too little data in open habitats meant that the Atlas project did not YET have an accurate understanding of the current distribution of key breeding bird species like Blue Grosbeak, Prairie Warbler, Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Northern Bobwhite. Two of these species are priority species for the VABBA2 project and all are known to be declining across their North American breeding range, which makes it vital to understand their current status within the Commonwealth. To address this shortfall, the VABBA2 asked our volunteers to focus their efforts on filling these gaps in both regional and open habitat coverage and to do this either solo or by attending summer Atlasing rallies (see above story of lost keys and new species). Through both methods, Virginia's volunteer birding community came through in grand style.

In 2019, annual detections of all the species mentioned above surpassed previous field seasons. For Northern Bobwhite and Yellow-breasted Chat, detections increased by 50%, but survey coverage for all the target open habitat-breeding species improved dramatically from 2018 to 2019. Other species tied to the Southern Piedmont (though not open habitats) also benefitted from the increased volunteer survey effort, including Red-headed Woodpeckers (RHWO) and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Taking a broader view of how volunteers increased statewide breeding survey coverage, the number of project priority blocks with less than three hours of effort fell from >50% to <20%! Not only did volunteers answer our call to help survey open habitats, particularly in the southern Piedmont, but they also did a great job of targeting overall effort where it was most needed.

The mountain-valley region of southwestern Virginia is now our primary target for the final VABBA2 field season this spring/summer (2020). Smaller gaps remain scattered around the state and merit volunteer attention (Figure 1). However, the greatest concentration of 'blocks in need' are found in regions 7 and 8 of southwestern Virginia.

For 2020, this means that our regional focus will be on birds of the mountain-valley region, especially high-elevation breeders. Early trends in the VABBA2 dataset suggested that many of our montane-breeding songbird species, e.g. Canada and Black-throated Blue Warbler, have actually increased in their Virginia distribution over the last 30 years. For some species, these trends parallel the range-wide findings published as part of the #3BillionBirdsLost campaign.¹ For example, Blue-headed Vireo populations are increasing markedly throughout the Appalachian region. But other species, like Canada and Black-throated Blue Warbler, are in decline. Thus, it is critical to verify the trajectory of Virginia's populations of Neotropical migratory species, especially if these vary from the range-wide trends.

Habitat focus for 2020?

For birders who like an excuse to get out of the coastal plain for a summer, the mountains beckon this summer. Higher elevation mountains of southwest Virginia (2000+ ft) and southwestern priority blocks in general, need more breeding bird data. Fortunately, some extremely interesting and unique habitats occur at the highest elevations. For example, Virginia's remaining spruce-fir forests are potential habitat for breeding Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, and Hermit Thrush. In 2019, the first confirmation of breeding Winter Wrens were logged by birders who found a small family group foraging on Whitetop Mountain in the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. While this site is now well-birded, other high mountains in the region remain virtually un-birded.

Higher elevation coniferous and mixed deciduous forests, notably those with thick rhododendron patches also need greater survey coverage. A range of important species breeding in these. For example, Hermit Thrush are still not confirmed, despite a number of probable breeding records in Giles, Grayson, and Washington counties. Magnolia Warblers are only confirmed in one small high-mountain valley, while Purple Finches and Red Crossbills tease us as they dance back and forth over the West Virginia border. All of these species breed in high elevation sites in West Virginia, including those near the state border, so a challenge for the final VABBA2 field season will be verifying whether more of our own potential breeding sites are occupied or not. Intrepid birds will get a good return on their birding investment, if they visit under-birded areas of Southwest Virginia and log their observations to the Atlas eBird portal (ebird.org/atlasva) this summer.

How to contribute in the 2020 field season?

First, volunteers can review the current coverage map in the Atlas Block Explorer Tool (found on the Maps page of vabba2.org) for guidance on where the remaining un-covered priority blocks are and which of these should be given highest priority. The Atlas project is aiming for 100% coverage of priority blocks, but we have prioritized completion of some based on historic data and other criteria.

Second, a series of Atlas rallies targeting under-surveyed areas will be held throughout the 2020 summer season. Each event occurs from Friday-Sunday and is based in a VA State Park. All events provide an opportunity for volunteers to add new breeding bird records to key regions and habitats. In 2020, these events will be held in the western Piedmont and three different sites throughout southwestern VA. More details are provided on the VABBA2 website.

Lastly, volunteers who cannot travel to bird for the Atlas but still wish to volunteer can do two things... 1) Check out the Atlas maps to see if any local priority blocks need a little more effort to be completed. Many still need nocturnal effort or a single day's effort to be finished up. 2) Visit and bird public properties like State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), county or state parks, national forest sites, etc. near home. While priority blocks have been our primary focus (due to historical data coverage), it is still highly important to document breeding birds on public lands since these are likely to persist and remain key habitats into the future.

¹KENNETH V. ROSENBERG, ADRIAAN M. DOKTER, PETER J. BLANCHER, JOHN R. SAUER, ADAM C. SMITH, PAUL A. SMITH, JESSICA C. STANTON, ARVIND PANJABI, LAURA HELFT, MICHAEL PARR, PETER P. MARRA. 2019. DECLINE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN AVIFAUNA. SCIENCE 366 (6461): 120-124

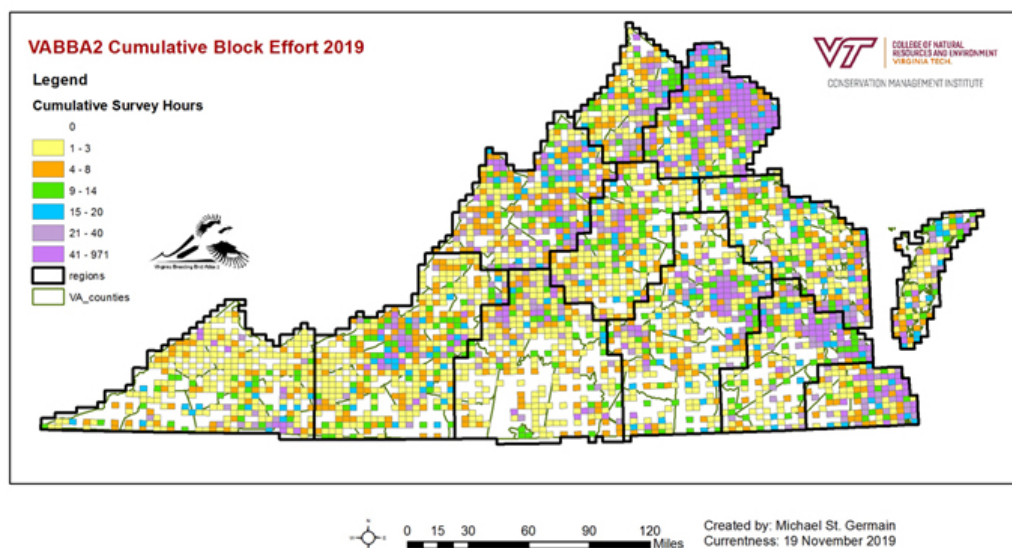
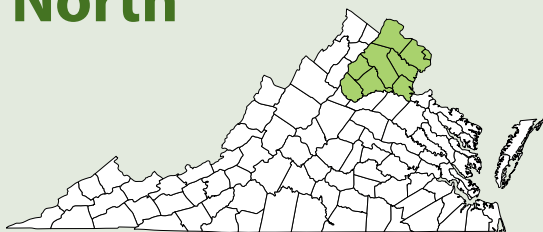


Figure 1. Cumulative Block-level effort for the 2nd VA Breeding Bird Atlas (2016-2019).

Regional Reports

North



Editors: Michael Lott
1729 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
P.O. Box 339
Stafford, VA 22554
michael.lott@dcr.virginia.gov

Mary Ann Good
18280 Lincoln Rd.
Purcellville, VA 20132
magood1@verizon.net

Arlington, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Madison, Prince William, Rappahannock, and Stafford counties; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park

Highlights this season included a Greater White-fronted Goose and a Brant seen in a cornfield s. of Fredericksburg, both the first recorded in *Stafford*; and a Limpkin seen and ph. by many at Fountainhead RP, *Fairfax*, a Franklin's Gull in *Fairfax*, and a Lark Sparrow in *Stafford*.

Abbreviations: Algonkian RP (Algonkian RP, *Loudoun*); Clifton Institute (Clifton Institute, *Fauquier*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Hunting Cr. Bridge (Hunting Cr. Bridge, *Fairfax*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Leesylvania (Leesylvania SP, *Prince William*); Sky Meadows (Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier*)

WATERFOWL—SHOREBIRDS

Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** and **Brant** were seen feeding in a cornfield along Kings Hwy. s. of Fredericksburg 23 Nov (FA), rare inland and the first reported on eBird in *Stafford*. A less-rare **Snow Goose** accompanied the flock of mostly **Canada Geese**, as did a **Cackling Goose**, a fairly rare winter visitor in the Piedmont. Earlier sightings of Cackling Geese also included one at Dyke Marsh 10 Nov (RR) (where the species is rarer than in the Piedmont) and 3 just n. of Sky Meadows 11 Nov (BW), the latter well ahead of the Piedmont extreme early date of 30 Nov. A late **Blue-winged Teal** showed up at Huntley Meadows 15 Nov (WH), past the 20 Oct Regional late date. A f. **Surf Scoter**, a rare visitor in the



A f. Surf Scoter photographed 21 Oct by David Larsen at Discovery Blvd. pond, *Prince William*

Region and more so well into the Piedmont, was present at the Discovery Blvd. pond, *Prince William* 21–25 Oct (ph. DLa), and 5 Surf Scoters were at C.M. Crocket Pk., *Fauquier* 13 Nov (ph. GS). Also rare in the Region were a m. **White-winged Scoter** observed at Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 16 Nov (DLed), as well as a m. **Long-tailed Duck** at the Upper Occoquan Service Authority, *Fairfax* 16 Nov (DM). A **Black-billed Cuckoo**, a rare transient in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Leesylvania 25 Sep (KG). Two **Chimney Swifts** were observed flying over Algonkian RP 25 Oct (PL), past the Piedmont extreme late date of 23 Oct. A **Virginia Rail**, a rare transient in the Piedmont away from a few known hangouts, was seen at a construction site near Flint Hill School, *Fairfax* 6 Sep (ph. LB). A **Common Gallinule**, a rare transient inland, was seen at the Int'l Conservation House, *Fauquier* 15–16 Sep (ph. PSa). A **LIMPKIN**, chronologically the third state record, was seen at Fountainhead RP, *Fairfax* 24 Aug (LC), seen and ph. by many here and nearby through 8 Sep.



Mike Boatwright's 25 Aug photo of the Limpkin at Fountainhead Regional Pk., *Fairfax*

Three **Sandhill Cranes** were observed flying over Algonkian Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 30 Nov (ph., v.r. BHe, AG), calling loudly as a Bald Eagle flew over them. These were probably the pair that has overwintered the past 2 years here and upriver, joined by a third. Reports of **American Avocets**, rare this far inland, included 2 at Reagan Nat. Airport, *Arlington* 6 Aug (ph. SS, DSp); 3 at Discovery Blvd. pond, *Prince William* (well into the Piedmont) 10 Aug (ph. TH); and one at Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 1 Nov (ph. PP).



One of 2 American Avocets Scott Stafford documented near Reagan Nat. Airport, *Arlington* 6 Aug

Three **American Golden-Plovers**, a rare but regular fall transient in the Region, were seen at Woodward Turf Farm, *Culpeper* 5 Sep (TD). Also a rare fall transient this far inland was a **MARBLED GODWIT** at Hunting Cr. Bridge 31 Aug (ph. DLeb). Species with few fall records w. of the Chesapeake Bay included a **Ruddy Turnstone** at Hunting Cr. Bridge 31 Aug (TK) and 2 **Sanderlings** at Leesylvania 24 Aug (ph. EP) and 2 again about 20 mi. upriver at Hunting Cr. Bridge 31 Aug (TK). A **Baird's Sandpiper**, seen at Hunting Cr. Bridge 10 Aug (ph. TK), was a rare transient in the Region, as were 2 **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** seen at this shorebird hotspot 1 Sep (ph. KG, m. obs.). A **Spotted Sandpiper** seen at Royal L. Pk., *Fairfax* 31 Oct & 7 Nov (ph. P&JW) was much later than the Piedmont late date of 15 Oct.

GULLS-RAPTORS

About 100 **Bonaparte's Gulls**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, were observed at the Discovery Blvd. pond, *Prince William* 12 Nov (DLA). A **FRANKLIN'S GULL**, a species that rarely ventures into the state, even less inland, was seen at Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 1 Sep (ph. PP). Single **Caspian Terns**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were observed nearly a month apart at two spots in close proximity: the s. side of L. Ashby, *Fauquier* 22 Aug (GS) and the n. side of nearby L. Wesley, *Fauquier* 18 Sep (TD). Three **Royal Terns** were seen at Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 12 Oct (ph. FBC), where one was seen again 19 Oct (KK); the rare post-breeding dispersal visits of this species into the Region usually end by the end of Sep. A rare transient in the Piedmont, a **SNOWY EGRET** was seen at Algonkian RP and Nature Preserve several times past the species' extreme Piedmont late date of 15 Sep, with the latest sighting 13 Oct (ph. EM). Single **Ospreys** were seen at Daingerfield Is., *Alexandria* 22 Nov (MP) and Huntley Meadows 30 Nov (JSa, MC, MM), well past this species' Regional mid-Nov late extremity. A perched ad. **Golden Eagle** was reported at Sky Meadows 1 Sep (JA). A pair of **Mississippi Kites** seen feeding young at the nest site at Forest Manor, *Loudoun* remained through at least 22 Aug (m. obs.). Early **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were seen at Range View Cabin in Shenandoah NP, *Rappahannock* 8 Sep (CHe) and Conway-Robinson SF, *Prince William* 12 Sep (TH), both prior to the Piedmont 18 Sep extreme early date (Mountain/Valley extreme early date not given in the Gold Book). Sightings of **Merlins** and **Peregrine Falcons** were again numerous; the latter included 3 seen flying and diving together among the tall buildings of Reston Town Center, *Fairfax* 28 Oct (DLed). A summary of the fall count at Snicker's Gap Hawkwatch, *Loudoun* included 49 **Ospreys**, 78 **Bald Eagles**, 31 **Northern Harriers**, 231 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 22 **Cooper's Hawks**, 1 **Northern Goshawk**, 26 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 9,591 **Broad-winged Hawks**, 192 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 2 **Golden Eagles**, 23 **American Kestrels**, 10 **Merlins**, and 5 **Peregrine Falcons**. The Northern Goshawk, which circled lazily, and the 2 Golden Eagles appeared together on one memorable day (10 Nov), along with one of the Peregrines.

FLYCATCHERS-THRUSHES

There were several reports of **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a fairly rare transient in the Region (rare in the Mountain/Valley area): Ashby Pond Conservancy Site, *Fairfax* 11 Aug (ph. P&JW); Limberlost Trail in Shenandoah NP,

Madison 2 Sep (ph. CC); Big Meadows in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 8 Sep (ph. JM, CHa); Warrenton Air Park, *Fauquier* (DSI); Clifton Institute 11 Sep (ph. BHa); and Julie Metz Wetlands, *Prince William* 20 Sep (PSi). **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Region, were seen at Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 30 Aug (TH); Clifton Institute 11&18 Sep (ph. BHa) (the latter individual banded); Monticello Pk., *Alexandria* 15 Sep (TA); Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 19 Sep (PWB); and Huntley Meadows 23 Sep (KG). A late **Acadian Flycatcher** was seen at the Clifton Institute 9 Oct (TD, IT), considerably after the Piedmont late date of 20 Sep. A **Least Flycatcher**, a fairly rare transient in the n. Piedmont, was seen and ph. at Sky Meadows 29 Sep (RT, PK). Although not rare in the Piedmont, the sight of 7 **Common Ravens** circling around the Skyline Office complex in Bailey's Crossroads, *Fairfax*, in the e. part of the Piedmont where still infrequent, 25 Nov (JA) was an unexpected sight. The **Brown-headed Nuthatch** that has been present at Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper* since Fall 2017, seen several times throughout each quarter (except, interestingly, no reports in Summer 2019), was again seen 29 Aug (CHe) and again 10 Oct (KK). Early **Winter Wrens** were observed at Ashby Pond Conservancy Site, *Fairfax* 8 Sep (P&JW); Algonkian RP 9 Sep (JT); and Ben Brenman Pk., *Alexandria* 13 Sep (DLed), preceding the species' Piedmont and Coastal Plain extreme early dates of 14 Sep and 19 Sep, respectively. A **Sedge Wren**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Waples Mill Meadow Pk., *Fairfax* 5–6 Oct (FA, ph. DLeb). There were several sightings of **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** considerably past the 20 Sep late date for the Region, where they as a species are rare winter visitors, including at Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William* 2 Nov (ph. TK) and Accotink Bay NWR, *Fairfax* 11&25 Nov (ph. WH). Well past the Piedmont extreme late date of 5 Nov was a **Swainson's Thrush** found at the Nat. Recreation and Park Assoc., *Loudoun* 16 Nov (AG, JY).

PIPITS-DICKCISSEL

An **American Pipit** along the Little Stony Mountain Trail in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 11 Sep (ph. IT) was earlier than the Mountain/Valley extreme early date of 21 Sep. A **Snow Bunting**, a rare and irregular transient in the Mountain/Valley area, was seen along Skyline Dr. near Syria, *Madison* 29 Nov (ph. RK). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was seen at a farm near Boston, *Rappahannock* 6 Nov (ph. IT), just after the Piedmont extreme late date of 5

Nov. A **Lark Sparrow**, a rare visitor in the Region, was seen at L. Mooney Pk., *Stafford* 29 Oct (ph. JeP, JoP). Sightings of **Clay-colored Sparrows**, a rare transient in the Region, especially in the Piedmont, included: between Flint Hill School and Oak Mar Recreation Center, *Fairfax* 20 Sep (FA); Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, *Fairfax* 13 Oct (ph. SP), probably the same individual seen at this location over the last two winters (first seen 9 Nov last year); and Airlie Conference Center, *Fauquier* 25 Oct & 1 Nov (PSa). An **American Tree Sparrow** was seen at Asterhill Farm near Marshall, *Fauquier* 13 Oct (AE), considerably before the 10 Nov Piedmont early date. A **Nelson's Sparrow**, a rare and secretive transient in the Piedmont, was observed at Algonkian RP 6–7 Oct (ph. BHe, AG). Single **Lincoln's Sparrows**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, were seen at Algonkian RP 7 Oct (JL) and Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 29 Nov (TH) and again 30 Nov (m. obs.); it is noted that this species is a rare early winter visitor. A **Baltimore Oriole**, a rare late fall and winter visitor in the Piedmont, was seen at a residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 9 Nov (EK), well outside the species' usual Piedmont late date of 30 Sep. Reports of **Golden-winged Warblers**, a rare transient away from the Blue Ridge, included sightings at a residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 24 Aug (EK); Crow's Nest NAP, *Stafford* 1 Sep (ph. WM); and Whitney SF, *Fauquier* 8 Sep (GS). Seen past the 23 Sep extreme Mountain/Valley late date was a **Blue-winged Warbler** along Skyline Dr., *Rappahannock* 25 Sep (GV). A late **Black-and-white Warbler** surprised the observer at his residence in Reston, *Fairfax* 27 Nov, gleaning insects at freshly raked spots in the yard (DY). The normal late date for this species is 15 Oct in the Piedmont, where it is a rare early winter visitor. An **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a rare transient in the Region, was seen at Ben Brenman Pk., *Alexandria* 1 Nov (DLed), and one was at Dyke Marsh 26 Nov (EE), one of 12 species EE observed at sapsucker drill holes. Rare **Connecticut Warblers** were seen at Sky Meadows 5 Sep (KG); Airlie Reservoir, *Fauquier* 11 Sep (PSa); Royal L. Pk., *Fairfax* 24 Sep (PSi); Old Rag Fire Rd., *Madison* 25 Sep (ph. IT); and along Skyline Dr., *Rappahannock* 25 Sep (JSt). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was seen at Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria* 1 Nov (ph. TA), outside the species' Coastal Plain extreme late date of 20 Oct. Late **Palm Warblers**, whose Regional late date is 30 Sep, were seen at Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Nov (AN); along Tatums School Rd., *Madison* 15 Nov (TD, IT); and 2 at Huntley Meadows 18&25 Nov (NV); it is noted that this species is a rare early winter visitor in the Piedmont and fairly rare

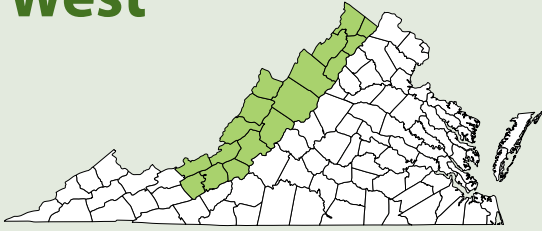
in the inland Coastal Plain. Late **Pine Warblers** seen along Long Mountain Rd., *Rappahannock* 2 Nov (JSt, IT, NN); at Brambleton Pk. E., *Loudoun* 9 Nov (BHi); and along Oak Pk. Rd., *Madison* 15 Nov (TD, IT) were well beyond the Piedmont late date of 10 Oct; it is noted that this species is a rare winter resident outside of the Coastal Plain. A **Yellow-throated Warbler**, a species with dwindling records in the Coastal Plain up until 27 Nov, was one of the 12 species visiting sapsucker drill holes at Dyke Marsh 26 Nov (EE), along with the afore-mentioned Orange-crowned Warbler. Also late (Coastal Plain late date 20 Sep) was a **Prairie Warbler** seen at Leesylvania 28 Oct (ph. PSi); it is noted that this species does on rare occasions linger into late fall but mainly on the coast. Very early reports of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in Shenandoah NP, where there were several reports this past summer, included one along Skyline Dr., *Rappahannock* 2 Aug (EK) and 2 at Big Meadows, *Madison* 8 Sep (ph. CHa); the usual Mountain/Valley early date is 25 Sep. There were multiple reports of **Scarlet Tanagers** well past the Piedmont late date of 10 Oct: along Long Mountain Rd., *Rappahannock* 5 Nov (IT); between Flint Hill School and Oak Marr Recreation Center, *Fairfax* 8 Nov (FA); and along Shellbark Place, *Fairfax* 10 Nov (GC). A **Dickcissel**, a rare and irregular transient in the Region, was observed at Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William* 28 Sep (ph. TK).

Contributors: Tom Albright, Janet Anderson, Fred Atwood, P. W. Boyd, Larry Brooks, Michael Carr, Luca Catanzaro, G. Clausen, Charlotte Clements, Todd Day, Anonymous eBirder, Ed Eder, Fredericksburg Birding Club (FBC), Allison Gallo, Kurt Gaskill, Cindy Hamilton (CHa), Tobin Hardwick, Bert Harris (BHa), Caroline Heald (CHe), Bryan Henson (BHe), William Higgins, Bruce Hill (BHi), Phil Kenny, Eric Kershner, Todd Kiraly, Richard Korpi, Kelly Krechmer, Dave Larsen (DLA), Dan Lebbin (DLeb), David Ledwith (DLed), Jody Lewis, Paul Lewis, William Mahoney, June McDaniels, Deapesh Misra, Michael Montalvo, Elton Morel, Adit N, Nick Newberry, Evan Pannkuk, Paul Pisano, Michael Plaster, Jeffrey Pozner (JeP), Joan Pozner (JoP), Scott Priebe, Rich Rieger, Paul Salaman (PSa), Jacob Saucier (JSa), Phil Silas (PSi), Greg Slader, Daniel Sloan (DSl), David Sperling (DSp), Scott Stafford, Jason Strickland (JSt), Jean Tatalias, Russ Taylor, Ian Topolsky, Gary Van Velsir, Nancy Vehrs, Bill Walsh, Paul & Joan Woodward, Jane Yocom, Dave Young



A Dickcissel photographed by Todd Kiraly at Occoquan Bay NWR 28 Sep

West



Editor: Clyde Kessler
P.O. Box 3612
Radford, VA 24141
ckessler@vt.edu

Allegheny, Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Clarke, Craig, Frederick, Giles, Highland, Montgomery, Page, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren counties; the cities/towns of Blacksburg, Buena Vista, Clifton Forge, Covington, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Radford, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester

Abbreviations: Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, *Clarke*); BRPW (Blue Ridge Parkway); Broadway (Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Rockingham*); RGHW (Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch, *Augusta/Nelson*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Three **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCKS** were found in Blacksburg 10–13 Sep (m. obs.). The highest reported **Snow Goose** count was 69 at the RGHW 12 Nov (BT). A **Ross's Goose** with 3 Snow Geese was seen at Riverview Pk., Radford 22 Nov (CK) then was relocated with the 2 Snow Geese at the New River Valley Fairgrounds, *Pulaski* 24 Nov (SB). **Tundra Swan** observations at RGHW included thirty-nine 8 Nov and twenty-eight 12 Nov (m. obs.). Higher **Gadwall** counts were 22 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 12 Nov (DB, WP); 38 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 17 Nov (DH); 91 at Murray's Pond, *Roanoke* 26 Nov (BE, BK); and 43 at Greenfield L., *Botetourt* 30 Nov (NR). The only **Canvasback** report was 4 at Quillen's Pond, *Augusta* 14 Nov (EL, IL). One to 3 **Redheads** were seen frequently at Broadway 2 Aug–16 Nov (m. obs.). Other records included 3 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 17 Nov (DH); 10 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 18 Nov (m. obs.); and one at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 18–19 Nov (m. obs.). Two f. **Surf Scoters** were at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 8 & 10 Oct (GR). A **White-winged Scoter** was seen at Broadway 23–24 Oct (DH). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 18 Nov (DB, WP, GR). **Common Merganser** reports noted 12 in *Allegheny* 7 Sep (AM), 10 at the Highland WMA, *Highland* 24 Sep (SH), 165 at L. Merriweather, *Rockbridge* 16 Nov (JP), 108 there 26 Nov (IL, ES, TS), and 12 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 19 Nov (BR, GR, NRi). Eight **Northern Bobwhites** were found at Churchville, *Augusta* 28 Nov (MH). An albino **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was photographed in Blacksburg 15 Aug (DP). An **ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD** was documented at feeders near Blacksburg 17–19 Aug (BA, ph. JV, ph. m. obs.).



Two Allen's Hummingbird photos taken near Blacksburg 17–19 Aug: Jerry Via (above) Doug Pfeiffer (below)



Single **Virginia Rails** were found at Blandy 19 Aug (GR) and in Blacksburg 19–25 Oct (m. obs.). A **Sora** was seen in Blacksburg 12 Oct (RM). Another was at Blandy 22, 28 (DCr) and 29 Oct (DG), and one was at Augusta Wetlands, *Augusta* 2 Nov (DC). Twelve **AMERICAN AVOCETS** were seen in *Rockingham* 15 Sep (m. obs.). A **Black-bellied Plover** was observed in *Rockingham* 5 (WL) & 6 Oct (DL, GM). A **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the Roanoke STP, Roanoke

26–29 Sep (m. obs.). A **Sanderling** was at Broadway 2–3 Sep (m. obs.). Single **Dunlin** were at Broadway 11 Sep (CM) and 9 Nov (DH), the Roanoke STP, Roanoke 28 Oct–13 Nov (m. obs.), and at Maurertown, *Shenandoah* 5 Nov (SH). **Baird's Sandpiper** reports included one each at the Roanoke STP, Roanoke 14 Aug (KD); in *Page* 23–29 Aug then 6–8 Sep (m. obs.); and at Broadway 9–12 Sep (m. obs.). There was a **White-rumped Sandpiper** in *Page* 23 Aug, one at the Roanoke STP, Roanoke 30 Aug (m. obs.), and 3 at Broadway 31 Aug (DH). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was photographed at Roanoke STP, Roanoke 22 Oct (KD) and one was at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 23 Oct (AL). A well-documented **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** was at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 24–31 Oct (m. obs.). Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** found at Broadway 3–11 Sep (m. obs.) overlapped with one in *Page* 3 (JF), 4 (DH) & 6 Sep (JF).

TERNS–WARBLERS

Two to 3 **Caspian Terns** were found at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 22–24 Aug (GH), one at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 23 Aug (JF, DG, EG), and 2 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 25 Sep (MM). A **Black Tern** at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 7 Aug (MM) preceded 23 there 19 Aug (LA) and one at Broadway 28 Aug (CT). There were 3 **Forster's Terns** at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 7 Aug; 2 were there (MM) and 2 were at Whitethorne, *Montgomery* 24 Aug (PL), and one was at Hiwassee, *Pulaski* 1 Sep (MM). **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** reports were one along the Maury River, *Rockbridge* 3–10 Aug, with 2 found 7 & 10 Aug (m. obs.); one at the BRPW Buena Vista Overlook, *Rockbridge* 8 Aug (MS); and one at the Harvey's Knob Hawkwatch, *Botetourt* 22 Aug (LA). **Northern Goshawk** observations included one at Smith L., *Augusta* 27 Oct (VL) and singles at the RGHW 4 (ES, TS) & 16 Nov (VL). **Mississippi Kite** observations were all at RGHW: two 18 Aug (VL et al.); two 19 Aug (BB, HH, ES); one 6 Sep (JPY); and one 17 Sep (VL). Single **SWAINSON'S HAWKS** were recorded at the RGHW 1 (BT) & 29 Nov (VL, GMa), respectively. **Olive-sided Flycatcher** finds included one in *Warren* 10 Aug (JF); one at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 22 Aug (GM); one in *Frederick* 26 Aug (GR, DY); and one in *Botetourt* 9 Sep (JP). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was at Swoope, *Augusta* 26 Aug (HH), and one was in Blacksburg 27 Sep (LA). Single **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found in *Shenandoah* 1 Sep (DH), at Swoope, *Augusta* 3 (DC) & 30 Nov (AL, VL, GMa), and at Blandy 11 (EM, LM, KW) & 15 Nov (DCr). Peak **Purple Martin** counts at the roost in Winchester were 6000 on 9 Aug

and 6500 on 16 Aug (BL, JL). **Brown-headed Nuthatch** records were 3 at Murray Run Greenway, Roanoke 11 Aug (MB), 3 at Dunsmore Rd., Roanoke 18 Aug (OH), 3 in Dublin, *Pulaski* 1 Nov (DS), 3 at Whispering Pines Pk., Roanoke 24 Nov (NR) and two 29 Nov (KD). Three **Sedge Wrens** were observed in Blacksburg 28 Sep (RM).



Ryan Mays photographed this Sedge Wren in Blacksburg 28 Sep.

Among the small number of **Marsh Wren** sightings in the Region were two 28 Sep, three 12 Oct, and one 28 Oct, all in Blacksburg (RM). **American Pipit** finds included twenty 9 Nov (PL) and forty (DW) 10 Nov in *Montgomery*; 45 in *Augusta* 30 Nov (VL, GMa); and several reports of 20–35 at Blandy throughout Nov (m. obs.). **Pine Siskin** detections were few a far between, mostly of single birds. The exception was 12 at the RGHW 2 Nov (VL). A **Lark Sparrow** was observed at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 17 Sep (m. obs.); another was at the RGHW 3 Oct (BT) for a third fall record in *Augusta*, and one was at Blandy 11–26 Nov (m. obs.). A **NELSON'S SPARROW** was photographed in Blacksburg 12 Oct (RM).



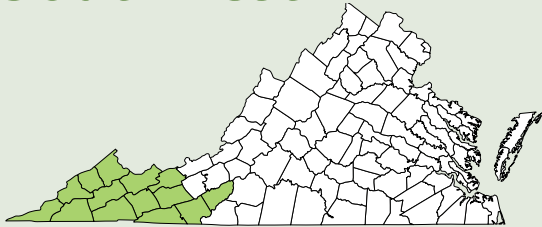
This Nelson's Sparrow was photographed by Ryan Mays in Blacksburg 12 Oct

Rusty Blackbird counts included 45 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 22 Oct (GR); 28 at Whitethorne, *Montgomery* 9 Nov (RM); 12 near Strasburg, *Shenandoah* 16 Nov (RB); and 30 at Claytor L. SP, *Pulaski* 24 Nov (GH). Single **Golden-winged Warblers** were near Singers Glen, *Rockingham* 22 Aug (HH), at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 6 Sep (DB), at Pandapas Pond, *Montgomery* 15 Sep (m. obs.), and at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 27 Sep (GM). A **Blue-winged Warbler** was found at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 24 Aug (WL), and one was near Harvey's Knob, *Botetourt* 10 Sep (AD, KD).

Contributors: Bill Akers, Logan Anderson, Mary Barritt, Baxter Beamer, Ricki Bennett, Stan Bentley, David Carr (DCr), David Clark, Ethan Davis, Kent Davis, A. Downing,

Bob Epperson, James Fox, Doug Graham, Eric Graham, Mark Harris, Greg Hays, Stanley Heatwole, Olivia Hill, Stacey Hollis, Diane Holsinger, Huck Hutchens, Clyde Kessler, Barry Kinzie, Allen Larner, Victor Laubach, Phil Lehman, William Leigh, Diane Lepkowski, Eli Lianez, Ira Lianez, BJ Little, Jon Little, Gabriel Mapel (GMa), Ryan Mays, Laura McDonald, Clair Mellinger, Elton Morel, Alan Moss, Greg Moyers, Mark Mullins, Janet Paisley (JPY), John Pancake, William Parkin, Doug Pfeiffer, Nick Ramsey, Benjamin Ricketts, Gabriel Ricketts, Noah Ricketts (NRi), David Shoch, Ezra Staengl, Theo Staengl, Mike Stinson, Brenda Tekin, Cory Taylor, Jerry Via, Doug Weidemann, Katherine Wychulis, David Youngblood.

Southwest



Editor: James Fox
75 Aspen Ln
Front Royal, VA 22630
jmsfox@gmail.com

Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe counties; the cities/towns of Abingdon, Bristol, Galax, Norton, and Tazewell

In sharp contrast to last fall, this fall was unusually dry, with most of the Region experiencing mild drought conditions at some point. This seemed to lead to a bit slower of a migration season than normal, with some species perhaps taking advantage of the nice weather to fly over the Region without stopping.

Abbreviations: BIP (Breaks Interstate Park, *Dickenson*); Whitetop (Whitetop Mt., *Grayson*)

WATERFOWL-COOT

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** 30 Nov at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* (fide TH, ph. BH) was a first eBird record for the county and possibly the first fall record for the Region. High counts of ducks at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* included 23 **Blue-winged Teal** and 45 **Green-winged Teal** 8 Oct (JP), 17 **Common Mergansers** 23 Nov (CD), and 12 **American Wigeons** and 35 **Ruddy Ducks** 24 Nov (JP). The first 2 **Redheads** of the fall arrived there Nov 2. Ruddy Ducks outside of *Tazewell* were at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 20 Oct (DO), BIP 8 Nov (DR), and at Clear

Creek Golf Club, Bristol 16 Nov (DO, RM). A **Horned Grebe** was present at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 8, 23, & 24 Nov (JP, CD). Seven **Eurasian Collared-Doves** near Ivanhoe, *Wythe* 24 Sep (ph. PE) provided more evidence a new population is becoming established in that area. There were also reports from traditional locations near Meadowview, *Washington* 20 Aug (EO) and near Rose Hill, *Lee* (LG). A flock of 310 **American Coots** at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 1 Nov was a good count.



Barry Hudgins photographed this Greater White-fronted Goose at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 30 Nov.



This m. Hooded Merganser was displaying at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 23 Nov. Photo by Clancey Deel

SHOREBIRDS-OWLS

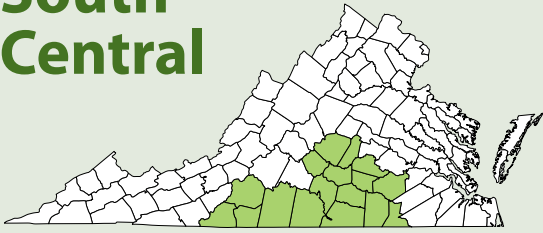
For the second straight fall **American Avocets** appeared in the Region, with 4 at Cavitt's Creek Pk., *Tazewell* 23 Aug (ph. M&JA) and 5 at Hidden Valley WMA, *Washington* 15 Sep (MD). Three **Least Sandpipers** were at Laurel Bed L., *Russell* 20 Aug (EO) and singles were at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 31 Aug (ph. DS) and Saltville, *Smyth* 8 Sep (ph. CD). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at Saltville, *Smyth* 19 Aug (EO). The Saltville, *Smyth* **Virginia Rails** continued through at least 8 Sep (CD) with up to 2 there 19 Aug (EO). At least one **Sora** continued at Gose Mill Pond, *Tazewell* though 15 Sep (DS). A single **Black Tern**, the first in the Region away from S. Holston L. in several years, was seen at Gose Mill Pond, *Tazewell* 22 Aug (CD, ph. DS). A surprisingly early **Golden Eagle** was photographed at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 24 Aug (CD, ph. DS). More expected for the time of year was one at the East River Mt. Overlook, on the WV/*Bland*, VA line 10 Oct (JP). The only good count of **Broad-winged Hawks** in the Region came from the East River Mt. Overlook, on the WV/*Bland*, VA line, where there were 111 reported 19 Sep (JP). The first **Rough-legged Hawk** arrived on 30 Nov at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* (DS). The only **Merlin** for the Region was spotted at Grayson Highlands SP, *Grayson* 4 Oct (ES, TS). **Peregrine Falcon** reports came from Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 28 Sep (ph. RM) and near BIP 26 Oct (DR, DO, ph. RM). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were reported at Beartree Campground, *Washington* 12 Oct (JL) and Whitetop 16 Nov (v.r. m. obs.).

SHRIKES-WARBLEDERS

Loggerhead Shrike reports came from Atkins, *Smyth* 3 & 11 Aug (CC), south of Rose Hill, *Lee* (D&JK) and one at Hensley Farm, *Lee* 11 Nov (LG). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports were limited to more mountainous areas where the species probably breeds. **Purple Finches** were scarce this fall, with the only reports from Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 18 Oct and 4 Nov (RM) and Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 27 Oct (DS). **Red Crossbills** continued to be reported around Whitetop throughout the period, with a high count of 10 on 17 Nov (m. obs.). Three were also reported a few miles away near Skull's Gap, *Smyth* 1 Aug (CC). Although there was not as good of a movement of **Pine Siskins** as last year, there were 10 on 22 Sep near Whitetop (CC) and a few other reports after that. Single **Lincoln's Sparrows** this fall were at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 1-2 Oct (RM) and near BIP 26 Oct (DR, DO, RM). A late f. **Baltimore Oriole** was at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 25 Oct (ph. RM). The only migrant **Golden-winged Warbler** was one in the Fairwood Valley, *Grayson* 20 Sep (AB). Two **Black-throated-Blue Warblers** at Devil's Den NP, *Carroll* 18 Oct (CJ) were a bit late.

Contributors: Michael & Judy Altizer, Logan Anderson, Allen Boynton, Cade Campbell, Clancy Deel, Michelle Duffour, Patty Elton, Leon Graber, Ron Harrington, Tanya Hall, Eric Harrold, Steven Hopp, Barry Hudgins, Cassandra Johnson, David & Jill Kaminski, Jason Love, Roger Mayhorn, Ellison Orcutt, Daryl Owens, Jim Phillips, Ashley Peele, David Raines, Andrew Rapp, David Schlabach, Ty Smith, Evan Spears.

South Central



Editor: C. Michael Stinson

437 Wildflower Lane

Dillwyn, VA 23936

myrmecocichla@gmail.com

Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Greenville, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward counties; the cities/towns of Colonial Heights, Danville, Emporia, Martinsville, Petersburg, and South Boston

Waterfowl numbers were low this fall, while shorebird reports were modest but not completely disappointing, especially given the Region's relative lack of habitat. A few expected shorebird species such as Least Sandpiper and both yellowlegs were noted at expected sites and are not discussed in the report below. Perhaps the most noteworthy birds this season were the 3 Wood Storks that visited *Prince Edward* for a few days in September, providing a first county record. Laughing Gulls appeared in several spots, perhaps enough that the scattering of reports from recent years could now be accurately labeled a trend. Only a few reports of unusual songbirds were submitted.

Abbreviations: Kerr (John H. Kerr Reservoir, *Mecklenburg* [lower lake], *Charlotte*, and *Halifax* [upper lake]); Staunton View (Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Duck numbers were anemic at best this season. For example, other than a few reports from Kerr, a single **American Wigeon** at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward* 9 (ADw, KD) and 18 Nov (ES) was the only report, and the only **Northern Pintail** was one at Staunton View 3 Nov (ADn). Meanwhile, among divers, **Redheads** and **Canvasbacks** were not reported at all, the only **Lesser Scaup** was one on lower Kerr, *Mecklenburg* 30 Nov (ADn, PG), and the only **Common Goldeneye** was a f. at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward* 18–29 Nov (ES). Scoters as well as **Common** and **Red-breasted Mergansers** were also unreported this season. The only **American Coot** was a bird at Piedmont Geriatric Hospital, *Nottoway* 16 (LR, JS)–18 Nov (ES). A single **American Avocet** first noted 21 Sep at Staunton View (PG) was seen several times through 28 Sep (PG), and the same or another was seen there 2–3 Nov (m. obs.). Two **American Golden-Plovers** found 3 Sep were viewed from both Staunton View (*Mecklenburg*) and Staunton R. SP, *Halifax*, and were joined by a third 5–7 Sept (m. obs.),



American Avocet at the Staunton R. mudflats, *Halifax* 3 Nov. Photo by Adam D'Onofrio



American Golden-Plover at the Staunton R. mudflats, *Halifax* 3 Nov. Photo by Adam D'Onofrio



Ruddy Turnstone at the Staunton R. mudflats, Halifax 7 Sep. Photo by Adam D’Onofrio

while 2 remained until 15 Sep (PG). One was again at Staunton View 2 (PG)–4 (m. obs.) Nov; together with the Sep birds these were the only Regional reports. A single **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was at Staunton View 1 Sep (JB, ADn, PG), the only report, and the only **Pectoral Sandpiper** noted away from upper Kerr, where there were several in Aug and Sep, was one at a farm pond in w. *Prince Edward* 27 Aug (ES).

GULLS–FALCONS

Laughing Gulls have historically been scarce in the Region but this season were seen in *Nottoway* at a landfill n. of Blackstone 12 Aug (ph. LA), at Ft. Pickett Res. 29 Aug (TS), in *Lunenburg* flying over a private farm nw. of Victoria 6 Sep (TS), as well as on several dates over upper and lower Kerr. Away from Kerr, the only **Caspian Tern** was at Wilck’s L., *Prince Edward* 12 Sep (ph. WR). Multiple **Forster’s Tern** reports came from Kerr, but otherwise the only one was at Holliday L. SP 30 Sep, seen in both *Appomattox* and *Buckingham* (ES). A single **Red-throated Loon** first noted above the dam at Kerr 5 Sep (NN) lingered through the season. Three **WOOD STORKS** appeared 12 Sep at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward* (ph. ES) and were subsequently seen at various spots around the lake through 14 Sep (m. obs.). This was the first record for *Prince Edward* and one of few for the s. Piedmont. One **Anhinga** was at Fort Pickett Res., *Brunswick* 14 Aug (LA, TS, ES); although Anhingas are occasionally seen in the far se. portion of the Region, this is not an expected location for the species. Four **Black-crowned Night-Herons** (2 ad. and 2 imm.) on the *Charlotte* side of upper Kerr 4 Nov (AD, PG) were the only ones reported; the observers noted that the species had been seen at the same location in

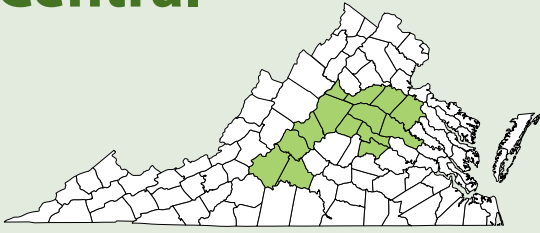
2018. While the s. Piedmont is not generally thought of as offering great hawkwatching, efforts here have occasionally yielded good results. This year, 211 **Broad-winged Hawks** were counted over Candler Mountain on the Lynchburg / *Campbell* border 20 Sep (WC), followed by 125 the next day (AC, WC) and 97 on 22 Sep (WC), this season’s raptor migration highlights. **Barn Owls** are scarce in the Region, so the report of one from the *Charlotte* portion of Staunton R. Battlefield SP 4 Nov (ADw, KD) was welcome. A **Short-eared Owl**, rarely reported anywhere in the Region, was at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward*, 14 (ES) & 26 (TS) Nov. The species had been seen at this location once previously, in Nov 2015. A single **Peregrine Falcon** was seen over lower Kerr on 6 Sep (PG) and 24 Sep (BE, MH), the only reports.

WRENS–WARBLERS

The only **Marsh Wren** was an individual at Holliday L. SP 15 Sep (ph. ES), a first for the park and perhaps for all of *Appomattox*. Regarding “winter finches,” no **Purple Finches** were reported this season, while 2 **Pine Siskins** at a feeder in South Boston 6 Oct (JB) were the earliest report, and one of very few all fall. Two **Lincoln’s Sparrows** were at James R. SP, *Buckingham* 10 Oct (ph. ES), and one relocated 11 Oct (KL), the only reports for this scarce migrant. Warbler reports seemed scant for some common species, while among the less expected species, a single **Cerulean Warbler**, a scarce migrant in the Region either spring or fall, was at Holliday L. SP, *Appomattox* 21 Sep (MA), and the only **Bay-breasted Warbler** was one at Hogan Cr. WMA, *Charlotte* 28 Sept (PG).

Contributors: Logan Anderson, Matt Anthony, Jeff Blalock, Wes Carr, Andy Clarke, Kent Davis, A. Downing (ADw), Adam D’Onofrio (ADn), Bob Epperson, Paul Glass, Matthew Hosmer, Kathy Louthan, Nick Newberry, Lisa Rose, Ty Smith, Evan Spears, Jason Strickland

Central



Editor: Baxter Beamer

2645 Jefferson Park Circle
Charlottesville, VA 22903
barobe09@gmail.com

Albemarle, Amherst, Bedford, Campbell, Caroline, Fluvanna, Goochland, Greene, Hanover, Louisa, Nelson, Orange, Powhatan, and Spotsylvania counties; the cities of Bedford, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, and Lynchburg

This fall was punctuated by a diverse array of species including an impressive assortment of rarities. The beginning of the period was unseasonably warm and dry, a trend that continued until strong cold fronts arrived in late October and November. The dry conditions were not favorable for shorebird and waterfowl fallouts, but large flocks of geese around the Fredericksburg area produced several notable records. The eastern part of the Region held good numbers of post-breeding herons and egrets, but ibis were less widespread than in previous years. A bumper cone crop in the northern states and Canada kept irruptive boreal passerines out of the Region but other passerines kept birders very busy. Sparrow and warbler diversity were very good overall, with above average occurrences of several rare species. Highlight species included Greater White-fronted Goose, Brant, Rufous Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird (probable), Limpkin, Cattle Egret, Swallow-tailed Kite, Clay-colored Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, and Connecticut Warbler.

Abbreviations: Sportsplex (Spotsylvania Sportsplex and adjacent ponds, *Spotsylvania*); SMLSP (Smith Mountain Lake State Park, *Bedford*)

GEESE-HUMMINGBIRDS

The only **Snow Goose** reported this period was an imm. associating with a **Canada Goose** flock in the vicinity of Sportsplex 3 Nov through the end of the period (MO, ph. m. obs.). **Greater White-fronted Geese** also joined the flock at Sportsplex; one was first noted there 15 Nov (MO) with a peak count of 3 on 22 Nov (ph. EO) and at least 2 continuing until 23 Nov. Extremely rare in the Region, an imm. **Brant** closely associated with the aforementioned Snow Goose at Sportsplex 3 (ph. MO, m. obs.) through 23 Nov. Given the close proximity of these species on the breeding grounds, it seems plausible that these two geese migrated together on the way to coastal

wintering areas. Although reports of **Cackling Geese** were restricted to only two locations, they produced notably high counts, with up to 15 at Sportsplex 18 Nov (ph. BB) and 14 at Hope of Glory Farm, *Fluvanna* 30 Nov (ph. TB, ST). Recorded less than annually in the Region on fall migration, a lone **Long-tailed Duck** was at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 16 Nov (ph. KK). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was very late at Greenbrier Pk., Charlottesville 1 & 2 Nov (ph. CF, TB, BB, DC, ESt, TSt). A **Rufous Hummingbird** was once again banded at Foster's Branch Rd, *Albemarle* and continued there 9 Nov through the end of the period (ph. CC, m. obs.) Interestingly, this was a different individual than the one banded at this location last fall.



This Rufous Hummingbird was photographed 9 Nov by Charlotte Clements at Foster's Branch Rd., *Albemarle*. To continue the trend of hummingbirds at Foster's Branch Rd., a probable imm. male **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** was present 12–15 Nov (ph. CC) but unfortunately departed before banding could confirm the identification,

likely driven off by competition with the aforementioned Rufous Hummingbird. Based on the photos, bander Bruce Peterjon noted that a hybrid Anna's × Calliope (at least 3 records from the eastern U.S., 2 the same individual) could not be conclusively eliminated.



This probable Anna's Hummingbird was documented at Foster's Branch Rd., *Albemarle* 12 Nov by Charlotte Clements.

RAILS-IBIS

There were two reports of **Virginia Rail**, both at the latter end of this species' migration window. One showed well at Galt's Mill Wetland, *Amherst* 20–29 Oct (ph. MB, m. obs.), and another at James R. State WMA, *Nelson* 3 Nov (IL, ESt, TSt).



A Virginia Rail at Galt's Mill Wetland, *Amherst* 20 Oct
Photo by Mike Boatwright

Conversely, the only **Sora** reported was at King Family Vineyards, *Albemarle* 22 Aug (PM), on the early side for this species. A **LIMPKIN** was discovered at Totier Cr. Pk., *Albemarle* 2 Nov (ph. KD) and was relocated there 11 Nov (ph. TB CF, m. obs.), representing the first Regional record of this species and, chronologically the 4th for the state [see North Region report-Eds.]. This record follows a largely unprecedented irruption of this species across eastern states, possibly a result of population booms of invasive apple snails, a key food source of Limpkin in their home range.



Martinia Nordstrand's Limpkin photo taken at Totier Cr. Pk., *Albemarle* 11 Nov

Scarce migrants through the Region, there were 2 reports of **Black Tern**; one was at Mill Cr. L. Pk., *Amherst* 27 Aug (AD, KD, DG) and 2 were at SMLSP 6 Sep (BE). Ten **Common Loons** was a high count of this generally uncommon fall migrant at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 30 Nov (ph. TB, ST). **SNOWY EGRETS** continued from the summer period at previously reported locations: one was at Reusen's Dam, Lynchburg 1 thru 27 Aug (ph. LA, m. obs.), and up to 4 were at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 1–25 Aug (ph. m. obs.). **Little Blue Herons** were reported at 4 locations: up to 4 were at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 1–27 Aug (ph. m. obs.), 3 at Sportsplex 4–25 Aug (ph. JF, m. obs.), one at Bellair Farm, *Albemarle* 25 Aug (ph. BB, TB, DC, PM, DS, m. obs.). A **TRICOLORED HERON** was also at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 1–16 Aug (ph. m. obs.) To top off the small heron grouping at Chamberlayne, a **Cattle Egret** was discovered there 6 Aug (ph. BB, MNor) and continued there through 27 Aug. A **Green Heron** was very late at L. Vista Forest, *Bedford* 18 Nov (ML). There were several **White Ibis** reports, although not quite to the degree of the other waders. One was at Sportsplex 10 Aug (LR, JS), another 22–25 Aug at Stillfred's Pond, *Albemarle*

(ph. BB, TB, m. obs.) and 3 at Bellair Farm, *Albemarle* 25 Aug (ph. BB, TB, DC, PM, DS).

KITES-CHAT

A very rare summer and early fall visitor, a **Swallow-tailed Kite** frequented the Thornburg area, *Spotsylvania* 9 & 17 Aug (EA, TH). Rare but increasing, a **Mississippi Kite** was observed migrating over Bland Wade Ln., *Nelson* 21 Aug (ph. TSt). A lone **Short-eared Owl** was observed at the species' usual wintering site at Green Springs, *Louisa* 26 Nov (TSm, ESp). There were 2 **Olive-sided Flycatcher** reports, both from the Blue Ridge Parkway. One was at Trayfoot Mt., *Albemarle* 24 Aug (JG), and one on the late end 1 Oct at Highcock Knob, *Bedford* (BE). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** is another scarce flycatcher in the Region and 2 were also reported: one at Highcock Knob, *Bedford* 8 Sep (BE, MJ) and another at Pocosin Cabin, *Greene* 22 Sep (DL, GM). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** did not have a significant irruption this year, with only 5 reports from the Region this fall. Generally scarce, **Marsh Wrens** were widespread with reports of up to 10 different individuals across *Albemarle*, *Amherst*, *Bedford*, *Charlottesville*, *Fluvanna*, and *Nelson*. As with Red-breasted Nuthatches, there was no flight of northern finches this fall, with only one **Pine Siskin** report and less than 10 **Purple Finch** reports. A rare fall migrant in the Region, there were two sightings of single **Clay-colored Sparrows**, both at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 21 Oct and 1 Nov (ph. TB, CF). It is certainly possible the two sightings represented the same individual. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was markedly late at Pleasant Grove Pk., *Fluvanna* 23 Oct (ph. GG).

WARBLERS

Steadily declining across its eastern range and now a rarity in the Region, a total of 3 **Golden-winged Warbler** reports was notable. Two came from Pocosin Cabin, *Greene*, 31 Aug (DL) and 22 Sep (ph. DL, GM), and the last was at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 30 Sep (ph. TB). There were two reports of early **Orange-crowned Warblers**, one at Peaks of Otter Recreation Area, *Bedford* 14 Sep (BE, m. obs.) and another at Salt Log Gap, *Amherst* 30 Sep (EO), possibly of one of the western ssp. Another at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 27 Oct (ph. TB, EL, IL) and 1 Nov were more expected. Usually uncommon and difficult to detect, there were an above average number of **Mourning Warbler** reports. Singles were encountered at Azalea Pk., *Charlottesville* 26 Aug (ph. TB, BB); at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 7 Sep (ph. TB, CF); L. Anna Millpond,

Louisa 8 Sep (ph. TH); at Three Ridges Overlook, *Nelson* 20 Sep (MB); at Pocosin Cabin, *Greene* 22 Sep (BB, TB, MN, CF, AH); Wolfpit Mt., *Albemarle* 25 Sep (MN); and at Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* 27 Sep (DC). All reports consisted of imm/f types. Even more furtive than Mourning, it was a good season for **Connecticut Warblers** as well. There were 3 different individuals alone detected at Three Ridges Overlook, *Nelson*, with an imm. 19 Sep (ph. MF), another imm. 6 Oct (ph. DC, BB) and an ad. m. there 7 Oct (MB). One was also at Peaks of Otter, *Bedford* 22 Sep (BE, MJ). A m. **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was rather late at the Monticello Trail, *Albemarle* 4 Nov (BM, TE), and it was accompanied by a more expected, yet still notably late **Blackpoll Warbler**. Keeping with the trend, a **Canada Warbler** was late at Bland Wade Ln., *Nelson* 8 Oct (ph. TSt).

Contributors: Eli Anders, Baxter Beamer, Tucker Beamer, Mike Boatwright, Drew Cheney, Charlotte Clements, Kit Decker, Kent Davis, A Downing, Bob Epperson, Toni Evans, Conor Farrell, Greg Goodson, Marshall Faintich, James Fox, Jennifer Gaden, Dick Grubb, Thomas Haycraft, Anja Hittinger, Tim Houghton, Mark Johnson, Kim Kozella, Ira Lianez, Diane Lepkowski, Margaret Lyons, Becky Marvil, Greg Moyers, Pete Myers, Mike O'Brien, Ellison Orcutt, Lisa Rose, David Shoch, Evan Spears (ESp), Jason Strickland, Ezra Staengl (ESt), Ty Smith (TSm), Theo Staengl (TSt), Shea Tiller

Southeast



Editor: Adam D'Onofrio

25118 Smith Grove Rd.

North Dinwiddie, VA 23803

bigadfromlb@comcast.net

Charles City, Chesterfield, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, New Kent, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, and York counties; the cities of Franklin, Hopewell, Richmond, and Williamsburg

Temperatures in August were near normal in September and October averaging about 4° F above normal. However, temperatures in November averaged 4° below normal. Drought conditions set in during the month of August and continued through the month of September. In fact, less than a half an inch of precipitation fell in September. The drought was relieved in October with precipitation averaging 1.7 inches above normal. This swung back the other way in November with precipitation levels averaging 1.4 inches below normal. Fall migration in the Region was somewhat lackluster with some early dates recorded for passerines but more late dates recorded, which has become the norm recently. Numbers seemed to be down as well, especially for migrating warblers. Some “good” shorebird sightings were made this season and not only at Hog Island. Rarities included Black-chinned Hummingbird, Brown Booby, and Brewer’s Blackbird.

Abbreviations: Ancarrow’s (Ancarrow’s Landing, Richmond); Crewes (Crewes Channel, *Henrico*); Curles Neck (Curles Neck Farm, *Henrico*); Dutch Gap/Henricus (Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Park, *Chesterfield*); Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*); Shirley (Shirley Plantation, *Charles City*); Swift Creek (Swift Creek Reservoir, *Chesterfield*)

GEESE–SHOREBIRDS

A single **Ross’s Goose** was photographed in the Brandon area of *Prince George* 19 & 25 Nov (ABr). Single **Cackling Geese** were noted in the Brandon area, *Prince George* 25 Nov (ABr) and at Westover Plantation, *Charles City* 30 Nov (ph. ABr). A nice count of 13 Cackling Geese was made at Curles Neck 17 Nov (RAS). Lingered **Blue-winged Teal** included 2 at Swift Creek 3 Nov (NN), 2 at Dutch Gap/Henricus 24 Nov (ph. TS), and a single bird that remained at Swan L./Shields L., Richmond until the end of the period (m.obs.). Two **Lesser Scaup** that summered

at Cheatham Annex, *York* (Restricted access) were still present 10 Aug (ph. H&RC); one was still there 1 Sep (H&RC). Two **Surf Scoters** were spotted on Swift Creek 16 Nov (EO, AB). A **Ruddy Duck**, possibly the same one seen earlier in the summer, was at Cheatham Annex, *York* (Restricted access) 10 Aug (ph. RC). The only report of **Black-billed Cuckoo** this season came from Little Creek Res., *James City* 5 Oct (TG). An ad. m. **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** photographed at a private residence in Queen’s L., *York* 20 Oct (MF) provided a first local record; it was present into the winter season.



Melissa Ferguson documented this male Black-chinned Hummingbird 20 Oct in Queens L., *York*, where it continued into February.

A *Selasphorus rufus/sasin* hummingbird was at Colonial Heritage, *James City* 25 Oct (ph., v.r. SD). A **Virginia Rail** was detected at Dutch Gap/Henricus 14 Nov (PB). **American Avocets** made their presence known at Hog this season with the first sighting of 4 birds in flight coming on 6 Aug (BB, MN). Other sightings included 8 birds 10 Aug (ph. AB, AD); one 11 Aug (NB, DC, JLow); two 28 (ph. AD) & 29 Aug (ph. JM); eight 10 Sep (TC); nine 11 Sep

(ph. MC, m.obs.); eight 14 (ph. NN, EA, CM) & 15 Sep (ph. CH, JM); four 17 Sep (ph. NB, ph. JF); five 18 Sep (SL); four 19 Sep (ADow); one 21 Sep (ph, EA); two 27 (AH, SS) & 29 Sep (EA, TCo), and 6 Oct (TC). The final report of the season was of 5 birds there 13 Oct (ph. NB). A single **American Golden-Plover** was at Riverside Turf Farm, *Charles City* 31 Aug (ph. NB). Singles were also noted there 1 (MC) & 5 Sep (AR); 2 were seen there 22 Sep (MB). A **Whimbrel**, rare inland, was seen at Felgate's Cr., *York* 21 Aug (NN, JS). A **Hudsonian Godwit** was a great find at Hog 22 Aug (TC), providing the seventh local record for this species. The bird was seen again the following day (ph. NB). **Red Knots** are rare inland, so three sightings this season was significant. The first was of 2 birds at Felgate's Cr., *York* 21 Aug (NN); one was at Hog 23 Aug (ph. NB) and another was at Hog 17 Sep (ph. NB, ph. JF). The last sighting represented the eighth local record and first Sep record. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** reports included up to 4 individuals at Riverside Turf Farm, *Charles City* 12–15 Sep (m.obs.) and a single bird at Sandybottom Turf Farm, *Charles City* 6 Sep (ph. NB). A juv. **Long-billed Dowitcher** was detected at Hog 2 Aug (ABa). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City* through 14 Oct, tying the local late date (ph. BW). A "**Western**" **Willet**, rare inland, was at Hog 12 Aug, establishing the eighth local record for this subspecies (ph. LA). A **Wilson's Phalarope**, also rare inland, was found at Hog 10 Sep (TC). Presumably the same bird was seen there amongst a group of yellowlegs the following day, 11 Sep (AD, PG). There were two sightings of a **Red-necked Phalarope** at Hog this season. The first one was spied 14 Aug (ph. IL) and the second was seen 17 Sep (ph. NB, ph. JF).

GULLS–GROSBEAKS

A "Thayer's" type **Iceland Gull** was carefully studied from the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge, Richmond 30 Nov (ph. EO, ph., v.r. AB). Early **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were noted at the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, *James City* 12 (BT) & 14 Sep (NN, CM). The former set a new local early date. A **Common Tern**, foraging among **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Curles Neck 17 Nov, was late (RAS). An amazing count, 4 **BROWN BOOBIES** were photographed in the Baltimore Channel, *York* 17 Aug (FS *vide* ESB). This sighting represented the third local record and also a state high count. A f. **Anhinga** was spotted at Harrison L., *Charles City* 6 Aug (ph. JAP). The same bird was seen again there 11 Aug (ph. AB). Further evidence

that breeding Anhingas have infiltrated the Region came in the form of 5 nests that were still active into Aug at Blackwater Swamp, *Prince George* (DB). Eleven **American White Pelicans** were spotted at Hog 13 Oct (ph. NB). A juv. **Least Bittern** was photographed at Hog 3 Aug (TC, TT), providing further evidence that the species breeds there. Three **Snowy Egrets** were counted at Crewes 9 Sep (JF); at least one lingered there until 30 Sep (BB, MNoo). An impressive count of 15 **Little Blue Herons** was made at Crewes 9 Sep (JF). A **Cattle Egret** was at Gospel Spreading Farm, *James City* 27 Nov, establishing a new local late date (BT). A late **Green Heron** was photographed at Swift Creek 18, 21, & 25 Nov (L<). A juv. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, *Henrico* 16 Aug (BG). **White Ibis** sightings, all imms., included one at Hog 18 Aug (ph. JM); one at Shirley 14 Sep (ph. JF); and one at Crewes 15 Sep (JW). A singing **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was off L. Powell Rd., *James City* 10 Aug (AM), furnishing a sixth local record. Likewise, a singing **Least Flycatcher** in Kingswood, *James City* 26 Sep (BT) was a seventh local record. Late vireo reports included a **White-eyed Vireo** at North Bank City Park, Richmond 1 Nov (MV) and a **Red-eyed Vireo** at a private residence in *Henrico* 9 Nov (MF). **Common Ravens** continued the species' march eastward. Two were spotted over McLaws Circle, *James City* 15 Oct (NN), providing the fourth local record. A **Brown Creeper** at Shady Bluff Pt., *James City* 14 Sep set a new local early date (LL). **Pine Siskins** were scarce this season, so 2 at the Jamestown Marina, *James City* 3 Nov was noteworthy (ph. JE). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was in Stonehouse, *James City* 12 Sep (ph. CA). This sighting accounted for the sixth local record but only the second fall record. A f. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** was at Carlton Farm, *James City* 21 & 22 Oct (ph. BW, ph. BT).

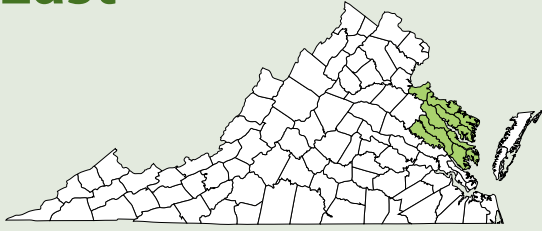


A female Brewer's Blackbird (left) with a f. Brown-headed Cowbird (right) at Carlton Farms, *James City* 22 Oct
Photo by Brian Taber

This was the seventh local record and first Oct record. Rarely seen in migration, a m. **Golden-winged Warbler** was a nice find at Ancarrow's 8 Sep (AB). An early **Orange-crowned Warbler** was noted at New Quarter Pk., *York* 15 Sep (JL, SM). Late **American Redstarts** included one at Yorktown Battlefield, *York* 24 Oct (ph. TS, ES, JS) and one at Rockwood Pk., *Chesterfield* 28 Oct (LS). A **Cape May Warbler** at Hog 19 Aug set a new local early date (NB). A **Magnolia Warbler** at the Maynard Dr. Power Line Cut, Williamsburg 1 Nov set a new local late date (NN). Another late Magnolia Warbler was seen at Pocahontas SP, *Chesterfield* 1 Nov (DJ). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was photographed in Kingswood, *James City* 10 Oct (BT), setting a new local late date. Also setting a new local late date was a **Prairie Warbler** spotted at Jamestown Beach Pk., *James City* 23 Oct (ph. BW). Late **Blue Grosbeaks** included one at Ancarrow's 27 Oct (AB, WF) and one at Jamestown Beach Pk., *James City* 3 & 5 Nov (ph. BW).

Contributors: Eric Alton, Logan Anderson, Carol Annis, Andrew Baldelli (ABa), Nancy Barnhart, Baxter Beamer, Paul Bedell, Arun Bose, Dana Bradshaw, Edward S. Brinkley, Allen Bryan (ABr), Mitchell Byrd, Drew Chaney, Mary Coker, Harry & Rochelle Colestock, Tamara Conklin (TCo), Terri Cuthriell, Shirley Devan, Adam D'Onofrio, A. Downing (ADow), James Easton, Michael Fahey, Melissa Ferguson, William Foster, Jan Frye, Paul Glass, Ben Griffon, Tori Gussman, Cindy Hamilton, Andy Hawkins, Deb Johnson, Les Lawrence, Ira Lianez, Stephen Living, Jan Lockwood, Joyce Lowry (JLow), Chris Monahan, June McDaniels, Alex Minarik, Sue Mutell, Nick Newberry, Max Nootbar (MNoo), Martina Nordstrand, Ellison Orcutt, Jo Ann Parks, Andrew Rapp, Richmond Audubon Society, Liz Scher, Fletcher Smith, Ty Smith, Evan Spears, Jason Strickland, Stuart Sweetman, Brian Taber, Tracy Tate, Lucia & Larry Tipton, Michael Vassalotti, James Winkelmann, Bill Williams.

East



Editors: **Adit Nehra**
2519 Glenlawn Place
Herndon, VA 20171
nehr.adit@outlook.com

Fred Atwood
Flint Hill School
10409 Academic Drive
fredatwood@yahoo.com

Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland counties

A total of 233 species was recorded this fall, higher than average and up by three from last autumn. Continuing a recent Regional trend, it was yet another banner year for shorebirds, with sightings of noteworthy species such as American Golden-Plover, American Avocet, Stilt Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope and both godwits. Twenty-four warbler species, the highlight being a single Blue-winged Warbler, were recorded this season, about average for the Region. Unlike last year, there was a very strong cone crop up north, evidenced by the lone Purple Finch and complete absence of both Red-breasted Nuthatch and Pine Siskin in the Region. Some waterfowl and winter sparrow numbers were low this year, perhaps due to the unseasonably warm fall weather to our north. This autumn brought in many notable rarities, ranging from Scissor-tailed Flycatcher to Common Gallinule. Data was sourced from the Virginia Birds listserv, eBird, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv), Middle Peninsula Bird Club Facebook page, and the CCB (Center for Conservation Biology) Waterbird Report.

Abbreviations: Beaverdam (Beaverdam Pk., *Gloucester*); Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Birthplace (George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, *Westmoreland*); Guinea (Guinea Marsh, *Gloucester*); Hughlett (Hughlett Pt. NAP, *Northumberland, Essex*); K.G. Ponds (private sand quarry ponds near the Rappahannock R., mostly along Rt. 3, *King George*); LaGrange (LaGrange Ln. near Sealston, *King George*); Leedstown (*Westmoreland*); New Pt. Comfort (New Pt. Comfort Preserve, *Mathews*); The Pocket (in Pamunkey Indian Reservation along the Pamunkey R., *King William*); Wilna (Rappahannock River Valley NWR--Wilna/Wright Unit, *Richmond*).

WATERFOWL-GALLINULE

The season's sole **Snow Goose** was found 23 Nov at K. G. Ponds (FA). Thirteen **Brant** stopping by New Pt. Comfort 23 Nov were the Region's first fall record in eBird (AR). Only 3 **Cackling Geese** were reported this fall, 2 at The Pocket 21 Nov (NB) and one at K. G. Ponds 23 Nov (FA). The season's high count of 3500 **Canada Geese** at The Pocket 21 Nov (NB) falls far short of the previous eBird Nov high (average 4338, max 5250), perhaps a sign of the late arrival of cold weather, or a continuation of the breeding struggles of this species mentioned in a previous report. Only 10 **Mute Swans** were reported from three locations this fall. At Beaverdam in 2008 and 2009 it was not uncommon to see 30 or 40 Mute Swans in the fall. But ever since 2010, Beaverdam's fall counts have been 10 or fewer, and usually less than 5. Due to the destructive nature of this invasive species, Virginia and many other states have adopted humane population control methods to reduce the species' negative impacts on our ecosystems. For the benefit of our native waterfowl, it seems like these strategies are working. Sixty **Tundra Swans** at Deep Pt. Boat Landing, *Gloucester* 15 Nov (JS) was far above the eBird's average November high count of 17. The high count of just 27 **Wood Ducks** at Wilna 19 Oct (JC, MC) was quite low for the autumn, when high counts can regularly be between 35 and 143. The season's high of 65 **Mallards** 9 Nov at Leedstown (FA) was the lowest weekly autumn high count in eBird and dwarfed by several previous fall counts ranging from 500 to 3482. Like the aforementioned Canada Goose, perhaps this scarcity can be attributed to the recent breeding troubles these ducks have experienced up north, or the late arrival of cold conditions this season. The 112 **Canvasbacks** found at LaGrange 24 Nov (HG, PG, AD) was a new eBird Regional high count for the fall season. Mid-November is always the best time to see large flocks of **Ring-necked Ducks** in this Region. LaGrange had one of its highest counts ever, 6700 on 23 Nov (FA), second only to the 8500 found in this location 19

Nov 2016 (BH). The second highest Pamunkey R. count of 1700 was also found at The Pocket 18 Nov (AB), surpassed only by a count of 2700 at The Pocket 27 Nov 2009 (FA). A total of 49 **Northern Bobwhites** was found at 17 locations in eight counties, with a high count of 12 in Leedstown 9 Nov (FA). This comes as fantastic news for the declining species compared to last year's 26 individuals across 20 locations. Setting a new autumn Regional high by ten, 40 **Horned Grebes** were seen off Canoe House Public Beach, *Middlesex* 21 Nov (MC,JC). After setting the Region's first seasonal record last fall, a **Black-billed Cuckoo** was back in the Region at Etta Ln. 29 Sep (JD) to set the first fall record for *Northumberland*. A **Common Nighthawk** in *Gloucester* 21 Oct was a new late date in eBird for the fall season (JS). The second fall eBird records of **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were noted this year at the same location in *Essex* where the species was heard in Aug 2017; one 10 Aug and 3 on 21 Aug (JC,MC). As birders explore more of the underbirded areas in this Region, new things are being discovered about the distribution of birds here. For example, the third and fourth *Middlesex* records of **Clapper Rails** were documented at new locations: Parrott Is. 19 Oct (JF, NN) and Deltaville Yachting Center 24 Oct (KB). Prior to 2015, Beaverdam was a haven for **American Coots** in the fall, with eleven counts ranging from 1000–2500 between 2011 and 2014. But since 2016, the highest fall count has been 163. This year the high count was 150 on 17 Nov (JB). The overall high count for the species this year was 575 at The Pocket 18 Nov (AB). A **Common Gallinule** photographed in Walkerton, *King and Queen* (FA) marked the Region's third fall record. This is the same location a bird was observed in Feb 2019, so one wonders if perhaps this bird was also present undetected during the breeding season.

SHOREBIRDS-SKIMMER

An **American Avocet** photographed at K.G. Ponds 9 Sep (ph. FA, ph. AN, LS, AC) was the third eBird record of the species in *King George*. A second American Avocet was at Bethel 4 Nov (JC,MC). An **American Golden-Plover** was also reported on the same eBird checklist, a scarce transient in the Region (ph. AN). **Killdeer** were surprisingly hard to come by this year. This season's high of 56 at Woodbury Rd. Sod Farm, *King William* 22 Sep (FA) was outclassed by past highs up to 480. Until this year there have been only three eBird reports of **Whimbrels**, all from Bethel or New Pt. Comfort. But on 3 Aug, 6 were found at Bethel (MS), where single birds were also found 4 Aug (LR, JS) and 7 Sep (JSh). Marking the fourth all-time Regional

record, a **Hudsonian Godwit** was seen at K.G. Ponds on both 9 and 23 Nov, possibly the same bird. On the ninth it successfully eluded a **Peregrine Falcon** with some nifty aerial maneuvers (m. obs). Interestingly enough, the three other Regional sightings have all been at this location. *Westmoreland's* first **Marbled Godwit** also marked the third eBird record of this species in the Northern Neck. The bird was photographed at Shark Tooth Is. 4 Aug (JF).



James Fox photographed this Marbled Godwit on Sharktooth Is., *Westmoreland* 4 Aug.

Another Marbled Godwit continued for over a week at Bethel from 31 Jul to 6 Aug (m. obs.), the second *Mathews* record. A **Red Knot** was seen in flight at Bethel 24 Sep (FA). Although nearly annual at this location, two **Stilt Sandpipers** were still a nice find at K.G. Ponds 28 Sep (FA). A first county record **Western Sandpiper** was a great find at Parrott Is., *Middlesex* 19 Oct (JF, NN). Another at Hughlett 26 Aug (KK, ph. RM) was the second *Northumberland* record and fourth eBird record for the Northern Neck. Two more birds were seen on 25 Aug and 1 Sep at Bethel, where for the last few years the species has been found annually. A **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** photographed at K.G. Ponds 7 Sep (FA) was the first county record and second all-time Regional record of this species in eBird. This was exactly a year after the first record was found in *Westmoreland* by the same observer. Setting a new Regional late date by over two weeks, a **Spotted Sandpiper** was a nice find at West Pt., *King William* 29 Nov (AB). This year's high count of 2160 **Laughing Gulls** at K. G. ponds 23 Nov (FA) had been exceeded 16 times at this location, with the highest being 9250 on 14 Nov 2009 (FA). This appears to be further evidence of the dramatic decline of this species in the last decade as described in the Center for Conservation Biology

(CCB) waterbird report. More than doubling the previous Regional high of 11, an amazing 23 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were counted at North Pt., *Lancaster* 19 Oct (JF, NN). Once a vagrant in the state, the species has been steadily increasing over the last few decades. The second all-time Regional record in eBird of **Gull-billed Tern**, at Bethel 24 Aug (ph. FA) comes four years after 2 were seen at the same spot by the same observer 29 Aug 2015. Single **Black Terns** at Bethel 25 Aug (AB) and 5 Sep (JC, MC) were the first eBird records for *Mathews*. Yet another county first, a **SANDWICH TERN** in West Pt., *King William* 24 Aug (FA) was also the furthest inland the species has ever been seen in the Region. Two **Black Skimmers** which lingered at Bethel from 25 Aug (AB) to 7 Sep (ph. HC, RC, JSh) were the first fall record since 2017.

LOONS-IBISES

Loons were once again scarce this year. Despite being up from last year's count of a mere 2 all season, the 5 **Red-throated Loons** seen this year was not much of an improvement. These counts are dwarfed by past highs up to 550. With past highs all the way up to 250, a mere 11 **Common Loons** at Canoe House Public Beach, *Middlesex* 21 Nov (MC, JC) was very low for the season's high count. For the second year in a row it was a poor fall for **Northern Gannets**, yet another sparse seabird. The total of 34 birds observed at six locations, although up from last year's 2 at two locations, is still eclipsed by past counts exceeding 300. A flock of up to 11 **American White Pelicans** at Sharktooth Is. near Currioman Bay, *Westmoreland* 4–12 Aug (JF, MG) may have been part of the group of 12–14 seen here 13 July (BH, SB). The species seems to frequent this location, as a flock of 10 was also here 14 Apr 2017 (DG, EG). As the breeding population of **Brown Pelicans** in the Coastal Region continues to grow, the species is being reported in greater numbers each year in the East Region. This fall, four of the 76 reports exceeded 90 individuals, and the high of 193 in Reedsville, *Northumberland* 3 Nov (KKo) was the second highest Regional count in eBird. Prior to 2010 the high count was 67. Most reports of this species are from the

Chesapeake Bay shore and near the mouths of major rivers, but 19 were found far upriver at the Rte. 360 bridge over the Rappahannock R. in Tappahannock, *Essex* 26 Nov (JC, MC) where previously there had been only a single eBird report of one bird. Both bitterns were recorded this season, a rare occurrence for the East Region. An **American Bittern** continued at New Pt. Comfort from 13 to 14 Oct (TD, KL, NN) and the Region's first fall **Least Bittern** was seen in flight along Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* 9 Sep (MC, JC). Both large herons were relatively few and far between this fall. **Great Blue Herons** topped out at a high of 20, quite low for a high compared to past years. Only one other count reached double digits. As noted by the CCB, colonies have continued to fragment and the species is becoming more widespread with more small colonies in contrast to the historic pattern of few large colonies. As noted in the spring, at least one historical rookery in *Essex* was abandoned this year. A high of 20 was recorded for **Great Egrets** as well, also low in comparison to past years. According to the CCB, after a short population rebound in 2013 egrets experienced a steep decline from 2013 to 2018. It was great to see higher numbers of **Snowy Egrets** than usual this fall, perhaps the sign of a comeback of the birds in the state, or at least in the East Region. A total of 25 were reported from eight sites, mostly in marshes along the Chesapeake shore. The CCB waterbird report states that after a steep plummet from an estimated statewide breeding population numbering over 2300 in 1993, the population seems to have since stabilized at around 900.



These American White Pelicans were on Sharktooth Is., *Westmoreland* 4 August. Photo by James Fox

An annual autumnal visitor, one imm. **Little Blue Heron** was spotted along Old Garden Creek Rd., *Mathews* 2 Aug (HC, RC). Twelve **Tricolored Herons**, an uncommon breeder in the Region, were seen at five locations this year. Like other mid-sized waders, this species is vulnerable

to ongoing habitat changes in the area. **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were strongly represented by 20 birds sighted in eight locations this season, with a high count of 5 at Rosewell Dr., *Gloucester* 11 Sep (HC). In some years, none have been reported. Not a single **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was recorded all fall. A fine example of a southern wader encroaching further north each year, 4 **White Ibis** were recorded in three locations this fall. In some past years, the species has been missed altogether, but it has now become an annual visitor. The fourth fall record for this Region, a **Glossy Ibis** was photographed in flight at Guinea 17 Aug (JS).

KITE-BUNTING

This year, for the first time ever **Mississippi Kites** were confirmed breeding in the East Region. The four birds represented the first *Gloucester* and second Middle Peninsula record. They hung around a neighborhood throughout the month of August with sightings from 31 Jul to 1 Sep. The adults were observed feeding young out of the nest on 15 Aug (JS), confirming a successful nesting season. This record is quite overdue, as these birds have been steadily pushing north in recent years, and are well-known in the state for their recently established breeding population in Northern Virginia. A **Barn Owl** heard along Fickle Fen Rd., *Mathews* 1 Oct (MS) was only the second seasonal eBird record in the Region, and the fifth for the entire Middle Peninsula. This is hard to explain when taking into account the highly agricultural landscape in this part of the state. According to CCB this species has been in a 60-year decline. "None of the nesting sites in the Coastal Plain known ... during the 1980s are still active today. As recently as the 1990s, barn owls nested in offshore duck blinds on the James, York, Rappahannock, Potomac, and Back Rivers and foraged within adjacent farmlands or marshes. These populations have now collapsed." It appears that some of the **Red-headed Woodpeckers** from last winter that set an all-time Regional high lingered until fall, as a not-unusual high of 12 was recorded near Beulahville, *King William* 22 Sep (FA). Falcons were relatively numerous this fall, with 35 **American Kestrels** at 33 locations, 7 **Merlins** at seven locations, and 7 **Peregrine Falcons** at 6 locations. Marking the fourth all-time Regional record in eBird, an ad. **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** was photographed along a private lane in *Gloucester* 23 Oct (JS, HC, RC). Interestingly, the only *Empidonax* flycatchers identified in the Region this fall were **Acadian Flycatchers**. The first **Warbling Vireo** in *Essex* was seen well on Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* 30 Aug (MC, JC).

Another was seen at LaGrange Ln. 7 Sep (FA). This species is quite rare in this Region during fall migration. There are only five reports in eBird. Although not a new late date, **Blue-headed Vireos** seen 3 Nov at Hickory Hollow NAP, *Lancaster* (KKo) and near Lanesville, *King William* (FA) were still of note. Continuing a pattern from last winter, **Horned Larks** were again scarce this fall. The season's high was just 35 in Walkerton, *King and Queen* 24 Aug (FA, JS). In total, 74 birds were seen across 8 locations. Past single-location highs have ranged up to 150. **Purple Martins** were also hard to come by this year. The season's high of 25 at Woodbury Rd. Sod Farm, *King William* 24 Aug (FA) is put to shame by the all-time high of 2400 in Walkerton, *King and Queen* 18 Aug 2007 (FA). A meager total of 142 birds was recorded all fall. A stark contrast from last year, not a single **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen in the Region this fall. For reference, observers last fall tallied 67 birds at 26 locations. This goes to show how great of an influence the cone crops up north has on this species' migratory patterns. Sixteen **Marsh Wrens** were found at 11 locations, with a high of 4 at Bethel 15 Sep (HC, RC). A **Sedge Wren** at New Pt. Comfort 13 & 14 Nov (TD, KL, NN) was the season's only sighting of this likely-annual but underdetected species. A **Wood Thrush** at a residence in *Gloucester* 13 Oct (EB) fell a day short of the Regional late date set last autumn. Strangely, no transient thrushes were seen at all this fall. Continuing a trend described in past reports, **American Pipits** were once again sparse in the Region, represented by a mere 4 birds seen on two trips to K.G. Ponds 23 Oct (CF) and 9 Nov (FA). Past highs of the species ranged up to 115. The season's only **Purple Finch** was observed at a home in *Middlesex* 29 Nov (LB). This is a stark contrast to last year, in which 12 were observed at seven locations in three counties with a maximum of 4. No **Pine Siskins** were seen in the Region this fall, whereas this species was found in seven counties last year. A **Snow Bunting**, not only the first *King George* record but also the only Regional record away from the Chesapeake Bay, was an extraordinary find at Caledon SP, *King George* 11 Nov (CN).

SPARROWS-DICKCISSEL

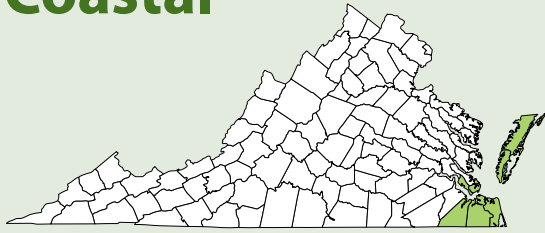
Although overshadowed by last year's seasonal high of 17, twelve **Grasshopper Sparrows** at Timberneck Farm, *Gloucester* 11 Aug (ph. HC, RC) were still a great find. In the wake of the destruction of grassland habitat this species has been dealing with over the last century, it was especially good to see that the report included both fledglings and adult birds. Perhaps as a result of the unseasonably warm

late fall weather, both **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **White-throated Sparrows** arrived later or fewer in number than usual. The first 5 juncos were spotted 6 Oct at a home in *Northumberland* (PW). This was on par with the normal arrival date, but season's high in eBird was only 25, far below past highs up to 185. The first White-throated Sparrow arrived on 11 Oct at Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* (MC, JC), nearly a month after the early date of 15 Sep. The seasonal high of 27 at a private location in *Richmond* 18 Nov (AB) is dwarfed by past highs up to 200. Also in low numbers were **White-crowned Sparrows**, with a total of only 4 seen at three locations in *King George*, *Westmoreland*, and *Richmond*. **Vesper Sparrows** are surprisingly hard to find in this Region, with only three prior fall eBird records in *King William*, *Northumberland*, and *Richmond*. This year, however, single birds were found on 12 & 21 Nov at two locations in *Gloucester* (JS). Although not record-breaking, fall brought in good numbers of all three of the expected grass sparrows in expected baymarsh locations. Fifteen **Seaside Sparrows** were found at six sites and 4 **Nelson's Sparrows** were found at North Pt., *Lancaster* 19 Oct (JF, NN). Despite falling one short of the previous seasonal high, 5 **Saltmarsh Sparrows** at New Pt. Comfort 13 Oct (TD, NN) was still a notable count. That same day these observers also noted single birds at Bethel and Ditch Bank Rd., *Gloucester*. The nesting and feeding success of this sparrow are extremely dependent upon the tide cycles, making them vulnerable to the slightest disturbances to their saltmarsh habitat. It is great to see that ongoing habitat changes in the Region have not seriously damaged this species' numbers yet. Not seen every fall, the only **Lincoln's Sparrow** reported this season was at Duck Pond Rd., *King and Queen* 29 Oct (JC, MC). A total of 118 **Eastern Meadowlarks** was found at 28 sites with a high of 21 near Warsaw, *Richmond* 17 Nov (MF). Single **Baltimore Orioles** were noted 6 Aug in *Gloucester* (JH), 2 Sep in *King George* (MK), and 22 Sep in Beulahville, *King William* (FA). There were only two sightings of the once abundant **Rusty Blackbird**: 9 near Newland, *Richmond* 18 Nov (AB) and one in Leedstown 9 Nov (FA). An **Ovenbird** lingered at a residence in *Essex* for over a month from 26 Sep to 28 Oct (MC, JC), setting a new Regional late date by over two weeks. Marking the third county record, 2 **Blue-winged Warblers** were seen near Beulahville, *King William* 24 Aug (FA). This being the only sighting within 20 mi. of the location indicates how underbirded some parts of the Region can be. A shocking change from last year's Regional high of 21 at Birthplace

14 Oct 2018 (FA), only 4 **Cape May Warblers** were seen all fall. This species' nesting success is known to fluctuate widely depending on the abundance of spruce budworms in the boreal spruce forests where they breed. However, this year there was an infestation of spruce budworm in parts of Quebec, so perhaps the low numbers of warblers this year had to do with the timing of when birders were out not coinciding with the short periods of time when the warblers passed through. Only one of each **Bay-breasted Warbler**, **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler** and **Blackpoll Warbler** was recorded in the Region this fall. A total of 69 **Summer Tanagers** was found at 39 locations, more than triple the 17 **Scarlet Tanagers** in ten locations. Finally, 3 **Dickcissels** were seen by m. obs. at Lands End WMA, *King George* 10–17 Aug. Another was at Wilna 4 Aug (LR, JS).

Contributors: Fred Atwood, Eirlys Barker, LJ Blackwell, Arun Bose, Kamella Boule', Allen Bryan, Harry Colestock, Rochelle Colestock, Joey Coker, Maeve Coker, Autumn Cromartie, JoAnn Dalley, Todd Day, Conor Farrell, James Fox, Melissa Gross, Bruce Hill, Robert Isdell, Karl Kaufmann, Matthew Kingsbury, Kim Kozella (KKo), Kathy Louthan, Carol Manglos-Foster, Rosabel Miro, Adit Nehra, Nick Newberry, Christina Nye, Andrew Rapp, Lisa Rose, James Shelton (JSh), Mark Sopko, Lucy Soulliere, Jason Strickland, Penny Warren

Coastal



Editor: Bill Williams

154 Lakewood Drive

Williamsburg, VA 23185

billwilliams154@gmail.com

Accomack and Northampton counties; Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel; Pelagic area; the cities/towns of Cape Charles, Chesapeake, Chincoteague, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach

The 6 September passage of Hurricane Dorian might have been the meteorological event of the season had it not been for the near drought conditions that cloaked the Region from mid-September through much of October. The last day of that month experienced a record high 86° F. Buried by the rich diversity portrayed below was a consensus that the volume of many species across all taxa was strikingly low. Indeed, when filtered by the range of early arrivals, late departures and exceptional rarities the proverbial messages from the “coal mines” noticeably grew louder. Standard bearers in the parade of the highly unexpected were Black-chinned Hummingbird, Purple Gallinule, Bar-tailed Godwit, Roseate Tern, an enticing suite of pelagics, Brown Booby, Gray Kingbird, Northern Wheatear, Sage Thrasher, Brewer’s Sparrow, and Kirtland’s Warbler.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, *Northampton*); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); CVWO (Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Materials Management Area, Portsmouth); Dismal (Dismal Swamp NWR, Chesapeake/Suffolk); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, *Northampton*); False Cape (False Cape SP, Virginia Beach); First Landing (First Landing SP, Virginia Beach); GATR (GATR Tract, Mockhorn Island WMA, *Northampton*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, Hampton); KSP (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); Little Is. (Little Island Pk., Virginia Beach); Mutton Hunk (Mutton Hunk Fen, *Accomack*); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach); Sunset (Sunset Beach, *Northampton*); Whitehurst (Whitehurst Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Two fly-by dark-morph **Snow Geese** at Machipongo, *Northampton* 29 Sep (JE, WK, ph. LM) were far ahead of the species’ Gold Book 30 Oct average arrival date. A

Ross’s Goose at Signature at West Neck, Virginia Beach 8 Nov (ph. PM, ph. SM) preceded 4 at GATR the next day (ph. m. obs.). A **Cackling Goose** at Ocean Lakes High School, Virginia Beach 16 Nov (K&TB) was likely the one at nearby Sherwood L., Virginia Beach 29 Nov (AB). A **Mute Swan** was at PHP 10 Nov (ph. RBi, m. obs.). A m. **Eurasian Wigeon** dabbled at Cedar Ln./SR 164, Portsmouth 25 Oct (NF). The **Common Eider** that summered at Rudee continued there through 3 Aug (ph. VAMSC). More in season were 4 off Back Bay 5 Nov (ph. SM), a f. at Chinc. 9 & 11 Nov (m. obs.), an ad. m. off Naval Station Norfolk (Restricted), Norfolk 18 Nov (ph. KSu), a f. at Ft. Monroe, Hampton 23 Nov (ph. TC), and a f. at Grandview 24 (ph. EM, ph. TT) through 30 Nov (BG, TT). A f. **Harlequin Duck** frequented Rudee 25 Oct (ph. AB, ph. RBi, ph. SK, ph. SM) through 18 Nov (MC, ph. AL). There was a **Black Scoter** at the Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk 10 Aug (ph. EA). Subsequently there were 2 off Back Bay (ph. RBi) and 5 off Camp Pendleton (restricted access), Virginia Beach 24 Aug (ph. SM), and a f. at Grandview 25 Aug (ph. RBi). A **Red-necked Grebe** was at Little Is. 27 Nov (AB). Two different **Western Grebes** were accounted for 25 Nov, one at Grandview (NB, JL, JLo) and one off Little Is. (TT). The latter was later noted off Back Bay 27 Nov (MF, ph. RF, m. obs.). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Back Bay 11 Nov (ph. LC) repeated the species’ 2018 last reported date. Single **Black-billed Cuckoos** were at Chinc. 14 Sep (m. obs.), the ESVNWR 15 Sep (JC), and Hobbs Rd., Virginia Beach 19 Oct (GH). Noteworthy **Common Nighthawk** counts included 12 at KSP 5 Sep (AS); 22 over a Chesapeake field 11 Sep (ph. KR); and 11 at Woodhouse Corner, Virginia Beach 12 Sep (K&TB); the last one listed was at Windsor Pt., Norfolk 27 Oct (DC). The latest **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** to be posted was at Fairway Dr., Chesapeake 22 Nov (Anonymous). Two **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRDS** were documented in the Region. An imm. m. was at KSP

6 (BC, ph. SSc) & 10 Nov (ph. BB, TB, CF, v.r. MN, AS). Another imm. m. off Blackwater Rd., Virginia Beach had "been here 3 weeks" when reported 15 Nov (ph. KD); the bird continued into the winter season (ph. m. obs.). An ad. m. **Rufous Hummingbird** noticed at a feeder off Holland Rd., Suffolk 28 Nov (ph. JB 29 Nov) remained into December. An imm. **PURPLE GALLINULE** was a special find at Whitehurst 6 Oct (ph. RBi, ph. m. obs.). A **Common Gallinule** was at Back Bay 6 Aug (AB). Later in the season singles were at the Oyster/Cheriton Landfill, *Northampton* 9 Nov (ph. m. obs.) and Back Bay 20 (ph. TT) through 30 Nov (m. obs.). Peak **Black-necked Stilt** totals from the 2 locations the species was found were 30 at Craney 1 Aug (LS, BT, BW, DY) and 13 at Chinc. 18 Aug (IL). A very late imm. was at Chinc. 7 Oct (SD, ph. JL, ML). The Region's **American Avocet** high count was 156 at Craney 22 Aug (AM, LS, BT, DY); 2 were present there 8 Nov (m. obs.). The species was chronicled in the Queen Sound Channel, *Accomack/Chinc.* area 9 Aug (CF) to 13 Nov (SD, JL, ph. ML) including 20 at Chinc. 26 Aug (ph. JL). Elsewhere, there were 3 at Oyster, *Northampton* 16 Aug (LA), 3 near Melfa, *Accomack* 14 Sep (KW), one at Back Bay 2 Oct (ph. EA), and 2 at Poquoson 24 Nov (ph. LB). **American Golden-Plover** posts, all of single birds, came from Arlington Rd., *Northampton* 10 Aug (SG) then possibly the same bird there 25 Aug (SG); Craney 29 Aug (BA, AM, LS, DY) then 19 Sep (LS, ph. BT, BW, DY); near Custis Tomb, *Northampton* 6 Sep (MA, NN); Chinc. 21 Sep (m. obs.) and 7 Oct (ph. SD, JL, ML); Back Bay 29 Sep (ph. JS, ph. AV); and off Plantation Rd., *Northampton* 10 Nov (ESB, ph. m. obs.). A **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** was seen by m. obs. at Chinc. 30 Aug (ph. AH) through 27 Sep (SD). Single **Hudsonian Godwits** were at Craney 19 Aug (AB, ph. m. obs.) and Whitehurst 6 Oct (AB, ph. m. obs.). The Region's 2 reported **Baird's Sandpipers** were both at Craney, one 11 Sep (m. obs.) then another 8 Nov (ph. m. obs.), nine days beyond the species' Gold Book 30 Oct extreme late date. A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Chinc. 11 Sep (ph. BH) was followed by 2 there 7 Oct (ph. SD, ph. JL, ML) and one at Back Bay 14 (ph. CH) through 19 (ph. CH, ph. TM, ph. JM, ph. SM) Oct. A **Stilt Sandpiper** at Craney 8 Nov (ph. m. obs.) equaled the species' Gold Book extreme late date. A **Solitary Sandpiper** at Back Bay 18 (ph. RR) & 19 (AB, ph. RBi, ph. TM, SM) Oct was four days past the species' 15 Oct average late date. An "**Eastern**" **Willet** was among Westerns at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 6 Sep (EO et al.). Three **Wilson's Phalaropes** at Craney 15 Aug (AM, BT, BW, DY) were

precursors to 6 there 22 Aug (AM, LS, BT, DY), 2 on 29 Aug (BA, AM, LS, DY), 8 on 5 Sep (AM, LS, BW, DY) and one on 26 Sep (AM, LS); 2 were at Chinc. 17 Aug (SD, JG). A **Red-necked Phalarope** was at (36.8908, -74.5142), *Northampton* 31 Aug (MA, RBi, ESB, JF, NN, JSt). As Hurricane Dorian passed 6 Sep 20 Red-necked Phalaropes were off Windsor Pt., Norfolk (DC), 109 off Ft. Story, Virginia Beach (AB, ph. RBi, KSu), 23 at Little Cr. Res., Virginia Beach (AB, ph. RBi, KSu), and 6 at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach (EO). A **Northern Fulmar** and 3 **Cory's Shearwaters** were 30 mi. se. of Chinc. 6 Oct (SS). Pelagic species totals from a 31 Aug outing off Virginia Beach and *Northampton* were 236 Cory's Shearwaters, of which 3 were subspecies *borealis*, 7 **Great Shearwaters**, 23 **Audubon's Shearwaters**, and 231 **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** (MA, ph. RBi, ESB, JF, NN, JSt).

JAEGERS-FLYCATCHERS

A **Pomarine Jaeger** off Sandbridge, Virginia Beach 2 Sep (DC) was quite unusual. A summary of **Parasitic Jaeger** sightings included 2 off Little Is. 8 Sep (AB, ph. TM); one 30 mi. se. of Chinc. 6 Oct (SS); one off Back Bay 27 Oct (RBi, ph. MC); one off Little Is. 7 Nov (K&TB); singles off 88th St., Virginia Beach (JM) and Rudee (AB) 12 Nov; and one off Little Is. 27 Nov (AB). Hurricane Dorian swept a **SABINE'S GULL** past Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 6 Sep (AB, RBi). A second-cycle **Franklin's Gull** was at Rudee 11 Nov (ph. LC). The 510 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Chinc. 7 Oct (SD, JL, ML) was one of the Region's higher single-site counts reported in several years. The list of 6 Sep Hurricane Dorian-related **Sooty Tern** sightings included one off Shore Dr., Virginia Beach (LR et al.); up to 7 at Bill Jesse Pk., Suffolk (E&NF); one at Windsor Pt., Norfolk (DC); one at Ft. Monroe, Hampton (MA, TD, CF, IT, NN); 2 at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach (ph. m. obs), and one at King-Lincoln Pk., Newport News (EO). A **Bridled Tern** was at (37.0194, -74.5821), *Northampton* 31 Aug (MA, ph. RBi, ESB, JF, NN, JSt). Small numbers of **Black Terns** were found in the Region 5 Aug (TT) through 14 Sep (KW). Seasonal peak counts, all coincidental with Hurricane Dorian 6 Sep, were 5 at Ft. Monroe, Hampton (TD, CF, EMI, IT), up to 6 off King-Lincoln Pk., Newport News (AC, EO) and 12 at Little Cr. Res. (TD). A banded **ROSEATE TERN** was at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 6 Sep during Hurricane Dorian (AB, ph. RBi, ph. MC, EO, AR). An ad. f. **BROWN BOOBY** was off *Accomack* at (37.3831, -74.8671) 16 Aug (ph. RD). Single **Anhingas** were at Bethel Pk., Hampton 8 Sep (ph. EMI) and L. Smith, Virginia Beach 23 Oct (DS). Not unexpectedly, one

to 2 were at Stumpy L., Virginia Beach throughout the period (m. obs.) with the last noted there 2 Nov (ph. JS). Seven **American White Pelicans** passed over KSP 6 Nov (ph. AS, BT). A notably early **American Bittern** was at the ESVNWR 31 Aug (HA); 5 Sep is this species' average early date. A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** lingered at PHP through 30 Nov (KL). Two imm. **White Ibis** were at Grandview 23 Nov (CM). Highlights from the 43rd annual Kiptopeke Hawk Watch, a CVWO project since 1995, included 5 **Golden Eagles**; a new one-day record 39 **Bald Eagles** 1 Nov (previous record was 38 on 6 Nov 2008); 3 **Mississippi Kites** (one each 3, 8, & 13 Sep, respectively); and a **Swainson's Hawk** 2 Nov (AS et al.). The only reported **Northern Goshawk** was an ad. perched at Red Bank, *Northampton* 9 Nov (HA). Mississippi Kites remained in the Whitehouse Ln., Virginia Beach area to 18 Sep with peak counts of 4 there 17 & 19 Aug (TT). Others recorded were one over Marsh View Pk., Virginia Beach 4 Aug (ph. SK); one off Kings Fork Rd., Suffolk 11 Aug (ph. JSt); and 3 off 821 Stardale Dr., Chesapeake 23 Aug (ph. TW). A tardy **Broad-winged Hawk** was at Magothy Bay 10 Nov (ph. ESB, TD, IT). Three **RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS** were observed in Dismal 22 Aug (NN). The 1,011 "haners" (**Northern Flickers**) that passed over KSP 25 Sep (AS) was reminiscent of daily high-volume flights there in previous decades. Four **Western Kingbirds** made rarities alerts: one at Back Bay 22 Sep (ph. m. obs.); one in Chincoteague, *Accomack* 15 Oct (DW); one at Yaros Farms, *Northampton* 3 Nov (ph. MA, EC, MP); and one at Airport Parking Dep. Rd., Norfolk 7 Nov (ph. DC). Daily autumnal **Eastern Kingbird** flights along the southern tip of the Eastern Shore once routinely totaled in excess of two thousand birds. High counts this year from KSP were ~615 on 1 Sep (AS) and 625 on 3 Sep (AS). A **GRAY KINGBIRD** was a most exciting surprise at Back Bay 21 (ph. BSC) & 25 Sep (AB, K&TB, ph.



The Gray Kingbird Betty Sue Cohen documented at Back Bay 21 Sep

RR). A **Least Flycatcher** was at KSP 16 Sep (AS); another was at Mutton Hunk Fen, *Accomack* 17 Sep (SH), and one was in Kings Grant, Virginia Beach 25 Sep (RF).

VIREOS-DICKCISSEL

Nine different **Philadelphia Vireos** were recorded between 14 Sep and 14 Oct, including two 25 Sep (MA, MB), one at KSP, and one at First Landing (ph. JM). A **Warbling Vireo** was at the ESVNWR 14 Sep (ph. RBi, m. obs.). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were listed from only six locations; the high count was 5 at Silver Beach, *Northampton* 30 Nov (JCr). One each **Bank Swallow** (ph. m. obs.), **Cave Swallow** (EO, LRo), and **Barn Swallow** (ph. m. obs.) were part of the avian diversity at the Cheriton/Oyster landfill, *Northampton* 9 Nov. Two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were at Hell's Point Golf Club, Virginia Beach 6 Nov (MD). Virginia's first **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** since 1995 was a stunning find at KSP 26 Sep (ph. KS, m. obs.). Two days later during CVWO's 28 Sep Kiptopeke Challenge, one was found ~45 km ne. of KSP near Machipongo, *Northampton* (HN, PN, ph. m.obs.) where it made life/state lists into the next day (ph. m. obs.).



The Northern Wheatear Kathy Spenser photographed at Kiptopeke SP 26 Sep

The state's third **SAGE THRASHER** was at Craney 24 Oct (BA, ESB, AM, ph. BT, ph. BW, ph. DY). None of the near one dozen **Purple Finch** postings had a total



Compare Andrew Rapp's 26 Sep Northern Wheatear at Kiptopeke SP photo (above) with Laura Mae's 29 Sep Northern Wheatear at Machipongo, *Northampton* (below) to consider whether these are the same or different individuals.



This Sage Thrasher was at Craney 24 Oct. Photo by Bill Williams

exceeding 4. Of the less than ten **Pine Siskin** reports the highest count was 6 at the ESVNWR 10 Nov (JF). A **Lapland Longspur** was at Chinc. 15 & 18 Oct (ph DW). **Snow Buntings** were also scarce; a total of 4 found 30 Nov included one at False Cape (ph. MM), one at Queen Sound Landing, *Accomack* (LG, H&GS), and 2 at Grandview (BG). A **Vesper Sparrow** was at Patrick Henry Field, Newport News 25 Oct (CF, ph. JSt, ST); another was at Yaros Farms, *Northampton* 3 Nov (ph. MA, EC). Five **Lark Sparrows** entered into the record included 2 at Chinc. 9 Sep (ph. BH); one in Cape Charles 15 Sep (SK, MLo); one at Chinc. 2 Oct (MY); and one at KSP 19 Oct (ph. BT). **Grasshopper Sparrows** noted in the Region after the species' expected 30 Oct departure date were: one at Stony Run Athletic Complex, Newport News 3 Nov (JSt); 3 off Latimer Siding Rd., *Northampton* (ph. m. obs.) and one off Magotha Rd., *Northampton* (ph. m. obs.) 9 Nov; and one at Magothy Bay 10 Nov (ESB, TD, IT). The Commonwealth's second **BREWER'S SPARROW** was extensively documented at GATR 9 (WT, ph. m.obs.) & 10 Nov (ph. m. obs.).



Scott Priebe's Brewer's Sparrow photo taken at GATR 10 Nov

A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at KSP 10 Oct (MA). Subsequently, there were 2 at Latimer Siding Rd., *Northampton* 9 Nov (ph. RBi, m. obs.), one at Whitehurst 10 (ph. RBi, ph. SM) & 24 (ph. RBi) Nov, and one at GATR 11 (AB) & 17 (ph. JLo) Nov. A **White-crowned Sparrow** in Talbot Park, Norfolk 4 Oct (ph. BA) was six days ahead of the species' 10 Oct average early date. An imm. m. **Orchard Oriole** initially detected at Back Bay 11 Nov (ph. CB) remained through 30 Nov (ph. TM), eclipsing the species' Gold Book 26 Nov extreme late date. There were 2 **Brewer's Blackbirds** off Plantation Dr., *Northampton* 9 Nov (JD, TS, ES, WT). A very early **Worm-eating Warbler** was at the ESVNWR 2 Aug (MA, EC) and a **Golden-winged Warbler** was at KSP 30 Aug

(ph. MA). The Gold Book's 15 Oct **Nashville Warbler** average late date was exceeded by singles at Windsor Pt., Norfolk 28 Oct (DC), L. Wright, Norfolk 8 Nov (JSt), and Cypress Point, Virginia Beach 9 Nov (ph. KSw). A **Connecticut Warbler** was at Back Bay 13 & 14 Oct (ph. m. obs.) and a **Mourning Warbler** was at Beach Garden Pk., Virginia Beach 24 Sep (DC). An exceptionally early **American Redstart** was at the ESVNWR 2 Aug (MA, EC). Detected past the species' 10 Oct average late were one at Custis Tomb, *Northampton* 9 Nov (BB, ph. TB, CF, MN) and one at Devil's Ditch, *Northampton* 10 Nov (ESB). Social media alerts directed m. obs. to Back Bay's Raptor Trail 4 Oct to revel in the presence of the extraordinary **KIRTLAND'S WARBLER** found there that morning (ph. SM).



Steve Myers' photo of the Kirtland's Warbler he found at Back Bay 4 Oct

Four **Northern Parulas** were reported beyond the species' 31 Oct Gold Book extreme late date, 3 in Cape Charles 9 Nov (ESB) and one at Devil's Ditch, *Northampton* 10 Nov (ESB). A **Magnolia Warbler** at First Landing 30 Oct (ph. JM) was fifteen days past the Gold Book's 15 Oct average late date. After 10 Oct is considered late for **Bay-breasted Warblers**; one each were at Mt. Trashmore, Virginia Beach 22 Oct (ph. TM, JM, SM, LRo) and KSP 24 Oct (DS). A **Blackpoll Warbler** was at Burton Station Rd., Virginia Beach 24 Oct (AB) and a m. **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was at Jones Cove Dr., *Northampton* 9 (LMe, RT) & 11 (AB) Nov. **Prairie Warblers** found beyond the species' 20 Sep normal late date were singles at Great Bridge Lock Pk., Chesapeake (ph. LM) and Chinc. (WB) 27 Oct and one at Whitehurst 10 Nov (ph. RBi). A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was at KSP 2 Nov (AS et al.); 25 Oct is that species' average late date. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was in Kempsville, Virginia Beach 22 Nov (ph. UD). A

Scarlet Tanager was at New Jersey Ave., Norfolk 26 Oct (PS), eleven days beyond the species' 15 Oct mean late date. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** noted past the species' 10 Oct average departure date included one at Chinc. 24 Oct (CHe, NM); one at Kerr Dr., Virginia Beach 30 Oct (JMa); and one in Dismal 1 Nov (JM). A tardy **Indigo Bunting** was at KSP 2 Nov (AS et al.); 25 Oct is this species' typical late date. **Painted Bunting** listings included a f./imm. at Back Bay 12 Oct (ph. RBi, PD, TM); a f./imm. at KSP 14 Oct (AS et al.); a f. (for a 4th consecutive late fall/early winter year) at Guthrie St., Virginia Beach 22–25 Nov (TCO); and a f. at Laurel Manor, Virginia Beach 23 Nov (ph. TM). Single **Dickcissels** were at KSP 13 Sep (MA); Windsor Pt., Norfolk 4 Oct (DC); KSP 14 Oct (AS et al.); New Jersey Ave., Norfolk 18–22 Oct (ph. PS); and Cavalier WMA, Chesapeake 30 Oct (ph. GHu)

Contributors: Bob Ake, Eric Alton, Logan Anderson, Matt Anthony, Harry Armistead, Andrew Baldelli, Nancy Barnhart, Baxter Beamer, Tucker Beamer, Wayne Bell, Rob Bielawski (RBi), Lynda Blair, Mark Brown, Charlie Bruggemon, John Bunch, Andrew Cameron, Erin Chapman, Linda Chittum, David Clark, Benjamin Clock, Betty Sue Cohen, Mike Collins, Teresa Conlon (TCO), Jonathan Cooley, Jim Crunk (JCr), Terri Cuthriell, Marie D'Auteuil, Una Davenport, Todd Day, Kelly Dean, Peggy DeRolf, Sally Dick, Rob Dickerson, Julian Dymacek, Joshua Emm, Conor Farrell, Elisa and Nick Flanders, Marie Furnish, Ron Furnish, Lisa Garrett, Joe Greco, Ben Griffon, Stephen Grimes, Cindy Hamilton, George Harris, Alex Henry, Chelsea Hedderig (CHe), Bill Hohenstein, Scott Houston, Greg Hudson (GHu), Steve Keith, Will Kennerley, Sally Knight, Joanne Laskowski, Ira Lianez, Aylett Lipford, Jan Lockwood, Marguerite Long, Mike Lott (MLo), Kathy Louthan, Joyce Lowry (JLo), Laura Mae, Tommy Maloney, Nathaniel Marchessault, Jim Marcum (JMa), Ellis Maxey, June McDaniels, Larry Meade (LMe), Ernie Miller (EMi), Alex Minarik, Chris Monahan, Pam Monahan, Marlee Morris, Steve Myers, Heidi Nasca, Paul Nasca, Nick Newberry, Martina Nordstrand, Ellison Orcutt, Michael Parker, Louis Rajnys, Andrew Rapp, Keith Roberts, Reuben Rohn, Lisa Rose (LRO), Patricia Scanlon, Debbie Schroeder, Scott Schuette, Shiloh Schulte (SSc), Lee Schuster, Helen and Gary Smith, Ty Smith, Jonathan Snyder, Evan Spears, Kathy Spenser, Jason Strickland (JSt), Anna Stunkel, Karl Suttmann (KSu), Kristin Swanbeck (KSw), Brian Taber, Tracy Tate, Russell Taylor, Shea Tiller, Ian Topolsky, Amresh Vaidya, Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center (VAMSC), Katrina Weinig, Dustin Welch, Bill Williams, Tony Wood, Dave Youker, Matthew Young

Fall 2019 Virginia Hawkwatch Effort Data*

Hawkwatch	# Count Days	Date Range	# Count Hours	VA Birds Region	Fall Season Years
Mendota Fire Tower, <i>Washington</i>	12 of 15	16–30 Sep	84	Southwest	1958–2019
Snicker's Gap, <i>Clarke/Loudoun</i>	22 of 84	26 Aug–17 Nov	122.25	West/North	1990; 1992–94; 1996–98; 2002–19
Harvey's Knob, <i>Botetourt</i>	83 of 108	15 Aug–24 Nov	451	West	1979–2019
Rockfish Gap, <i>Augusta/Nelson</i>	88 of 108	15 Aug–3 Nov	522	West	1977; 1981–2019
Lochlyn Hill, <i>Charlottesville</i>	3 of 14	11–24 Aug	5.75	Central	2017–2019
Candler Mt., <i>Lynchburg</i>	9 of 13	14–26 Sep	38	Central	2002–2019
Kiptopeke, <i>Northampton</i>	90 of 98	25 Aug–30 Nov	795.25	Coastal	1977–2019

Fall 2019 Virginia Hawkwatch Totals*

Hawkwatch	OS	SK	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UN	Total
Mendota	7	0	0	21	1	18	5	0	2	4993	0	5	0	2	1	1	3	8	5067
Snickers Gap	49	0	0	78	10	231	22	1	26	9591	0	192	0	2	23	10	5	16	10,256
Harvey's	86	0	0	129	15	351	56	1	15	5984	0	261	0	1	56	6	23	17	7001
Rockfish	206	0	7	264	31	1161	194	3	65	26,058	2	677	1	11	141	33	29	55	28,938
Lochlyn Hill	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Candler Mt.	15	0	1	8	1	13	0	0	0	563	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	604
Kiptopeke	3961	0	3	710	445	4451	2253	0	121	542	1	498	0	5	3434	2189	646	40	19,299
Totals	4044	0	11	1211	503	6225	2530	5	229	47,733	3	1633	1	21	3568	2239	706	137	71,169

*Retrieved from HawkCount 24 Dec 2019

Compiled by Bill Williams