



VIRGINIA BIRDS

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



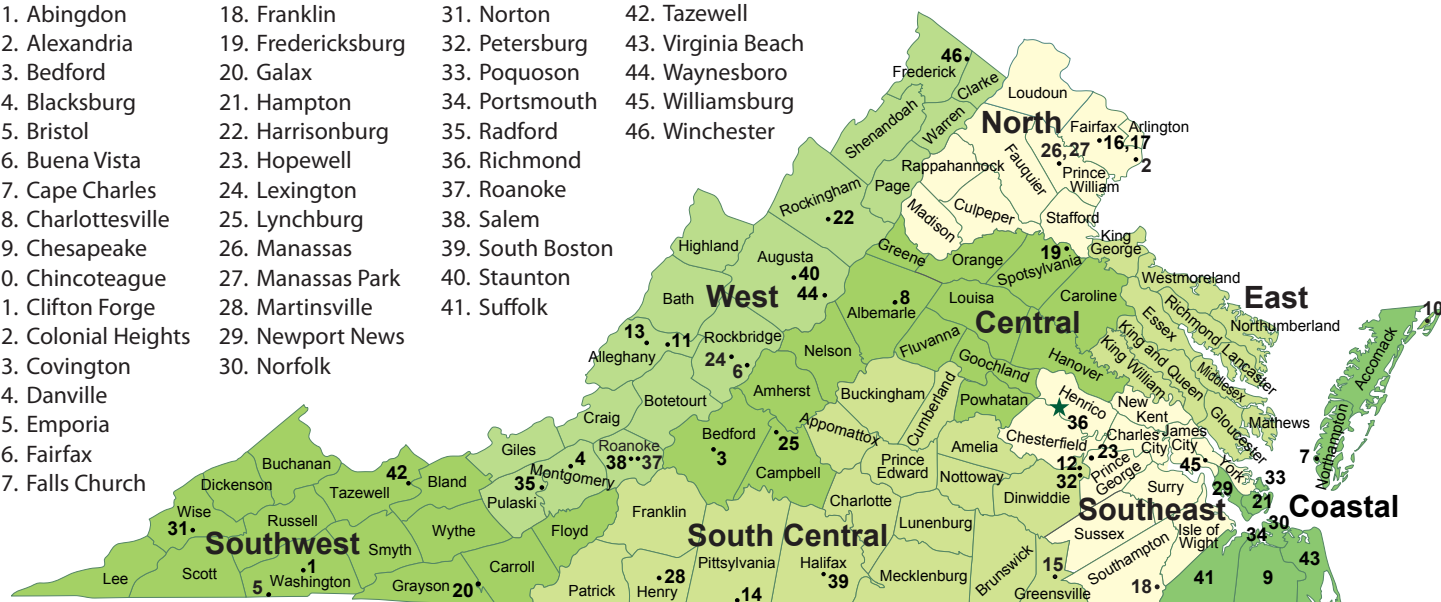
Volume 16 • Number 4

Spring Records • March–May 2020

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

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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



Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2

Terms and Abbreviations

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

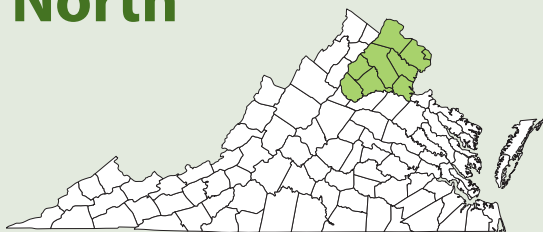
Abbreviations

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
VDWR	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
v. r.	voice recording
vid. r.	video recording
VSO	Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
*	specimen collected

On the cover: Tyler Hohenstein's documentation photo of a male Garganey at Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack* 4 May

Regional Reports

North



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

Temperatures were about 2° F below average in April and May at both Dulles Int'l and Reagan Nat. Airports while rainfall was near to slightly below average for the period. The highlights this season included a White-winged Dove in *Rappahannock*, one of only a couple seen in the Piedmont and seen more typically in the fall statewide, an impressive flock of 22 Whimbrels in the Dyke Marsh area, a Little Gull at Belmont Bay Marina, and a Lark Sparrow in the *Stafford* Piedmont.

Abbreviations: Algonkian RP (Algonkian RP, *Loudoun*); Aquia Landing (Aquia Landing Beach Pk. *Stafford*); Belmont Bay Marina (Belmont Bay Marina, *Prince William*); Bles Pk. (Bles Pk., *Loudoun*); Bristoe Station (Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk., *Prince William*); Cub Run Stream Valley Pk. (Cub Run Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Frying Pan Farm Pk. (Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax*); Hunting Cr. Bridge (Hunting Cr. Bridge, *Fairfax*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Julie Metz Wetland (Julie J. Metz Wetland Mitigation Bank, *Prince William*); Mason Neck (Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck NWR, *Fairfax*); Monticello Pk. (Monticello Pk., *Alexandria*); Mountain Run L. Pk. (Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper*); Occoquan Bay (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Sky Meadows (Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier*); Warrenton Res. (Warrenton Res., *Fauquier*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Four **Cackling Geese**, a fairly rare winter visitor in the Region, were seen at Daniels Run Pk., Fairfax City 1 Mar (MA, JF, NN). A **Blue-winged Teal** seen at Huntley Meadows 5 Mar (E&JJ) preceded the Regional early date of 15 Mar. A pair of **American Black Ducks** lingered at the Warrenton Res. 30 Apr (PSa), well past the Piedmont late date of 30 Mar. Single

Long-tailed Ducks, a rare transient inland, were observed at Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Mar (ph. DL) and Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* Mar 26 (GS). A **Redhead** observed at Belmont Bay Marina 29 Apr (KG) was well past the species' Coastal Plain late date of 15 Apr. Reports of **Ring-necked Ducks** observed past the species' Coastal Plain late date of 15 Apr included 4 at Occoquan Bay 9–10 May (PSi), with a single observed at the adjacent Belmont Bay Marina 14–24 May (KG). The Gold Book confirms that small numbers often linger through May. A probable **Greater Scaup** was reported at L. Brittle, *Fauquier* 13 Mar (GS). A **Bufflehead** lingered at the Warrenton Res. 7–14 May (MC, SL, PSa), well past the typical Regional late date of 10 Apr and even the Piedmont extreme late date of 27 Apr. Another was seen off Mason Neck 11 May (KG). There were several reports of 2–6 ads. (the latter, all f., on 28 April). **Common Mergansers** occurred from mid-April through mid-May in a localized area near Sperryville, *Rappahannock*, mainly on a small river, Thornton R. (ph. PL). This species is fairly rare in the Piedmont in spring away from reservoirs in the n. Piedmont, per the Gold Book. The fact that one pair was seen with 12 chicks on 3 May (RRa) explains this pair's presence past the usual Piedmont late date of 10 April (extreme late date 15 May). Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** were observed at Occoquan Bay 17 May (AH, RH*i*), past the species' Regional late date of 30 Apr, with additional reports of 1–2 birds lingering through May (as small numbers are apt to do, per the Gold Book). A single was observed at the Warrenton Res. (rare in the Piedmont) 23 May (SL, PSa). A **Ruddy Duck** seen at Occoquan Bay 30 May (ph. TH) was well past the species' Coastal Plain late date of 15 Apr; the Gold Book states the species is a rare but regular early summer visitor. A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE**, exceptionally rare for the Piedmont with only one record in the Gold Book outside our Region, was seen along Aaron Mt. Rd., *Rappahannock*

2 May (IT). Most of the few state records are in the outer Coastal Plain in the fall; however, eBird shows two additional spring records, one in our Region (in 2014 at Occoquan Bay). Interestingly, the subject bird may have lingered, as one showed up around 2 mi. away in the next report period (5 Jun). Distinct **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** calls were heard well before the Piedmont extreme early date of 30 Apr: from a residence in Countryside, *Loudoun* 6 Apr (BHi) and the following day at Bles Pk., about 2.5 mi. further up the Potomac R. (JB). It was an exceptional year for **Black-billed Cuckoos**, a rare transient in the Coastal Plain, especially in spring, with at least 10 sightings. An apparent **Chuck-will's-widow**, rare n. of the James R., was reported as heard calling at a residence at Great Falls, *Fairfax* 15 May (HS). Two **King Rails**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were heard along Thoms Rd., *Culpeper* 12 May (TD), with at least one continuing through the period. Single **Virginia Rails**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, were encountered along Crane Ln., *Rappahannock* 28–29 Apr (IT) and at Sky Meadows 4 May (BHa) and again 25 May. A **Sora**, also a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, was found dead in the gutter in a residential neighborhood in Fairfax City 7 May (JC), probably migrating north. There were several reports of **Common Gallinules**, a rare transient in the Region. An individual seen along Bedder Stone Pl., *Prince William* 18 Mar (anon.) was significantly before the 16 Apr extreme early date for the Piedmont. Other reports included 2 seen at Bles Pk. 25 Apr (GB, LF) continuing through 18 May (ph. m. obs.), and singles at Gravelly Pt. Pk., *Arlington* 27 Apr–1 May (EW); the National Recreation and Park Association lake, *Loudoun* 10 May (PN); and Occoquan Bay NWR 22 May (LC). The **Sandhill Cranes** that spent most of the winter at Algonkian RP and nearby areas continued into early spring, with 4 seen there 8 Mar (MMy) and 3 on 10 Mar (SK). An **Upland Sandpiper**, a rare transient in the Region, was seen among puddles along Hebron Church Rd., *Madison* 13 May (IT). A late **Dunlin**, a rare transient in the Piedmont with an extreme late date of 18 May, was found at the ponds/wetlands along Wilderness Rd., *Madison* 22 May (IT). A **White-rumped Sandpiper**, also a rare spring transient in the Piedmont, was seen at a pond along Colvin Ln., *Prince William* 30 May (EP), where it continued through 1 Jun. An impressive 22 **WHIMBRELS**, rare w. of the Chesapeake Bay, were observed in flight at Dyke Marsh 23 May (JH); 20 were found along the shore at nearby Hunting Cr. Bridge later in the day (ph. KG).

GULLS–HERONS

A **Bonaparte's Gull** seen off Hunting Cr. Bridge 18 May (KG) was considerably later than the species' Regional late date of 30 Apr. A **LITTLE GULL**, a species with only a handful of records in the state, was seen at Belmont Bay Marina 17 Apr (ph. LC, AJ). The period saw at least 10 reports, all widely scattered, of **Caspian Terns** in the Piedmont, where the species is a rare transient. A **Black Tern**, a rare spring transient in the inland Coastal Plain, was seen at Great Marsh in Mason Neck 11 May (ph. KG) and again 19 May. Also fairly rare this far inland were 10 **Common Terns** seen at Great Marsh in Mason Neck NWR 11 May (ph. KG) and singles at Dyke Marsh 12 May (RRi) and Leesylvania SP, *Prince William* 12 May (ph. RHe). A **Forster's Tern**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Mountain Run L. Pk. 14 Apr (KK). After a single bird showed up at Dyke Marsh 3 Mar (DSa), with 3 seen there and at nearby Hunting Cr. Bridge 6 May (KG, RRi). A large flock of **American White Pelicans**, a rare visitor in the Region, spent time farther south, with 38 first seen 12 Apr at Belmont Bay Marina (KG) and as many as 56 observed there and at nearby Occoquan Bay and Mason Neck SP, *Fairfax* for about a week (some wandered up the Occoquan R.); some of the flock hung around the rest of April, with 2 lingering into late May at Occoquan Bay (ph. m. obs.). Reports of **American Bitterns**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, included one at Bles Pk. 14 Apr (ph. BHe), often joined by a second bird through 28 Apr (m. obs.), and singles at Sky Meadows 24 Apr (TD); a pond on Middlesex Dr., *Loudoun* 11 May (GG); and Cub Run Stream Valley Pk. 15 May (AN). A **Least Bittern**, a rare and local transient in the Piedmont, was an exciting find at Bles Pk. 14 May (ph. CL). A **Great Egret** seen at Government Is. Pk., *Stafford* 2 Mar (LB) was considerably before the species' 25 Mar Coastal Plain early date; the species is a rare winter resident away from the coast. Early **Green Herons** ahead of the 10 Apr Piedmont early date were seen at the Auburn Middle School wetlands, *Fauquier* 1 Apr (GS); the East Stratford pond off Hope Pkwy., *Loudoun* 1 Apr (MS); and about 6 mi. away at Forest Manor, *Loudoun* 2 Apr (BHi). There were four reports of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons**, rare and local transients in the Piedmont: 2 at Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 23 Apr (KG) and singles at the Herndon Golf Course, *Fairfax* 1–7 May (WH); Bles Pk. 3–5 May (JB, ph. AGa); and Olde Izaak Walton Pk., *Loudoun* 3 May (ph. MMy). **Glossy Ibis**, a rare spring transient in the Piedmont, made several widely separated appearances in *Loudoun*: 9 at Bles Pk. 23 Apr (GG), with a single later spending time there 16–22

May (ph., m. obs.); 4 along Weather Service Rd. 30 Apr (AGa, BHe); and a single at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project 9 May (BHi).

RAPTORS-KINGLETS

A late **Northern Harrier** was seen near Ida Lee Pk., Loudoun 23 May (HA) and an apparent one at Waples Mill Meadow Pk., Fairfax, also 23 May (anon.). Also late were a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** seen at a residence at Taylorstown, Loudoun 22 May (GH) and an apparent one in the Pinecrest neighborhood, Fairfax 27 May (BHo). The Piedmont late date for both of these species is 30 Apr, and they are rare summer visitors. **Mississippi Kites** were reported returning to established and new locations in May, continuing the trend of recent years. A rare transient in the Piedmont was a **Merlin** seen along Meetze Rd., Fauquier 2 May (GS, SSl). A very early **Eastern Kingbird** was reported as seen by a group of four birders in clear scope views, perched and hawking insects from the top of a bare tree, at Meadowood Recreation Area, Fairfax 11 Mar (JH, anon.) (Regional early date 20 Apr). **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Region, especially in spring, were seen at Rock Hill District Pk., Fairfax 15 May (SJ); Sully Historic Site, Fairfax 21 May (SJ); Cub Run Stream Valley Pk. 23 May (QE); Algonkian RP 25 May (AR); Great Falls Pk., Fairfax 25 May (ph. JSto); and L. Fairfax Pk., Fairfax 27 May (JMe). Also a rare transient in the Region, **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were seen at Sully Woodlands, Fairfax 4 May (SJ) (the Piedmont early date is 10 May); Huntley Meadows 26 May (KG); and along Frytown Rd., Fauquier 30 May (GS). There were numerous reports of **Alder Flycatchers**, a rare transient in spring in the Region, including singles at Algonkian RP 20–25 May (AR, ph. m. obs.); Frying Pan Farm Pk. 20 May (KG); and a residence in Great Falls, Fairfax 21 May (ph. AN); 4 at Bristoe Station 23 May and 5 the next day (ph. KG); 2 at Julie Metz Wetland 24 May (KG) and again 25 May; one at Poplar Ford Pk., Fairfax 25 May (KS, RMo) and 2 there the next day; 2 at Huntley Meadows 26 May (KG); and one at Woodgrove HS, Loudoun 31 May (JY). A **Least Flycatcher**, a rare spring transient in the Piedmont, was reported on the Holmes Run II Trail, Alexandria 18 May (LU). An early **White-eyed Vireo** seen at Sky Meadows 31 Mar (DB) preceded the Piedmont extreme early date of 5 Apr. A **Blue-headed Vireo** seen at Long Branch Nature Center 4 Mar (ph. TN) was significantly earlier than the species' Regional early date of 10 Apr. A **Brown-headed Nuthatch**, rare in the Region since the winter stays of the

Mountain Run L. Pk. bird seem to have ceased, was reported as distinctly heard at C.M. Crockett Pk., Fauquier 20 Mar (DL, GS, SSl). Seen well before the 10 Apr Regional early date were **House Wrens** at Riverbend Pk., Fairfax 1 Mar (SB) and Aquia Landing 22 Mar (AGr, EG); the species is a rare winter visitor. A **Sedge Wren**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Frying Pan Farm Pk. 2–3 May (ph. AN, m. obs.). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was reported at G.R. Thompson WMA, Fauquier 22 May (WM, RMo, ES), past the species' Piedmont extreme late date of 16 May.

MIMIDS-DICKCISSEL

A **Gray Catbird** seen at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, Loudoun 17 Mar (MMe) was far earlier than the Piedmont early date of 25 Apr; the species is a rare but regular winter visitor. Two **Purple Finches** were observed at a residence in Burke, Fairfax 13 May (DP), with both, then one, seen again 20–22 May, outlasting the species' 11 May Piedmont extreme late date. A **Grasshopper Sparrow**, seen in a gravel lot at Dulles Int. Airport, Fairfax 6 Apr (ph. JE), preceded the 20 Apr Piedmont early date. A **Lark Sparrow**, a very rare visitor and apparently just the seventh record in the Region, was well-seen at L. Mooney Pk., Stafford 5 May (ph. JeP, JoP). A **Seaside Sparrow** was seen at Aquia Landing 6 May (ph. JStr). While the species is a rare late-summer dispersant in the inland Coastal Plain, this is just the second known spring sighting in the Region. Five **Savannah Sparrows** were observed well past the 10 May Piedmont late date along Grassdale Rd., Fauquier 31 May (DSO), a repeat breeding site that is further s. than the extreme n. part of the Piedmont where the species is known to be a rare breeder. There were several reports of **Lincoln's Sparrows** in the period—a fairly rare but increasing spring transient in the Region. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, a rare visitor in the Region, was first seen at Dyke Marsh 22 Mar (CE, JMa), where it continued through 5 Apr (ph. m. obs.). Two **Bobolinks**, rarely found inside the Capital Beltway, were seen at Americana Pk., Fairfax 6 May (SE); there was an uncommon sighting of 30+ the same day farther w. at Frying Pan Farm Pk. (HW), with 15 still there 12 May. Perhaps a wandering over-wintering bird, a **Baltimore Oriole** was seen at a residence in Prince William 3–8 Mar (D&KB). There were numerous reports of **Golden-winged Warblers**, a species with increasing rarity away from the n. Blue Ridge: a m. at Huntley Meadows 3–5 May (ph. BJ, EK) and a f. there 4–5 May (QE, KG, ph. WK); a m. at Upton Hill RP, Arlington 5–6 May (MG); a m. at Cub Run Stream Valley Pk. 5–10 May (NA, SSi); a m. at Occoquan Bay 6 May (ph. JStr); a m. at White Oaks Pk., Fairfax 4–7 May (ph.

BJ); and a m. at Leesylvania SP, *Prince William* 8–10 May (LC, AJ). A singing m. **Brewster's Warbler**, a recognized Golden-winged × Blue-winged hybrid, was seen at Huntley Meadows 7–13 May (ph. SF, m. obs.), very soon after the m. and f. Golden-winged Warblers were seen there.



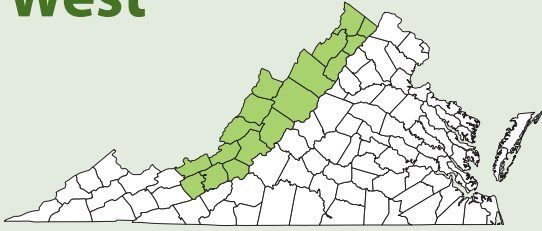
Seth Honig's 13 May photo of the Brewster's Warbler that was at Huntley Meadows, *Fairfax*

Late **Blue-winged Warblers** were seen at Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, *Fairfax* 17 May (HM) and Fred Crabtree Pk., *Fairfax* 23 May (MMay); 10 May is the Coastal Plain and Piedmont late date for this fairly rare transient in the e. part of the Region. An early **Tennessee Warbler** was observed at Conway-Robinson SF, *Prince William* 22–25 Apr (ph. SK), preceding the typical slim Piedmont migration range of 2–20 May. Three of the species, which is a fairly rare spring transient in both the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, were observed at Monticello Pk. 21 May (ph. TK). An **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a rare transient in the Region, was seen at Frying Pan Farm Pk. 4 May (CS, PSc) and again 9 May (ph. AN). A **Nashville Warbler**, a late and fairly rare transient in the Coastal Plain, was observed at Huntley Meadows 23 May (LS), where the late date is 15 May. A rare transient in the Region, especially in spring, 2 **Mourning Warblers** were observed along Possum Pt. Rd., *Prince William* 10 May (SF, KG, PK). Singles were observed at Bristoe Station 24 May (DL, ph. EM); Huntley Meadows 24 May (BJ); Angry Moose Lodge HQ, *Fairfax* 26 May (RS); and Julie Metz Wetland 26 May (MMai, RMa). A **Common Yellowthroat** showed up early at Aquia Landing 22 Mar (AGr, EG); the Coastal Plain early date is 10 Apr; the species is a fairly rare winter resident. There was an impressive showing of 10 **Cape May Warblers** past the Coastal Plain late date of 15 May at Monticello Pk. 21 May (TA, ph. TK); one lingered as late as 25 May. An early **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was seen at Huntley Meadows 19 Apr (MMc); the Coastal Plain extreme early date is 28 Apr. Single **Yellow-throated Warblers**, rare and local in the Piedmont north of *Albemarle* and *Louisa*,

were seen at Phelps WMA, *Fauquier* 8 Apr, 28 Apr, & 3 May (TD, IT). An early **Black-throated Green Warbler** seen at a residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 5 Apr (EK) preceded the Piedmont early date of 20 Apr. Seen just prior to the 2 May Piedmont extreme early date was a **Canada Warbler** seen at the Warrenton Res. 30 Apr (PSa). Also early were a f. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** that appeared at a residence in Reston, *Fairfax* 1 Apr (OL) (Piedmont extreme early date 2 Apr) and a **Blue Grosbeak** observed at Mountain Run L. Pk. 12 Apr (GJ) (Piedmont extreme early date 21 Apr). A **Dickcissel** that had been a rare winter resident at the Julie Metz Wetland in January and February was seen again 11 Mar (JA). Dickcissels also returned again this season to Bristoe Station, where they likely have been breeding since 2017; one was observed 25 May (JR-C) and continued through the end of the period.

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West



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Alleghany, 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*); Broadway (Broadway Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Rockingham*); Roanoke STP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke City)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Single **Snow Geese** were found in *Augusta* 4 Mar (EC), in Waynesboro 27 Mar (MN), and in Luray, *Page* 6 Mar (CK) and 18 Apr (DH). **Greater White-fronted Goose** sightings included 2 in Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 5 Mar (MS); 2 at L. Campbell, *Rockingham* 7 Mar (GMO); and one in Dublin, *Pulaski* 9–20 Mar (m. obs.). A **Cackling Goose** was seen at Lakeside L., *Frederick* 2 Mar (WP) and one was at Broadway 21 Mar (DH). The **Trumpeter Swan** with wing tag P61 was seen 1–11 Mar in Waynesboro (m. obs.). A **Tundra Swan** was at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 8–21 Mar (m. obs.). A **Surf Scoter** pair was observed and photographed at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 18 Apr (JF, DH, SS). **Long-tailed Duck** reports included 3 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 13 Mar (GR); one in Staunton 25 Mar (AL); 2 in Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 25 Mar (VL); one at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 26 Mar (MS, SS) then 15 there 28 Mar (AS, SS); and 2–3 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 22–30 Mar (m. obs.). A **Red-necked Grebe** was found at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 18–19 Apr (m. obs.). A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** was photographed in *Augusta* 20 Apr (MGo). The **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** that spent the winter at L. Frederick, *Frederick* was last recorded 2 Mar (ph. CM). A **King Rail** was seen and photographed at Greenfield, *Botetourt* 28–29 May (m. obs.). **Virginia Rail** finds included 3 at Bent Mt. Center, *Roanoke* 27 Mar (MB) then 2 there 29 Mar (AD, SL); one to 2 in Blacksburg 24 Apr through 10 May (m. obs.); and 5 at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 15 May (GB). **Sora** reports included 3 in *Augusta* 25 Apr (JF, GR); one in Blacksburg 24 (RM) & 25 Apr (PL) and 1–2 May (m. obs.); one in *Warren* 1 May (JF); 4 at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 3 May (BK); one in *Frederick* 7–8 May (GR);

3 in *Rockingham* 11 May (MG); and one in *Rockbridge* 16 May (LN). Single **Common Gallinules** were found at Abrams Cr. Wetlands, *Frederick* 5 (DC, DG) to 8 May (DG, EG, GR); L. Frederick, *Frederick* 13 May (MY); in *Page* 21 May (FF, JF, DH); and at Greenfield L., *Botetourt* 22–24 May (m. obs.). A **Sandhill Crane** was found at Smith L., *Augusta* 6 Apr (GM) and one was in *Rockingham* 23 May (MG). A **Black-bellied Plover** was in *Rockingham* 28 (MG) & 29 Apr (DH); another was in *Shenandoah* 11 (JF) & 12 May (JF, DH) and one was at the Roanoke STP 20 May (AD, KD). An **American Golden-Plover** was seen and photographed in Dublin, *Pulaski* 17 May (MM et al.). **Semipalmated Plover** totals of note were 12–14 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 11 (MG) to 13 May (CTZ) and 28 in *Shenandoah* 12 May (DH). An **Upland Sandpiper** was found in *Rockingham* 18 Apr (*vide* DL). A **RUDDY TURNSTONE** was photographed at the Roanoke STP 21 May (NR) and a **Sanderling** was in *Rockingham* 16 (IL, WL) to 18 May (MG). **Least Sandpiper** high counts were 40 at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* (MG); 36 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* (MG) and 18 at Broadway 11 May (MG); and 16 at the Roanoke STP 21 May (NR). A total of 5 **White-rumped Sandpipers** were found in two *Augusta* locations 21 May (AL, GM); one was in the county 22 May (EC). **Pectoral Sandpiper** peak counts included 5 in Swoope, *Augusta* 15 Apr (JL, VL) and 12 in Dublin, *Pulaski* 19 Apr (MM). Highest **Semipalmated Sandpiper** tallies were 6 at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 13 May (DH); 6 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 17 May (PN); 8 in *Augusta* (GM); 23 at the Roanoke STP 21 May (NR); and 9 in Dublin, *Pulaski* (MM) and 6 in *Shenandoah* 22 May (DH). A **Western Sandpiper** was seen at Smith L., *Augusta* 20 May (GM). Three **Short-billed Dowitchers** were observed at Smith L., *Augusta* 23 Apr (AL). Two **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** were found at Mt. Solon, *Augusta* 24 Apr (AL, GM, PW); one in *Shenandoah* 24 Apr (DH); 18 in Dublin, *Pulaski* 24 Apr (m. obs.) with

2 still there 26 Apr (MM). A **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** was seen at Mt. Solon, *Augusta* 23–24 Apr (m. obs.). Numerous **RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** were noted in the Region mid- to late May as follows: one at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 17 May (m. obs.) then 4 there 28 May (VB); 7 at Broadway 21 May (MG, DH) followed by 9 there the next day (JF, DH) and 3 on 28 May (DH); one at Greenfield, *Botetourt* 23 & 24 May (m. obs.); and one in Blacksburg 31 May (m. obs.). A remarkable weather-related fallout of **WILLETS** (all *inornata* based on photos) deposited one in Dublin, *Pulaski* 26 (SK) & 27 Apr (LA, ph. MM, GR, ph. JW); 6 in Blacksburg 26 Apr (ph. JG, ph. PL, DW, HW); one (subspecies undetermined) at Cross Junction, *Frederick* 28 Apr (GR); one in *Rockingham* 6 (ph. MG) to 8 May (DH); and 16 at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 6 May (ph. MB, KD, ph. AD).



Annie Downing took this Western Willet's photo at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 6 May.

GULLS-TANAGERS

Bonaparte's Gull sightings accounted for 60 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 22 Mar (PL); 42 at Broadway 31 Mar (MG); 82 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 31 Mar (DBZ, WP); and the following at L. Holiday, *Frederick*: 62 on 28 Mar, 210 on 31 Mar, and 73 on 5 Apr (GR). A **Caspian Tern** was seen at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 18 Apr (DB). Elsewhere, 5 were at Smith L., *Augusta* 18 Apr (m. obs.); 3 at Sunset View L., *Augusta* 20 Apr (AL); and one at Broadway 22 Apr (EO). A **Black Tern** was seen in Harrisonburg 9 (MG) & 10 May (GMO); singles were at Claytor L., *Pulaski* (MM) and L. Frederick, *Frederick* 22 May (m. obs.). Four **Forster's Terns** were observed at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 5 Apr (LS). Additional observations had one at Silver L., *Rockingham* 5 (DR), 24 (MG), & 27 Apr (GMO); one at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 18 Apr

(SS); 2 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 18 Apr to 3 May (GR); 2 at Broadway (CT); one at the Roanoke STP (JD, KD) and one in Staunton 30 Apr (MK, GM, PW); 2 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 6 May (MSt); and 3 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 7 May (MM). Single **American Bitterns** were found near Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 28 Mar (GM) then 12 (IL) & 24 Apr (GM); at Braley Pond, *Augusta* 5 Apr (RS); in *Botetourt* 18 Apr (DH) and 8 May (BK); at the Starkey Wetland, *Roanoke* 27–30 Apr (m. obs.); in Blacksburg 28 Apr (SL); and at the Abrams Cr. Wetlands Preserve, *Frederick* 8 May (DB, WP). A **Least Bittern** was observed at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 12–15 May (m. obs.) and one was in *Augusta* 16 May (AL, GM). A **SNOWY EGRET** was seen in *Rockingham* 24 May (m. obs.). A **GLOSSY IBIS** was observed and photographed in *Shenandoah* 8–9 May (JF, RW) and one was in *Augusta* 22 May (m. obs.). A **Mississippi Kite** was seen at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 25 May (MM). A dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** recorded on Sapling Ridge, *Highland* 10 May (LH, JSp) was 2 days beyond this species' Gold Book Mountains and Valleys 8 May extreme late date. The **Long-eared Owl** that wintered at Blandy was observed through 9 Mar (m. obs.). Four **Short-eared Owls** were seen in Staunton until 8 Mar (m. obs.). Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were observed near Swoope, *Augusta* 16 May (AL); at Cowbane Prairie NAP, *Augusta* (GM) and in George Washington NF, *Shenandoah* 23 May (JF); in Jefferson NF, *Montgomery* (BS) 24 & 25 May (SK); and near Blacksburg 24 May (HW). One each **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were at Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 17 May (JF); L. Frederick, *Frederick* 26 May (DB, WP); and in Shenandoah NP, *Page* 30 May (SR). Virginia's second fully documented **BELL'S VIREO** was at the Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, Blacksburg 28 (ph. DW et al.) & 29 Apr (ph. & v. r. m. obs.). Coincidentally, another was posted to



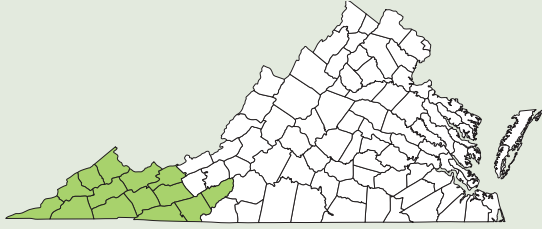
The Virginia Tech Vet School Pond Bell's Vireo, photographed by Joe Girgente 28 April.

eBird 29 Apr at Love's Pt., *Queen Anne's*, MD. The first and only other VARCOM Category 1 Bell's Vireo was one banded on Fisherman Island NWR 19 Sep 2010. The Gold Book lists one Category 2 sight record at Pocahontas SP, *Chesterfield* 12 Aug 1962. Twenty-five **Horned Larks** were in *Rockingham* 26 Apr (WL). **Brown-headed Nuthatch** sightings included 2 in Dublin, *Pulaski* 20 Mar (LD); 2 in *Montgomery* 28 Mar (m. obs.); 6 at Whispering Pines Pk., *Roanoke* 16 May (LC, SL); and 5 at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 25 May (LC). A **Sedge Wren** was found in Blacksburg 17 Apr (RM). Subsequently, singles were found at Caldwell Fields, *Montgomery* 29 Apr (m. obs.); in Blacksburg 10 (m. obs.) & 16 May (RM); and at Whitethorne, *Montgomery* 10 May (LA). A **Marsh Wren** was at Blandy 4–30 Mar (m. obs.). Others reported were one in *Augusta* 23 Apr (GM); one to 2 in Blacksburg 17 Apr to 2 May (m. obs.); and one at Roundhill Marsh, *Frederick* 2 May (JF, GR). The highest **Red Crossbill** counts were from Briery Branch Gap, *Rockingham* with 14 on 8 Mar (KH) and 24 on 24 May (JS). Additional reports in the Region included 2 near Blacksburg 28 Mar, 11 & 27 Apr, and 10 May (m. obs.); 4 in *Augusta* 4 Apr (GM); 2 on Little Walker Mt., *Pulaski* 22 Apr (SB); 2 in *Augusta* 29 Apr (GM); 2 in Poverty Hollow, *Montgomery* 28 May (RM); and 12 at Locust Springs, *Highland* 29 May (MN, NR). A frequently listed **Lark Sparrow** was at Blandy 3–29 Mar (m. obs.). High **Golden-winged Warbler** counts included 5 in *Giles* 3 May (JG, HW); 7 there 16 May (JW); and 4 in Blue Grass Valley, *Highland* 28 May (MN, NR).

Two **Swainson's Warblers** were found in *Rockingham* 20 May (VB). The **SCOTT'S ORIOLE** that wintered at a private residence near Swoope, *Augusta* continued to least 23 Mar (ph. m. obs.). Birders were alerted to *Augusta's* third **WESTERN TANAGER** 18 Apr (*vide* JSp). This one was a m. that had been present for six weeks off Stingy Hollow Rd.; it was documented by m. obs. through 7 May.

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Southwest



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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

After a fairly dry start to the spring, the rain really picked up in May, which seemed to result in migrants lingering a bit longer than usual in many cases. The most interesting record for the Region that might be related to that phenomenon was a Lapland Longspur in *Buchanan* for an entire week. It was a good spring for passerine migrants as well, with several species seen that are typically only found in the fall, if they are recorded at all.

QUAIL-OWLS

As has often been the case in recent years, the only reports of **Northern Bobwhite** came from Southern Gap, *Buchanan* where up to 2 were recorded throughout May (m. obs.). Most **Eurasian Collared-Dove** reports this spring came from the usual spots in *Lee*. More notable were 2 on Rocky Hollow Rd., *Grayson* 27 Mar (ph. AB), a first county record, and 5 at Ivanhoe, *Wythe* 19 May (ph. MA, EC). Up to 3 **Virginia Rails** were at Saltville, *Smyth* throughout the period; another bird was noted at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 4 & 28 Apr (ph. DS). Single **Sora** were at Saltville, *Smyth* 25 Apr (ph. CD) and at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 10 May (DS). **Semipalmated Plovers** were at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 6 & 14 May (ph. DS). It was a good spring for **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, with one at Washington County Pk., *Washington* 27 Apr (MS); 2 at Saltville, *Smyth* 18 May (ph. MA, m. obs.); one at Kinder Valley Rd., *Wythe* 18 May (ph. MA); and up to 12 in Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 14 & 19 May (ph. DS). **Bonaparte's Gulls** were recorded at more locations than usual this spring, with one at Saltville, *Smyth* 21 May (DS); 6 at Britt's Park, *Tazewell* 1 Apr (ph. CD); one at The Cove, *Tazewell* 15–18 Apr (ph. CD); and one at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 14–16 Apr (ph. AB, VF). A **Forster's Tern** was at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 28 Apr (ph. AB). Three **Common Terns** were at the same location 9 May (FA). An **American Bittern** was at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 4 Apr (ph. AB). A dead one that appeared to have been hit by a car was also found in Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 17 May (MA). A **Black-**

crowned Night-Heron was at a farm pond on Barberry Dr., *Lee* 28 Apr (ph. TS, LG). The only **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** report came from Bristol as usual, with one at Beaver Cr. 6 May (ph. TD). **Golden Eagles** were at Breaks Interstate Pk., *Dickenson* 9 Mar (DR) and Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* 27 Mar (CD). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* 18 Mar (CD).

FLYCATCHERS-DICKCISSEL

An **Alder Flycatcher** at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 31 May (v.r. GB) may have been either a late migrant or a potential breeder. The only **Loggerhead Shrike** reports were one at Elk Garden, *Russell* 9 Apr (ph. CD) and one on Browning Rd., *Washington* 29 Apr (ph. TS). A **Philadelphia Vireo** in Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 10 May (DS) was an unexpected spring migrant, but it seems this was a better spring than normal for this species throughout the state. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** continued throughout the period at Washington County Pk., *Washington* (m. obs.). A **Marsh Wren** was at the Riverstone Organic Farm, *Floyd* 3 May (SC). Not surprisingly after the species' poor showing this winter, it was a poor spring for **Purple Finches** in the Region, with just two reports: 2 at Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* 8 Mar (LA) and one at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 12 Apr (DS). **Pine Siskin** records were limited and mostly restricted to the Whitetop/Mt. Rogers area. The latest report was of 3 birds along the AT near Elk Garden, *Smyth* 18 May (ph. MA, EC). The only report away from this area was a lone bird at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 5 May (RM). **Red Crossbills** were on Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* throughout March (m. obs.), and there was also a single bird present there along with 5 birds at Mt. Rogers on 14 May (DS). More unexpected was a single bird at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 5 May (ph. RM), providing the first documented record for *Buchanan*. One of the most surprising finds of the season was a m. **Lapland Longspur** in almost full breeding plumage at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 3 & 9 May (ph. C&VR, DO, MS).



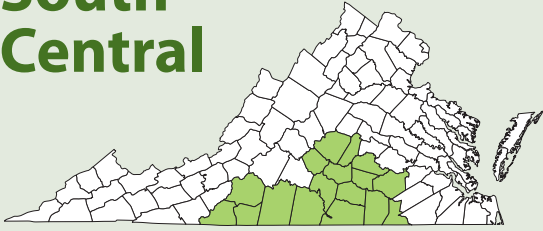
Chuck & Veronica Ratliff photographed this Lapland Longspur at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 3 May.

The only **Golden-winged Warblers** this spring were in *Tazewell*, with birds at two different locations near The Cove

23 May (DO, MS) and one photographed at Cavitt's Creek Pk. 24 May. There are very few spring **Orange-crowned Warbler** reports for this Region, so a well-photographed bird at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 14 Apr (ph. AB) was a very nice find. Another one was at Breaks Interstate Pk., *Dickenson* 19 April (DO). A **Wilson's Warbler** was at Riverstone Organic Farm, *Floyd* 27 May (ph. SC). An impressive count of 8 **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** was recorded at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 3 May (ph. RM). Surprisingly, the only **Dickcissel** reported was one on Waddletown Rd., *Bland* 13 & 17 May (ph. NN, v.r. MA, EC).

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South Central



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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

The spring weather was largely pleasant and some noteworthy birds were found, though the emergence of COVID-19 clearly slowed birder activity in this Region as well as across the nation. Late in the season, work on the final year of the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas began, providing several noteworthy reports. Since waterfowl numbers were low during the preceding winter, it's not surprising that counts of species in that group were generally low this season as well. On the other hand, several new county shorebird records were established in counties with minimal shorebird habitat.

Abbreviations: Dick Cross (Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg*); Kerr (John H. Kerr Reservoir, *Mecklenburg*, lower lake, and *Charlotte/Halifax*, upper lake); SRR (Sandy River Reservoir, *Prince Edward*).

WATERFOWL

The only **Blue-winged Teal** report away from Dick Cross, where several were seen on various dates, was a single bird at Briery Cr. L., *Prince Edward*, 14 Apr (AJ, TJ, MS). **Northern Shovelers** were only reported from Dick Cross in March, the latest record being 3 m. there 29 Mar (PG), after the species was not reported in the Region at all the previous winter. The only **American Black Ducks** reported were 3 at a private lake in c. *Buckingham*, 21 Mar, (DS), and 3 at Dick Cross 22 Mar (AD, PG). The only **Redhead** was one on lower Kerr 1 Mar (PG). Some **Greater Scaup** were on lower Kerr in March, but away from there the only report was a pair at SRR 24 Mar (ES). A remarkable 7 **Long-tailed Ducks** were on lower Kerr 22 Mar (ph. AD, PG); the species was unreported elsewhere and is generally unexpected in the Region. A single m. **Common Merganser** along the Riverwalk Tr., Danville, 16 Mar (ph. DP) was the only report.

RAILS-LOONS

Two **Virginia Rails** were calling at Dick Cross 23 Apr (NN), with one there on subsequent days through 25 Apr (m.obs.); the species is seldom reported in the Region despite probably being a regular migrant. The same might be said for **Sora**, which were reported at Dick Cross 19 Apr (1 bird, PG) through 10 May (AD, PG), with a high count of 6 on 23 Apr (NN). The high count of **American Coots** was only 8 at Dick Cross 29 Mar (PG), with no reports from anywhere other than lower Kerr and Dick Cross. Migrant shorebirds of note included 27 **Semipalmated Plovers** in a flooded field along River Rd. in s. *Cumberland* 22 May (ES), probable firsts for the county, followed by 6 there 24 May (ES). Two **Ruddy Turnstones** at Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg* 16 May (PG) were the only report. A flock of 12 **Dunlin** present at the same s. *Cumberland* site where the Semipalmated Plovers were seen 22 May (ES) were probably the first *Cumberland* record, while *Prince Edward's* first Dunlin appeared 30 Apr (ph. TS, ph. ES, ph. MS) on a farm pond in the w. part of the county. Also in the flooded field in s. *Cumberland* on 22 May (ES) were 2 **Least Sandpipers** and 6 Semipalmated Sandpipers, remarkable records for this location, with the Semipalmated Sandpipers apparent first county records. An ad. **Laughing Gull** was at Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg* 17 May (ph. AD, PG); while the species is not expected there, it's not unprecedented around Kerr. Less expected were 4 seen briefly at SRR 28 May (ph. MS), providing a high count for *Prince Edward* as well as the first spring record there. The 28 May birds might have been influenced by the movement of the remains of Tropical Storm Bertha, which were passing w. of the Region at the time of the sighting. The only **Forster's Tern** reports were single birds at SRR 18 Apr (TS, ES) and lower Kerr 19 Apr (AD, PG), and 3 at SRR 27 Apr (TS). A continuing **Red-throated Loon** with an injured wing was present until at least 17 May (AD, PG) on lower Kerr and was the only individual reported.

ANHINGA-HERONS

An **Anhinga** at Taylors Millpond, *Greensville*, 16 May (TS, ES) was the only report. A single **American Bittern** was at Dick Cross 23 Apr (DP) through 25 Apr (PG), and another at Appomattox Riverside Pk., *Dinwiddie*, 8 Apr (TS, ES). A **Snowy Egret** 22 May (ph. ES) in a flooded field in s. *Cumberland* (see also Semipalmated Plover et al., above) was the only report and the first in several years for that county, while a **Little Blue Heron**, also along River Rd., *Cumberland*, 30 Apr, was perhaps a first county record and all the more remarkable for being an a. individual. Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at Wilcks Lk., *Prince Edward* 22 May (ph. WR), were the only night-herons reported.

VIREOS-DICKCISSEL

The earliest **Blue-headed Vireo** report was one singing 13 Mar at James R. SP, *Buckingham* (AL); there were two other March reports as well as numerous April sightings, a reasonably good showing for the species. A **Sedge Wren** was at the Petersburg National Battlefield Pk., *Dinwiddie* 2 May (ph. AD). Two **Marsh Wrens** were singing at Dick Cross 23 Apr (NN) and one remained through at least 3 May (AD, PG); the species is never common Regionally and these were the only reports this season.



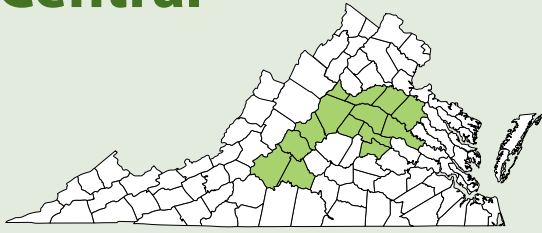
This Sedge Wren posed for Adam D’Onofrio at the Petersburg National Battlefield Pk., *Dinwiddie* 2 May

The only **American Pipit** report was a single bird seen on plowed ground at a farm in w. *Prince Edward* 30 Apr (TS, ES, MS). Only single **Purple Finches** were reported, following the species’ near-absence during the winter, with individual birds at feeders in South Boston, *Halifax* 4 Mar (JB) and 15 Mar (PG) and on Dry Fork Rd., *Pittsylvania*

18–19 Mar (MF), while the only **Pine Siskin** was also a bird visiting a feeder in South Boston from the beginning of the season through 20 Apr (JB). The only **Blue-winged Warblers** were single birds 26 Apr at Banister R. WMA, *Halifax* (HG, PG), and in Farmville, *Prince Edward* 30 Apr (ph. JD), while **Swainson’s Warblers** were only found in se. *Greensville* near the North Carolina border, where single birds were noted 30 (JF, JS) & 31 (KG) May. The 3 **Wilson’s Warblers** seen 10 May at Dick Cross (AD, PG) were an amazing total given that even single birds are rarely found in the spring in this Region; the only other individual this season was one along the Berry Hill Plantation Tr., *Halifax* 14 May (HG, PG). Finally, **Dickcissels** were reported from three counties (*Cumberland*, *Halifax*, and *Prince Edward*), perhaps presaging a good number of this species attempting to breed in the Region.

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Central



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

With nearly 240 species reported in total, this spring was one for the books. Strong southwesterly winds brought early records of quite a few species, while several rare feeder visitors brought joy to cabin-fevered birders during the COVID-19 lockdown. April and May had several major rainfall events, causing impressive fallout events of waterbirds. Shorebirds stole the show for many birders this spring, with a total of a truly remarkable 20 species. Highlights were innumerable, but standout rarities included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Upland Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, both Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, Willet, Black and Common Terns, Anhinga, Swallow-tailed Kite, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Swainson's Warbler, and Western Tanager.

Abbreviations: (MCLP) Mill Creek Lake Park, *Amherst*; (RVT) Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson*.

WATERFOWL—CRANES

The 2nd Regional record, a **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** delighted area birders at the Fredericksburg Canal Path, Fredericksburg 30 & 31 May (BL, ph. m. obs.). Two **Trumpeter Swans** were at Clarks Mt. Rd., *Orange* 7 Mar (ph. TD, IT). Five **Long-tailed Ducks** dropped into Lickinghole Cr. Res., *Albemarle* 25 Mar (ph. AC). Two more were at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 18 Apr (ph. ST). A **Common Merganser** hen with 13 ducklings on the Rivanna R. at Pen Pk., Charlottesville 12 May (ph. BB TB CF) provided a notable breeding record away from the western James R. There were several **Virginia Rails**, with one recorded calling during nocturnal migration at Rugby Ave., Charlottesville 7 Apr (a.r. CF). Others were at Robert W. Duncan WMA, *Caroline* 17 Apr (AR); up to 3 at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 23 Apr through 6 May (ph. BB, TB, MN, JP, m. obs.); and one at Terry's Run Rd. 28 Apr (AR). **Soras** were not as widespread, with one at Warren Ferry, *Albemarle* 5–12 Apr (ph. BB, m. obs) and up to 3 at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle*

23 Apr through 15 May (BB, TB, JP, MN, m. obs.). Not quite annual in spring in the Region, a **Common Gallinule** was observed at Fluvanna Ruritan L., *Fluvanna* 30 May (ph. DV). **Sandhill Cranes** showed up at several sites including one at Green Springs, *Louisa* 1 Mar (GG); another at a small wetland by Charlottesville Albemarle Airport, *Albemarle* 26 & 27 Apr (ph. GB, SB, m. obs.); 2 flying over Entwood, *Hanover* 4 May (NC); and possibly the same continuing bird at Green Springs, *Louisa* 30 May (ph. AB).



Baxter Beamer photographed this Sandhill Crane near the Charlottesville Airport, *Albemarle* 27 April.

SHOREBIRDS—TERNs

Three **Black-bellied Plovers** were found at Groome's Pt., *Orange* 21 May (ph. AR, IT) and another was seen flying over Pleasant Landing Marina, *Louisa* 22 May (AR). Likely not reported in the Region in over a decade, 2 **Upland Sandpipers** were enjoyed by many at Greenfield Farm, *Albemarle* 26 Apr (ph. MN, m. obs.). **Dunlin** were detected in unusually high numbers during a fallout across the Region,

with peak counts of 6 at Wingina, *Nelson* 21 May (ph. ES, TS); 5 at Central Plains Pond, *Fluvanna* 21 May (ph. ST); 3 at Braeburn Pond, *Albemarle* 22 May (MJ, ph. BB, TB); and 3 at Groomes Pt., *Orange* 21 May (ph. AR, IT). There were numerous other reports of singles from *Albemarle*, *Campbell*, *Fluvanna*, Lynchburg, *Nelson*, and *Orange*. The sole report of **White-rumped Sandpiper** was one at Central Plains Pond, *Fluvanna* among other fallout shorebirds 21 May (ph. ST). There were two **Short-billed Dowitcher** reports from May 21, one from Groome's Pt., *Orange* (ph. AR, IT) and 2 from Wingina, *Nelson* (ph. ES, TS). Very rare in the Region with less than five records, there were two **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** reports, both from 24 Apr: 2 at Groome's Pt., *Orange* (AR) and another at Liberty Corner Farm, *Albemarle* (ph. BB, WC, m. obs). The fact that both dowitcher species observations came in pairs from the same dates suggested a related fallout event for each.



A Long-billed Dowitcher at Liberty Corner Farm, *Albemarle* 24 April (Photo by David Shoch)

Very rare in the Region and especially in spring migration, 2 **WILSON'S PHALAROPES** were found at Penicks Mill, *Bedford* 24 & 25 Apr (ph. BE, m. obs.). Several **RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** were detected due to the offshore passage of Tropical Storm Arthur, 2 and then 6 at MCLP 20 & 21 May (ph. MJ, MB, m. obs) and another at Green Springs, *Louisa* 22 May (ph. AR). Braeburn Pond, *Albemarle* proved to be a **WILLET** (all subspecies *inornata*) hotspot, with one there 26 Apr (ph. BB, m. obs), then a mind-boggling 44 there 30 Apr (ph. PM, m. obs) for one of the strangest and most impressive spectacles of the period. Three **Black Terns** briefly stopped by Braeburn Pond, *Albemarle* 21 May (ph. PM, m. obs.) during a weather system and another was at MCLP 22 May (JC). Three **Common Terns** were found at



Baxter Beamer's photo of most of the Willets at Braeburn Pond, *Albemarle* 30 April

Smith Mt. L, *Bedford* 21 May (ph. LA, GB) and 3 were at Reusen's Dam, *Bedford* 22 May (ph. LA).

ANHINGA-FLYCATCHERS

An **Anhinga** was spotted soaring over Bird Dog Mine, *Caroline* 23 May (v.r. EO). Up to 3 **American Bitterns** were found at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 23–29 Apr (ph. BB, TB, JP, MN, m. obs.); another was recorded during nocturnal migration at Emerson Commons, *Albemarle* 29 Apr (a.r. MS). At least 2 **Least Bitterns** were found at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 29 Apr through 27 May (BB, ph. TB, CF, MN, DS). A rare visitor to the Region, a **Cattle Egret** was found at Independence Rd., *Hanover* 14 Apr (ph. NC). Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were spotted, one at MCLP 17 Apr (ph. DB) and another at L. Hollymead, *Albemarle* 24 & 25 Apr (ph. m. obs.). Four **GLOSSY IBIS** briefly visited Penicks Mill, *Bedford* 26 Apr (ph. BE, m. obs.) A rare but increasing visitor, a **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** was observed flying over Sawhill Blvd, *Spotsylvania* 4 Apr (GJ). There were several migrant **Mississippi Kites**: one at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 15 May (ph. BB, TB, WC, PM, DS); another at New Bridge Rd., *Louisa* 18 May (CF); one at Elizabeth Ave., Charlottesville 23 May (ph. WC); and one at IX Art Pk., Charlottesville 26 May (ph. BB, TB). Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were found at Turkey Sag Rd., *Albemarle* 15 May (ph. MN); Dunlora, *Albemarle* 23 & 24 May (ph. DC, m. obs); Peaks View Pk., Lynchburg 23 May (ph. LA, GB); RVT 25 May (ph. ES, TS); and Greenbrier Pk., Charlottesville 25 May (ph. TB, m. obs.). Six vocalizing **Alder Flycatchers** was a remarkably high count of this rare migrant at Greenbrier Pk., Charlottesville 24 May (ph. a.r. TB, m. obs.), and reflected a statewide fallout of this species around this date. The sixth regional record of **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** put on a show for birders at Blackwater Rd., *Bedford* 6 & 7 May (ph. CRE, m. obs.).

VIREOS-DICKCISSEL

Quite rare for spring, a **Philadelphia Vireo** was found at L. Orange, *Orange* 5 May (ph. AR, CL). A **White-eyed Vireo** at Gold Mine Marsh, *Louisa* 21 & 22 Mar (ph. AR, CF) was quite early. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Riveredge Pk., *Amherst* 5 Mar (GS) was also notably early, and it seems plausible that both aforementioned passerines might have overwintered. A singing **Winter Wren** at Hog Camp Gap, *Amherst* 17 (BE, MJ, DMS) & 25 May likely represented a bird on territory. **Marsh Wrens** were found at three sites: up to 4 at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 23–29 Apr (ph. BB, TB, JP, MN, m. obs.); another at Lickinghole Cr, *Albemarle* 28 Apr (a.r. MS); and one at HumanKind Trails, Lynchburg 7 May (ph. LA). Not reported annually in the Region, a singing **Sedge Wren** was present 23 & 24 Apr (ph. a.r. BB, TB, JP, MN, m. obs.) at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle*.



This Sedge Wren was at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 23 April. (Photo by Baxter Beamer)

Extremely unexpected, especially outside of irruption winters, an **Evening Grosbeak** visited a feeder and the nearby Rivanna Trail in Charlottesville (ph. DH, m. obs.) 20–28 Apr. A rare spring migrant in the Region, there were two **Clay-colored Sparrow** reports; one visited a backyard feeder in *Spotsylvania* 7 & 10 Apr (ph. KB) and another was at RVT 13 May (ph. MF). A rare **Lark Sparrow** visited Three Otters Rd., *Bedford* 24–27 Apr (ph. BE, m. obs.) There was a great diversity of warblers detected this spring, with 35 species reported. A rare migrant, a **Brewster's Warbler** (**Golden-winged** × **Blue-winged Warbler** hybrid) was spotted at Observatory Mt., *Albemarle* 4 May (ph. DC, BB, JP, MN). There were



Max Nootbar took this Evening Grosbeak's photo 22 April at Azalea Pk., Charlottesville.

widespread early arrival **Black-and-white Warblers**; the earliest were 4 in e. *Hanover* 27 Mar (AW). A **Swainson's Warbler** was well documented at RVT 14 May (ph. & a.r. DC). Subsequent efforts failed to detect the bird so it was likely an overshot migrant. There were 2 **Orange-crowned Warblers**; one at the Holmes Ave. Rivanna Trail, Charlottesville 15 Apr (ph. WC, BB, TB) and one in Earlysville, *Albemarle* 24 Apr (ph. GB). Although a very uncommon spring migrant, there was only one **Mourning Warbler** report, that from L. Nelson, *Nelson* 6 May (AR). A **Prairie Warbler** 29 Mar at Tardy Mt. Rd. (DMS) was possibly a record early date for the Region. An imm. m. **WESTERN TANAGER** visited a feeder in *Albemarle* 22 & 23 Mar (ph. JG, SM) then again 18 Apr. It was refound at a nearby feeder in the same neighborhood shortly thereafter, last seen 21 Apr (ph. TA). **Dickcissels** were reported widely, from *Albemarle*, *Amherst*, *Hanover*, *Louisa*, *Nelson*, and *Powhatan*.



The Western Tanager that was at an *Albemarle* residence photographed here by Baxter Beamer 21 April.



Drew Chaney's Lark Sparrow photo taken at Three Otters Rd., *Bedford* 26 April

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20–22 May 2020 Storm Fallout Shorebirds and Terns

Species	<i>Albemarle</i>	<i>Amherst</i>	<i>Bedford</i>	<i>Fluvanna</i>	<i>Greene</i>	<i>Louisa</i>	Lynchburg	<i>Nelson</i>	<i>Orange</i>
Black-bellied Plover						1			3*
Semipalmated Plover	11	2	1	1	8		2		4
Dunlin	3			5			1	6	3
Least Sandpiper	32	6		4	14		2		15
White-rumped Sandpiper				1					
Semipalmated Sandpiper	15		4	3	31		3		40
Short-billed Dowitcher								2	1
Red-necked Phalarope		6				1			
Caspian Tern			1						
Black Tern	3	1							
Common Tern		8	11				3		
Forster's Tern		1				4			

*Numbers indicate highest total counts per site per county to avoid double counting.

Southeast



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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 March and the first half of April were well above average for the Region before dipping below normal for the rest of April and most of May. Precipitation averaged about 1.8 inches below normal overall. It was a tale of two springs. Strong southerlies and warm temperatures in March and early April spurred an early movement of migrant passerines into the Region. Conversely, a series of cold fronts in early May delayed the arrival or departure of others. Early and late dates for certain species are sprinkled throughout the text. Rarities this season included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, White-winged Dove, Swallow-tailed Kite, Brewer's Blackbird, Western Tanager and Painted Bunting.

Abbreviations: College Cr. (College Creek Hawkwatch, *James City*); Dutch Gap/Henricus (Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Historical Park, *Chesterfield*); Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*); JRP (James River Park, *Richmond*); Shirley (Shirley Plantation, *Charles City*)

WATERFOWL-TERNS

A **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** was discovered in Ford's Colony, *James City* 29 Apr (ph. VW). The bird was seen again the following day (m.obs.). Possibly the same bird was spotted there 17 & 18 May (ph. GM) and then again 27 May (VW). A late **Gadwall** pair was at Shirley 22 May (E&BO). A lingering **Lesser Scaup** was present at Sherwood Forest, Williamsburg 23 May (ph. VB, LN). Two **Hooded Merganser** chicks found near a deceased ad. f. in Waverly, *Sussex* 7 May (CMo) were successfully transferred to a wildlife rehabilitator (ph. 26 May RC via HRWNPG) who raised them to fledging.



The Ford's Colony, *James City* Black-bellied Whistling Duck photographed by Bill Williams 29 April

A **Ruddy Duck** noted from Sherwood Forest, Williamsburg lingered until at least 20 May (ph. VB). An ad. **Pied-billed Grebe** and 4 young were photographed at Dutch Gap/Henricus 29 May (ph. NW). The **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** first recorded in late December from Renwick Pl., *Henrico*, was last seen 27 Mar (DB). A **Common Nighthawk** near Gospel Spreading Farm, *James City* 27 Apr was slightly early (NB, BT) as was a **Chimney Swift** at L. Matoaka Woods, Williamsburg 29 Mar (NN). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** arrived at



This 26 May photo of one of the 2 Hooded Merganser chicks rescued in Waverly, *Sussex* 7 May was provided by Rose Chandler, who raised then released the young birds.

Governor's Land, *James City* 1 Apr, setting a new local early date (ph. CO). A **Common Gallinule**, an uncommon to rare transient, was detected on Treasure Is. Rd., *James City* 6 Apr (NN). Two **Black-necked Stilts** were found at Hog 26 May, establishing a 12th local record (ph. AD). The number of birds doubled to 4 there by 28 May (NN, CM). Four **American Avocets** were at Hog 26 Apr, a species rarely seen there in spring (ph. PB). Four **Black-bellied Plovers** passed from Hog over College Cr. 13 Mar, setting a new local early date (BT). A **Ruddy Turnstone**, rare in the Region at any time of year but especially in spring, was found at Jamestown Is., *James City* 11

& 12 May (ph. BW). Rare in spring, a **Stilt Sandpiper** was spotted at Hog 22 Apr (ph. AD). Early **Least Sandpipers** were noted at Dutch Gap/Henricus with up to 6 birds present 9–21 Mar (MC, BWo, JW, JS). Three **Red-necked Phalaropes** were found at Hog 22 May (ph. NB) after several days of strong easterly winds which produced quite a few records of this species throughout the state. Up to 3 lingering **Bonaparte's Gulls** were at Hog 26 May (TC, ph. AD). Two **Least Terns** at College Cr. 19 Apr set a new local early date (ph. NB). A **Black Tern**, rare in spring, was off College Cr. 21 May (NB). A **Royal Tern** at College Cr. 3 Mar was early (NB).

SKIMMER-WRENS

Always rare in the Region, a **Black Skimmer** was at Hog 28 May (ph. NN, CM). A lingering **Common Loon** was in western *Henrico* on Nuckols Rd., Glen Allen 31 May (ph. PS). Now expected in the Region, there were a number of **Anhinga** sightings this season in the Colonial Historic Triangle area led by 22 that passed from College Cr. to Hog 30 Mar (NB, BT, BW), establishing a new local peak count and early date, then 12 that flew from Hog to Jamestown, *James City* 26 Apr (NB). A f. was at the Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City* 19 (ph. GM) to 21 Apr (ph. m. obs.). Elsewhere, Anhingas returned once again to Carson Wetland, *Prince George*, with 4 birds first spotted there 18 Apr (AD, TT). These birds and others were seen throughout the period. Widespread nesting of this species is most likely occurring throughout the Region.



Bill Williams' 19 April photo of the Anhinga at the Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City*

An early **Snowy Egret** was at Jamestown Is., *James City* 28 Mar (NB). Also early was a **Green Heron**, seen on the Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City* 29 Mar (GM).

A **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, uncommon this far inland, was spotted in flight at the Wetlands section of JRP 15 May (AB). An ad. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** photographed along SR 626 in *Sussex* was both uncommon and early (ABr). Two hundred sixteen **Turkey Vultures** flying across College Cr. 29 Mar set a new high count over 2 hours and 45 minutes of observation (BT). A **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** was seen gliding northward over Queens L., *York* 28 Mar, establishing a new early date and sixth local record (RS). Two **Broad-winged Hawks** at College Cr. 30 Mar set a new local early date (BW, BT, NB). Twenty **American Kestrels** counted at College Landing Pk., Williamsburg 29 Mar set a new local one-day peak count (NN, CM). An early **Eastern Kingbird** was seen at Williamsburg Airport, *James City* 31 Mar (BT). A **Least Flycatcher**, a rare spring migrant in the Region, was audio recorded at the Wetlands section of JRP 7 May (AB). There were a number of early **White-eyed Vireo** sightings this season, with the earliest one recorded at Johnson Millpond, *Southampton* 24 Mar (TC). An early **Blue-headed Vireo** was noted at Bryan Pk., Richmond 4 Mar (RB). A **Sedge Wren** continued at Shirley from the winter season, seen 1 & 5 Mar (ABr).

SPARROWS-DICKCISSEL

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at Matoaka L. woods, Williamsburg 30 Mar, setting a new local early date (ph. CM, ph. NN).



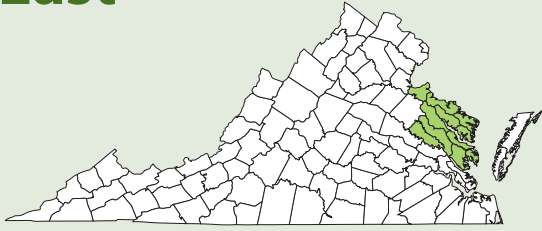
This Grasshopper Sparrow was photographed by Nick Newberry near L. Matoaka, Williamsburg 30 March.

As many as 6 **Vesper Sparrows** were tallied at Dutch Gap/Henricus 28 Mar (JD, WT, MC). Singles were noted off Treasure Is. Rd., *James City* 5 & 7 Apr (NN, CJ). A **Lincoln's Sparrow**, a fairly rare spring transient, was at Riverside

Doctor's Hospital Pond, Williamsburg 1 May (AR). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** continued from the winter season at a suet feeder at Monticello Marketplace, *James City* until 8 Mar (ph. DC). An **Orchard Oriole** was at Governor's Land, *James City* 12 Apr, setting a new local early date by one day (CO). A well-described f. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** stopped by a residential yard in eastern *Henrico* before heading off to parts unknown 27 Apr (TT). An **Ovenbird** at Tutter's Field, Williamsburg 29 Mar set a new local early date (NN). Sixteen Ovenbirds counted at Warhill Sports Complex, *James City* 7 Apr established a new local peak count (LSchu). Early **Louisiana Waterthrushes** included one at York R. SP, *James City* 20 Mar (NB) and one at Redoubt Pk., Williamsburg 20 Mar (CJ). A **Blue-winged Warbler** at the Wetlands section of JRP 14 May was on the late side (AB). A **Prothonotary Warbler** heard at the Pony Pasture section of JRP 1 Apr was early (AB). Singing **Swainson's Warblers** were detected in two locations in *Southampton* this season; one was at the border with *Greensville* at the Meherrin R. 14 & 24 May (ABr, W&BF) and another was farther east near the intersection of The Hall Rd. and Hugo Rd. (ph. JF, JSt). A **Nashville Warbler** at Echo L. Pk., *Henrico* 7 Apr was either a really early migrant or a bird that successfully overwintered (ph. KR, SY). Always a rare migrant in the Region, a **Mourning Warbler** was detected at the Wetlands section of JRP 25 May (v.r. AB, SR, EO). A **Cape May Warbler**, seen at the 42nd St. entrance to JRP 16 May, was running late (PE). Late **Yellow-rumped Warblers** included one at Bryan Pk., Richmond 22 May (LS, TB) and one at L. Rooty, *Henrico* 22 May (LM). An ad. m. **Western Tanager** was in Rolling Woods, *James City* 17 Mar (DCr). Two ad. m. **PAINTED BUNTINGS** graced the Region this spring. One was in Ford's Colony, *James City* 29 Mar, establishing the 16th local record (ph. MS). The other was in Carrollton, *Isle of Wight* 27 Apr (PO). The only **Dickcissel** reported in the Region was one at Shirley 22 May (E&BO).

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East



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

A total of 220 species was recorded this spring, which is about 5 species below average for recent springs. Data was sourced from the Virginia Birds listserv, eBird*, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv), and the Gold Book. Highlights were a Gull-billed Tern, Piping Plover, two groups of American White Pelicans, a singing Sedge Wren, Canada Warblers, a Wilson's Warbler, and Dickcissels.

Abbreviations: Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Hutchinson (Hutchinson unit of Rappahannock R. NWR, *Essex*); Wilna (Wilna unit of Rappahannock R. NWR, *Richmond*)

WATERFOWL–RAPTORS

The first eBird record of **Blue-winged Teal** for *Essex* came from Bottom's Neck Marsh 11 Apr (ph. JF). A slightly tardy flock of 30 **Green-winged Teal** was spotted from a boat on the Rappahannock R. where it meets Brockenbrough Cr., *Westmoreland* 11 Apr (JF). The latest sighting of **Surf Scoter** for the spring was of 4 birds a few hundred yards nw. of Gwynn Island, *Middlesex* 19 Apr (DW). The final **Black Scoter** sighting of the season was coincidentally also of 4 birds, but this time from Bethel 24 Apr (HC, RC). Two scoters photographed at Guinea Marsh, *Gloucester* 28 May were either **Surf** or **White-winged Scoters**, most likely the former (ph. EW). A single **Bufflehead** lingered until 1 May at Robinson Cr., *Middlesex* (JCok). An exceptionally late **Common Goldeneye** was photographed in the company of a Bufflehead along Mill Cr., *Northumberland* 29 Apr (ph. BW). A f. **Hooded Merganser** was found at the York River Yacht Haven, *Gloucester* 27 May (JS). Given the date it's possible this bird attempted to breed nearby. An exciting count of 30 **Northern Bobwhites** was tallied at a private farm near Howertons, *Essex* 2 May (LD). A large **Wild Turkey** flock, even by statewide standards, of 75 birds was found near Weems, *Lancaster* 3 Mar (JCoo). The night of 9 Apr produced three records of **Chuck-will's-widows**

near Blakes, *Mathews*, which is approximately two weeks prior to the expected arrival date listed in the Gold Book (CN). The first **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** of the season were detected along Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* 1 Apr, four days before the expected arrival in the Gold Book (M&JC). The season's first **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was found coming to a feeder near Rosewell, *Gloucester* 6 Apr (RC); this species typically arrives during the first week of Apr. An **American Golden-Plover**, a very uncommon spring transient through the state, was the Region's first spring record in eBird, found 4 Apr at a private location in Sealston, *King George* (ph. FA).



This American Golden-Plover was photographed by Fred Atwood on private property in *King George* 4 April.

A single **Piping Plover** at Bethel 26 Apr was two weeks later than any other recent spring record (ph. MS). Although regular during the spring in *Mathews*, **Ruddy Turnstones** are rarely recorded from the Northern Neck during this season. In fact, the first spring eBird record from either *Northumberland* or *Lancaster* came from

Windmill Pt., *Lancaster* 16 May (LAn, ph. AR). Nine **Dunlin**, a species not regular on the Northern Neck in spring, were at Leedstown, *Westmoreland* 4 Apr (ph. FA). A flock of 26 **Greater Yellowlegs** at Bottom's Neck Marsh 11 Apr (ph. JF) marked a new eBird high count for *Essex* and was one of the higher counts for the upper reaches of the Rappahannock R. Bethel continues to host **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** with increasing regularity with an ad. 10 (AR, CL) & 17 Mar (CF). An additional representative of this species was discovered at Currioman Landing, *Westmoreland* 19 Mar (FA), another location where this species has become somewhat expected as of late. The first **Least Tern** arrivals were noted at Bethel 24 Apr, which is right around the species' expected arrival date (HC, RC). Two well-described **Gull-billed Terns** were seen from Windmill Pt., *Lancaster* 16 May, providing a first eBird record for the Northern Neck (LAn, AR). A late **Common Loon** continued through at least 26 May in the Ware R. near Ware Neck, *Gloucester* (FR). Two widely separated records, by both location and date, of **American White Pelican** were reported from the Region. The first was of 6 high-soaring birds from a private location in Montross, *Westmoreland* 9 Mar (MG) and the second was of 9 at Guinea Marsh, *Gloucester* 28 May (ph. EW), the latter of which provided a first county eBird record for the species. Individual **Cattle Egrets** were reported from across the Region, including Heathsville, *Northumberland* 16 Apr (ph. LN); Dutton, *Mathews* 27 Apr (PR); Germans Corner, *Richmond* 28 Apr (LAd); Warsaw, *Richmond* 30 Apr (BD); and Beaverdam Pk., *Gloucester* 7 May (ph. SW). Unusual for so far inland, a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was found in Bruington, *King and Queen* 21 Apr (NK) and was refound the next day (ph. M&JC). An ad. **Peregrine Falcon** was seen perched on the Robert O. Norris Bridge, *Lancaster* 31 May where that species has bred in past years (JCoo).

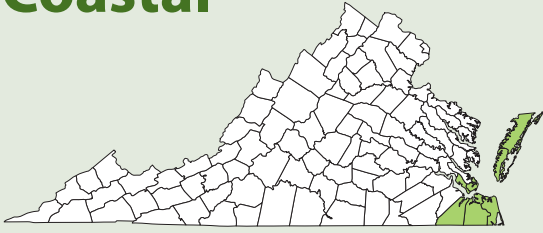
FLYCATCHERS-DICKCISSEL

Two **Least Flycatchers**, a scarce spring migrant, were detected, with one each at Beaverdam Pk., *Gloucester* 28 Apr (DY) and Wilna 15 May (MM, RM). A remarkably early **White-eyed Vireo** was heard singing vigorously in Leedstown, *Westmoreland* 19 Mar (FA); this date is two days after the extreme early date listed in the Gold Book for non-wintering birds. The Region's first spring eBird record of a **Philadelphia Vireo** came from a well-described individual near Sassafras, *Gloucester* 2 May (EB). Now more or less expected here, a **Common Raven** near Sealston, *King George* 4 Apr (FA) was still worth noting for its rarity in

the Region as a whole. At the Walkerton Landing Bridge, *King William* a maximum count of 20 **Cliff Swallows** was recorded 11 Apr (TB) and 16 May (FA), which was lower than the 40 reported here last year around the same time. A spunky harbinger of spring, the first **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was reported 19 Mar from a private location near Dunnsville, *Essex* (M&JC). Very rarely recorded away from the Region's coastal marshes, a **Sedge Wren** was observed vigorously singing from Woodbury Rd., *King William* 1 May (AB). The first **Louisiana Waterthrush** was noted at "Warbler Bridge" along Union Hope Rd., *King and Queen* 20 Mar, which was about on par with this species' arrival most years (M&JC). Spring **Tennessee Warblers** are few and far between, so an individual found 9 May at Wilna was exciting (BK). Two **Canada Warblers**, a very scarce spring migrant, were detected on two occasions on the same day, with one at Cedar Pointe in Urbanna, *Middlesex* 13 May (JCok) and the other at "Warbler Bridge" along Union Hope Rd., *King and Queen* (M&JC). Another species that is often missed in spring, **Wilson's Warbler**, was heard singing at Hutchinson 28 Apr (M&JC). Up to 3 **Dickcissels** were found along Folly Neck Rd., *Richmond* after first being sighted 25 May (ph. LAd); these were the only representatives of the species to be seen in the Region this season.

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Coastal



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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

Birders made the best of the state-mandated stay-at-home and social distancing guidelines necessitated by the global health pandemic to chronicle this Region's exceptional species diversity. As the season progressed numerous early and late date observations, annotated below, were posted. Most days were cool, buffeted by what seemed to be ceaseless wind. Annual rainfall by the end of May was ~3.5 inches above normal. For a sixth consecutive year a named cyclonic system churned the Atlantic prior to the June 1 official start of hurricane season. Tropical Storm Arthur formed off southeast Florida then skirted Virginia 18 May. As the storm exited to the northeast a low pressure system was pulled over the Region from the west then lingered to at least 24 May. Those meteorological events delivered seabirds to near-shore waters and stalled passerines' movements. Garganey, Western Grebe, Common Ground-Dove, Roseate and Arctic Terns, Crested Caracara, Alder Flycatchers (yes, plural!), and Bicknell's Thrush captured this season's highest accolades.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Beasley (Beasley Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, *Northampton*); CCCHNAP (Cape Charles Coastal Habitat Natural Area Preserve, *Northampton*); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Materials Management Area [restricted access], Portsmouth); Dismal (Dismal Swamp NWR, Chesapeake/Suffolk); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, *Northampton*); False Cape (False Cape SP, Virginia Beach); FINWR (Fisherman Island NWR, *Northampton*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, Hampton); Little Is. (Little Island Pk., Virginia Beach); PHP (Pleasure House Point, Virginia Beach); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach); Tidewater Arboretum (Tidewater Arboretum-Virginia Tech Display Gardens, Virginia Beach); Whitehurst (Whitehurst Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach)

WATERFOWL-ALCIDS

Twelve **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** were at The Hague, Norfolk 2 May (ph. LW). A **Snow Goose** was a late season find at Bluebird Gap Farm, Hampton 25 May (ph. RV). Single **Mute Swans** showed up at Mt. Trashmore/L. Windsor, Virginia Beach 21 Mar (LR, ph. m. obs.) and in Thoroughgood, Virginia Beach 29 Mar (TT). A seemingly healthy **Tundra Swan** was at Enterprise Parkway, Hampton 23–25 May (ph. EA, m. obs.). Without question the Region's vernal superstar was an ad. m. **GARGANEY** discovered at Chinc. 4 May (BH, ph. TH). Through 6 May m. obs. posted photos and field notes to document this species' third (per VARCOM) Virginia record.



The male Garganey at Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*, in a photo taken 4 May by Tyler Hohenstein

Two **Gadwalls** lingered at the ESVNWR to 31 May (ESB), more than a month beyond the species' 30 Apr Gold Book average late date. Last reported dates for **Eurasian Wigeons** were 7 Mar for one at Hoffer Creek Pk., Portsmouth (ph. JM) and 14 Mar for one each at Chinc. (m. obs.) and NAS Oceana Pond [restricted], Virginia Beach (ph. RBi, KS). An exceptionally tardy f. **Common Eider** was at Ft. Monroe, Hampton 30 May (ph. SW, TSA). The f. **Harlequin Duck** that was at Little Is. through the winter remained to 19

Mar (m. obs.). A f. **Common Goldeneye** was at PHP 3 (ph. SM) to 11 Apr (m. obs.); the Gold Book lists this species' average late date as 30 Mar. Five **Red-necked Grebe** reports showed one at Little Is. 5 Mar (TT), 2 at Little Is. 11 & 13 Mar (AB), and singles in Chincoteague, *Accomack* (MS) and at Back Bay 13 Mar (K&TB). A **WESTERN GREBE** off Little Is. 12 (ph. BE, JP) & 13 Mar (K&TB) may have been the one at Back Bay 12 Apr (AB, ph. RBi). The **COMMON GROUND-DOVE** that was in Suffolk in late February was seen at irregular intervals to 27 Mar (*vide* BA).



This Common Ground-Dove (foreground) photo was taken in Suffolk by Joe Simmons on or about 27 March.

A **White-winged Dove** was in the Greater Hilton Area of Newport News 30 Mar (DW). **Black-billed Cuckoo** reports included one off Jericho Ditch, Dismal 19 (ph. CH, ph. JM) to 26 Apr (ph. KM); one in Cheriton, *Northampton* 9 May (ESB, ZP); and 2 at Laurel Ditch, Dismal 13 May (GR). A **Common Nighthawk** was in Churchland, Portsmouth 30 Apr (NF). An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** was a surprise visitor in Aragona Village, Virginia Beach 28 Mar (ph. KR). The m. **Rufous Hummingbird** that wintered off Holland Rd., Suffolk was last observed 3 Apr (ph. JB) and the **Selasphorus rufous/sasin** that was at a private residence in Virginia Beach continued to 16 Mar (ph. REG). A total of 6 **Common Gallinules** reported 28 Apr included one at Back Bay C Pool (BA), 2 at False Cape (ph. SM, KS), and 3 at Beasley (AB). The Beasley trio were still present 30 Apr (ph. RBi). Subsequently, only one was noted there 2 (SM, WT) to 14 May (ph. RBi). Singles were also at False Cape 30 May (JM) and on the ESNWR 31 May (ESB). A **Sandhill**

Crane was in Poquoson 27 (RW) & 28 Apr (SN). Another 2 made the drive along Blackwater Rd., Virginia Beach 5 & 6 May (ph. AB, ph. m. obs.) a worthwhile venture. **Black-necked Stilts** were reported throughout the Region, commencing with one near Cape Charles 15 Apr (ph. ESB, et al.); up to 4 at Messick, Poquoson 23 Apr (ph. DY) to 15 May (ph. m. obs.); and a peak count of 14 at Queen Sound Flats, *Accomack* 5 May (ph. GR). Eight **American Avocets** were at Craney 5 Mar (LS, ph. BW); by 12 Mar that number had increased to 27 (DY). Elsewhere, one was at Messick, Poquoson 27 Apr (ph. AC) through 2 May (ph. m. obs.) and 7 were in Cape Charles 24 May (MA, ph. ESB, EC, AL). Were the 4 **Whimbrels** at Wachapreague, *Accomack* 8 Mar (ESB, AD, NN, AR, WT) early arrivals or winter holdovers? The Gold Book lists 15 Apr as the species' average arrival date. The Nature Conservancy's annual Whimbrel Watch at Box Tree Cr., *Northampton*, conducted this year 18–27 May, totaled 3672 birds with a one-day high of 886 on 26 May (AW et al.). Folks scouring the Wildlife Loop at Chinc. were rewarded with a **Ruff** 7–9 May (ph. m. obs.). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Whitehurst 24 Apr (ph. RBi) was six days ahead of the species' more typical 30 Apr arrival. Also early were 2 **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Craney 12 Mar (BW, DY); 25 Mar is the Gold Book's average early date for that species. A **Willet** (subspecies unreported) was at Ocean View Beach Pk., Norfolk 15 Apr (DC), five days earlier than the Gold Book's 20 Apr average first appearance. The last "**Western**" **Willet** report noted 4 at Red Bank Cr., *Northampton* 19 May (AL). A **Wilson's Phalarope** was off LaSalle Ave., Hampton 14 May (ph. EM). Tropical Storm Arthur and its low pressure system companion pushed **Red-necked Phalaropes** into view off Virginia Beach as follows: one off Rudee 19 May (ph. CH, ph. SK, ph. KL) then 2 there (AB, ph. RBi, et al.) and one off 30th St. (ESB) 20 May; 6 at Back Bay (ph. m. obs.), one off 83rd St. (ESB) and 10 off Little Is. (ESB) 21 May; 4 at Rudee 22 May (AB, ph. SM, ph. TM); and one off 85th St. 25 May (AB). Four briefly observed "large alcid sp.," possibly **Razorbills**, passed off 83rd St., Virginia Beach 19 May (ESB).

GULLS-RAPTORS

A second-year **Black-legged Kittiwake** was storm-tossed off 83rd St., Virginia Beach 19 May (ESB). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was at Chinc. 29 May (G&HS); after 30 Apr is considered late for this species. The winter season's first-cycle **Iceland Gull** at Ocean View Beach Pk., Norfolk remained through 27 Apr (m. obs.). Others, all first-cycles, included one at Little Is. 1 Mar (ph. KBe) and one to 2 at

Rudee 7 Mar (BA) to 6 Apr (SK). A first-cycle **Glaucous Gull** was at Belle Island Dr., Hampton 18 Apr (ph. CK). **Black Tern** reports listed one off the CCCHNAP 15 May (ESB), a total of 4 off Rudee 20 May (AB, ph. CH, SK), and 2 off 83rd St., Virginia Beach 21 May (ESB). Tropical Storm Arthur and its immediate aftermath systems brought a **ROSEATE TERN** off 15th St., Virginia Beach 18 May (ESB) and a total of 5 **ARCTIC TERNS** past 83rd St., Virginia Beach 21 May (ESB). A deceased **Royal Tern** found in Norfolk 15 May (ph. BR) had been banded on FINWR as a pre-fledgling 9 Jul 1998. A summary of **Sooty Shearwater** counts during and after Tropical Storm Arthur included 11 off 83rd St., Virginia Beach 19 May (ph. ESB); 72 off Virginia Beach-83rd St. to Back Bay- (AB, ph. RBi, ESB, SM, et al.) and one off the CBBT (ESB) 20 May; 14 off Virginia Beach-83rd St. to Back Bay 21 May (AB, K&TB, ESB, DC, AD, ph. SM, RR); and one off Rudee 22 May (AB). A **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** was noted from Little Is. 11 May (AB). Single **Leach's Storm-Petrels** were documented from Little Is. (ph. ESB, RBi) and Ft. Monroe, Hampton (ph. EM) 20 May. The following day one was off Back Bay (AB, AD, WT) in the morning; another was off Little Is. (ESB) that afternoon. The season's first reported **Anhinga** flew over Talbot Pk., Norfolk 28 Mar (BA). Subsequent detections revealed one to 2 intermittently at Blackwater Rd., Chesapeake 4 Apr (ph. KR) to 2 May (ph. LM); 2 at Stumpy L., Virginia Beach 11 Apr (ph. JSn); 2 at Rock Creek Recreation Area [restricted access], Virginia Beach (ph. PM); one at Great Neck Pk. (BS), and one at L. Drummond Causeway, Chesapeake (ph. RBi), all on 2 May; and one at Pine Ridge, Virginia Beach 16 May (ph. MH). The single-site Anhinga high count was 4 near the Virginia Beach Golf Club, Virginia Beach 17 May (SM). An **American Bittern** at Back Bay 31 May (CF) exceeded the species' 20 May Gold Book late date by eleven days. Single **Swallow-tailed Kites** were near Eyre Hall, *Northampton* (MP, MiP) and over Plum Tree Is., Poquoson 12 Apr (NN, ph. JS). Those were followed by an unprecedented total of 3 at Back Bay 16 May (ph. ES, GS, ph. TS). **Mississippi Kites** have bred in the vicinity of White House Ln., Virginia Beach since 2015. Thus, it was not unexpected that the season's first appeared there 28 Apr (TT) with 2 on hand the next day (TT). One was on the ESVNWR 9 May (ESB). At Apollo Dr./Margaret Dr., Hampton, where this species nested in 2018 and 2019, one to 2 were seen 13 & 16 May (BB, SB). A **Barn Owl** was heard near Parksley, *Accomack* 20 Mar (CN); 4 chicks in a box on Mockhorn Marsh,

Northampton 26 Mar (AL) eventually fledged (*vide* BWa). Potentially Virginia's fourth (per VARCOM) **CRESTED CARACARA** was photo-documented at Thomas Jefferson Rollins Nature Area, Poquoson 23 May (ph. EA, TC).

FLYCATCHERS-DICKCISSEL

One of 2 **Western Kingbirds** off Potters Rd., Virginia Beach 2 (ph. MB) through 4 Mar (m. obs.) was still present 14 Mar (ph. m. obs.).



Laura Mae's 3 March photo of one of the Western Kingbirds at Potter's Rd., Virginia Beach

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was at First Landing 25 May (ph. JM) and a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was at False Cape 11 May (ph. AB). There were 3 singing **ALDER FLYCATCHERS** at the Tidewater Arboretum 23 May (ESB). The same day, a total of 10 **Willow Flycatchers** were accounted for, with 2 at Back Bay (ph., v. r. RBi); 7 at the Tidewater Arboretum (ph. ESB); and one in Oak Springs, Virginia Beach (CP). On 24 May one continued at the Tidewater Arboretum (MC, ph. RR) and one was at Magothy Bay NAP, *Northampton* (ESB). Single **Least Flycatchers** were at Back Bay 6 May (ph. EA, TC) and the Tidewater Arboretum 23 May (ESB). A **Philadelphia Vireo** was at the CCCHNAP 9 May (ESB) and one was at False Cape 11 May (ph. AB). A list of **Warbling Vireo** observations included one at the CCCHNAP 4 May (ph. ESB, m. obs.); one at Chin. 5 May (ph. MA, EC, JS); one at Back Bay 6 May (ph. EA, TC); one at Sturgis House Dr., *Northampton* 7 May (ph. ESB, GR); and one to 2 on the ESVNWR 7-10 May (ph. ESB, GR). A **Red-eyed Vireo** was in Dismal 4 Apr (v.r. TT), three days ahead of the Gold Book's 7 Apr extreme early date. A **Horned Lark** carrying nest material was in the Gates CE East, Suffolk VBBA2 block 31 May (BA). The Gold Book's **Purple Martin** extreme early date (10 Mar) was

reset by one in Cape Charles 8 Mar (MA, AR). A **Brown Creeper** was at Back Bay 22 Apr (ph. CH), seven days past the species' 15 Apr Gold Book late date. Coming? Going? Staying in place? Only the **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Stumpy L., Virginia Beach 11 Mar (ph. BSC) could resolve that enigma; the species' Gold Book typical arrival date is 30 Mar. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was at the ESVNWR 8 & 9 May (ph. ESB, GR), a bit tardy given that on average this species has vacated the Region by 5 May. A singing **BICKNELL'S THRUSH** was at the ESVNWR 24 May (ph. & v.r. ESB, MP, MiP), marking the third consecutive spring this challenging species has been documented in the Region. A **Swainson's Thrush** was in Dismal 24 Apr (BA), four days ahead of the species' 28 Apr Gold Book extreme early date. Two **Pine Siskins** from the winter season hung on at Cypress Pt., Virginia Beach through 8 May (DS); singles were near Woodhouse Corner, Virginia Beach 18 Mar (K&TB) and the CCCHNAP 1 Apr (ESB). The last reported **Savannah Sparrow** was at Thomas Jefferson Rollins Nature Area, Poquoson 23 May (JS); post 10 May is late for this sparrow. What may have been the same **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at Whitehurst 15 Mar (WT) then 9, 15 (ph. RBi), & 27 Apr (ph. RBi). Another was at Sandy Bottom Pk., Hampton 2 & 7 Apr (ph. NN) and one was at Beasley 28 Apr (AB). A late-exiting **White-throated Sparrow** was at Burton Station Rd., Virginia Beach 24 May (AB, LR). The **Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow** that wintered at the Harris Teeter Retention Pond, Virginia Beach continued to 14 Mar (ph. RBi). The average **Rusty Blackbird** late date is 25 Apr, making one at the CCCHNAP 3 May (ESB, SG) extra special. Up to 8 **Brewer's Blackbirds** remained at Breeze Farm, Virginia Beach to 15 Mar (ph. m. obs.). Dismal welcomed three early *Parulidae* worth noting: an **Ovenbird** detected 27 Mar (ph. BT), two days earlier than average; 2 **Worm-eating Warblers** on 11 Apr (ph. CH, ph. JM), eight days ahead of the species' 19 Apr Gold Book extreme; and 2 **American Redstarts** 29 Mar (LR, JS), two days prior to the species' 1 Apr Gold Book extreme. A singing **Mourning Warbler** was at the Tidewater Arboretum 23 May (AB, ph. m. obs.). Anecdotal evidence suggested a **Cape May Warbler** at Gale Dr., Virginia Beach 8–10 Mar (ph. MJ) had been present in February. The **Prairie Warbler** that was at East Water St., Norfolk during the winter lingered to at least 7 Mar (TC). A f. **Western Tanager** was in the Maple Hall section of Norfolk 4 & 5 Apr (ph. CH). Quite exceptional were 2 f. simultaneously on a Kempsville, Virginia Beach feeder 15 Mar (ph. SMc) then a m. at the same feeder 17 (ph. SMc) & 25 Apr (v.r. SMc)! Preceding the Gold Book's

25 Apr average arrival, an ad. m. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at the CCCHNAP 19 Apr (ESB, MA). Single **Indigo Buntings** at False Cape and Back Bay on 10 Apr, (ph. MFM) were well ahead of the Gold Book's 25 Apr early date. A f. **Painted Bunting** continued at Laurel Manor, Virginia Beach to 13 Apr (ph. TM). Others included an ad. m. at Lakeside Pk., Chesapeake 16 (ph. DG) & 17 Apr (ph. BSC); a f. near Ocean L. Pk., Virginia Beach 1 May (ph. KM); and a f. at Whitehurst 3 (ph. RBi) & 4 May (CH, SK). A **Dickcissel** at Machipongo, *Northampton* 9 May (DC) was the first of up to 3 at the site to 19 May (ESB, GR); one was in Cape Charles 21–31 May (ph. m. obs.) and one was off Seaside Rd. near Jones Cove., *Northampton* 31 May (ESB).

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