



VIRGINIA BIRDS

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



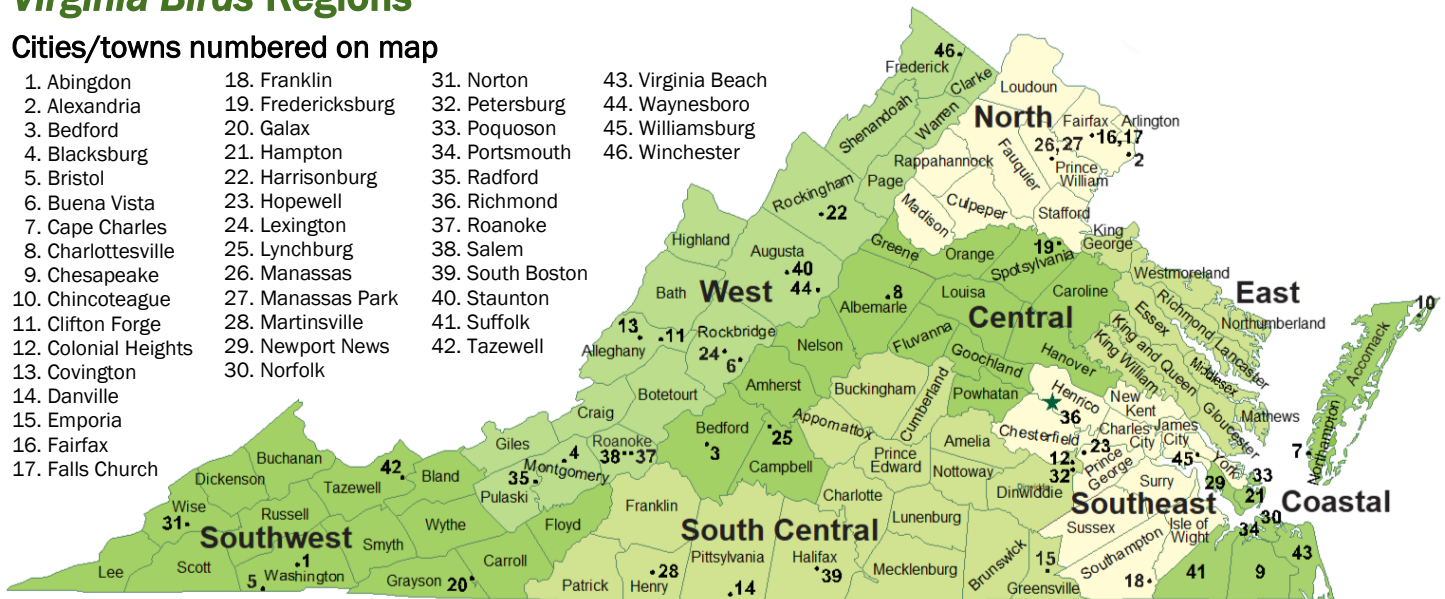
Volume 17 • Number 1

Summer Records • June–July 2020

Virginia Birds Regions

Cities/towns numbered on map

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Abingdon | 18. Franklin | 31. Norton | 43. Virginia Beach |
| 2. Alexandria | 19. Fredericksburg | 32. Petersburg | 44. Waynesboro |
| 3. Bedford | 20. Galax | 33. Poquoson | 45. Williamsburg |
| 4. Blacksburg | 21. Hampton | 34. Portsmouth | 46. Winchester |
| 5. Bristol | 22. Harrisonburg | 35. Radford | |
| 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 | 42. Tazewell | |
| 13. Covington | 30. Norfolk | | |
| 14. Danville | | | |
| 15. Emporia | | | |
| 16. Fairfax | | | |
| 17. Falls Church | | | |



Virginia Birds

Editor

Evan Spears

e3spears@gmail.com

Regional Editors

Fred Atwood

Baxter Beamer

Adam D'Onofrio

James Fox

Mary Ann Good

Amiel Hopkins

Clyde Kessler

Michael Lott

Adit Nehra

C. Michael Stinson

Bill Williams

VSO Officers

President

Dan Bieker, North Garden

Past President

Lenny Bankester, Alexandria

Vice President

James Fox, Front Royal

Secretary

Phil Kenny, Vienna

Treasurer

Terri Cuthriell, Smithfield

Raven Editor

Mike Stinson, Dillwyn

Newsletter Editor

Dixie Sommers, Alexandria

Membership Secretary

Shirley Devan, Williamsburg

VSO Board of Directors

Terms expire 2021

Patti Reum, Highland County

Cheryl Jacobson, Williamsburg

Lisa Perry, Broadway

Terms expire 2022

Dianne Lepkowski, Harrisonburg

Richard Rowe, Lexington

Jessica Ruthenberg, Norfolk

Terms expire 2023

Faye Cooper, Staunton

Ellison Orcutt, Mechanicsville

Alan Williams, Luray

Submissions

Send reports and photographs to the appropriate Regional Editors. Photographs should be the highest electronic quality possible and sent with the release form, which can be found under the "Publications" tab on the VSO website: www.virginiabirds.org. Articles for consideration can be sent to e3spears@gmail.com.

Season Reports due to Regional Editors:

Winter (Dec–Feb) 15 Mar

Spring (Mar–May) 15 Jun

Summer (Jun–Jul) 15 Aug

Fall (Aug–Nov) 15 Dec

Terms and Abbreviations

Species name in **bold** (first time mentioned), VARCOM Review Birds in **BOLD CAPS**, and county names 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: Conor Farrell's photograph of a male Ruff at Middlesex Drive pond, Loudon 6 Jul

2020 Hampton Roads Seabird Conservation Initiative

On February 14, 2020, Governor Northam directed the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to provide temporary alternative nesting habitat for seabirds displaced by the Hampton Roads Bridge and Tunnel (HRBT) Expansion Project in time for the 2020 breeding season. Below is a brief summary of the work completed and some preliminary results, which are subject to change during further analyses.

Creation of alternative seabird nesting habitat

DWR staff obtained the necessary permits and hired contractors to transform the parade grounds of Ft. Wool, an island adjacent to the HRBT, into suitable seabird nesting habitat. This entailed the removal of vegetation and predatory rats, installation of erosion and sediment control structures, and placement of sand/gravel substrate on the parade grounds. Barriers were installed at building openings to prevent seabird chicks from entering hazardous spaces. At the same time, Wildlife Division staff obtained permits to lease and moor a sufficient number of flat-top barges in the embayment between the HRBT and Ft. Wool to create additional nesting habitat. The department contracted with a local marine construction company who procured the barges, placed sand/gravel substrate and installed seabird chick barriers on the topsides, and delivered and anchored the barges in place. The department acquired decoys and audio lures to help attract target species and engaged the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program Team (VT Team) to install and maintain the seabird attraction equipment along with remote monitoring cameras, and evaluate nesting success on Ft. Wool and the barges. The VT Team, with assistance from DWR staff, applied uniquely-coded field readable bands on flightless young and conducted weekly adult and chick counts as well as resighting surveys of banded individuals to obtain breeding population and chick survival estimates and to gain information on post-breeding movement patterns. Lastly, department staff procured and deployed a Board- and Coast Guard-approved array of regulatory waterway markers to delineate a “No Boats” zone at the mouth of the embayment. This action was necessary to reduce human disturbance of the birds on Ft. Wool and the barges.

Results

Preliminary results below suggest efforts to provide alternative nesting habitat at both locations was a success. Moreover, there was much greater survival of chicks to fledging than was observed at the HRBT in previous years. This can be attributed to the lack of human disturbance, abundant food, better habitat, and continued lack of mammalian predators.

Fort Wool

- Royal Terns: 10,000-12,000 adults, nearly 6,000 nests and approximately 5,200 chicks (2,110 banded)
- Sandwich Terns: 200-275 adults and 100-140 chicks (46 banded)
- Laughing Gulls: At least 830 adults, nests/chicks not counted, 52 chicks banded
- Common Terns: 10 adults, five nests, chicks not counted or banded
- Ancillary breeding species: Snowy Egrets, Herring Gulls, American Oystercatchers, Killdeer, Mallards, and Canada Geese

Barges

- Common Terns: over 650 adults, at least 329 nests, nearly 600 chicks (555 banded)
- Black Skimmers: at least 140 adults, at least 70 nests, at least 105 chicks (70 banded)
- Gull-billed Terns: two adults, one nest, two chicks (two banded)

The VT Team DWR staff also banded 326 chicks at a royal tern colony in Chincoteague Bay, *Accomack* and conducted resight surveys to compare that colony’s estimates of chick survival and post-breeding movement patterns with those derived from Ft. Wool and the HRBT.

Ruth Boettcher

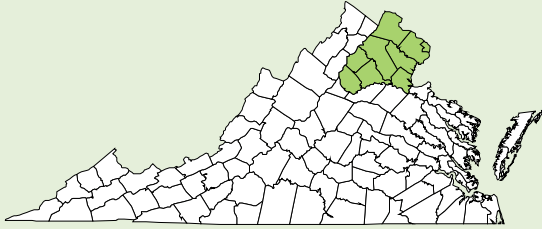
Coastal Terrestrial Biologist

VA Department of Wildlife Resources

Ruth.Boettcher@dwr.virginia.gov

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

Temperatures were above normal throughout the period, particularly in July, when the average at Reagan Nat. Airport was four degrees higher than the 30-year average. This, along with dry conditions in July, led to moderate drought conditions across much of the Region. The highlights this season included a White-winged Dove in *Rappahannock*, one of only a handful of Piedmont records, and a Ruff, the second record for the Piedmont.

Abbreviations: C.M. Crockett Pk. (C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Occoquan Bay (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Sky Meadows (Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Single **Ring-necked Ducks** were observed at Occoquan Bay 11 Jun (PSi) and L. Mooney Pk., *Stafford* 17 Jun (JeP, JoP, BC); the species is rare in the Region in summer, although small numbers typically linger into early June. A f. **Bufflehead** observed at the Mooreview Pkwy. impoundments, *Loudoun* 2 Jul (ph. BHi), lingering through the end of the month, was only the second known summer occurrence in the Piedmont. A group of 10 **Common Mergansers**, including juvs., seen near the confluence of the Rush and Thornton Rivers, *Rappahannock* 25 Jun (RRa) was probably the same family reported there in the last period; there are only a handful of summer records in the Piedmont away from the Potomac R. Sightings of **Red-breasted**

Mergansers, very rare in summer in the Region although small numbers linger into early June, included a single at Occoquan Bay 1 Jun (ph. SK) and 3 at the Warrenton Res., *Fauquier* 13 Jun (PSa). A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE**, just the sixth record in the Piedmont and the third in the Region, was seen near Flint Hill, *Rappahannock* 5 Jun (BR, AV). This is possibly the same bird as one reported around 12 miles s. in the previous period (2 May). A **Black-billed Cuckoo**, a rare summer resident in the Piedmont (although more common in the nearby West Region), was observed along Sunnyside Rd., *Rappahannock* 24 Jul (KG). A **King Rail**, a rare transient and summer resident in the Piedmont, was again seen along Thomas Rd., *Culpeper* 2 Jun (IT), where it had been observed the last 2+ weeks of May. Two **American Avocets**, rare inland, were seen from Hunting Cr. Bridge, *Fairfax* 17 Jul (ph. DL). Also rare inland were a pair of **Ruddy Turnstones** observed n. of Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 2 Jun (KG, DL, RRI, SS). A m. **RUFF**, just the second record for the Region and the second for the Piedmont, was seen and ph. by many at Middlesex Dr. pond, *Loudoun* 4–7 Jul (RL). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** was observed at the Colvin Ln. pond, *Prince William* 1 Jun (ph. JM), just the fourth summer record in the Piedmont. Single **Solitary Sandpipers** were seen from the W. Perimeter Rd. of Dulles Int. Airport, *Loudoun* 7 Jul (SP, DS) and the Auburn Middle School wetland, *Fauquier* 9–12 Jul (GS), considerably before the 25 Jul Piedmont early date.



A male **Ruff** at Middlesex Drive pond, *Loudon* photographed by Conor Farrell 6 Jul

CORMORANTS–VIREOS

A **Double-crested Cormorant**, an uncommon to rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, was observed at Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* 1 Jul (GS), where it continued through the month. A possible second bird, or maybe the same one, was reported but unconfirmed the previous day 20 mi s. at C.M. Crockett Pk. (HA). Rare summer residents in the Piedmont were a well-described **Black-crowned Night-Heron** flying over a residence near Upperville, *Fauquier* 28 Jul (MB) and a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** observed at Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 19–20 Jul (SM). There were sightings of single **Osprey**, a rare summer resident or visitor w. of the Potomac R., at several locations in *Fauquier*, including 4 sightings within a 3-mile radius around L. Brittle spread between 6 Jun and 31 Jul (m. obs.); further afield were singles spotted at C.M. Crockett Pk. 2–7 Jun (GS); Sky Meadows 12–13 Jun (TL); and Hume Rd. 4 Jul (EL, SLe). One was also seen along Skyline Dr. w. of Washington, *Rappahannock* 25 Jul (IT). A **Swallow-tailed Kite**, a rare but increasing visitor in the Piedmont (there have been at least 11 sightings since the 4 recorded in the Gold Book), was observed along Botts Ln. near Woodville, *Rappahannock* 26 July (PL, AW) and was seen and ph. with another through 31 Jul. There were 4 unconfirmed reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** in the Region, where the species is a rare summer visitor/resident: at Great

Falls Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Jun (KL, JS); Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, *Fairfax* 26 Jun (GF); Sky Meadows 3 Jul (SLi); and a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 9 Jul (GHo). Continuing to establish their presence as breeders in the Region, a breeding pair of **Mississippi Kites** was recorded for the third year at or near Forest Manor Dr., *Loudoun* (GHa). A very early **Merlin**, typically a rare transient inland, with only 6 known summer occurrences statewide and 2 in the Piedmont, was seen flying over the Moorefield Station pond, *Loudoun* 25 Jul (BHi); the Piedmont early date is 10 Sep. An **Alder Flycatcher**, a rare migrant in the spring, was encountered at Dyke Marsh 1–4 Jun (PB, m. obs.). There were 2 sightings of **Least Flycatchers** along Skyline Dr., where they are fairly rare in summer: w. of Syria, *Madison* 10 Jun (KK) and at Compton Gap, *Rappahannock* 3 Jul (SB). A **Blue-headed Vireo** was observed at Prince William Forest Pk., *Prince William* 11 Jul (NN); the species is a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, especially away from the Blue Ridge.

FINCHES–DICKCISSEL

Reports of **Red Crossbills**, rare in summer even in their preferred higher elevations and typically west of the Blue Ridge, included several locations within Shenandoah NP: a single at Pinnacles Overlook, *Rappahannock* 3 Jul (BHa); up to 4 at Elkwallow, *Rappahannock* 17–25 Jul (GM); 4–5 at Thornton Hollow Overlook, *Rappahannock* 22–27 Jul (DH); and a single at the Pinnacles picnic area, *Madison* 30 Jul (ph. KG) (about one mile from the first sighting listed). A possible **Dark-eyed Junco** was reported along Cobbler Mtn. Rd., *Fauquier* 18 Jul (anon.); this species is nearly unknown in summer in the c. Piedmont, with an extreme early date of 15 Sep. **White-throated Sparrows** made unexpected summer appearances at a private residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 1 Jun (EK), where it lingered through 3 Jul, and about six miles away at a private residence in Fairfax City 13 Jun (P&JW). The Piedmont late date for this species is 20 May. **Bobolinks** were confirmed breeding along Hill Rd., *Loudoun*, n. of Upperville, where 6 were observed 19 Jun (KG), and two miles s. near Upperville, *Fauquier*, where 30 were observed

20 Jun (BHa, ph. LM, ES). Portions of Loudoun and Fauquier are one of the few areas in the Piedmont where Bobolinks are known to breed, albeit increasingly rarely. Bobolinks made additional rare summer appearances: 3 near Bluemont, *Loudoun* 17 Jun – 6 Jul (RF); a flyover along Highland Rd., *Culpeper* 15 Jul (KG); 4–6 along Rokeby Rd., *Fauquier* 17–19 Jul (TD, BHa, IT); and 2 near The Plains, *Fauquier* 18 Jul (BHa). A **Blue-winged Warbler**, a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, especially away from the Blue Ridge, was seen at Silver L. RP, *Prince William* 13 Jun (RM). There were 2 reports of **Prothonotary Warblers** near Remington, *Fauquier*, probably within two miles of each other: 26 Jul (GW) and 31 Jul (TD); the species is a fairly rare summer resident and transient in the w. Piedmont. An apparent **Magnolia Warbler** was seen at Thornton Hollow Overlook along Skyline Dr., *Rappahannock* 23 Jul (ph. TK); the species is a rare summer resident in most of the Mountains sector. A **Blackburnian Warbler**, a species that makes rare summer appearances in the w-most Piedmont, was seen near Sperryville, *Rappahannock* 27 Jun (IT). Late sightings of **Black-throated Blue Warblers** included singles at Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 7 Jun (MH) and Crow's Nest NAP, *Stafford* 27 Jun (EW); the species' Piedmont and Coastal Plain extreme late dates are 2 Jun and 6 Jun, respectively. Two **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, a rare but increasing summer resident in the Mountains sector, were seen in Shenandoah NP along the Limberlost Trail, *Madison* 12 Jul (FG, LG). A **Black-throated Green Warbler**, a species with only 2 previous summer records in the Piedmont, both well outside our Region, was seen at

Merrimac Farm WMA, *Prince William* 31 Jul (ph. BS) (Piedmont early date 30 Aug). Rare in summer in the Piedmont, especially away from the Blue Ridge, up to 5 **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were seen at G.R. Thompson WMA, *Fauquier* 4 Jun – 19 Jul (m. obs.), and singles were found at Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax* 25 Jun (ph. AB) and a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 22 Jul (GHo). **Dickcissels**, historically a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, continued their spring presence at Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk, *Prince William* (ph., m. obs.) and nearby rural areas, with up to 3 continuing through 2 Jul.

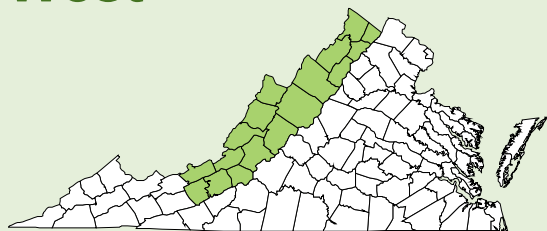
Contributors: Heidi Aboutaj, Anonymous eBirder, Steve Biasetti, Annie Bielamowicz, P.W. Boyd, Mark Brewer, Brenda Chase, Todd Day, Gary Fleming, Regina Flynn, Frank Galaskewicz, Lauren Galaskewicz, Kurt Gaskill, Bert Harris (BHa), Gerry Hawkins (GHa), Bruce Hill (BHi), Mark Hoffman, Diane Holsinger, Gerco Hoogeweg (GHo), Eric Kershner, Scott Keyes, Todd Kiraly, Kelly Krechmer, Patty Lane, Tahiry Langrand, Robert Langstroth, Kristine Lansing, David Ledwith, Edmund LeGrand, Steve LeGrand (SLe), Steve Little (SLi), Stacey Maggard, Gabriel Mapel, Joan Mashburn, Richard Mehl, Linda Millington, Nathaniel Nye, Jeffrey Pozner (JeP), Joan Pozner (JoP), Shannon Pursell, Richard Raines (RRa), Rich Rieger (RRi), Bernadette Rigley, Paul Salaman (PSa), Phil Silas (PSi), Greg Slader, Brian Smith, David Smith, Emily Southgate, Janis Stone, Sherman Suter, Ian Topolsky, Amy Venclik, Ed Wallace, George Wallace, Alan Williams, Paul & Joan Woodward

Corrigendum

The following sentences in the Spring 2020 Virginia Birds (Vol 16:4) North Region report “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 further south, with 38 first seen 12 Apr at Belmont Bay Marina (KG) and as many as 56 observed there and at nearby Occoquan Bay NWR 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 NWR (ph. m. obs.)” will be replaced

in the North Region report of the electronically archived Spring 2020 Virginia Birds (Vol 16:4) with a corrected sentence that will state: “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 further south, with 38 first seen 12 Apr at Belmont Bay Marina (KG) and as many as 56 observed there and at nearby Occoquan Bay NWR 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 NWR (ph. m. obs.)”

West



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

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

MERGANSERS–HUMMINGBIRDS

A single **Hooded Merganser** was seen at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Rockingham* 5 and 10 Jun (DH), one recently fledged young at Slate Lick Fields, *Rockingham* 14 Jun (GMO), one at Silver L., *Rockingham* 19 Jun (RS), one at Briery Branch Reservoir, *Rockingham* 26 Jun (DH), and one at Oakwood Pond, *Rockingham* 4 Jul (LB). There were many records throughout the Region this summer of **Common Merganser**, with highest tallies of 19 in *Bath* 6 Jun (EL, IL), twenty-eight in *Clarke* 17 Jun (DC), twenty-one at Catlett's Ford, *Warren* 21 Jun (GR), and thirty also in *Warren* 27 Jun (JH). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was observed at Lexington Reservoir, *Rockbridge* 13 Jun (GK, DT), one at Quillen's Pond, *Augusta* 13 Jul (AL), one at Broadway Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Rockingham* 19 Jul (CT), and one also in *Rockingham* 27 Jul (SH). Breeding records for **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** are as follows: ad. carrying nesting material in George Washington NF, *Shenandoah* 10 Jun (SJ), a nest with young in *Craig* 13 Jun (DB), recently fledged young at Seven Bends SP, *Shenandoah* 13 Jun (DH), ad. carrying food in *Montgomery* 21 Jun (LA), ad. carrying food at Fenwick Mines, *Craig* 22 Jun (KG), and ad. carrying food in *Botetourt* 24 Jun (JP). There were several records of lone **Black-billed Cuckoos**: near Lexington, *Rockbridge* 1 June (SD), at Claytor Lake SP, *Pulaski* 2 Jun (OS), on Paddy Knob, *Bath* 7 Jun (CF), at Briery Branch Gap, *Rockingham* 7 Jun (WT), and 30 Jun (KL), at Newport, *Giles* 8 Jun (XG), at Locust Springs, *Highland* 8 Jun (BB, MN), at Paddy Knob, *Highland* 10 Jun (GT), in

Shenandoah NP, *Page* 25 Jun (DV), in Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 28 Jun (TF), and near Grottoes, *Rockingham* 13 Jul (EO). A **Chuck-will's-widow** was seen carrying food in *Augusta* 21 Jun (AL). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** nest was found in Roanoke 3 Jul (KD et al); a f. was feeding young in *Page* 21 Jul (KK), and two recently fledged young were following a f. at Reddish Knob, *Rockingham* 21 Jul (MG).

RAILS–VULTURES

A **Virginia Rail** was at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 7 June (JN), three in *Rockbridge* 6 Jun (AL), two 14 Jun (JP), and four including one fledged young 18 Jul (AL), one in *Bath* 30 Jun (EO), and one in *Roanoke* 13 Jul (AR). SORA records were from Nazarene Church Wetlands, *Rockingham*: one 2 Jun (PN), two 6 Jun (AL), and one 7 Jul (WL). A **Black-bellied Plover** was seen in *Augusta* 19 Jun (VL, GM), for a second summer record in that county. A **Semipalmated Plover** was found at Broadway Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Rockingham* 2 Jun (CT), and one at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 7 Jun (JN). A **Least Sandpiper** was photographed at Blandy, *Clarke* 13 Jul (DB, DC, WP) and 14 Jul (DC). An older fledgling or juv. **Spotted Sandpiper** was observed with an ad. at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Rockingham* 12 Jul (MG). A **Common Loon** was seen at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 5-6 Jun (GR), and one at L. Frederick 6 Jun (DB, WP). One to three were observed several times at Switzer L., *Rockingham* from 8 Jun (CM) to 6 Jul (HH), and one was at L. Arrowhead, *Page* throughout Jun and Jul (m. obs.). Three ad. **Least Bitterns** were observed with fledged young in

Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 21 Jul (AL), for a first nesting record in the county. An imm. **Little Blue Heron** was photographed at Glen Lyn, *Giles* 24 Jul (PL). One to two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were found in Blacksburg, *Montgomery* throughout the period (m. obs.), while one was often seen at Silver L., *Rockingham* 1 Jun to 16 Jul (m. obs.). Other records include six at Luray, *Page* 12 Jun (DH), three in Dayton, *Rockingham* 2-3 Jul (GMO), and one at Wildwood Pk. Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 16 Jul (WB, RP). Six **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were observed at Smith Pk., Roanoke 1 Jul (MB, SL) and seven at Memorial Bridge Pk. Roanoke 3 Jul (LC, AD, AP). Near Glen Lyn, *Giles*, a **Black Vulture** with red wing tags was observed 14 Jun (JP). It had been banded near Peterstown WV 17 Oct 2019.

SHRIKES-TANAGERS

A **Loggerhead Shrike** was seen at Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 2 Jul (AC). Eight **Horned Larks** were found in *Rockingham* 18 Jun (WB, RP). Four **Brown-headed Nuthatches** including recently fledged young were found near Ironto, *Montgomery* 21 Jun (LA), providing the first breeding record for that county. Other records include four at Spring Valley L., Roanoke 19 Jul (KC) and three at Windsor L., Roanoke 24 Jul (KC). A **Winter Wren** was observed carrying food to a nest site 31 Jul at Reddish Knob, *Augusta* (AL). A **Sedge Wren** was found in Blacksburg, *Montgomery* 6 Jun (RM). Three **Pine Siskins** were at Mountain L., *Giles* 17 Jun (TS, SW), one in Radford 22 Jun (CK), one at Warm Springs Mountain Preserve, *Bath* 24-25 Jun (LA), one at Douthat SP, *Bath* 29 Jun (CA), two at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 18 Jul (BH), and one at Briery Branch Gap, *Rockingham* 29 Jul (BB, MN). A **Vesper Sparrow** was observed carrying food to a likely nest site in *Highland* 13 Jun (JS). Nesting of **Yellow-breasted Chat** was confirmed in *Montgomery* with an adult carrying food 18 Jun (PL). A **Bobolink** nest with young was found in *Warren* 2 Jun (AV), and a fledged young was found in *Clarke* 28 Jun (BL, JL). **Prothonotary Warbler** records include one near Rileyville, *Page* 10 June (LF), two at Morgan's Ford Boat Ramp, *Warren* 13

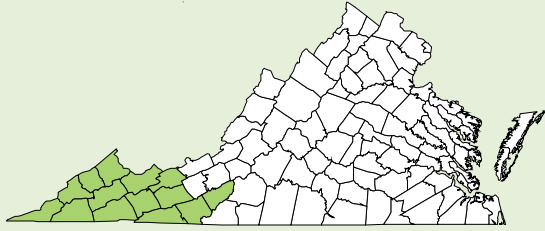
Jun (KH), one in Shenandoah NP, *Warren* 15 Jun (JW), one at Catlett's Ford Boat Ramp, *Warren* 21 Jun (GR), one on the South Fork Shenandoah R., *Warren* 27 Jun (JH), three near Millwood, *Clarke* 17 June (DC) and one there 8 Jul (KH). A f. **Cerulean Warbler** was observed building a nest at High Knob, *Warren* 1 Jun (SC). Nesting of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was confirmed with two young in a nest on Reddish Knob, *Rockingham* 3 Jul (DL, GMO) and in *Augusta* with recently fledged young observed 4 Jul (MBr). A **Summer Tanager** was observed at the Nazarene Church Wetlands, *Rockingham* 5 Jun (LB), two in *Augusta* 10 Jun (KB, TB), one in Harrisonburg 18 Jun (JN), one at Rawley Springs, *Rockingham* 7 Jul (LB), and one in *Montgomery* 16 Jul (LBI).

Contributors: Cathay Adair, Logan Anderson, Mary Barritt, Baxter Beamer, Karen Beatty, Tom Beatty, William Benish, Lori Blanc (LBI), David Boltz, Lakota Bondurant, Dan Brauning, Matt Brooks (MBr), Andrew Cameron, Scott Campbell, David Carr, Katherine Clemo, Linda Cory, Kent Davis, A. Downing, Scott Dransfield, Conor Farrell, Todd Fearer, Lisa Filipy, Matt Gingerich, Xavier Gitre, Stanley Heatwole, Bruce Hill, Jordan Hinson, Kathy Hixson, Diane Holsinger, Huck Hutchens, Stephen Johnson, Clyde Kessler, Kelly Krechmer, Glenn Kuhar, Allen Lerner, Vic Laubach, Phil Lehman, William Leigh, Diane Lepkowski, Eli Lianez, Ira Lianez, BJ Little, Jon Little, Sissy Logan, Kathy Louthan, Gabriel Mapel, Ryan Mays, Clair Mellinger, Greg Moyers (GMO), Max Nootbaar, Martina Nordstrand, John Norment, Peter Norment, Ellison Orcutt, John Pancake, Antoinette Pepin, Robyn Puffenbarger, William Parkin, Andrew Rapp, Gabriel Ricketts, Olivia Schiermeyer, Ron Shearer, John Spahr, Tom St. Andre, Cory Taylor, Wes Teets, David Tilson, Greg Tito, Amy Venclik, Danielle Viands, Joy Walker, Sandra Winstead

Corrigendum: The following sentence in the Spring 2020 Virginia Birds (Vol 16:4) West Region report "The first and only other VARCOM Category 1 Bell's Vireo was one banded on Fisherman Island

NWR 19 Sep 2010” was incorrect. The sentence should have stated “The first and only other VARCOM Category 1 Bell’s Vireo was one banded on the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR 19 Sep 2010”. The incorrect sentence will be replaced by the corrected sentence in the West Region report of the electronically archived edition of Virginia Birds Spring 2020 (Vol 16:4).

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

WATERFOWL–NIGHTJARS

Common Mergansers continue to increase as breeders in the Region with birds reported in *Buchanan*, *Dickenson*, *Washington*, and *Wythe*. The high count was an impressive 35 near Austinville, *Wythe* 18 Jul 9 (GP). A **Hooded Merganser** was found at the Saltville Well Fields, *Smyth*, 20 Jun (ph. AB), a juvenile was near Glade Spring, *Washington* 1 Jul (SH). There were a few scattered records of single **Northern Bobwhites**, as usual the majority came from the Sothern Gap area, *Buchanan*, 4-14 Jun (GB, ph. DO). Singles were also near Rich Valley, *Smyth* 17 Jun (LA) and Gratton, *Tazewell* 14 Jul (AR). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continue to increase in the Region. There were multiple reports from the Jonesville and Rose Hill areas in Lee and several reports from new locations in *Washington*: two near Glade Spring 28 Jun (ph. TS, ES), and three were in Wyndale 2 Jul (ph. AN, RL, MS). More expected were several reports from the Meadowview area. The new population near Ivanhoe, *Wythe* also seems to be doing well with several reports, including an impressive count of 11 27 Jun (PE). A **Chuck-wills-widow** was near Jonesville, *Lee* 14 Jun (GB).

RAILS–HERONS

It was another good summer for **Virginia Rail** in the Region. They were confirmed breeding at Gose Mill Pond, *Tazewell* 17-21 Jun (DS), others were at the Mud Fork Beaver Pond, *Tazewell* 5 Jun (CD), near Rural Retreat, *Wythe* 6 Jul (ph. LA) and up to two were recorded throughout the summer at the Saltville Well Fields, *Smyth* (m. obs.). Two **Soras** were at Gose Mill Pond in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 17 Jun

(DS). An American Coot was at Wytheville Community College, *Wythe* 18-25 Jul (SP). As usual the only **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** reports came from downtown Bristol, with single birds on 3 Jun (MC) and 4 Jul (AN, CC).

FLYCATCHERS–WARBLERS

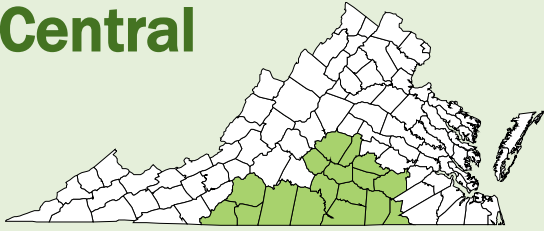
The only reports of **Alder Flycatcher** were 3 at Mt. Rogers, *Grayson*, 13 Jun (v.r. LA, GB) and 17 Jul (ph. AR) and one at Grayson Highlands SP, *Grayson* 25 Jun (JM). There were many reports of **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in the Grayson Highlands area, but one on FR 237, Scott 7 Jul was more notable. Most reports of **Loggerhead Shrike** came from *Washington*, where there were a family of three on Browning Road 26 Jul (ES, ph. TS) and a single bird at the Virginia Highlands Airport 29 Jun (ph. AN). Other records were one in Elk Garden, *Russel* 20 Jul (AR) and one in the Stanley Valley, *Scott* just across the state line 29 Jun (DC). **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were confirmed breeding for the second straight summer at Washington County Park, *Washington*, where up to 3 were recorded 12 Jun-27 Jul (LA, ph. CC). Two more were found near Cana, *Carrol* 8 Jul (SK). This was another good summer for **Brown Creeper** with a good number of reports in the Mt. Rogers area, several were also near the Little Dry Run Campground, *Wythe* 15-19 Jun (LA, SK). Up to 3 males were singing on territory at Crawfish Hollow, *Smyth* 12-23 Jun (CC) and another was recorded singing at the Seven Sisters Trail, *Wythe* 13 Jun (v.r. S&DP). **Hermit Thrush** is an expected breeder in the Mt. Rogers area, but two at the High Knob campground, *Scott* 8 Jun (GR, LA) and two nearby at High Knob Recreation Area,

Wythe 24 Jun (WB) were more noteworthy. There were several reports of **Swainson's Thrushes** in western *Grayson* at or near Mt. Rogers throughout the summer, the high count was 3 at Mt Rogers 26 Jun (LP). There were only two reports of **Red Crossbills** this summer, with two at Whitetop Mtn., *Washington*, 13 Jun (LA, GB) and two at Huckleberry Knob, *Wythe* 13 Jul (GR). Two lingering **White-throated Sparrows** were at Saltville, *Smyth* 10 Jun (ph. CD). There were only a handful of **Golden-winged Warblers** seen this summer; single birds were seen at Abbs Valley, *Tazewell* 13 Jun (D&SP), and Laurel Bed Lake, *Russell* 4 Jul (CD). **Swainson's Warblers** were widely reported in the Region this summer, mainly thanks to point counts for the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Project. Most reports came from *Buchanan*, *Dickenson*, *Wise*, *Scott*, *Tazewell*, and *Russell*, one

east of Hillsville, *Carroll*, 11 Jun (JS) was more notable. Up to two **Dickcissel** were at Southern Gap, *Buchanan*, 8 Jun - 20 Jul (GB, C&VR, LA), and single birds were also at Crockett, *Wythe* 15 Jun (GR) and in the Corn Valley, *Russell* 24 Jun (CC).

Contributors: Logan Anderson, Jill Auburn, Guy Babineau, George Burrell Allen Boynton, Adam Campbell, Cade Campbell, Caroline Coe, Daphne Cole, Jason Davis, Kent Davis, Clancy Deel, Connor Farrell, Leon Graber, Paul Graber, Ron Harrington, Eric Harrold, Steven Hopp, David & Jill Kaminski, David Larsen, Michael Lott, Roger Mayhorn, Guy McGrane, Neil Moore, Adrianna Nelson, Daryl Owens, G. Patton, Doug Pfeiffer, Sally Pfeiffer, Jim Phillips, Ashley Peele, Joe Poston, Andrew Rapp, Art Ritter, David Schlabach, Michael Schultz, David Shoch, Ty Smith, John Spahr, 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

Despite restrictions resulting from COVID-19, birders were able to enjoy significant time afield in the Region this summer. Many of the reports summarized here resulted from work on the final season of the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, and as a result of Atlas work areas such as Pittsylvania County that are often underrepresented in our seasonal reports had relatively good coverage this year.

Abbreviations: BBA (Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas); Staunton View (Staunton View Public Use Area, upper Kerr Res. shoreline, *Mecklenburg*)

MERGANSERS–TERNS

A f. **Hooded Merganser** continued from the spring at a small private pond in e. *Appomattox* until at least 7 Jun (DMS), and a m. lingered at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg* 13 (CW, DW) and 14 (AD, PG) Jun. A m. **Common Merganser** found on the Dan R. at Danville 10 Jun (AG, ph. AR) continued until at least 22 Jun (AG, AR), while a “female-type bird” was there 8 Jul (AG) – curious, at least, considering the recent expansion of this species’ breeding range. **Northern Bobwhite** were widely reported, unlike many recent summers, largely as a result of BBA efforts. Two **Least Sandpipers** had returned to Staunton View on 12 Jul (PG), and the first **Pectoral Sandpiper** was there 26 Jul (AD, PG). A single **Semipalmated Sandpiper** feeding on mudflats below Smith Mt. Dam along the Roanoke R., *Pittsylvania*, 22 Jun (AG, ph. AR) was remarkable. The first “fall” **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at Staunton View 30 Jul (ph. TS, ES), and 5 **Spotted Sandpipers** and 1 **Solitary Sandpiper** were there

12 Jul (both PG). One **Lesser Yellowlegs** had also returned to Staunton View 30 Jul (TS, ES), while 2 **Greater Yellowlegs** were there 26 Jul (AD, PG). An early **Caspian Tern** was also at Staunton View 18 Jul (ph. BH), with 2 there the next day (ph. PG).

LOONS–FALCONS

A **Common Loon** found grounded 7 Jun along Nutbush Rd., *Lunenburg* (ph. TS) was gone when the observer returned a short time after finding it. A



Grounded Common Loon photographed by Ty Smith near Nutbush Road, *Lunenburg* 7 Jun

single m. **Anhinga** at Kettles Cr., *Mecklenburg*, 8 Jun (ph. SH) was the only one reported. Single **Black-crowned Night-Herons** seen flying overhead below Kerr Dam, *Mecklenburg*, 11 Jun (TS, ES), and flushed while kayaking along upper Kerr Res., *Charlotte*, 26 Jul (AD), were the only ones reported, while 1 juv. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Staunton View 19 Jul (PG) was the only report of that species. A **Swallow-tailed Kite** soaring with vultures over School Rd., s. *Buckingham*, 31 Jul (ph. MS), was a first for the county and the only report



Ty Smith took this photo of an adult Mississippi Kite along Poorhouse Road, Lunenburg 10 Jun

this season. **Mississippi Kites** were reported from seven counties, perhaps a Regional high total for a season; many of the reports came from BBA volunteers. Since **American Kestrels** are rare in the Region in summer, receiving reports from four locations this year was good, but for perspective, consider that more than twice as many Mississippi Kites were reported in the same time frame.

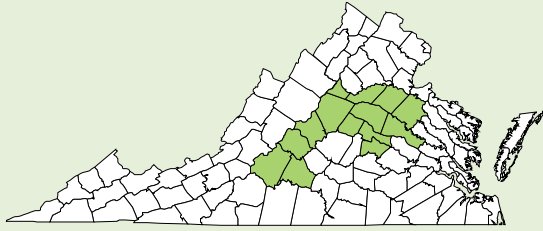
SHRIKES–DICKCISSEL

Despite increased Regional coverage from BBA workers, the only **Loggerhead Shrike** reports were from previously known locations in *Cumberland* and *Lunenburg*. Three **Blue-headed Vireos**, including

one fledged young, along Red Rd. near Java, *Pittsylvania*, 21 Jun (ph. AR) were far e. of their expected breeding area along the Blue Ridge, and a few other reports from well into the Piedmont were submitted by BBA workers as well, though no others as far e. as the Java group. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** n. of their expected range included one along Country Club Rd., *Appomattox*, 3 Jul (ph. AR); a group of 4, including ads. feeding young, along Rosser Rd., *Buckingham*, 28 Jun (MA, ph. JP); and a group of 3 on Westminster Church Rd., *Buckingham*, also on 28 Jun (ph. DC, TC). **Dickcissels** were reported in several locations, with singing ms. found in *Appomattox*, *Buckingham*, *Charlotte* (multiple locations and dates, m. obs.), *Cumberland*, *Halifax*, and *Pittsylvania* (multiple locations, m. obs.) – far more than a typical summer. Breeding was confirmed near Redeye, *Pittsylvania*, 16 July (AB, MS), where 4 or more individuals had been observed intermittently for several weeks beginning 10 Jun (MS).

Contributors: Mary Ames, Alyssa Brady, Drew Chaney, Tim Chaney, Adam D’Onofrio, Paul Glass, Aaron Graham, Sergio Harding, Bill Hooker, Janet Paisley, Andrew Rapp, Donna Mateski de Sanchez, Ty Smith, Evan Spears, Mike Stinson, Clyde Wilson, Donna Wilson

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 summer was highlighted by numerous lingering spring migrants and other out-of-season birds that kept area birders on their toes while out looking for the seasonal regulars. High water levels prevented many shorebirds or post-breeding waders from moving into the area, but a few early movers from these groups still found their way into the Region. Highlight species included Common Gallinule, Little Blue Heron, Mississippi Kite, Merlin, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-winged Warbler, Painted Bunting, and Dickcissel.

MERGANSEr–HERONS

The lone **Common Merganser** sighting was one from Snowden Dam, *Amherst* 25 Jul (TS), a consistent breeding site for this species. A **Black-billed Cuckoo** 1 Jun at Thunder Ridge Overlook, *Bedford* (ph. PS, NW) could have been a late migrant, or possibly part of a scarce population in the Blue Ridge. Another at Quarry Trail, Fredericksburg 4 Jun (ph. JG) seems more likely to have been a migrant. A very confiding **Common Gallinule** continued from the spring



Max Nootbaar's photo of a Common Gallinule at Fluvanna Ruritan Lake, *Fluvanna* 1 Jun

period at Fluvanna Ruritan L., *Fluvanna* 1 Jun (ph. m. obs.) providing one of very few summer records of the species in the Region. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was notably early at King Family Vineyard, *Albemarle* 6 Jul (ph. BB). A **Greater Yellowlegs** was also early at Bremo Bluff, *Fluvanna* 20 Jul (ph. TB). There were two reports of lingering **Common Loons**, one on the Rivanna R., *Fluvanna* 8 Jun (ph. NT, SH, WH), another continued from the spring at a private pond near Keswick, *Albemarle* 2 Jul (BG). Two **Little Blue Herons** were found, an ad. at L. Gordonsville, *Louisa* 21 Jul (ph. NT, SH, WH), and an imm. at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 25 Jul (ph. CF).

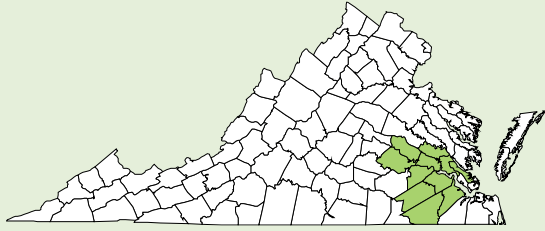
KITE–DICKCISSEL

A **Mississippi Kite** was observed on the edge of the species' breeding range at Foxanna Farms, *Hanover* 6 Jun (ph. AR, CL), the Region still lacks confirmed nesting records. A **Barn Owl** nest box near Arrington, *Nelson* successfully supported at least three fledglings, 28 Jul (AH). Very unseasonal, a **Merlin** was encountered at Riverview Cemetery, Charlottesville 2 Jun (ph. TB). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was also late at Riverview Cemetery, Charlottesville 2 Jun (ph. TB). Rarely encountered in the breeding season in the Region, a singing **Willow Flycatcher** at Lone Oak Farm, *Albemarle* 4 Jul (ph. a.r. BB) was possibly a bird on territory. Possibly hinting at an irruption year for the species, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was very early at Oak Trees, *Albemarle* 9 Jul (RK). A silent m. **Blue-winged Warbler** was detected at Jessups L., *Albemarle* 12 Jun (ph. DC), providing a rare summer record for the Region and an unusual date for this

species not to be on territory. Very unexpected and rare at any season but especially in summer, a f. **PAINTED BUNTING** was found at Foxanna Farms, *Hanover* 6 Jun (ph. AR, CL). **Dickcissels** were found on territory in many counties in the Region this season, including *Bedford*, *Campbell*, *Hanover*, and *Powhatan*.

Contributors: Baxter Beamer, Tucker Beamer, Drew Chaney, Conor Farrell, Jim Goehring, Barbara Goodson, Allen Hale, Susan Hofacker, Will Hofacker, Reid Keller, Carson Lambert, Andrew Rapp, Pam Scrima, Ty Smith, Nik Teichmann, Nicola Williamson

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 June were normal with precipitation averaging 1.3 inches above normal. The opposite was true for July with temperatures averaging 3.6 degrees above normal and precipitation down 1.7 inches from the normal. The first three weeks of July were extremely dry, setting up great shorebird conditions at Hog. Many birds were being counted and more were coming in when the rains suddenly started on the night of July 21. From that point on the rains never really stopped for any length of time, filling all the impoundments, and the great start to the shorebird season abruptly ended as their habitat disappeared underwater. Sadly, this was a trend that would continue into the next season. Good news came out of Sussex County where the northernmost population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers reside. This year, a record number of young were produced and every breeding group made a breeding attempt, resulting in a greater number of young fledged per nest compared to the last few years. Rarities this season included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Ruff.

Abbreviations: Dutch Gap/Henricus (Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Historical Park, *Chesterfield*), Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*).

DUCKS–SHOREBIRDS

A **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** was a rare find at a farm pond along Beaver Dam Rd., *Sussex* 21 Jun (ph. by DC, TC). The bird remained there at least until the following day (m.obs.). An ad. m. **Lesser Scaup**, rare in summer, was spotted at College Cr, *James City* 16 Jun (ph. by BT). Also rare in summer, a **Ruddy Duck** was near Jamestown,



Black-bellied Whistling Duck (front) with Canada Geese photographed by Drew Chaney along Beaver Dam Road, *Sussex* 21 Jun

James City 25 Jun (AA) & 26 Jun (ph. by DC). Another Ruddy Duck was at Hog 31 Jul (JF). Ad. and juv. **Pied-billed Grebes** continued from the spring season at Dutch Gap/Henricus, spotted several times in the marsh from mid Jun to mid Jul (m.obs.). An ad. Pied-billed Grebe was at Hog 22 Jul (ph. by NB, BB, CF). Two **Black-billed Cuckoos**, a fairly rare transient and rare summer resident, were tallied in the region this season. The first one was spotted at the Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City* 2 Jun (RS) and the other was off the Colonial Parkway, *James City* 4 Jun (BT). An **American Avocet** was at Hog 10 Jul (ph. by NB). Establishing a third local record, a molting m. **RUFF** was an excellent find at Hog 21 Jul and the second one found there in the last three years (ph. by AB, ST). **Western Sandpipers** made a good showing at Hog before the rains came with 167 counted on 15 Jul (AB), 294 there 20 Jul (AD) and 411 on 21 Jul (AB). An excellent count of 835 **Short-billed Dowitchers** was recorded at Hog 21 Jul (AB). On the same day, two **Long-billed**

Dowitchers were carefully gleaned from the large group of Short-billed (AB, ST). A **Willet**, rare inland, was seen flying along the James R. 21 Jul (AB).

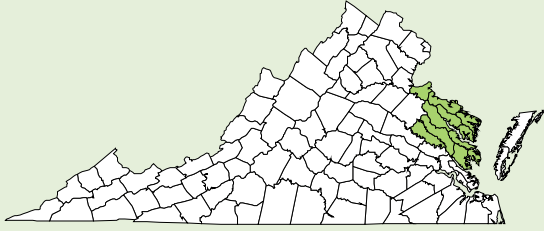
TERNs–DICKCISSEL

A **Gull-billed Tern**, rare west of the Chesapeake Bay, was at Hog 14 Jun, establishing the sixth local record (ph. by TB). Remarkably, this is the third year in a row that Gull-billed Tern has been spotted at Hog. A **Black Tern** was at Hog 18 Jul (KL). Always rare in the region, a **Black Skimmer** was seen on the Jamestown side of the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry 20 Jun (ph. by NB). This species is being found more frequently in the region in recent years, possibly due to increased observer participation. Two out of season **Common Loons** were recorded this season. The first was a continuing bird from late spring at a lake on Nuckols Rd., *Henrico* 1 Jun (ph. by M&MS). The other was seen off the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, *James City* three times, 1 Jun (ph. by NB), 20 Jun (ph. by NB, BW) and 4 Jul (NN). **Anhingas** continued at Carson Wetland, *Prince George* throughout the season with a high count of ten birds on 25 Jul (ph. by AM). Elsewhere, a single f. Anhinga was on Wormley Cr., *Yorktown, York* 22 Jul (ph. by CO). Although commonly encountered at Hog in numbers at other seasons, **American White**

Pelicans are typically absent during the summer. One bird broke that trend this year and was present throughout the season (m.obs). Two **Yellow-crowned Night Herons**, uncommon to rare this far inland, were at Tuckahoe Cr. Pk., *Henrico* 21 Jun (ph. by W&SH). At least one bird remained there through 26 Jul (m.obs.). Another Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was spotted flying low over the Nottoway R., *Southampton* 18 Jun (NF). Rare this far inland in summer, a **Northern Harrier** was spotted on Lankford Ln., *Isle of Wight* 7 Jun (TCu). Two early **Bobolinks** were noted at Hog 23 Jul (TCu). A single bird was there 28 Jul (TCu). A late **Northern Watertrush** was encountered along Chinquapin Rd., *Sussex* 7 Jun (DC). The only **Dickcissels** reported in the region this summer were two off Chippokes Farm Rd, *Surry* 11 Jul (N&EF, JS).

Contributors: Arlene Aitkin, Andrew Baldelli, Nancy Barnhart, Baxter Beamer, Timothy Burnett, Drew Chaney, Tim Chaney, David Clark, Terri Cuthriell (TCu), Adam D’Onofrio, Conor Farrell, Elisa Flanders, Nick Flanders, James Flynn, Will & Susan Hofacker, Kathy Louthan, Anne Mytych, Nick Newberry, Colleen O’Conner, Max & Mary Sandham, Robert Steele, Jason Strickland, Brian Taber, Shea Tiller, Bill Williams

East



Editors: Fred Atwood
Flint Hill School
10409 Academic Drive
Oakton, VA 22124
fredatwood@yahoo.com

Amiel Hopkins - Vienna, VA
amielhopkins@gmail.com
Adit Nehra - Herndon, VA
nehra.adit@outlook.com

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

A total of 152 species was recorded this summer. Data was sourced from eBird, the Virginia Birds listserv, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv), Middle Peninsula Bird Club Facebook page, and the CCB (Center for Conservation Biology). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the USGS Breeding Bird Survey routes were not run this year. However, since it was the last year of the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2), there was increased coverage of the area.

Abbreviations: Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Hughlett (Hughlett Pt. NAP, *Northumberland*); K.G. Ponds (private sand quarry ponds near the Rappahannock R., mostly along Rt. 3, *King George*); LaGrange (LaGrange La. near Sealston, *King George*); Leedstown (*Westmoreland*); New Pt. Comfort (New Pt. Comfort NAP, *Mathews*); Wilna (Wilna/Wright Unit of the Rappahannock River Valley NWR, *Richmond*).

GEESE-GULLS

The most notable waterfowl record this summer was a **Canvasback** seen from Riverside Inn floating on the Rappahannock R., *Richmond* 9 Jun (TC, SC). This represents the first eBird record of this species summering in the Region. Another good waterfowl sighting was of a **Red-Breasted Merganser** seen while kayaking off of New Pt. Comfort 22-25 Jul (PN). This was the 3rd eBird summer record for the county and only the 4th for the Region. Two **Ruddy Ducks** were spotted at Henry's Cr., *Northumberland* 2-4 Jul (AE). This is one of a handful of eBird summer records in the Region, and a first summer record for the county. In fact, it is

only the 2nd summer record in eBird outside of the K.G. Ponds area. Because of the thorough coverage this year by participants in the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project, a remarkable total of 158 **Northern Bobwhites** was reported from 62 locations. They were found in every county in the Region with a high of 11 at Zoar State Forest, *King William* 7 Jul (ST). A **Pied-Billed Grebe** was spotted at LaGrange 23 Jul (AN, SK). This is most likely a very early migrant rather than a summering bird because it was not seen in the area before this, despite coverage. This represents the 5th eBird record for the Region during the summer and the 3rd eBird record in the county in the summer. **Chuck-Will's-Widows** were well represented with 49 sightings in 31 locations in all counties in the Region except *Lancaster*. This differs from **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** which is less common, especially in the eastern counties. This year 10 birds were found at nine locations. Before this year, only 3 breeding season **King Rails** had been reported to eBird, all from separate locations along the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers. So this summer's tally of 11 vocalizing birds is quite remarkable. One of these was from a private non-tidal freshwater marsh near Newland, *Richmond* 30 Jun (AN, FA). The other 10 were all from boat-based surveys of the tidal freshwater Otterburn and Drake Marsh complex in *Essex* and *Westmoreland* along the Rappahannock R. near Leedstown 3-18 Jun (SH). The *Richmond* and *Essex* birds were the first eBird records for those counties. This is probably not a result of increased population, but of increased coverage. An impressive count of 41 **Semipalmated Plovers** was seen at Bethel 29 Jul (AB). This is a Regional high count for the

summer with the average count being only about 12 during that week. A **Marbled Godwit** at Bethel 26 Jul (DG) was only the 3rd summer eBird record for the Region. Two **Pectoral Sandpipers** were spotted at New Pt. Comfort, *Matthews* 20 Jul (PN). This represents the earliest record for the Region in eBird and ties the typical arrival date for the coastal plain in the Gold Book.

TERNS–FALCONS

Single **Caspian Terns** at Mill Stone Boat Ramp, *Middlesex* 4 Jun (MC, JoC) and Hughlett 28 Jun (JRC) marked the 3rd and 4th June eBird records in the East Region. A trend discussed in depth in previous reports, the coastal breeding population of **Brown Pelicans** continues to increase, leading to more and more reports each year. This summer, two of the 39 reports hit 80 individuals at New Pt. Comfort 15 Jun (IW) and Windmill Pt., *Lancaster* 24 Jun (CF), a new Regional summer high count. No other reports broke 40, although prior to 2012 the Regional summer high was 25, revealing the scale of their growth. Only seven of the 39 were double digit counts. Most reports were of singles or pairs. As usual, most reports were from the Chesapeake Bay shore as well as the mouths of major rivers, although three of the four furthest inland Regional summer records were found at St. George Is., *Northumberland* 20 Jun (JW), Belle Is. SP, *Lancaster* 24 Jun (CF), and near Rosewell, *Gloucester* 30 Jun (HC, RC). Eight **Least Bitterns** were reported this summer at seven locations, including 4 as part of boat-based surveys near Leedstown 10-18 Jun (SH). One bird at a private location near Warsaw, *Richmond* 30 Jun (FA, AN) responded aggressively towards playback; this sure sign of territorial defense suggests it is breeding in the area. A continuation of trends discussed in previous reports, **Great Blue Herons** once again displayed a pattern of abandoning their historic large rookeries, instead opting to nest in fragmented smaller colonies. A new rookery of at least six nests was confirmed in Leedstown 30 Jun (AN, FA). The summer's only three **Tricolored Herons** were spotted at New Pt. Comfort 21 Jul (PN) their most frequent location in

this Region. An impressive 10 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were recorded at five locations in the Region. Of particular interest were many juvenile birds, suggesting successful breeding in the area. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons nest earlier than many of Virginia's other waders, with adults often on eggs in early April and chicks fledged by May. Once out of the nest they have a strong tendency to wander, a phenomenon known as post-breeding dispersal that is especially prominent in waders. Therefore, it is difficult to trace the juveniles seen this summer back to their natal areas, although a confirmed breeding record of a pair at a nest with eggs 15 Apr (DD) at Gloucester Pt., *Gloucester* that did not make into this spring's report is a short flight away from some of this summer's reports. All individuals this summer were seen on the Middle Peninsula, where they have always been more common. Perhaps in coming years we will see them grow in number on the Northern Neck as well. The East Region's long-overdue first eBird record of **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** was a fantastic find in flight over Marl Bank Rd., *Essex* 9 Jul (ph. DC, TCh). This species appears to be following a similar, albeit slightly delayed, pattern of northward range expansion to their relatives the Mississippi Kites. We will likely start seeing more and more reports during migration, and in the next decade or two a nesting record is not far out of reach. According to the Gold



Drew Chaney photographed this Swallow-tailed Kite along Marl Bank Road, Essex 9 Jul

Book, up to 2 adults were in *Gloucester*, 23 Jul–5 Aug 2003; and one on 19 Jul 2004. Two sightings of **Mississippi Kite** this year strongly evidence the establishment of a breeding population in *Gloucester*.

One bird seen in flight at Cole's Landing 11 Jul (HC, ph. RC) was a mere three miles from the successful nest site of last year's first confirmed breeding record in the Region and first *Gloucester* record. There is a good chance these are the same birds, or perhaps their offspring, returning to nest somewhere in the area. The other kite, just 10 miles south of Cole's Landing, was spotted over a private road near the southernmost point in the East Region 26 Jun (JS). A **Broad-winged Hawk** over John Clayton Memorial Highway near North *Mathews* 29 Jun (MA, NN) represented the first June record and 2nd summer record in the Region. Given the large tracts of undisturbed mixed deciduous forest in this part of the state, the editors wonder if these woodland hawks breed in the Region. This notion is supported by reports from late spring and early August, along with confirmed and probable records from neighboring *Caroline*. However, unfortunately they have never been confirmed, or even noted as probable, in the Region. With effort, lucky observers may eventually upgrade them to a higher code in coming years, although this data will not be included in the VABBA2 as 2020 is the final year of the five-year project. Up by 3 from last summer's lone **American Kestrel**, single birds over the Piankatank R., *Gloucester* 14 Jun (JeC), Saint George I., *Northumberland* 20 Jun (JW), Lewisetta Rd., *Northumberland* 29 Jun (NN), and Leedstown 3 Jul (FA) are a hopeful sign for this statewide-declining species which has always been a rare to uncommon summer resident in the coastal plain according to the Gold Book. It was a great nesting season for 3 **Peregrine Falcon** pairs in the Region. According to the annual monitoring by the Center for Conservation Biology, the pair at the Coleman Bridge Rt. 17 hatched all four of their eggs, while the Tappahannock Bridge Rt. 360 pair reared three young from their four eggs and the pair on the Pamunkey R. Eltham Bridge Rt. 33, reared two young from their five eggs. This is terrific evidence of recovery for these once extremely imperiled falcons. Although, it is worth noting that historically Peregrines would not have bred in the East Region, only using this land as a stopover during migration

with some individuals possibly spending the winter. Instead, they would have nested on the many naturally occurring cliffs and rocky slopes ideal for this species scattered throughout the Appalachians.

FLYCATCHERS–WRENS

Once again no **Willow Flycatchers** were recorded this summer. The most recent summer record in the Region was a bird observed repeatedly bringing food back to a nest at Wilna 7 Jun 2015 (m. obs.). Most likely an unusually late migrant as opposed to an attempted breeder, a well-described **Blue-headed Vireo** near the Piankatank R., *Middlesex* 7 Jun (JeC) was the first Regional summer record in eBird. Two reports of **Warbling Vireos** in western *King George* near Goby 14 Jun (TCO) and Caledon SP, *King George* 23 Jun (AD) were a good showing of this scarce breeder in the Region. Curiously, all summer records of these vireos in the Region are concentrated in the NW: *King George* and w. *Westmoreland*. Two sightings spaced a mile apart of a **Common Raven** near Lanesville, *King William* 13 Jul (FA), likely the same bird, marked the first summer Middle Peninsula and 2nd summer Regional record in eBird. This bird is likely related to the ravens which have been seen in recent winters on the Walkerton CBC. Multiple small groups of **Horned Larks** amounting to a total of 27 birds at Leedstown 3 Jul (FA), likely comprised mainly of post-breeding birds from the area, set a new Regional summer high by two. The season's high of 450 **Tree Swallows** along Mt. Zion Church Rd., *King and Queen* 8 Jul (MC, JC) is dwarfed by past summer highs up to 2,000. There were 16 sightings of **Cliff Swallows** at 12 locations this summer. Most of these sightings were in the vicinity of the known nesting sites on river bridges at Walkerton, *King and Queen*; Aylett, *King William*; West Point, *King William*; and Port Royal, *Caroline*; but a new potential nesting site under a bridge over Cat Point Creek, *Richmond* 29 Jun (MA, NN) was an exciting discovery. This summer carried a couple of stray **Brown-headed Nuthatches** out west, a species not normally known to venture far from home. An individual near Central Garage, *King William* 19 Jun

(EO) marked the westernmost Regional record. Another bird in Chiltons *Westmoreland* 4 Jul (CN) was the westernmost summer eBird record on the Northern Neck. It was excellent to see **Marsh Wrens** documented more extensively than ever in the East Region: 37 birds at 17 locations, mostly in marshes along the Rappahannock River and Chesapeake Bay. However, this is probably a sign of increased coverage rather than increased population. Their breeding season presence was noted in three locations that had not been noted previously in eBird: Folly Neck Rd. *Richmond* 5 Jun (CP), Starvation Rd. *Gloucester* 23 Jun and 9 Jul (HC, RC), and the Otterburn and Drake Marsh complex in *Westmoreland* and *Essex* in the vicinity of Leedstown where boat-surveys 3-18 Jun revealed the presence of 16 singing birds (SH). This included one observation of an occupied nest in Drake Marsh, Leedstown 18 Jun (SH), marking the VABBA2's only breeding confirmation in the East Region. The 9 singing birds at a marsh near Naylor's *Richmond* 30 Jun (FA, AN) is nothing in comparison to past highs up to an astounding 135 at the same location less than a decade ago on 9 Jul 2011 (NF). Ecological succession has increased the thickets in portions of this marsh which may have had an impact upon the Marsh Wren population here. Even though the remarkable count of 135 resulted from surveying from a kayak with which the observer could penetrate deep into the marsh, double-digit counts from shore were the norm five years ago, and counts exceeding 30 were hardly given a second thought at this location. According to sources below, throughout their range, these wrens face threats including invasive plants, water contamination from pesticides and fertilizer, agricultural encroachment, and rising water levels caused by climate change, all contributing to the loss or degradation of ideal native marsh habitat, so we wonder what VABBA3 will show in the future.

THRUSHES–DICKCISSEL

The **Wood Thrush** population in the Region is still doing fairly well; 86 were reported from 56 locations in every county. A new Regional eBird high of 20

Brown Thrashers was reported along the 1.2 mile Broad Marsh Ln., Hayes, *Gloucester* 12 Jun (HC, RC) including one group of 7 birds. In this highly agricultural Region, **Grasshopper Sparrows** also continue to maintain a strong population: 124 were found in 53 locations. One location, Cat Point Farms, *Richmond*, had 12 birds on 29 Jun (MA, NN). In contrast, **Song Sparrows**, perhaps the most common sparrow in suburban areas, are more scarce and patchily distributed in this Region: only 59 in 33 locations. This is notable considering the more thorough coverage of the area this summer due to VABBA2. Only one bird was reported from both *Lancaster* and *King William*. As usual, **Seaside Sparrows** were common in the salt marshes along the eastern shores of *Mathews* and *Gloucester*. Two found at Snug Harbor 27 July (DL) were the first eBird summer report for *Lancaster*. A total of 56 birds were reported from 12 locations. The furthest south population of the Coastal Plain form of **Swamp Sparrow**, known only from the Mid-Atlantic coast, was discovered at a private marsh near Naylor's, *Richmond* in 2005. The Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) conducted a thorough survey that year and found 41 singing males. Over the years, there has been a dramatic decline in the population, and despite careful and lengthy efforts in the exact locations where they had been previously found, none could be found this year 30 Jun (FA, AN). In 2019 only one could be found 27 Jun (FA). In 2005 CCB also found small populations in three other nearby marshes of the Rappahannock R, but they have not done any recent follow-up surveys to see if these populations have survived. Dr. Bryan Watts of CCB (pers. comm.) explained: "This form seems to move around, so occurrence is more episodic than most other species. I know that in some of the sites up in MD, birds have shown up, stayed 2-3 years and then were gone. This form is clearly declining due to sea-level rise within the core of the breeding range but not sure that this would be the cause for abandonment there on the Rappahannock." In a publication of CCB after a 2014 follow-up survey found only 5 singing males, he also suggested habitat change as a factor in their decline. "Within the

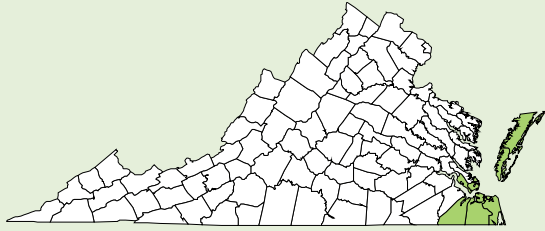
Coastal Plain, swamp sparrows occur in marshes within a fairly narrow salinity band from tidal fresh to approximately one part per thousand. Pairs utilize habitats with a mix of marsh vegetation and shrubs that typically form along the marsh-upland interface. Within the Mulberry Point site, habitat components include olney three-square (*Scirpus olneyi*), salt meadow hay (*Spartina patens*), marsh hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos*), and cattail (*Typha angustifolia*). The cause of the population decline is unclear. The preferred ecotone habitat has been visibly reduced over the decade with invasive common reed (*Phragmites australis*) occupying more of the adjacent uplands and the wetter portions of the marsh containing pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) expanding. These two patterns have effectively squeezed the preferred breeding habitat within the site.” This coincides with observations made by this year’s observers who saw thickets, *Phragmites*, and Pickerelweed in some areas where Swamp Sparrows had been found in previous years, though there were still some areas that had the preferred habitat with the plant species referred to above. This Region is also known for its timber industry which results in many patches of forest regrowth scrub that provide great habitat for **Yellow-breasted Chats**. This species was found in every county except *Middlesex*, totaling 211 birds at 93 sites with a high of 10 at Wilna 29 Jun (MA, NN). **Eastern Meadowlarks** are still fairly widespread: 93 were reported from 52 locations in all

counties. **Baltimore Oriole** is a surprisingly rare breeder in this Region. Only one was reported this year, at a marshy pond on Indiantown Rd., *King George*: a probable breeder heard singing 28 Jun (FA) and 20 Jul (MS). Three singing **Kentucky Warblers** were a nice find at Twiford Rd. near Leedstown 28 Jun (ph. JRC). Certainly just a slightly late migrant, a **Blackpoll Warbler** near Rosewell, *Gloucester* 1-2 Jun (HC) was only the 2nd eBird summer report in the Region. The accompanying chart shows a summary of the 14 resident warbler species present in the Region during this year of increased coverage, in order of abundance. Another nice find was the only report of **Dickcissel** this season: 2-4 birds were at Folly Neck Rd., *Richmond* 4-12 Jun (CP, ph. LA).

Contributors: Lee Adams, Matt Anthony, Fred Atwood, Allen Bryan, Drew Chaney, Tim Chaney (TCh), Jessica Coker (JeC), Joey Coker (JoC), Maeve Coker, Harry Colestock, Rochelle Colestock, Taylor Coxon (TCO), Tom Crockett, Susan Crockett, Denise Deckert, Alexander Donley, Anonymous eBirder, Conor Farrell, Nicholas Flanders, Doug Graham, Sergio Harding, Seth Kellogg, David Little, Adit Nehra, Nick Newberry, Carlton Noll, Peter Norment, Ellison Orcutt, Caleb Park, John Rice-Cameron, Mark Sopko, Jason Strickland, Shea Tiller, Bryan Watts, Irvine Wilson, Jeffrey Wright

Resident Species	Total Individuals	Total Locations	Counties found in
Common Yellowthroat	491	182	All
Ovenbird	246	117	All
Northern Parula	224	115	All
Pine Warbler	171	97	All
Hooded Warbler	156	85	All
Prairie Warbler	129	65	All
Yellow-throated Warbler	96	53	All except Mathews
Prothonotary Warbler	75	23	All except Northumberland and Mathews
Black-and-White Warbler	52	34	All
Louisiana Waterthrush	14	12	Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Richmond, Westmoreland
American Redstart	13	9	King and Queen, King George, King William, Middlesex, Richmond, Westmoreland
Worm-eating Warbler	12	10	Gloucester, King George, King William, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland
Yellow Warbler	8	7	Essex, Gloucester, King George, Westmoreland
Kentucky Warbler	3	1	Westmoreland

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

Four consecutive 100+°F days, 19-22 July, was not only a first since records were inaugurated in 1874, the spell set the table for a monthly average of 85.4°F breaking the previous July record established in 1993 by 2°F. Rainfall by the end of the report period was an inch below normal for the year. Tropical Storm Fay passed off the Virginia coast 9-10 July, the first time a sixth named tropical system occurred that early in the season. Unfortunately, for birder's the system's dynamics resulted in a birding bust. Two offshore trips, 2 June and 12 July, respectively, contributed data about known, yet minimally documented pelagic species and insights into the occurrence of several rarely encountered species. Topping the season's avian sensations were Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Band-rumped Petrel, Wood Stork, Brown Booby, and a rather improbable Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, *Northampton*); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Materials Management Area, Portsmouth); False Cape (False Cape SP, Virginia Beach); First Landing; (First Landing SP, Virginia Beach); Pleasure House Point, Virginia Beach); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach)

WATERFOWL-JAEGERS

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were in the Region for a second consecutive summer; 2 in Melfa, *Accomack* 12 Jun (ESB) and 4 at the Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress (Restricted Access), Chesapeake 18 Jun (ph. DS). A late-departing **Brant**

was at Queen Sound Landing, *Accomack* 12 Jun (RC); this species' average late date is 25 Apr. A **Mute Swan** frequented the PHP area 21 (ph. TM) through 26 (ph. K&TB) Jun. Summering scoter species included a m. **Surf Scoter** at Folly Cr., *Accomack* 28 Jul (ph. JJ) and single **Black Scoters** near Rudee 2-18 Jun (ph. SK) then 11 Jul (NN), at 88th St. (JSO) and at Back Bay (WC) 6 Jun, off Dam Neck, Virginia Beach 10 Jun (PB), and off Chinc. 26-29 Jul (DeY, LY, MY). A lingering **Red-breasted Merganser** was at Lynnhaven, Virginia Beach 9 Jun (AB, ph. SM). Intermittent observations of a **Pied-billed Grebe** at Back Bay 2 (ph. SM) to 5 Jul (ph. RBi, JF) led to a significant VBBA2 confirmation of 3 ad. with 2 chicks there 7 Jul (AB). Three **Common Nighthawks** passed over Woodhouse Corner, Virginia Beach 2 Jun (K&TB) and one was spotted at Craney 23 Jul (LS, BW, DY). Back Bay hosted a **Common Gallinule** 6 (ph. RBi, ph. SM, ph. GB) to 10 (MH) Jun; another was at False Cape, also 10 Jun (ph. MFM). Three **Black-necked Stilts** were an unusual find on Parramore Is., *Accomack* 3 Jun (AL). Adults with young were in the Chinc./Queen Sound Channel, *Accomack* area where the peak count was 25 on 10 Jun (ph. AH). A total of 91 at Craney 30 Jul (LS, BT, BW, DY) included 20 chicks/recently fledged young among at least 10 broods. An **American Avocet** was at PHP 11 Jun (vid. r. JF); another was at Chinc. 21 (IZ) & 23 Jul (ph. JL). Craney took home this species' high-count honors with 288 on 30 Jul (LS, BT, BW, DY). Preliminary results from the VDWR's Annual Plover Survey estimated 25 **Wilson's Plover** pairs and 202 **Piping Plover** pairs bred/attempted to breed on Virginia's coastal barrier islands (RBt). These were

the lowest totals for both species since 2011 when 22 Wilson's Plover and 188 Piping Plover pairs were recorded. The Gold Book lists 5 Aug as the **White-rumped Sandpiper** Coastal Plain average fall season arrival date. Therefore, 30 at Chinc. 23 Jul (JL) was noteworthy. Two displaying **American Woodcocks** in Region 12's Lake Drummond NW SE block 26 Jun (BA) were an excellent VABBA2 data point. A **Wilson's Phalarope** was at Craney 30 Jul (BW, DY) and 3 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were off Virginia Beach 2 Jun (AR, et al.). Highly exceptional for the season was an imm. **Parasitic Jaeger** over Norfolk Canyon, *Northampton* 12 Jul (ph. m. obs.).

GULLS-HERONS

Bonaparte's Gulls typically exit the Region by late April. Thus, one at Rudee 3 Jun (ph. SM) was a special eBird entry. Two different first-cycle **Glaucous Gulls** were reported; one at False Cape 20 Jun (ph. MFM) and one at Cape Charles 28 Jun (ph. MA, ph. ESB, EC). A **ROSEATE TERN** was an exciting discovery at PHP 19 Jun (ph. KL, WT). Construction activities on the HRBT curtailed censusing colonial seabird populations nesting there in 2019. An overview of the 2020 nesting seabirds census at Ft. Wool adjacent to the HRBT may be found in the essay at the beginning of this journal issue. A **Red-throated Loon** was at/near PHP 9 (ph. AB, ph. SM) to 28 Jun (m. obs.); this species is rarely found in the Region after late May. A 2 Jun pelagic trip off Virginia Beach encountered 11 **Cory's Shearwaters** (ESB et al.); another 10 were recorded during a 12 Jul trip to Norfolk Canyon, *Northampton* (ESB et al.). During the 2 Jun excursion there were also at least 18 **Sooty Shearwaters** and 17 **Great Shearwaters** (m. obs.). Additional reports of the latter included one at Chinc. 23 Jun (CI, ChI); one on the beach at False Cape 9 Jul (ph. MFM); and 6-9 over Norfolk Canyon, *Northampton* 12 Jul (ESB et al.). A list of **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** observations included ~ 130 off Virginia Beach during the 2 Jun pelagic (m. obs.); 2 off 85th St., Virginia Beach 1 Jul (AB); 76 from Virginia Beach to Norfolk Canyon, *Northampton* 12

Jul (m. obs.); and one off First Landing 31 Jul (AB). The 2 Jun pelagic came across a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** off Virginia Beach (m. obs.) and the 12 Jul blue-water outing found a **BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL** off *Northampton* at (37.031, -74.957) (NN et al.). Two **WOOD STORKS** were off Muddy Cr. Rd., Virginia Beach 19 Jun (AB); another, or one of those, flew over Landstown Centre Way, Virginia Beach 21 Jun (CH, SK). Despite being in the care of a wildlife rehabilitator, an emaciated imm. **BROWN BOOBY** discovered near Rudee 15 Jun (ph. KR) succumbed later that day. An ad. **Great Cormorant** was a birding bonus at Rudee 2 (ph. AR, ph. m. obs.) & 3 Jun (m. obs.); this species has typically vacated the Region by mid-April. Stumpy L., Virginia Beach continued to be reliable for **Anhingas** with one to two found there 10 Jun (ph. HG) through 22 Jul (BB, CF). Singles were also observed at Gray Rock Rd., Chesapeake 18 Jun (TW) and in flight over the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail, Chesapeake 5 Jul (ph. DC). The large **Brown Pelican** colony that has occupied South Pt. Marsh, *Accomack* for many years had only ~ 30 nests this breeding cycle; 124 chicks were banded there 18 Jul (HA *fide* JW). It appeared much of the former nesting contingent had relocated to Martin NWR, Smith Is., MD (HA *fide* JW). The Brown Pelican colony on Wreck Is., *Northampton* was active again, although no population census was made. After a couple of summer 2019 **American Bittern** sightings at Back Bay, one spotted there this year 7 (EB) through 22 Jun (AB) raised some questions about this species' breeding season status in the Region. **Snowy Egrets** successfully nested on the HRBT 2016-2018. Construction eliminated the colony site in 2019. This season an estimated 35 pairs successfully produced young on Ft. Wool, Hampton adjacent to the HRBT (RBt) prompting speculation the species may have colonized that location the previous year.

RAPTORS-DICKCISSEL

Folks scanning Virginia Beach skies throughout June and July have a high probability of seeing at least one **Mississippi Kite**. Indeed, this species was

reported by m. obs. throughout the report period from multiple locations in that diverse jurisdiction, beginning with those from spring in the Thoroughgood section where as many as 9 were logged through 14 Jul (m. obs., TT). Most intriguing, however, was the volume of Mississippi Kites chronicled in the Larkspur/Brenneman Farms area that strongly suggested a larger Virginia Beach breeding population than previously confirmed. The 3 to 5 at Larkspur 3 Jun (SM, AM) through 31 Jul (m. obs.) may have been part of 14 accounted for near Brenneman 19 Jun (AB, ph. RBi, AM, SM). That count did not include one near Woodhouse Corner also 19 Jun (K&TB), bringing city's total for that day to 15. Additional Neptune City reports included singles at/near Naval Air Station Oceana (Restricted Access) 6 (DS), 21 (JF) & 23 Jun (KS), at Blackwater Rd. 18 Jun (GT) and in Kings Grant 18 Jul (R&MF). Reports away from Virginia Beach showed one at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress (Restricted Access), Chesapeake 1 Jun (KS) and one at Windsor Pt., Norfolk 13 Jul (ph. DC). Given the number of sightings of this species in lower *Northampton* the two previous summers, it was surprising there was only one report that of a single bird at Magothy Bay NAP 17 Jun (ph. JM). Three Mississippi Kites (2 ad., one second-year) were at Artillery Rd./Apollo Dr., Hampton 7 (v. r. NN) & 9 Jul (BB, SB), the location breeding was confirmed in 2018. **Willow Flycatchers** are rare spring transients in the Region to 25 May. Therefore, one at Chinc. 9 Jun (RR) merited acknowledgement herein. For a third consecutive summer season at least one **Warbling Vireo** was at Ashville Pk. Blvd., Virginia Beach, noted this year 6 (Rbi, ph. & v. r. SM) to 14 Jun (ph. DC). An ad. m. **Baltimore Oriole** at PHP 7 Jun (Rbi) was almost certainly a late migrant. Two seasonally anomalous *Parulidae* prompted speculation about origin and migration timing for the species involved. One of those was an **American Redstart** in Sandbridge, Virginia Beach 9 Jul (TD). The second was an imm. "Myrtle" **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Craney 23 Jul (LS, ph. BW, DY). Gold Book and eBird accounting indicates this was an unprecedented Coastal Plain



Yellow-rumped Warbler photographed by Bill Williams at Craney Island, Portsmouth 23 Jul

June/July confirmation. An "X" entry for the species sans any documentation was posted to eBird from Chinc. 20 Jun 1987. **Dickcissels** teased the margins of VBBA2 confirmed status at several sites in the Region, among them one to 3 at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress (Restricted Access), Chesapeake 2 (ph. KS) & 15 Jun (KS); 2-3 that continued from spring at Machipongo, *Northampton* 3 & 12 Jun (ESB); up to 4 singing m. near Stone House Rd., Onley, *Accomack* 13 Jun (v. r. ESB) to 20 Jul (ph. H&GS); and a m. at Flame of Hope Memorial, Virginia Beach 18 Jun (AB) to 10 Jul (v. r. & ph. m. obs.).

Contributors: Bob Ake, Matt Anthony, Harry Armistead, Andrew Baldelli, Bryan Barmore, Baxter Beamer, Karen and Tom Beatty, Elena Bersani, Rob Bielawski (Rbi), Paul Block, Ruth Boettcher (RBt), Edward S. Brinkley, George Burrus, Sharon Burton, Rich Carlson, Walker Catlett, Erin Chapman, David Clark, Todd Day, Judy Jones, James Flynn, Marlee Fuller-Morris, Ron and Marie Furnish, Hope Grasser, Cindy Hamilton, Amiel Hopkins, Matthew Hosmer, Carla Irvin, Christopher Irvin (CHI), Judy Jones, Steve Keith, Joanne Laskowski, Aylett Lipford, Kathy Louthan, Tommy Maloney, June McDaniels, Amy Myers, Steve Myers, Nick Newberry, Andrew Rapp, Keith Roberts, Rick Robinson, Lee Schuster, Doug Shultz, Helen and Gary Smith, Jason Sosebee (JSo), Karl Suttman, Tracy Tate, Wes Teets, Greg Tito, John Weske, Bill Williams, Tony Wood, Derek Yoder (DeY), Laurie Yoder, Mira Yoder, Dave Youker, Isaiah Zercher