



VIRGINIA BIRDS

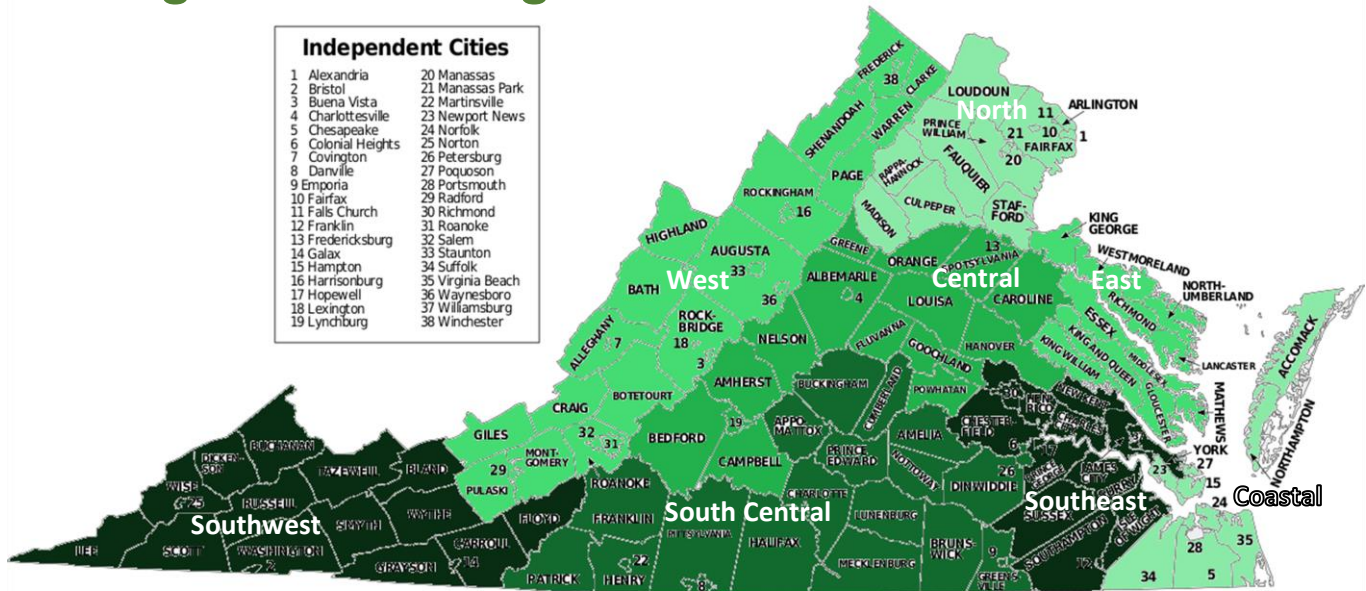
A quarterly journal of ornithological sightings in the Commonwealth
published by the Virginia Society of Ornithology



Volume 19 • Numbers 1 & 2

Summer Records • Jun – Jul 2022
Fall Records • Aug – Nov 2022

Virginia Birds Regions



Virginia Birds

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Send reports to the appropriate Regional Editor. Photographs should be the highest resolution possible and sent to max92701@gmail.com. Articles for consideration can be sent to mhanthony2@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 names appear in **bold** the first time mentioned, species on the Virginia Avian Records Committee (VARCOM) review list in **BOLD CAPS**, and county/independent city names in *italics*.

Abbreviations

ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
a. r.	audio recording
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
Dr.	Drive
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, 4 th Ed. (2007).
Hwy.	Highway
Is.	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
Ln.	Lane
m.	male
m. obs.	multiple observers
Mt./Mtn.	Mount/Mountain
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NF	National Forest
NFC	Nocturnal Flight Call
NHP	National Historical Park
NP	National Park
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	photograph
Pk.	Park
Pkwy.	Parkway
Pt.	Point
R.	River
Rd.	Road
Res.	Reservoir
RP	Regional Park
Rte.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SR	State Road, State Route
VARCOM	Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDWR	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
v. r.	video recording
VSO	Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
*	specimen collected

On the cover: Pamela Scrima's photo of Virginia's first Tropical Kingbird in Oyster, *Northampton* 19 Oct 2022.

Editor's Corner

As I sit down to write this issue's Editor's Corner, the one-year mark has just passed for my tenure as editor of *Virginia Birds*. In light of this personal milestone, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been accomplished by the editorial staff in this short time as well as muse about what lies ahead. Taking on the editorship has been an extremely gratifying project for me, as I am a true believer in the value of regional publications like *Virginia Birds*. In an era of unprecedented connectedness in birding, with real-time reports to eBird; rare bird alerts via email, text, and social media; and ongoing discussion on blogs and Facebook pages, it may seem quaint to think that a publication like *Virginia Birds* could serve any purpose. Yet it is precisely this deluge of information and data that gives the journal its ongoing value. Whereas once information itself was at a premium, the torrent of data now begs for a way to discern the signal from the noise. In its way, *Virginia Birds* does just that. By taking a carefully curated approach that taps into the dedication and expertise of regional leaders in the birding community, this journal gives us a way to filter out the signal. Valuable though the many sources of data are, the journal allows us to contextualize everything. We strive to add that quintessentially human element of qualifying the data – rendering it understandable and meaningful. Our job as editors is to help you sift through the stream of sightings to see what is truly noteworthy – the rarities, the emerging patterns, the irruptions and invasions and other avian events, the changes in distribution or phenology. I believe this is a worthy project, and it is an honor to take a leadership role in bringing it about. Furthermore, as someone with a keen interest in birds and birding across the Commonwealth (all 133 counties and cities are on the menu for my personal birding excursions!), I love playing a part in knitting together our shared sense of avian knowledge and birding community.

Having said my peace on the ongoing value of this journal, it's time to take stock of what we have done in the past year. Frankly, the work of this editorial team has been nothing short of

marvelous, and I would be remiss if I did not take the time to shine a spotlight on them and their herculean efforts. When I took the reins of *Virginia Birds* in September 2022, no issue had been published since the summer of 2020. Our charge was to bring the journal back to its regular publication schedule while filling in the backlog of missing issues. It was a tall order; while some of the missing issues had already been penned, others had not, or were not complete. What I asked of my editorial team was to go full steam ahead, churning out columns as quickly as they could, with me turning around published journals nearly as quickly. In the interest of speedy publication, this all took place with far less feedback, dialogue, and editorial interaction than would be my preference. Yet this team rose to the challenge, and we can now say that in just one year we have brought the journal from Summer 2020 to the present volume, which combines reports from Spring and Fall 2022. This represents a massive accomplishment in a short time, and within a few more months I expect to have the journal caught back up to its normal publication schedule!

None of this would be possible without the dedication of the Regional Editors, whom I would like to take a moment to thank by name for those of you who haven't read the front material in a while. A hearty thanks to Mary Ann Good and Mike Lott (North); James Fox (West); Fred Atwood and Nick Newberry (East); Adam D'Onofrio (Southeast); C. Michael Stinson (South Central); Baxter Beamer (Central); and Logan Anderson (Southwest). You have all risen to the challenge and done what was needed to restore the journal, and I am grateful for your efforts. During the past year, we also welcomed a new member of the Editorial team in a newly-created role – Max Nootbaar as Photo Editor. Max's efforts have shone brightly in an aspect of the editorship that is not my forte, and I am indebted to his assistance. Finally, I would also like to take a moment to thank Bill Williams, previous *Virginia Birds* editor and most recent past president of the VSO for his vote of confidence in tapping me for this role. Bill's

wealth of knowledge about the history and operations of *Virginia Birds* was crucial in my early days as editor, and I appreciate his guidance and support. Thanks is also due the members of the VSO Board for their ongoing support, financially and morally, for this project. I would like to thank our guest editors and article authors, whose contributions have added to the overall value of this publication. And finally, I would like to thank everyone who is reading these words, for your readership and support.

Whither next for *Virginia Birds*? My first year as editor has been so thoroughly consumed with catching us up that I have been less able to turn attention to the future growth and evolution of the journal. Like any worthwhile project, we will have to grow, change, and adapt with the times. There is no reward for being static, and we will

have to navigate the changes in birding culture as any other organization or publication must. I hope that we might continue to feature both articles and journalistic pieces that can enhance the content of the journal. I plan to thoroughly consider the format, style, and content of the journal to see where improvements may be made. Anything is on the table, and I look forward to fielding feedback from my editorial team and my readership as we think about what the future holds for *Virginia Birds*. For those among the readership with thoughts, suggestions, ideas, questions, or concerns – please share them! This is your journal, and we want to know what you think and how we can make it better. But above all, please keep reading and please keep seeking out the value that this publication brings to our shared Virginia birding community. Cheers, and good birding to all! — *MHA*

Fall 2022 Hawkwatch Summary

Compiled by Bill Williams

(Data retrieved from HawkCount 17 May 2023).

Table 1: Fall 2022 Virginia Hawkwatch Effort Data

Hawkwatch	City/County	Number of Count Days	Date Range	Total Count Hours	Virginia Birds Report Region(s)	Fall Season Years
Mendota Fire Tower	<i>Washington</i>	10 of 10 (100%)	15–25 Sep	70.25	Southwest	1958–2019; 2021–2022
Snickers Gap	<i>Clarke / Loudoun</i>	30 of 95 (31.6%)	1 Sep–4 Dec	142.25	North / West	1990; 1992–1994; 1996–1998; 2002–2022
Harveys Knob	<i>Botetourt / Bedford</i>	96 of 111 (86.5%)	13 Aug–2 Dec	534.5	West / Central	1979–2022
Rockfish Gap	<i>Augusta / Nelson</i>	92 of 106 (86.8%)	17 Aug–30 Nov	524	West	1976–2022
Candlers Mountain	<i>Lynchburg</i>	2 of 7 (28.6%)	17–24 Sep	10.5	Central	2002–2022
Kiptopeke	<i>Northampton</i>	89 of 93 (95.7%)	28 Aug–29 Nov	670.58	Coastal	1977–2022

Table 2: Fall 2022 Virginia Hawkwatch Species Totals

Species	Mendota	Snickers	Harveys	Rockfish	Candlers	Kiptopeke	Totals
Osprey	9	46	97	188	5	2212	2557
Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi Kite	0	0	2	4	0	3	9
Bald Eagle	5	187	247	393	2	535	1369
Northern Harrier	0	24	24	53	0	483	584
Sharp-shinned Hawk	30	465	531	2379	6	2950	6361
Cooper's Hawk	4	52	78	282	0	1762	2178
American Goshawk	0	1	0	5	0	3	9
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	52	44	94	0	158	351
Broad-winged Hawk	4451	2658	7948	23765	55	759	39636
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Red-tailed Hawk	5	432	384	929	3	398	2151
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Golden Eagle	0	3	1	15	0	6	25
American Kestrel	8	47	111	172	2	3373	3713
Merlin	5	16	11	48	0	977	1057
Peregrine Falcon	3	13	12	22	1	413	464
species unknown	4	11	49	42	0	47	153
Totals	4527	4007	9539	28392	74	14079	60618

Regional Reports

NORTH



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SUMMER 2022

Temperatures were near normal throughout the period. Precipitation was also near normal across the Piedmont and above normal in the Coastal Plain, particularly in July. The highlights this season were Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, and Wilson's Snipe in *Fairfax* and a Limpkin seen along Aquia Creek in *Stafford*.

Abbreviations: Belle Haven (Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax*); Hunting Creek Bridge (Hunting Creek Bridge, *Fairfax/Alexandria*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Shenandoah NP (Shenandoah NP, *Madison*)

WATERFOWL—SHOREBIRDS

An **American Wigeon**, a rare summer visitor in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Huntley Meadows 24 Jun (ph. MoH). An **American Black Duck**, rare inland in summer, was seen at the Upper Occoquan Service Authority, *Fairfax* 15 Jul (ph. P&JW). A **Green-winged Teal**, only the third summer record in the entire Piedmont, was seen at Great Falls Pk., *Fairfax* 3 Jul (m. obs., ph. JS, SB). A **Ring-necked Duck**, a very rare mid-summer visitor in the Piedmont, was seen at the Mooreview Pkwy. impoundments, *Loudoun* 9 Jul (ph. BHi), where it continued through 17 Jul. A **Bufflehead** observed at Occoquan RP, *Fairfax*

21 Jun (ph. P&JW) was only the fourth known summer occurrence in the entire Piedmont (one of which was at this location in early Jun 2021); 27 Apr is the Piedmont extreme late date. A **Common Merganser**, rare in summer in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Occoquan RP, *Fairfax* 10 Jun (EH); it was observed several times there and nearby through 22 Jul (ph. VC). A **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, a species with only 3 previous records in the Region, all over 20 years ago, continued from the previous period at APD Farm near Auburn, *Fauquier*, seen 13 Jun (HD, ph. EL, KR). A **Black-billed Cuckoo**, a rare summer resident in the Piedmont (although less so in the nearby Mountain/Valley sector), was observed at a residence in Hume, *Fauquier* 8 Jul (EL). A **Virginia Rail**, a rare or locally uncommon summer resident in the Piedmont, was seen at Bles Pk., *Loudoun* 2–6 Jun (ph. DLeb). A **LIMPKIN**, a rare visitor with only 5 prior records statewide, was seen near Aquia Creek off Hope Rd., *Stafford* 7 Jun (ph. MB) and again 5 m. upstream within Aquia Harbor, *Stafford* 29 Jun (AG, ph. EG). Interestingly, a Limpkin spent time just before and during the same time period approx. 200 m. further inland, near Roanoke—part of a large-scale movement of this species across the Southeast and Midwest, with records as far afield as Wisconsin and Iowa. An **American Avocet**, rare inland, was seen at Belle Haven 20 Jul (KG) and nearby Hunting Creek Bridge 21 Jul (ph. m. obs.). A **Black-bellied Plover**, the first summer record in the Region,

was also seen at Belle Haven 31 Jul (DLed, ph. DS). A **Whimbrel**, rare inland, was seen at Hunting Creek Bridge 24 Jul (ph. JA). Two **Stilt Sandpipers**, a rare fall transient inland, were also observed at Hunting Creek Bridge 20 Jul (ph. ABi), and one was at Huntley Meadows 26 Jul (PWB, ph. m. obs.), remaining through 30 Jul. Two **Sanderlings**, a species with only 6 prior summer records in the state w. of the Chesapeake Bay, were discovered at Hunting Creek Bridge 23 Jul (ph. TK), seen by m. obs. there and at nearby Belle Haven through 28 Jul. A **Wilson's Snipe** was observed at Huntley Meadows 31 Jul (anon., ph. m. obs.); the extreme Coastal Plain early date is 12 Aug (the only other summer record statewide was on a barrier island in 1921). A **Willet**, also rare inland especially in summer, was seen at Hunting Creek Bridge 27 Jul (ABi, ph. SB) and nearby Belle Haven 28 Jul.

GULLS—FLYCATCHERS

A **Bonaparte's Gull**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, was seen at Trump National Golf Club, *Loudoun* 20 June (ph. DC). Reports of **Caspian Terns**, a species with only 4 previous summer records in our part of the Piedmont,



Larry Meade's photo of an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 6 Nov.

included one at Trump National Golf Club, *Loudoun* 17 Jun (JH), with 2 there 28 Jun, and 2 at Fountainhead RP, *Fairfax* 10 Jul (ABu). An **American Bittern**, rare in the Region in summer, was seen at Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 19 Jul (TH) through the end of the period (m.

obs., ph. DLa), with 2 seen 22 Jul; 1–2 were present in much of the previous period. **Snowy Egrets** present between the Piedmont extreme dates of 24 May and 10 Jul included singles at the lake at Dulles Int'l Airport, *Loudoun* 6 Jun (ph. JD, KD) and Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 28 Jun (ph. TH). Reports of **White Ibis**, a rare post-breeding visitor in the Region, included singles along Old Weaversville Rd., *Fauquier* 2–4 Jul (ph. JB) and at Hunting Creek Bridge 19 Jul (PH). A **Northern Harrier**, a rare summer visitor in the Region, was observed at Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 20 Jun (DLeb). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was seen near Hood, *Madison* 14 Jul (BF); most of the rare Regional summer sightings are in the n. and near the Blue Ridge. A **Broad-winged Hawk**, rare in the Coastal Plain in summer, was seen at Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax* 30 Jul (ph. TK). A **Least Flycatcher**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont (although less so in the nearby Mountain/Valley sector), was seen at Eldon Farm near Sperryville, *Rappahannock* 10 Jul (PL).

WRENS—DICKCISSEL

A **Winter Wren**, rare in the Piedmont in summer, was seen at Difficult Run Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 5 Jun (ph., a. r. NN); sightings in Shenandoah NP, where the species is a fairly rare breeder, included along Limberlost Trail 12 Jun (KM, MV) and Dark Hollow Falls Trail 13 Jul (BF). Reports of **White-throated Sparrows**, also rare in the Piedmont in summer, included singles along Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., *Fairfax* 7 Jun (CKB), lingering through 24 Jul; a residence in Purcellville, *Loudoun* 11 Jun (SH); along Broad Run Trail, *Prince William* 30 Jun (anon.); and a residence in Burke, *Fairfax* 19 Jul (DP). The Piedmont late date for this species is 20 May; late migrants occasionally pass through in early Jun. Reports of **Bobolinks**, rare in late Jun and Jul in the Region, included one along Boteler Rd., *Fauquier* 7 Jul (ph. JB); one at the Fairfax County Landfill, *Fairfax* 14 Jul (KG, SS), with up to 9 there through the end of the period (ph. m. obs.);

unspecified numbers of m's, f's, and juv's along Loughborough Ln., *Fauquier* (KS); 10 at Oak Spring Garden Foundation, *Fauquier* 14 Jul (BH_a); and 23 along Rokeby Rd., *Fauquier* (BS) (the latter three are all in the Upperville area). A **Blackpoll Warbler**, a very rare summer visitor in the Mountain/Valley sector, with an extreme late date of 15 Jun, was seen along the Story of the Forest Nature Trail in Shenandoah NP 18 Jun (MiH, MS). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was seen after the Piedmont extreme late date of 2 Jun at Syria, *Madison* 10 Jun (KL). There were numerous reports of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in Shenandoah NP where they have become more common summer residents in recent years. Two "Yellow-rumps" were also seen not far outside of the Mountain/Valley sector at Flint Hill, *Rappahannock* 26 Jul (MAG), where much rarer in summer. Reports of **Yellow-throated Warblers**, rare in the n. Piedmont away from the Potomac R., included singles e. of Hillsboro, *Loudoun* 1 Jun (HW); at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, *Loudoun* 15 Jun (TP); and near Huntly, *Rappahannock* 25 Jun (BM). A **Black-throated Green Warbler**, a very rare summer resident in the Piedmont with a late date of 15 May, was seen along Rounding Run Cir. in Herndon, *Fairfax* 5 Jun (LL). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, was seen at G.R. Thompson WMA, *Fauquier* 3–5 Jun (ph. NB), with another seen there 30 Jul (ph. AA). The late spring date is 20 May, and the early fall date is 10 Sep. **Dickcissels**, historically a rare summer resident in the Region, were observed at numerous locations. Two were seen along Boteler Rd. s. of Calverton, *Fauquier* 3 Jun (ph. JB), with 1–3 seen by m. obs. through 10 Jul and one a mi. w. 30 Jul. Two were observed along Cemetery Rd. near Remington, *Fauquier* 23 Jun (GS); one along Jacks Shop Rd. near Rochelle, *Madison* 3 Jul (CU); 5 at the Fairfax County Landfill, *Fairfax* 14 Jul (a. r. KG, SS), with 2–5 seen through the end

of the period; at the Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus, *Prince William* 24 Jul (SJ); and one at Myers Mill and Spring Rds. near Warrenton, *Culpeper* 31 Jul (TMD).

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Erratum: The North Region column for the Summer 2020 report season inadvertently included a sighting that was actually from Summer 2019. The following sentence should be retracted from the Summer 2020 report, but is a correct recounting of a notable Summer 2019 record: "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)."

FALL 2022

Except for October, temperatures were at or above normal through the period. Precipitation was below average for the season. Highlights this season included a Mottled Duck in *Stafford*, a Sanderling in *Fauquier*, a Red-necked Phalarope in *Stafford*, an American Goshawk in *Loudoun*, an Ash-throated Flycatcher in *Fauquier*, the return of the Brown-headed Nuthatch to *Culpeper*, an end-of-summer Winter Wren in *Madison*, a Lark Sparrow in *Prince William*, and a Henslow's Sparrow in *Fairfax*.

Abbreviations: Algonkian RP (Algonkian RP, *Loudoun*); Aquia Landing (Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford*); Belle Haven (Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax*); Bles Pk. (Bles Pk., *Loudoun*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Great Falls Pk. (Great Falls Pk., *Fairfax*); Hunting Cr. Bridge (Hunting Cr. Bridge, *Fairfax/Alexandria*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Leopold's Preserve (Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William*); Occoquan Bay NWR (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Riverbend Pk. (Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax*); Sky Meadows (Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier*); Waples Mill (Waples Mill Meadow Pk., *Fairfax*); Warrenton Res. (Warrenton Res., *Fauquier*).

WATERFOWL—SHOREBIRDS

Two **Tundra Swans** showed up early at Aquia Landing 7 Oct (RD); the Coastal Plain early date is 25 Oct. A late **Blue-winged Teal** visited Leopold's Preserve 19 Nov (NVBC), past the 20 Oct Regional late date. A **MOTTLED DUCK**, a species with only 3 known prior state records, was found at the Historic Port of Falmouth, *Stafford* 28 Sep (ph. TS), where it was seen by m. obs. through 4 Oct. Interestingly, one was also seen at this location in May 2021. Early **Northern Pintails** were seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 21 Aug (WB) and the Warrenton Res. 25–27 Aug (PS); the Coastal Plain and Piedmont

early dates are 10 Sep and 30 Sep, respectively. Also appearing prior to the Piedmont early date of 30 Sep was a **Green-winged Teal** at Great Falls Pk. 21 Aug (JS, et al.). Early **Ring-necked Ducks**, seen prior to the 15 Oct Regional early date, included one at the Mooreview Pkwy. impoundments in Ashburn, *Loudoun* 9 Sep (BHi) and 8 at the Warrenton Res. 24 Sep (PS), with 7 seen again 26 Sep. A group of up to 5 **Surf Scoters**, fairly rare this far inland, were seen in



Timothy Burnett's photograph of a **Mottled Duck** from Historic Port of Falmouth Pk., *Stafford* 29 Sep.

Belmont Bay, *Fairfax* from multiple vantage points, first seen from Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax* 29 Oct (ph. AMi); at least one remained through 7 Nov. A **Red-necked Grebe**, a rare transient in the Piedmont and whose Piedmont extreme early date is 14 Nov, was also seen at Burke L. Pk. 29 Oct (EP), ph. by m. obs. through 8 Nov. **Black-billed Cuckoos**, a rare transient in the Coastal Plain, were seen at Huntley Meadows 24 Sep (KG) and Occoquan Bay NWR 1 Oct (JH). A **Common Gallinule**, rare inland, was seen at Aquia Landing 31 Oct (ph. AD) where it lingered through 2 Nov. Six **Sandhill Cranes**, still a rare transient, were observed flying w. over Mavis Ct., *Fairfax City* 30 Sep (WB, JJ). Reports of **American Avocet**, rare inland, included 2 at Hunting Cr. Bridge 1 Aug (MS), with 14 present there 19 Aug (ph. JBe) and one between there and nearby Belle Haven 27 Sep (SS). Another was at Occoquan Bay NWR 10 Aug (JA). A **Black-bellied Plover**, fairly rare inland, was seen at Huntley Meadows 15 Aug (NV), ph. by m. obs. through 23 Aug, with another sighting 8 Sep (KB). A single was at Belle Haven 2 Sep (KG)

and another at Occoquan Bay NWR 17 Sep (KG, DLed). An **American Golden-Plover**, a rare but regular fall transient in the Region, was found at the Bristow Rd. sod farm, *Prince William* 7 Sep (WB), with up to 3 ph. by m. obs. through 17 Sep; 4 were at Belle Haven 27 Sep (SS), with 2 continuing 30 Sep. An **Upland Sandpiper**, a very rare transient in the Region in recent decades, though less rare at sod farms, was also found at the Bristow Rd. sod farm 13 Sep (KG, SS). Single **Stilt Sandpipers**, a rare fall transient inland, were observed at Hunting Cr. Bridge 20 Aug (ph. TK) and Huntley Meadows 23 Aug (PWB); 2 were at the Norman Cole Pollution Control Ponds near Lorton, *Fairfax* 11 Sep (ph. AH). A **Sanderling**, a very rare fall transient in the Piedmont, was seen at the Warrenton Res. 1 Sep (PS). A **Least Sandpiper** seen at L. Ashby, *Fauquier* 4 Nov (TMD) was considerably later than the Piedmont late date of 15 Oct. Single **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**, a rare fall transient in the Piedmont, were seen at the Meadowbrook Farm ponds in Leesburg, *Loudoun* 5 Sep (ph. JMc, SM) and Woodward Turf Farm, *Culpeper* 13 & 14 Sep (TMD, ph. JBe). A **Long-billed Dowitcher**, a rare transient inland, spent time at Huntley Meadows 19–24 Aug (ph. EP). A **Wilson’s Snipe** observed at Huntley Meadows 2 Aug (ph. PH) pre-dated the Coastal Plain extreme early date of 12 Aug. A **Red-necked Phalarope**, rare inland and the first reported in *Stafford*, was seen at Aquia Landing Pk. 5 Oct (ML, ph. JG, TS).

TERNS—RAPTORS

Reports of **Caspian Tern**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, included 2 at Algonkian RP 21 Aug (BHe) and singles at Beaverdam Res., *Loudoun* 8 Sep (ph. PW); the inland Prince William Marina, *Prince William* 17 Sep (BHi); and a neighborhood in n. *Arlington* 23 Sep (BG). A **Forster’s Tern**, also a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen over Woodward Turf Farm, *Culpeper* 13 Sep (TMD). A **Royal Tern**, a rare inland visitor whose usual Coastal Plain late

date is 30 Sep, was seen at Aquia Landing Pk. 5 Oct (ph. JG, ML, TS), with 3 seen 29 Oct (JG). An **American White Pelican**, a fairly rare but increasingly common visitor in the Region, was seen 3 Aug at Hunting Cr. Bridge (TK) and nearby Belle Haven, ph. by m. obs. Reports of **American Bittern**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, included one continuing from summer at Leopold’s Preserve, last reported 7 Aug (ph. KPi), and at Waples Mill 20 Sep (WB); Huntsman L. Pk., *Fairfax* 6–7 Oct (BR); and Folly Lick Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 17 Oct (WG). Most **Little Blue Herons** making summer and fall visits to the Piedmont are dispersing imm.’s; an ad. was seen at the Loudoun Golf & Country Club in Purcellville, *Loudoun* 24 Aug (ph. MGo). A late ad. Little Blue Heron was observed at Seneca RP, *Fairfax* 3 Nov (GA); the Piedmont late date is given in the Gold Book simply as “Sep.” A **Tricolored Heron**, rare inland, was seen at the Julie J. Metz Wetlands Bank/Neabsco Boardwalk, *Prince William* 22 Aug (ph. JA), where it continued through 26 Aug. A juv. **Cattle Egret**, a rare transient of fall, was seen at Mason Neck NWR, *Fairfax* 14 Aug (AN). Reports of late **Green Herons** included a juv. at L. Barton, *Fairfax* 4 Nov (ph. P&JW); a single at Mason Neck SP, *Fairfax* 6 Nov (BI, CL); and a very late individual at Broadlands Wetlands Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 25 Nov (ph. JMc). The Coastal Plain and Piedmont late dates are 20 Oct and 10 Oct, respectively. A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, fairly rare inland, was observed at Algonkian RP 26 Aug (JBox). There were multiple reports of **White Ibis**, a fairly rare visitor to the Region, including singles along Kinchloe Rd. near Clifton, *Fairfax* 4 Aug (ph. P&JW), seen by m. obs. through 4 Sep; along Broad Run Tr. near Bristow, *Prince William* 10 Aug (ph. MZ); at Algonkian RP 22 Aug (ph. KPi); at Riverside Preserve, *Fauquier* 28 Aug (JL, AS); and at Huntley Meadows 1 Sep (ph. SBo), seen by m. obs. through 7 Sep. Reports of **Glossy Ibis**, rare in the Piedmont, included individuals seen along Kinchloe Rd. near Clifton, *Fairfax* 4 Aug (PH) and at Great Falls Pk. 21 Aug (m. obs.). Flyover **Golden Eagles**, a rare transient in the Region,

were seen in Oakton, *Fairfax* 4 Nov (FA) and at Bles Pk. 16 Nov (ph. NH). An early **Northern Harrier** was seen at Kelly's Ford Battlefield, *Culpeper* 16 & 19 Aug (ph. TMD); the early Piedmont date is 30 Aug. A **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, with an early date of 10 Sep in the Piedmont, where the species is a rare summer resident, was seen along Lorton Rd. near Lorton, *Fairfax* 13 Aug (KG, AMu). An **AMERICAN GOSHAWK**, a very rare and irregular fall migrant, was captured and banded at the Short Hill Banding Station n. of Neersville, *Loudoun* 13 Nov (ph. IT). A summary of the fall raptor count at Snicker's Gap Hawkwatch, *Loudoun* included: 46 **Osprey**, 187 **Bald Eagles**, 24 Northern Harriers, 465 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 52 **Cooper's Hawks**, 1 American Goshawk, 52 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 2658 **Broad-winged Hawks**, 432 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 3 **Golden Eagles**, 47 **American Kestrels**, 16 **Merlins**, and 13 **Peregrine Falcons**.

WOODPECKERS—THRUSHES

An early **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen in a residential backyard in Ashburn, *Loudoun* 17 Sep (ph. JE), one day earlier than the extreme Piedmont early date of 18 Sep; interestingly, the bird had a solid black crown vs. the red crown of m. and f. and the hatched crown of fall and winter juv. Reports of **Merlin**, generally a rare transient in the Piedmont, were too numerous to list this season. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, apparently just the third record in the Region, obligingly spent time at Sky Meadows, first seen 14 Nov (ph. DWo, JBa, GH) and seen by m. obs. through the end of the period. There were numerous reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, typically a fairly rare transient in the Region; one seen along the Turquoise Tr. in Reston, *Fairfax* 14 Aug (ph. PH) got a jump on the Piedmont extreme early date of 21 Aug. There were also numerous reports of **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and **Least Flycatcher**, both typically rare transients in the Region. A **Yellow-throated Vireo** lingered at Algonkian RP 15 Oct (PL), past the Piedmont

extreme late date of 12 Oct. Similarly, a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** remained past the Piedmont extreme late date of 11 Nov at Huntsman L. Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Nov (ph. CR). Early reports of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** included on the Old Rag Mtn. Ridge Tr. in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 11 Aug (AH) and at Hawksbill Mtn. in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 12 Aug (CV); the Mountain/Valley early date is 15 Sep. After not being seen for 16 months, despite near-weekly visits during the first 4 of those 16 months, a **Brown-headed Nuthatch** was observed again at Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper* 25 Nov (a. r. KK), where one had remained year-round from at least Sep 2017 until Feb 2020, then seemingly disappeared until a single sighting in Jul 2021. (Ed. note: It remained through the following Winter 2022–23 period.). An early **Brown Creeper** was seen at the Big Meadows Campground in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 9 Sep (DH), well before the 25 Sep Regional early date. There were several sightings of **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** considerably past the 20 Sep late date for the Region, where they are known to be a rare winter visitor; the latest were at the Dulles Int'l Airport lake, *Loudoun* 21 Nov (JMc) and Sky Meadows 23 Nov (JBox). Also late were 2 **House Wrens** at the *Fairfax* County Landfill 29 Nov (KG); the Piedmont late date is 30 Oct. Although listed in the Gold Book as mainly a transient and winter resident in the Mountain/Valley sector with an early date of 30 Sep, a **Winter Wren** seen 1 Aug on the Dark Hollow Falls Tr. in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* (SC) was more likely one of those noted as uncommon to rare summer residents of SNP. Reports of **Sedge Wren**, a rare transient in the Region, included at Meadowood Recreation Area/Hidden Pond, *Fairfax* 16 Sep (ph. KG), continuing through 21 Sep; Broad Run Stream Valley Pk., *Loudoun* 18 Sep (BHi); Huntley Meadows 27 Sep (KG, SS), seen again 1 Oct; and Waples Mill 15 Oct (ph. NN), lingering through 20 Oct. Late **Marsh Wrens** were observed at Aquia Landing 10 Nov (AD), seen again 12 Nov (assumed late although no late date is given for the Coastal Plain in the Gold Book); the

Middlesex Dr. pond in South Riding, *Loudoun* 18 Nov (BHi); and Leopold's Preserve 19 Nov (NVBC), seen again 22 Nov; the Piedmont late date is 20 Oct. A **Veery** seen at Shellbark Pl. in Herndon, *Fairfax* 11 Oct (GC) was past the Piedmont extreme late date of 8 Oct. Sightings of **Hermit Thrush** near Ruth, *Madison* (at the edge of the Mountain/Valley sector) 26 Sep (IT) and on the Turquoise Tr. in Reston, *Fairfax* 29 Sep (PH) preceded the extreme early date for the Mountains/Valleys and Piedmont of early Oct.

FINCHES—DICKCISSEL

There were several reports of **Evening Grosbeak**, an irruptive and typically rare transient and winter resident; they included 2 at Waples Mill 1 Nov (ph. WB) and singles at Occoquan Bay NWR 2 Nov (DWh) and a residence in Leesburg, *Loudoun* 19 Nov (ph. TG). A **Pine Siskin** was observed prior to the 10 Oct Piedmont extreme early date at a residence on Berryland Dr. in Oakton, *Fairfax* 6 Oct (ph. JBe). A **Snow Bunting**, a rare transient in the Region,



William Goode Jr.'s picture of a **Henslow's Sparrow** seen at Waples Mill Meadow Pk., *Fairfax*, 12 Oct.

was seen at Sky Meadows 26 Nov (SP). A **Lark Sparrow**, a very rare visitor in the Region, was seen at the Discovery Blvd. pond in *Prince William* 21 Sep (ph. WB). A **HENSLOW'S SPARROW** was seen at Waples Mill 10 Oct (MMA, ph. NN), observed by m. ob. through 14 Oct. Most records in the state are from the last century; this is only the 2nd in the Region since 2005. An early **Savannah Sparrow** was seen at

the Meadowbrook Farm ponds in Leesburg, *Loudoun* 27 Aug (GB, LF), prior to the 15 Sep Regional early date. Two **Bobolinks** lingered at the *Fairfax* County Landfill 26 Oct (SBo, AC), well past the 25 Sep Piedmont late date. A **Baltimore Oriole** seen at Dyke Marsh 13 Nov (FODM, ph. TN) was present well after the 30 Sep Coastal Plain late date. A **Blue-winged Warbler** was seen just after the 29 Sep extreme Coastal Plain late date at Huntley Meadows 1 Oct (WB). **Brewster's Warblers**, rare in the Region, were observed at Huntley Meadows 28 Aug (ph. WH) and Meadowood Recreation Area, *Fairfax* 22 Sep (AA, KB) and again 23 Sep. A late **Prothonotary Warbler** was seen at Great Falls Pk. 25 Sep (JS, et al.), well past the 10 Sep Piedmont late date. Reports of **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, included at Bles Pk. 24 Sep (NH); Riverbend Pk. 24 Sep (AB, SBi, SBo, GH), with more sightings there 21 & 23 Oct; Riverside Preserve, *Fauquier* 1 Oct (AE); and Great Falls Pk. 9 Oct (JS, et al.). A late **Nashville Warbler** was spotted at Popes Head Pk., *Fairfax* 7 Nov (ph. P&JW); the Piedmont extreme late date for this species is 2 Nov. This was a banner year for **Connecticut Warblers**, typically a rare fall transient, with over a dozen reports scattered across the Region. Birds seen at Algonkian RP 5 Sep (JD) and Dyke Marsh 7 Sep (DA) preceded the Piedmont and Coastal Plain extreme early dates of 10 Sep and 9 Sep, respectively. **Mourning Warblers**, also a rare transient in the Region, were seen at Difficult Run Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 28 Aug (a. r. DLeb); Waples Mill 29 Aug (ph. WB), seen through 31 Aug; Daniels Run Pk., *Fairfax City* 3 Sep (ph. P&JW) and at the nearby Ashby Pond Conservancy Site, *Fairfax City* 5 Sep (CN); Upton Hill RP, *Arlington* 23 Sep (MGr); and Riverbend Pk. 24 & 25 Sep (AB, SBi, SBo, JMa, ph. WB, a. r. TK). A **Kentucky Warbler** was seen past its 10 Sep Piedmont late date at Riverbend Pk. 25 Sep (TK). Also late was a **Common Yellowthroat** observed at Occoquan Bay NWR 14 & 15 Nov (ph. AR), well after the 25 Oct Coastal Plain late date. Late **Northern Parulas** were seen at Bles Pk. 19 Nov (JT) and

Belle Haven 26 Nov (TMD); the extreme Piedmont and Coastal Plain late dates are 16 Nov and 31 Oct, respectively. An early **Magnolia Warbler** was found prior to the 18 Aug extreme Coastal Plain early date at Huntley Meadows 14 Aug (BHo), and late-to-depart were individuals at Bles Pk. 22 Oct (KPa, TP), with 2 seen there 26 Oct (NH), and Ashburn L., *Loudoun* 24 Oct (BHe); the Piedmont extreme late date is 18 Oct. Seen somewhat before the Piedmont extreme early arrival times of mid-Aug and late Aug, respectively, were a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Manassas Nat'l Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 13 Aug (ph. SJ) and a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at the Providence Recreation Center, *Falls Church* 18 Aug (ph. SH). Two **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were seen in the Big Meadows area of Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 13 Aug (PA); although the usual Mountain/Valley early date is 25 Sep, it is noted that the species may breed in the area. There were several early Yellow-rumped Warblers in both the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, the most extreme being one seen at C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier* 15 Sep (ph. JBow), where the Piedmont extreme early date is 28 Sep. Reports of **Yellow-throated Warbler**, a rare transient in the n. Piedmont away from the Potomac R., included individuals at Merrimac Farm WMA, *Prince William* 7 Aug (BHi); along the Turquoise Tr. in Reston, *Fairfax* 16 & 29 Sep (PH) and on the nearby Twin Branch Tr. 26 Sep (the same individual?); and one at the Broadlands Wetlands Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 27 Sep (DJ). A **Canada Warbler** seen at the Four Mile Run Observation Deck, *Arlington* 12 Oct (ph. MJ) lingered past the extreme Piedmont late date of 7 Oct. Reports of **Dickcissel**, formerly rare in the Region, included one continuing from summer along Boteler Rd. near Catlett, *Fauquier* 1 Aug (JBow) and individuals at Occoquan Bay NWR 24 Sep (NVBC, ph. m. obs.); Curling Creek Farm s. of Castleton, *Culpeper* 30 Sep (CH); a residence in s. Leesburg, *Loudoun* 5 Oct (ph.

MMy); the *Fairfax* County Landfill 9 Oct (KG); and Huntley Meadows 25 Oct (ph. RW).

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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 of Buena Vista, Covington, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Radford, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester.

SUMMER 2022

Abbreviations: Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, *Clarke*); Broadway WTP (Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Rockingham*); Roanoke STP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke City); Stuarts Draft WTP (Stuarts Draft Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Augusta*); NRV Fairgrounds (New River Valley Fairgrounds, *Pulaski*).

WATERFOWL—SHOREBIRDS

A **Ring-necked Duck** was at Silver L., *Rockingham* 4–21 Jul (WL, m. obs.). A **Hooded Merganser** was at the Wyatt Farm Pond, *Montgomery* 21 Jun (ph. anonymous eBirder); 7 were at Wilderness Canoe and Camp, *Rockbridge* 23 Jun (RK); and 5 were at Broadway WTP 14 Jul (SH). **Common Mergansers** are now regular breeders throughout the Region; the high count for the summer was 29 at the Horseshoe Bend Boat Ramp, *Botetourt* 21 Jun (RK). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 6 Jun (S&BF). The only **Chuck-wills-widow** reports was one at Union Springs Hollow L., *Rockingham* 4–13 Jun (SS, MG). Two **Virginia Rails** were along Big R. Rd., *Rockbridge* 4 Jun (AL, BK, BE, JP) and a single bird was found slightly further south 4 Jul (GB). A **Common Loon** lingered at L. Holiday, *Frederick* through the entire summer period (GR), while another was at Carvin's Cove Res., *Botetourt* 19 Jun–24 Jul (MW, KS). An **American Avocet** was at the Botetourt Center,

Botetourt 21 Jul (AD, KG, KD, m. obs.), while another was at the Target Distribution Center Pond, *Augusta* 23 Jul (ph. HH). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at the Roanoke STP 31 Jul (ph. KD).

KITE—DICKCISSEL

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was near Daleville, *Botetourt* 21–31 Jul (LR, m. obs.). Single **Little Blue Herons** were seen at Big Falls Rd., *Montgomery* 27–28 Jul (RB, DM) and at Parrot Rd., *Pulaski* 27 Jul (RB). Aside from the usual reports of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** from the breeding population in *Salem* and *Roanoke*



Bob Epperson's photo of a **Roseate Spoonbill** on private land in *Rockbridge* 29 Jul.

City, there was a single report of one at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* on 5 Jun (KG). A juvenile **White Ibis** was at the Roanoke STP 17–28 Jul (AD, WF, m. obs.). It was joined by a second bird on 28 Jul. A **LIMPKIN** at the

Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 1–20 Jun (AL, m. obs.), continued from May and was the first record for the Mountains and Valleys. A **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** was seen on private property in *Rockbridge* 28–30 Jul (ph. LN, DR, m. obs.); this was the first county record for *Rockbridge*. **Red Crossbills** were widely reported in *Highland*, *Augusta*, *Rockingham*, and *Montgomery*. Single **Summer Tanagers** were at Parrot River Rd., *Pulaski* 3 Jun (JC); at Hone Quarry Recreation Area, *Rockingham* 3 Jun (BH); in *Roanoke City* 5 Jun (BHo); and at Jefferson NF–Caldwell Fields, *Montgomery* 25 Jul (KD, JD). It was another poor summer for

Dickcissel with the only reports coming from *Rockingham* and *Augusta*.

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FALL 2022

Abbreviations: Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, *Clarke*); Broadway WTP (Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Rockingham*); Roanoke STP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke City); Stuarts Draft WTP (Stuarts Draft Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Augusta*); NRV Fairgrounds (New River Valley Fairgrounds, *Pulaski*).

WATERFOWL—SHOREBIRDS

A **Ross's Goose** was at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 21 Nov (ph. GR). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at the NRV Fairgrounds 30 Nov (MN). It was another poor fall for **Surf Scoters** in the Region. The only reports were both from L. Holiday, *Frederick*: 2 on 28 Oct and one 29 Nov (ph. GR). A **Black Scoter** was at Silver L., *Rockingham* 27 Nov (ph. GM). An **Eared Grebe** was at the Broadway WTP 22 Oct–30 Nov (DH, m. obs.). An ad. m. **Rufous Hummingbird** was in Blacksburg, *Montgomery* 29 Oct–18 Nov (RB, ph. JM). Surprisingly, not a single **Virginia Rail** was reported in the Region this fall. Single **Soras** were near Hightown, *Highland* 31 Aug (AB); Locust Grove Farm, *Rockbridge* 3 Sep (GB); and Laurel Dr., *Montgomery* 18 Oct (ph. DHa). Up to 2 **Black-bellied Plovers** were at the Turner's Sod Farm, *Rockingham* 16–18 (ph. GM, CT); one was at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 2 Oct (FA, DH); one was at Broadway WTP 30 Oct (GM); one was at the VT Airport, *Montgomery* 30 Sep (RB); and one was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 5 Nov (LC). A single **American Golden-Plover** was at Blandy 6 Sep (ph. DC); 4 flew over the Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 20 Sep (ph. GR); up to 41 were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 8 Sep–21 Oct (MG, m. obs.); one was at the Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery* 1 Oct (ph. BB, MN); and up to 12 were at the NRV Fairgrounds, 25 Sep–15 Oct (ph. BB, m. obs.). A **Stilt Sandpiper** was at Broadway WTP 31 Aug (DH, ph. CT). Up to 2 **Sanderlings** were at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 6–12 Sep (DL, ph.

MK) and one was at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 12 Sep (ph. MG). One **Baird's Sandpiper** was at Turner's Sod Farm, *Rockingham* 16 Aug (DL), while 2 were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 12 Sep (DH). There was a nice push of **White-rumped Sandpipers** in the first few weeks of Oct. Records came from *Frederick*, *Shenandoah*, *Page*, *Rockingham*, *Roanoke City*, *Montgomery*, and *Pulaski*. The high count was a flock of 18 at Mike Longs Woods Rd., *Page* 6–7 Oct (DH, ph. AS). Up to 2 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were in the vicinity of the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 6-17 Sep (m. obs.). Up to 3 **Western Sandpipers** were at the Roanoke STP 7-26 Aug (KD, KG). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 22-26 Aug (DH, HH, m. obs.), another was at Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 13 Aug (BE). Up to 4 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at the



Baxter Beamer's photograph of a **White-rumped Sandpiper** from Claytor L. SP, *Pulaski* 1 Oct.

Broadway WTP 3-6 Oct (DH), a single bird was on private property in *Rockbridge* 4 Oct (ph. DR), two were at the VT Airport, *Montgomery* 1 Oct (ph. BB, MN). A **Wilson's Phalarope** was at the Broadway WTP 7-11 Aug (ph. DG), another was at the Oakwood Dr. Pond, *Rockingham* 2 Sep (WL).

TERNs—CARACARA

The only **Caspian Terns** reported in the region this fall were one at the Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch 4 Sep (VL) and one at Claytor Lake, *Pulaski* 11,17 Sep (ph. GH, DW, MM). Up to 15 **Black Terns** were at the Broadway WTP 20-30 Aug (m. obs.), up to 4 were at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 21 Aug (BK, BE), 3 were at the Roanoke STP 21 Aug (KD) and a single was also there 6 Sep (KD), another single was at the Whitethorne Boat Ramp, *Montgomery* 21 Aug (ph. BB, MN). The only **American Bittern** was at Wegner's Mill, *Rockingham* 23 Sep (ph. MG). A **Cattle Egret** was at Hollins University, *Roanoke* 3-7 Nov (AD). A **Little Blue Heron** was at the Roanoke STP 6-7 Aug (ph. KG, KD). Two juv. **White Ibises** were seen in the Broadway area, *Rockingham* 7–26 Aug. A **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** was at Linville Cr.,



Matt Gingerich's picture of a **MacGillivray's Warbler** found at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 28 Nov.

Rockingham 7–12 Aug (ph. MG, m. obs.). This was the first record for *Rockingham* and only the third for the Mountains & Valleys, all of which have come since 2018. The spoonbill from the summer in *Rockbridge* also lingered until 2 Aug (SC). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was found along Interstate 81 in northern *Rockingham* 3–22 Aug (DH, DL); one was around Daleville, *Botetourt* 1–10 Aug (m. obs.); up to 2 were at Riverview Pk., *Radford* 18–23 Aug (CK); possibly the same 2 were around Narrows, *Giles* 9–21 Aug (ph. BB, MN, m. obs.). **Mississippi Kites** were reported

from *Harrisonburg*, *Augusta*, *Botetourt*, *Roanoke*, *Montgomery*, and *Pulaski*. The only **AMERICAN GOSHAWK** was one at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* 12 Nov (ph. VL). The only **Short-eared Owls** reported were 2 at Bells Ln., *Staunton* 28 Nov (LP). Single **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were recorded at Bramble Hill, *Highland* 25 Sep (CH, CJ) and 2 Nov (AC, SB); 2 were at the Chessie Nature Trail, *Rockbridge* 29 Nov (JuM); and up to 10 were recorded at the Highland retreat banding site, *Rockingham* from 1–8 Nov (ph. GM, m. obs.). A **CRESTED CARACARA** was seen at the Persimmon Ridge Farm, *Clarke* 21 Aug (*vide* DC). This represents the first *Clarke* record and the second for the Mountains & Valleys. Despite diligent searching the next day, it was not relocated.

FLYCATCHERS—DICKCISSEL

As usual for the fall there were several reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** from *Frederick*, *Clarke*, *Warren*, *Rockingham*, *Rockbridge*, *Botetourt*, *Roanoke*, *Giles*, and *Montgomery*. Single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were seen at Seven Bends SP, *Shenandoah* 28 Aug (CL); Seven Fountains Rd., *Shenandoah* 5 Sep (DGe); Switzer L., *Rockingham* 10 & 28 Sep (MG, PN, GM); and at Pandapas Pond, *Montgomery* 8 Sep (JW). Single **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found at the Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 24 Sep (ph. DG); Heritage Community Pk., *Montgomery* 12–13 Oct (SA, RB); and at Kent Farm Rd., *Pulaski* 20 Oct–20 Nov (ph. BE, RB). The only **Brown-headed Nuthatch** reports came from the small population in the Roanoke area. At least a few **Black-capped Chickadees** showed up at lower elevations this fall, with well-documented individuals at Thornrose Cemetery, *Staunton* 30 Oct (MK); Blandy 18–29 Nov (ph. DC, m. obs.); and at Broadway WTP 11–26 Nov (DH, ph. MK). An apparent family group of 3 juv. **Sedge Wrens** was at the Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 27 Aug (ph. JL, BL), while another was at the Glen Alton Day Use Area, *Giles* 15 Oct (ph. PL). A single bird was also at Wengers Mill,

Rockingham 16–17 Oct (ph. MG). Single **Marsh Wrens** were at Blandy 6–7 Oct (ph. DC, DB) and at Locust Grove Farm, *Rockbridge* 3–4 Sep (GB). In stark contrast to last fall there were no winter finches of note. A **Lark Sparrow** was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 7 Nov (ph. BE, BK). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at the Paul SF, *Rockingham* 28 Sep (CT), while another was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 18 Nov (AD). A **NELSON'S SPARROW** was near Augusta Springs, *Augusta* 19 Oct (CG). There were several reports of **Orange-crowned Warbler** this fall with reports coming from *Harrisonburg*, *Botetourt*, *Roanoke*, and *Montgomery*. It was a good fall for **Connecticut Warbler** in the Shenandoah Valley, although there were no records from further south in the Region. Reports came from *Frederick*, *Clarke*, *Page*, *Rockingham*, and *Augusta*. The only **Mourning Warbler** reports were singles at Shenandoah NP – Dickey Ridge, *Warren* 4 Sep (JF), and Blandy 20 Sep (ph. DC). A **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** was at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 27–28 Nov (ph. PN, MG). A few **Dickcissels** were around with singles at the Roanoke STP 7 Aug (ph. KD); the Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, *Montgomery* 24 Sep (RB); Blandy 16–19 Oct (ph. DG, DC); Mulberry Run Constructed

Wetland, *Waynesboro* 26 Oct (MK) –the first eBird record for *Waynesboro* – and Piney Woods Rd., *Rockingham* 5 Nov (DH).

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SOUTHWEST



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SUMMER 2022

BOBWHITE—FALCONS

Reports from this Region over the period were few and far between, though many of the Region's rare breeders were observed at least once. **Northern Bobwhites** were reported at four different locations across the Region including one at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 3–18 Jun (ph. RH, KA); one observed outside the town of Ivanhoe, *Wythe* 14 Jun (PE); one flushed from a field outside of Willis, *Floyd* 14 Jul (SR, DH); and another observed near Adwolfe, *Smyth* 27 Jul (RR). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was observed at Lincolnshire Pk., *Tazewell* 19 Jul (MA). This



Drew Chaney's photo of a **Great White Heron** (*A. herodias occidentalis*) from the Saltville Well Fields, *Smyth*, 8 Jun.

represents a tenth record for the summer period in the Region. As many as four **Virginia Rails** were observed at the cattail wetland at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 4 Jun–27 Jul (BM, AG, JI, m. obs.), and 6 were seen at Gose Mill Pond in Burkes

Garden, *Tazewell* 4 Jul (DS). This rail is known to breed at both locations. A 5th county record **Black Tern** was seen at Falls Mill L., *Tazewell* 28 Jul (ph. CD), and two days prior to this a 3rd county record **Forster's Tern** was observed at the same location 26 Jul (JP). An astonishing record of **GREAT WHITE HERON** was first seen at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 3–8 Jul (RR). Better and continued documentation of the bird was made in the fall period. This, unsurprisingly, is a first record for Southwest Virginia. Falls Mill L., *Tazewell* also produced a juvenile **Little Blue Heron** 26 Jul (JP, ph. CD). This heron was observed at the lake into the fall period. A first county record ad. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at Clinch River SP, *Wise* 22 Jun–1 Jul (ph. TG). A **Northern Harrier** was photographed flying over Elk Cr., *Grayson* 18 Jul (ph. TR). This is only the second summer record for the Region. **Peregrine Falcons** were confirmed breeding at Breaks Interstate Pk., *Dickenson* 4–11 Jun (HW). The Breaks have been a known nesting location for falcons since their reintroduction in 2007.

SHRIKE—WARBLERS

A family group of **Loggerhead Shrikes** was seen in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 29 Jun (FA). This was the only record in the Region for the period. Surprisingly, shrikes were not reported at reliable summer locations in *Lee* and *Russell*. **Bank Swallows** are not often mentioned here but a few records were made of this uncommon species over the period. Two were seen in Abingdon,

Washington 26 Jun (MS); two were observed at the Buller Fish Hatchery, *Smyth* 5 Jul (RH); and another was noted at Fort Chiswell, *Wythe* 15 Jul (BP, RP). At least one **Swainson's Thrush** was reported from the Mt. Rogers area, *Grayson* 3 Jun–5 Jul (m. obs.). Mt. Rogers and nearby Whitetop are the last two mountains in the Region where the species is known to occur in the summer due to the boreal-like spruce-fir forests at their summits. **Vesper Sparrow** is another high-elevation species found in known but restricted locations in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* and the Grayson Highlands. Confirmed records of the species came from several locations around Mt. Rogers, *Grayson* 8 Jun–27 Jul (m. obs.), and near the Chestnut Knob Shelter, *Tazewell* 5 Jul (GK). **Savannah Sparrows** were also noted in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 18 Jun–20 Jul (m. obs.) and nearby Blackberry Farm, *Tazewell* 20 Jul (SB, CD). Another report of the species came from Greasy Creek Beaver Pond, *Tazewell* 2–12 Jun (CD) near the county border with *Buchanan*. **Prothonotary Warblers** were reported from the

Whitaker Hollow Pk. Boat Ramp, *Washington* 28 Jun (CS) and at Natural Tunnel SP, *Scott* 22 Jul (AD, JD). **Swainson's Warblers** were observed at a number of locations across their breeding range in the Region. Known breeding locations in *Tazewell* are in the northern and western reaches of the county, but a new location for the species was discovered near the Chestnut Knob Shelter, *Tazewell* 5 Jul (GK).

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FALL 2022

SCOTERS—HERONS

Two **Surf Scoters** were observed at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 24 Nov (ph. AB, MP), a first county record. **Virginia Rails** were noted across the Region including at well-known locations such as



Judi Sawyer's photograph of a **Brown Booby** at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 29 Sep.

the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 3–29 Sep (m. obs.); Rocky Ford Wetlands, *Wise* 8 Oct (BB, MG, MN); and Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 9 Oct (BB, MG, MN). A third county record **Sora** was found in a yard in Troutdale, *Grayson* 28 Sep (ph. AB), and a first county record was heard at the Rocky Ford wetland, *Wise* 8 Oct (BB, MG, MN). The Rocky Ford wetland is quickly becoming one of the most popular wetland hotspots in *Wise*. With continued effort, the extensive cattail wetlands here—and neighboring Guest R. Rd.—may continue to supply uncommon marsh species. A small collection of shorebirds), which included two **Least Sandpipers**, one **Pectoral Sandpiper**, and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, was reported from a farm pond near Speedwell, *Wythe* 2 Sep (ph. ER, KR, KZ). This same farm pond was a productive shorebird location in *Wythe* last year. A **Black Tern** was seen at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 6 Sep (RR, ES). A first Regional record **BROWN BOOBY** was seen for nearly a month at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 21 Sep–17 Oct (JK, m. obs.). This record could be attributed to Hurricane Fiona which tracked far to the east, off Virginia's coast, though it is challenging to say.

Smyth continued to have a taste of south Florida with a continuing **GREAT BLUE HERON (GREAT WHITE)** at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 11 Aug–22 Sep (ph. MH). A first county record **Great Egret** was found at the East Bluegrass Trail, *Bland* 15 Aug–29 Sep (KG). **Little Blue Herons** had a decent year in Southwest Virginia; one was found at Cavitt's Cr. Pk., *Tazewell* 6 Aug, and 3 were seen at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 8 Aug–4 Sep (ph. MH). A first county record continued from July at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 2–18 Aug (ph. CD). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was seen in Alvarado, *Washington* 16 Aug (MS), and at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 23 Aug (AB). These observations add to the growing list of reports of the night-heron along the I-81 corridor.

KITES—WARBLERS

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen in Volney, *Grayson* 17 Sep (GH). This is the first record for the county and only the second record for the Region. A single **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was reported from Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* 19 Aug (JW). The only record of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** this fall came from the Settlers Museum of



Oliver Patrick's picture of a **Black Tern** spotted at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 4 Sep.

Southwest Virginia, *Smyth* 23 Aug (CW). A number of **Philadelphia Vireos** were observed this fall including one at Kingfisher Farm, *Washington* 14 Sep (SH); another at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 17 Sep (AB, RR); one in the Fairwood Valley, *Grayson* 18 Sep (AB, MR); and

lastly a bird photographed on the Burruss Tract, *Bland* 30 Sep (ph. MN). **Loggerhead Shrike** reports increased from the summer with reports at established locations such as Rose Hill, *Lee* 13 Aug (LG); Elk Garden, *Russell* 18 Aug (ph. BB, MN); and Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 19 Sep–30 Oct (DS). A surprise first county record **Sedge Wren** was seen at the Priest Fork Wetlands, *Dickenson* 7 Oct (AD, JD). This is the first record of the species in the Region since 2018. Two **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were seen at Pinnacle Overlook in the Cumberland Gap, *Lee* 7 Oct (BB, WB, MG, MN); this was be the first record in *Lee* since 2016. A flock of 10 **American Pipits** was seen at Rocky Hollow, *Grayson* 22 Nov (AB). A single male **Evening Grosbeak** was seen at Clear Creek L., *Bristol* 25 Nov (SC). A first county record **Vesper Sparrow** was observed at the Rocky Gap Safety Rest Area, *Bland* 26 Sep (GV). Another 6 were seen at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 30 Oct–5 Nov (ph. DO). A late **Yellow-breasted Chat** was reported from Bluefield, *Tazewell* 17

Oct (JP), and a late **Ovenbird** was found at Sugar Hollow Pk., *Bristol* 21 Oct (LJ). **Orange-crowned Warblers** were found at Falls Mills L., *Tazewell* 20 Oct (ph. anonymous eBirder) and the Buller Fish Hatchery, *Smyth* 6 Nov (RR). Additionally, **Connecticut Warblers** were found in Adwolfe, *Smyth* 27 Sep (RR, ES) and at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 9 Oct (ph. BB).

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SOUTH CENTRAL



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SUMMER 2022

As is typical for the Region, many shorebirds appeared in late July, with most found around upper Kerr Reservoir. These arrivals represent the earliest “fall” migrants, and shorebird reports dominate this seasonal report. An American Avocet seen dodging holiday traffic on Smith Mountain Lake on 4 July was much less expected than the other shorebird species noted and provided a seasonal highlight. While some other water bird reports were also notable, few unusual songbird reports were received.

Abbreviations: Kerr (John H. Kerr Res., *Charlotte*, *Halifax*, and *Mecklenburg*); SRSP (Staunton R. SP, *Halifax*)

MERGANSERS—TERNS

A single **Hooded Merganser** seen flying over Meadville Rd., *Halifax* 10 Jul (JB, PG) was unexpected and the only one reported. One **Common Merganser** along the Riverwalk Tr., *Danville* 3 Jul (BW) was unusual but not unprecedented, the species having also been seen here in summer 2020. A single **Pied-billed Grebe** 12 Jul (JB) at the Clover Boat Ramp on the *Halifax* side of the Staunton R. was the only grebe reported. An **American Avocet** was well-photographed on Peninsula Pt. on the *Franklin* shore of Smith Mtn. L. 4 Jul (ph. MK). The species is remarkable any time in the Region, and this is perhaps a first county record. According to the observer’s eBird checklist notes, the lake “was full of boats, swimmers, and kayakers for the July 4 holiday. The avocet flushed

several times as I observed it, always landing on one of the two beaches at the base of the peninsula.”

Two **Semipalmated Plovers** reported from SRSP 28 Jul (JB) and 5 on the nearby Staunton R. mudflats, *Halifax*, 30 Jul (ph. PG) were the only ones reported. A single **Sanderling** was at the Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg*, 28 Jul (ph. CW) and there and nearby, including SRSP, 30 Jul (m. obs.). **Least Sandpipers** were at SRSP beginning 13 Jul, when 2 were reported by JB, and 10 were on the mudflats 30 Jul (PG) in the lake downstream still in *Halifax*; one was also at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg*, 30 Jul (ADy, JD). One **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at SRSP 28 Jul (JB), with more seen on several dates through the end of the month, and a high count of 9 on 30 Jul (ph. PG) on the Staunton R. mudflats near the SP. A single **Semipalmated Sandpiper** on the Staunton R. mudflats, *Halifax*, 30 July (PG) was the only one reported. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was noted 30 Jul at SRSP (JB) along with one the same day at Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg* (ADy, JD), with 2 reported on the nearby Staunton R. mudflats also on 30 Jul (PG); one remained at Staunton View on 31 Jul (m. obs.). Because of the proximity of these sites, perhaps only two individual birds were involved. A **Spotted Sandpiper** seen 6 Jun at Briery Cr. WMA, *Prince Edward* (WR) might be considered a lingering spring migrant, while the species was reported widely near Kerr (m. obs.) in Jul, likely representing fall migrants. The first returning **Solitary Sandpiper** was noted at SRSP 23 Jul (JB) with several reports near Kerr through the remainder of the month (m. obs.); the species was not reported away from Kerr. **Lesser Yellowlegs** were also noted only near Kerr, with the earliest birds 2 at SRSP 28 Jul (JB); following these there were scattered

reports near there through the end of the month. **Greater Yellowlegs** was also noted only around upper Kerr with the earliest birds 2 found at SRSP 25 Jul (JB); several reports of 1–3 birds nearby followed through the end of the month (m. obs.). A single **Laughing Gull** on the *Franklin* side of Hales Ford Bridge, Smith Mtn. L. 26 Jun (ph. BE, MJ) was well inland from where expected. It was seen alongside one **Ring-billed Gull**, while the only other gull reported Regionally was another Ring-billed Gull near Kerr Dam, *Mecklenburg* 31 Jul (TB, AD). The earliest **Caspian Tern** reported was one 13 Jul at SRSP (JB) with several reports of one or two birds following at various later dates, all at



Timothy Burnett's picture of a **Wood Stork** from Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg* 31 Jul.

Kerr. A **WOOD STORK** was nice coda to the summer at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg* 30–31 Jul (ph. CW, DW), and remained into the fall for a few days.

ANHINGA—KITE

An **Anhinga** was found along Meadville Rd., *Halifax*, 10 Jul (ph. JB, PG), and another 16 Jul along Newbill School Rd., Crystal Hill, *Halifax* (JB); these were the only reports. As an indication of the current summer status of **Double-crested Cormorants** in the Region, the species was reported by many observers from eight different counties and the city of *Danville*, with the high count an estimated 35 below Kerr Dam, *Mecklenburg* 29 Jul (AB). Beginning 15 Jul (JB) and continuing through 18 Jul (JB), a **Snowy Egret** was seen at SRSP and nearby; although there are several Regional reports, the species is not generally

expected this far from the coast in Virginia. A single **Cattle Egret** was reported 10 Jun along VA 40 just w. of Gretna, *Pittsylvania* (LF). Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at SRSP 25 Jul (ph. JB) were the only ones reported, and a single **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Bear Cr. L. SP, *Cumberland* 13 Jul (ph. ES) was the only report of that species; these reports accurately reflect the scarcity of the night-heron species in the Region. **Mississippi Kites** were reported from several sites, mostly from the s. counties of the Region where the species is more expected, but one was also seen over downtown Farmville, *Prince Edward* 24 Jun (TS).

VIREO—DICKCISSEL

Blue-headed Vireos were reported only from the Blue Ridge at the far west of the Region (m. obs.); this is to be noted in contrast to the reports of the species from elsewhere in the Region in recent summers. There were, disappointingly, no **Loggerhead Shrike** reports from the Region this summer. **Horned Larks** were noted in three locations: one at a farm in w. *Prince Edward* 17 Jul (ES); one along Wade Pond Rd., *Halifax*, 7 Jun (JB); and 3 at the Danville Regional Airport, *Danville* 16 Jun (JB). A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** near Curdsville, *Buckingham* 3 Jul (MS) was surprising and was the only one reported; the species subsequently appeared in good numbers during the fall. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were widely reported from s. counties where they are routine, and one was also found 11 Jun at the Longwood Golf Course, *Prince Edward* (ph. MS), where the species has been reported occasionally since fall 2021. Finally, one **Dickcissel** along Wade Pond Rd. (SR 792), *Halifax* 7 Jun (ph. JB) and 12 Jun (ph. PG) was the only one reported.

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FALL 2022

Waterfowl numbers were generally low, and some species (e.g. Canvasback, Greater Scaup) were unreported this fall. By contrast, a number of noteworthy shorebird reports were received, a great majority of them coming from the mudflats that become exposed at appropriately low water levels in Kerr Reservoir at the junction of the Dan and Staunton Rivers. An assortment of interesting songbird reports was also received, highlighted by two Nelson's Sparrows found and photographed one day apart.

Abbreviations: Kerr (John H. Kerr Reservoir, *Mecklenburg*, *Halifax*, and *Charlotte*); SR mudflats (Staunton River mudflats, upper Kerr just southeast of Staunton River SP, *Halifax*); SRR (Sandy River Reservoir, e. of Farmville, *Prince Edward*)

WATERFOWL—RAILS

A single **Snow Goose** 12 Nov (ph. JBI, CW) on upper Kerr (reported in *Halifax* and *Mecklenburg*) was the only one noted. The earliest returning **Blue-winged Teal** were 3 at Staunton R. SP 28 Aug (JBI). **Northern Shovelers** were scarce and only reported from *Halifax*; 2 were on upper Kerr 6 Nov (PG) and 9 Nov (JBI), and one was at Staunton R. Battlefield SP 20 Nov (JBI). **Northern Pintail** were reported from only two locations, with single birds appearing 16 Oct at two separate locations: the SR mudflats (ph. PG) and L. Lanier, *Martinsville* (JK). While the former was not reported again, the species was reported on several instances at L. Lanier (one to 3 individuals, m. obs.) through 30 Nov (one bird, KI). The only **Redhead** reported were 4 on a pond along Wade Rd., *Halifax* 8 Nov (JBI). Two **Black Scoters** that appeared at SRR 11 Nov (ph. ES, m. obs.) were the only scoters reported; they remained until 20 Nov (CMS, CS). A single **Common Merganser** on the Dan R. at *Danville* 20 Nov (ph. BW) was the only one reported. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were seen in Crewe, *Nottoway*, where there were

2 on 31 Aug (MB); in Amelia Court House, *Amelia*, where one was noted 12 Aug (TS) and 2 were seen 17 Nov (CF, ST); and along Grub Hill Church Rd. not far n. of US 460, also *Amelia*, with 2 found 28 Aug (ES). The only **Black-billed Cuckoo** noted was one in Farmville, *Prince Edward* 1 Sep (AmD, JD). Most rail reports in this Region are noteworthy due to the general scarcity of all species; this season, a single **Virginia Rail** was heard along Redlawn Rd., *Mecklenburg*, near the Roanoke R., 22 and 29 Nov (both CW), and a **Sora** was at the SR mudflats, *Halifax* 16 Oct (PG).

SHOREBIRDS

Three **American Avocets** were found 28 Aug on the SR mudflats, *Halifax* (JBI, CW) and the species was subsequently reported on various dates through 22 Sep, when 3 were seen (MH). **American Golden-Plovers** were noted only at the SR mudflats, *Halifax* with 3 appearing there 25 Sep (JBI, PG), a high count of 5 on 27 Sep (CW), and the latest report of one seen 6 Nov (ph. PG). A **MARBLED GODWIT** was at upper



Adam D'Onofrio's photo of a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the Staunton R. Mudflats in *Halifax* 4 Sep.

Kerr, *Halifax* 8 Sep (JBI) but not seen later. Three **Stilt Sandpipers** were on the SR mudflats 30 Aug (AdD) with 2 remaining through 2 Sep (m. obs.), the only reports of the species. Reports of **Sanderlings** came only from the SR mudflats, with 2 on 25 Aug (JBI), a peak count of 5 on 2 Sep (JBI), and the last one on 18 Sep (ph. AdD).

Dunlin were also reported only from the SR mudflats: first, one on 25 Sep (ph. PG); a high count of 15 on 1 Oct (JBI); and the last one 26 Nov (JBI). A remarkable total of 35 **White-rumped Sandpipers** was at the SR mudflats 2 Oct (AdD, ph. PG), with a few lingering in subsequent weeks, and one last seen 30 Oct (PG). Two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were at the SR mudflats 2 Sep (JBI, CW) to 4 Sep (ph. AdD, ph. PG), the only reports. While there were several reports of **Pectoral Sandpipers** near Kerr; away from the reservoir, the only one reported was an individual at a small farm pond in w. *Prince Edward* 11 Oct (ph. CMS). **Semipalmated Sandpiper** numbers peaked at 16 on 25 Sep at the SR mudflats (JBI); the species was not seen away from the Kerr vicinity, nor was **Western Sandpiper**, with only a single bird reported there 2 (JBI, CW) and 4 (AdD, ph. PG) Sep. Similarly, dowitchers were only reported from the Kerr area, with a maximum count of 17 **Short-billed Dowitchers** at the SR mudflats 28 Aug (JBI) and the only **Long-billed Dowitcher** one found 25 Sep on the SR mudflats (ph. PG). Another species only reported from the Kerr vicinity was **Lesser Yellowlegs**, with a remarkable high count of 56 at the SR mudflats 4 Sep (AdD, PG) and the latest report 2 there 16 Oct (PG). A single **Red-necked Phalarope** was at the SR mudflats 25 Sep (ph. PG) and 2 Oct (AdD, PG).



Clyde Wilson's photo of a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** above the John H. Kerr Reservoir Dam in *Mecklenburg*, 2 Oct.

GULLS—KITES

The number of **Laughing Gull** reports has slowly been increasing in recent years but the species remains noteworthy Regionally; this season one was seen at Kerr Dam, *Mecklenburg* 1 Oct (CMS) and 2 Oct (AdD, PG), as well as at the SR mudflats on various dates from 13 Aug (ES, CW) to 1 Oct (JBI). At least two individual birds were involved in the reports since one was an adult and another a first-year. A remarkable total of 35 **Common Terns** was reported 2 Oct at SR mudflats (AdD, PG), while only a few reports of single **Forster's Terns** were received, the earliest 23 Aug at SRR (CMS) and the latest 26 Sep at SR mudflats (JBI, CW). A **LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** spotted from the dam at Kerr 2 Oct (AdD, PG, ph. CW, m. obs.) was a truly remarkable find, particularly given the lack of any storm or other obvious weather-related cause. A **WOOD STORK** that had been found in late Jul continued at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg* 1–2 Aug (m. obs. both dates), and an **American White Pelican** found in mid-July at the SR mudflats continued until 1 Aug (m. obs.). A **Tricolored Heron**, unexpected this far inland, was at the SR mudflats from 20 Aug (m. obs.) until 14 Sep (JBI). Neither night-heron is common in the Region, but this season both were reported. Single **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported from two locations in *Prince Edward*: Wilcks L. in Farmville 8 Sep (CMS) and upper SRR 8 Nov (ph. NV), and one was also seen on the SR mudflats 20 Aug (m. obs.) and 25 Sep (PG); a single **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was heard in South Boston, *Halifax* 1 Sep (JBI). **White Ibises** are scarce and unpredictable in the Region; this season two were noted. One was seen along Meadville Rd., *Halifax* 6 Aug (JBI) and the other was at SRR 24 (NV) to 27 (WR, CMS) Sep. A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was sighted several times, initially together with several **Mississippi Kites**, along US 58 e. of Brodnax, *Brunswick* 1 Aug (ph. SC) to 7 Aug (m. obs.).

FLYCATCHERS—WARBLERS

The only **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** reported was one in Curdsville, *Buckingham* 20 Sep (ph. CMS), and the only **Philadelphia Vireo** was also in Curdsville, *Buckingham* 22 Sep (ph. CMS). A **Loggerhead Shrike** seen along Drunkard Rd., *Amelia*, 17 Nov (TS) to 21 Nov (m. obs.) was the only one reported. **Marsh Wrens** are seldom reported in the Region, but this fall single birds were found 18 Sep at the SR mudflats (AdD, PG); 28 Sep (ph. ES, ph. WR) at Briery Cr. WMA *Prince Edward*; upper SRR 28 Sep (ph. NV); and near the dam at SRR 5–6 Nov (AJ, ph. CMS). The only **Evening Grosbeaks** reported were a flyover flock of 14 in central *Prince Edward* 2 Nov; a group of 3 just to the n. at Briery Cr. WMA 3 Nov (TS), also *Prince Edward*; and one in w. *Franklin* 12 Nov (JV). A **NELSON'S SPARROW** near the dam at SRR 29 Oct (ph. CMS, m. obs.) was the second record for *Prince Edward*, and the first documented by photos, with the only previous report from 7 Jan 1948. The bird was refound on 30 Oct (SC). Remarkably, another Nelson's

Sparrow was found 30 Oct at the SR mudflats, *Halifax* (ph. PG). For a species that is seldom reported in the Virginia Piedmont, two Regional records in two days is unprecedented. Three **Orange-crowned Warblers**, more than usual, were reported: at Staunton R. Battlefield SP, *Halifax* 11 Oct (JBI); at Oakwood Cemetery, *Martinsville* 24 Oct (JBe); and at SR mudflats 30 Oct (PG). The only **Connecticut Warbler** was one located 21 Sep near upper SRR (ph. NV), while two **Mourning Warblers** were found, 7 Sep at Wilcks L., *Prince Edward* (CMS), and 8 Sep along the Tobacco Heritage Trail, South Boston, *Halifax* (JBI).

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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 Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, and Lynchburg.

SUMMER 2022

Highlights of this period included several rare migrants such as Western Sandpiper, a new breeding confirmation for Anhinga, several wandering post-breeding waders, and some early irruptive migrants including Red-breasted Nuthatches and Red Crossbills.

Abbreviations: SML (Smith Mountain Lake, Bedford/Franklin).

DUCKS—IBIS

A **Ring-necked Duck** was unseasonal 23 Jun at Thrashers Mill Lk. Pk., *Amherst* (MJ). Also unseasonal was a **Pied-billed Grebe** at Northeast Reservoir, *Louisa* 22 Jul (ph. NT). Rare and local in the summer in the Region, a **Black-billed Cuckoo** was at Bootens Gap, Shenandoah NP in *Greene* 8 June (MC). A juv. **WESTERN SANDPIPER**, a very rare transient for the Central Region, was at Reusens Dam, *Bedford* 31 Jul (ph. MJ, AL, CT). Single **Common Loons** were noted over-summering at three locations at SML, *Bedford* 13 & 16 Jul (KP, MP, AS). **ANHINGA** were confirmed nesting for the first time in the Region this summer, and surprisingly were documented at two locations: one nesting pair was at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* with the male first documented 11 Jun (ES), nest discovered 26 Jun (ph., v. r. EO), and up to 5 individuals in total through the end of the period. The nesting Anhinga first discovered on the

Richmond Turnpike, *Caroline* in the spring period continued through 18 Jun with a high count of 3 individuals. The sole **Snowy Egret** of the summer was an imm. at Reusens Dam, *Bedford* 29 Jun (ph. BB) that was also seen within *Lynchburg* and *Amherst*. An ad. **Little Blue**



Amiel Hopkin's photograph of an **Anhinga**, taken at the Richmond Turnpike Swamp, *Caroline* 13 Jun.

Heron, an unusual age, was at L. Hanover Nature Trail, *Hanover* 15 Jun (ph. KG), an early date for the Region. More typical were imm. birds in singles and pairs in *Albemarle*, *Amherst*, *Bedford*, and *Lynchburg* through the end of the period. Imm. **White Ibis** arrived in late July in the Region. One was at the James R. Visitor Center, *Amherst* 24 & 25 Jul (ph. BE, MJ); another was at Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 26 & 27 Jul (ph. BB, m. obs.); and 2 were there 28 & 30 Jul.

Unexpected for the habitat were 2 in a field at Rio Rd., *Albemarle* 30 Jul (WK).

KITES—DICKCISSEL

Rare in the western part of the Region in summer, a **Mississippi Kite** was at Chancho Volante, *Albemarle* 15 Jun (PM); another at Hanover



Michael Boatwright's photo of a **Red Crossbill** at Oronoco Campground, *Amherst* 3 Aug.

Quarter Rd., *Hanover* 9 Jul was more expected (RG). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was at Warbler Cr. Farm, *Bedford* 20 Jun (BE). This species is a rare summer resident at high elevations in the Region. Notably late and uncommon for the Region was an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Monacan Pk. Rd., *Amherst* (ph. MB) 3 Jun. Early

Red-breasted Nuthatches began to arrive in the Region in July, with the first report at Pumpkin Patch Dr., *Hanover* 10 & 12 Jul (ph. TB). Another was at Persimmon Ln., *Spotsylvania* 21 Jul (EK). **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were detected at the periphery of their range in *Caroline* at the Richmond Turnpike, with one found 13 Jun (AN) and 2 there 21 Jun (MA, TMD, MJI). Six **Red Crossbills**, a rare high elevation visitor to the Region, were at Oronoco Campground, *Amherst* 22 Jul (ph. MB), providing the first summer record for the Lynchburg vicinity. A **White-throated Sparrow** was notably late at Sunset Ridge Rd., *Bedford* 20 Jun (ph. ML). Two m. and a f. **Dickcissel** were found at Hanover Quarter Rd., *Hanover* 12 Jun (NN, AR). Another singing m. was photographed at an undisclosed location in *Bedford* 25 Jun (ph. MR).

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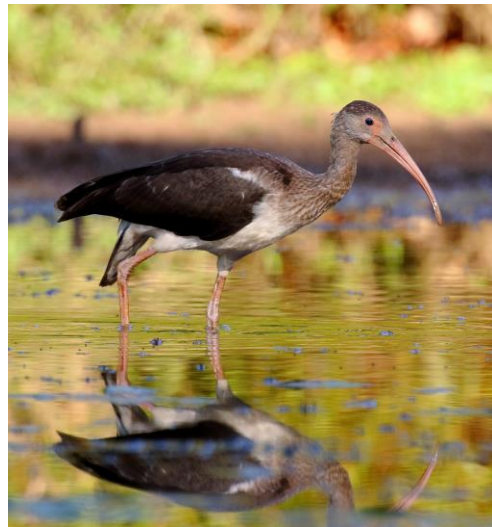
FALL 2022

This was a remarkably varied and birdy fall for the Central Region. Diversity was impressively high, yielding numerous species of sought-after migrants, post-breeding wanderers, and surprising vagrants alike. While summer temperatures scorched the early part of the period, post breeding dispersal from southern regions brought waders and kites aplenty. Several shorebird rarities were found as the season progressed, as were rarities from other waterbird groups such as terns. Warblers showed strongly, with the 34 species reported just shy a Mourning Warbler from the full 35 annual species in the Region. Boreal irruptive passerines were found in good numbers, providing additional flavor to the species roster this fall. Highlight species included Mottled Duck, Surf Scoter, Rufous Hummingbird, White-rumped and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Black and Common Terns, Anhinga, Snowy Egret, White Ibis, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Evening Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, Lapland Longspur, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Golden-winged and Connecticut Warblers.

DUCKS—ANHINGA

Initially detected in *Stafford* on the Rappahannock R., a **MOTTLED DUCK** made occasional forays onto the shoreline of the Central Region at Old Mill Pk., *Fredericksburg* 30 Sep–3 Oct (MA, AD). Likely the same bird discovered in Spring 2022 on the same stretch of river, this cryptic vagrant from the south has only a handful of accepted records in the state. Six **Redhead** at Ivy Ponds, *Bedford* 4 Nov (ph. ML) made for a fairly early arrival in the Region. A **Surf Scoter** dropped in to L. Monticello 29 Oct (ST, ph. KK), furnishing a nice fall record of a rare migrant. Four **Ruffed Grouse** at the Vining Tract, *Greene* 5 Nov (SI, JP) showcase their persistence at high elevations in the Blue Ridge in the western portion of the Region. A **Rufous Hummingbird** that was later banded was found at Holly Rd., *Charlottesville* and ph. there 28 Nov

(DS). Two **Semipalmated Plovers** stopped by the Region this fall: one at Groomes Pt., *Orange* 21 Aug (MA), and another at Ruffins Pond, *Spotsylvania* 3 Sep (BG). The 1 Oct passage of Tropical Storm Ian through inland Virginia brought grounded **White-rumped Sandpipers**, a less-than-annual migrant through the Region, in its wake: 13 were at Groomes Point, *Orange* 4 Oct (AR) and 9 were at Hawkwood L., *Louisa* also 4 Oct (AR). A juv. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was a treat for local birders in *Albemarle* at King Family Vineyard 11 Sep (ph. PM) – the same site that hosted this rare migrant in 2017, also in the second week of Sep. Several groups of **Black Terns** popped up in the Region this fall as part of a strong inland push of the



Nik Teichmann's photograph of a **White Ibis** from L. Gordonsville, *Louisa* 2 Sep.

species throughout the rest of the state. Four were at L. Louisa, *Louisa* 20 Aug (RiP, ReP, RyP); 18 at L. Anna, *Louisa* 22 Aug (AR, RW); and 9 at Smith Mtn. L., *Bedford* 31 Aug (ph. DA, BE, BK, JP). The latter group also hosted 2 **Common Terns**, a rare migrant in the Region. Up to 3 **Anhinga** continued from the summer period at their favored site of Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 2–31 Aug (ph. m. obs.).

HERONS—IBIS

A secretive and infrequently detected migrant in the Region, an **American Bittern** was an early fall surprise at L. Gordonsville, *Louisa* 2 Sep (ph. NT). A **Snowy Egret** continued from the summer period at Reusens Dam, spending time between *Amherst*, *Bedford*, and *Lynchburg* 1 Aug–1 Sep (ph. m. obs.). Imm. **Little Blue Herons** were found at several locations: 2 at Groomes Pt., *Orange* 1 Aug (AR) and one continued there

KITE INVASION

One of the most dramatic and widely appreciated phenomena of the fall was a bona fide **Swallow-tailed Kite** invasion in *Albemarle*. While this species has been steadily increasing as a late summer and early fall visitor, this fall was marked by far and away their most widespread and numerous occurrences yet. The saga started with 2 birds spotted soaring over the Boaz mountains of sw. *Albemarle* 5 Aug (LR) which grew to 3 later that day (ph. BB, DC), 5 individuals by 9 Aug (LE) and an astonishing 6 on 12 Aug (ph. DS), which were enjoyed by dozens of birders over the coming weeks from Boaz Rd. and Johnson Purvis Ln., with at least one persisting through 7 Sep. To sweeten the already delightful deal, 3 **Mississippi Kites** joined in for a true kite swarm 13 Aug (ph. ES, TS), and their numbers similarly grew to 6 by 30 Aug (PM) with one last seen there 3 Sep. Another, separate sighting of a lone Swallow-tailed Kite soaring with vultures came from southern *Albemarle* along Scottsville Rd. 10 Aug (AD, JD), and yet another set up shop over the Seminole Trail Walmart, *Albemarle* 28 Aug (ph. JC) where it was enjoyed through 7 Sep with a Mississippi Kite on the last day of its occurrence (BG). As if these records were not enough, 2 more were at Jones Mill Rd., *Albemarle* 31 Aug (NL, fide DS), also with 6 Mississippi Kites! The only kite sighting out of *Albemarle*, a lone Mississippi Kite, was seen at Brookneal Sportsman Club, *Campbell* 20 Aug (BT). The grand total for the season was 10 Swallow-tailed and 14 Mississippi Kites, unprecedented in the Central Region.

through 22 Aug; one continued at Lickinghole Cr., *Albemarle* 4–19 Aug (ph. AC); one at Reusens Dam, *Lynchburg* and *Bedford* 9–24 Aug (MS, m. obs.); one at Totier Cr. Pk., *Albemarle*

10 Aug (ph. NT); and up to 2 at Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 12 Aug–5 Sep (JM, ph. ES, TS). Another southern wader making its presence in the Region felt, **White Ibis** also showed strongly this fall: one continued at Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 1 Aug (ph. TG, KG) and 2 continued there through 15 Aug; one at Reusens Dam occurred in *Amherst*, *Bedford*, and *Lynchburg* 3–9 Aug (ph. LA, m. obs.); another at L. *Albemarle*, *Albemarle* 4 Aug (ph. JD); a flyover juv. at Patch Brewing Co., *Orange* 13 Aug (EA, MA); and another at nearby L. Gordonsville, *Louisa* 2 Sep (ph. NT).

HAWKS—FINCHES

Though probably an expected migrant down the Blue Ridge at the western edge of the Region in late fall, an imm. **Golden Eagle** spotted migrating past Bald Knob, *Amherst* 21 Nov (GC, WC) was nonetheless notable as the only one detected. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was coaxed to call at Overstreet Creek Rd., *Bedford* 24 Nov (a. r. AE) and 34 were banded throughout a successful season at Camp Hydaway, *Campbell*



David Shoch's picture of a **Swallow-tailed Kite** at Rivanna Plaza, *Albemarle* 6 Sep.

(MJ, GS). The typically uncommon **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was found somewhat widely, with individuals at Warbler Cr. Farm, *Bedford* 23 Aug (ph. BE); Mills Gap Overlook, *Bedford* 26 Aug (AN, KN); Jones Mill Rd., *Albemarle* 31 Aug (PM); Waugh's Ferry Rd, *Amherst* 2 Sep (MJ); Stoney Cr., *Nelson* 5 Sep (JG); Mill Cr. L. Pk., *Amherst* 6 Sep (MB); and another at Rivanna

Trail Belvedere, *Albemarle* 25 Sep (ph. DS). Likewise scarce fall migrants, single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were documented at Rivanna Trail Dunlora, *Albemarle* 17 Sep (ph., a.r. TW) and at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 21 Sep (ph. DC, ST). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported widely and in good numbers following reports starting as early as Jul in the summer period. Though not present in the staggering numbers of the 2020–2021 irruption, **Evening Grosbeaks** nonetheless made appearances in the Region this fall at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 3 Nov (ST) and at Caroline Ave., *Charlottesville* 10 Nov (JM). **Red Crossbills** made a strong showing in the Blue Ridge area of the Region this fall. Up to 4 continued from the summer period at the Oronoco Campground, *Amherst* 3–6 Aug (ph. MB); another flew over Loft Mtn. Campground, *Albemarle* 10 Aug (TL); 2 were at Fallingwater Cascades, *Bedford* 12 Aug (BE, AN, KN); and up to 5 were at Peaks of Otter, *Bedford* 12 Aug–11 Oct (BE, MJ, ph. m. obs.).

LONGSPURS—DICKCISSEL

A rare and unexpected fall visitor to the area, a **Lapland Longspur** appeared with a flock of **Horned Larks** at Greenfield Farm, *Albemarle* 23 Nov (ph. BB, LC). A rare inland migrant, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** appeared at a historically productive site for the species at the Albemarle Community Pk., *Albemarle* 7–10 Oct (ph. MF, m. obs.). Perhaps a result of low birder effort in suitable habitat of what should be a migrant present in numbers, the sole **Bobolink** was reported to eBird at Pouncey Tract Rd., *Hanover* 28 Aug (ZZ). The sole **Golden-winged Warbler** report came from Whittcamp Rd., *Goochland* 23 Sep (ph. AB). Two **Orange-crowned Warblers**

were found, both in *Bedford*: at Wheats Valley 13 Oct (BE) and at Montvale Pk. 16 Oct (ph. KD, KG). The prize fall warbler for many, multiple lucky birders were treated to **Connecticut Warblers** with reports of singles coming from Chanco Volante, *Albemarle* 16 Sep (PM); Old Mill Pk., *Fredericksburg* 3 Oct (ph. AR); Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* 7 & 8 Oct (ph. RW, a. r. ST); and at Ivy Cr. Natural Area, *Albemarle* 11 Oct (ph. TG, KG). Seldom detected as a migrant, a **Kentucky Warbler** was encountered at Pleasant Grove Pk., *Fluvanna* 16 Sep (ST). Uncommon fall migrants, **Dickcissels** were detected at Pleasant Grove Pk., *Fluvanna* 9 Oct (ph. NT) and another under a feeder at Mechanicsville, *Hanover* 21 Nov (ph. AS).

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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.

SUMMER 2022

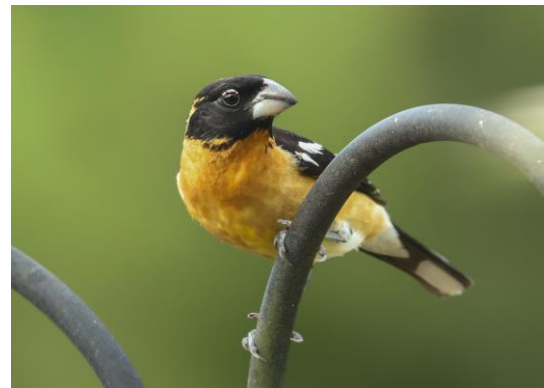
Temperatures for the short two-month period were slightly above average overall with precipitation in June averaging two inches higher than normal. A drastic change occurred in July with only 1.48 inches of rain falling, well below the annual average of 4.37 inches.

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

DUCKS—GROSBEAKS

A close but brief encounter with a **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** occurred at L. Harrison, *Charles City* while the observer was kayaking on the evening of 12 Jun (TR). The bird flushed, flew out and was never seen again. A pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** lingered around the marsh at Dutch Gap/Henricus until at least 4 Jun (ph. BW, m. obs.). A f. **Hooded Merganser** hung around the Lowes stormwater retention pond, Glen Allen, *Henrico* 7–8 Jun (ph. KH, KO). Rare in summer, a m. **Common Merganser** was noted in the James R., *Richmond City* twice this season. The bird was first spotted from the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge 10 & 14 Jun (KB, CK) still sporting its black and white plumage. Most likely the same bird was seen much later, a little further upriver at Belle Isle 30 Jul in eclipse plumage (KB). An out-of-season **Pied-billed Grebe** was photographed on Swift Creek Res., *Chesterfield* 13 Jul (ph. L<). Likewise, a single **American Coot** was also photographed on

Swift Creek Res., *Chesterfield* 18 Jun (ph. L<). Potentially the same bird was seen again 7 Jul (ph. JF) and 23 Jul (ph. MC). Just about annual at Hog nowadays, an **American Avocet** was there 20 Jul (ph. NB). For the third year in a row and fourth in the last five years, a **RUFF** was seen at Hog, this year a one-day wonder 12 Jul (ph. NB). Wandering juv. **White Ibis** were noted at Bandy Field Nature Pk., *Henrico* 23 Jul (WM, TH); at Hog 24 Jul (AD); and at Wilde L., *Henrico* 29 Jul (ph. anonymous eBirder). **Swallow-tailed Kites** are being seen in the Region more frequently as the years progress. This season, one was spotted at Tormentor L., *Isle of Wight* 1 Jul (TC). A **Willow Flycatcher**, a rare spring transient, was photographed and audio



Nick Newberry's photo of a **Black-headed Grosbeak** at a private residence in *New Kent*, 12 Jun.

recorded along SR 633, *Surry* 4 Jun (ph., a. r. TC). The bird most certainly was a late migrant. **Kentucky Warbler** is a very scarce breeder in the Region, so one singing at the intersection of Burwells Bay Rd. and Purvis Ln., *Isle of Wight* 25 Jun (ADy, JD) was noteworthy. The bird of the

season was clearly the beautiful ad. m. **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** that found its way to a feeding station in the Talleysville section of *New Kent* 12 Jun (ph. KK, m. obs.). It stayed only that one day, providing a first Jun record for Virginia and possibly the entire eastern half of the United States, at least according to records in eBird.

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FALL 2022

Overall temperatures were above average in August, September, and November with October temps slightly below average. Precipitation was below average in August and well below average in September and October before rebounding in November with above average rainfall. Dry conditions in July continued into August and September, which bode well for water levels at Hog Island WMA. As a result, it was a good season there for shorebird numbers and diversity, especially compared to recent late summer seasons in which the impoundments were inundated with water and there were very few shorebirds. Birders flocked there this season to enjoy the spectacle of many birds and the several rarities that were present, proving once again that if you have the habitat available the birds will come. Rarities this season included Roseate Spoonbill, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Wilson's Phalarope, and Lark, Clay-colored, and LeConte's Sparrows.

Abbreviations: Curles Neck (Curles Neck Farm, *Henrico*); Dutch Gap/Henricus (Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Historical Park, *Chesterfield*); Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*); JRP (James River Park System, *Richmond City*).

GEESE—SHOREBIRDS

A single **Ross's Goose** was found among the big goose flocks during an annual field trip to Curles Neck 13 Nov (ph. NC, RAS). Also in the mix were five **Cackling Geese (Richardson's)**. This is a traditional hotspot for both species. An early m. **Ring-necked Duck** was seen in the James R. at the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge, *Richmond City* 5–10 Sep (ph. JFa, AW). Also in the James R., a m. **Lesser Scaup**, viewed from the Wetlands section of JRP 28–29 Sep (ph. W&SH, KC, LS), was on the early side. An early m. **Ruddy Duck** was spotted at Hog 19 Aug (TC). A late **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** made an appearance at Nottingham Place, *James*

City 5 Nov (VW). Three **Rufous Hummingbirds** were reported in the Region this season. The first was spotted at a feeder in *Chesterfield* 8 Nov (ph. MC), and the second was also in *Chesterfield* 23 Nov (ph. JK), present for six days. The third report came from *Southampton* 22 Nov (ph. JB). It does not appear that any of these birds were banded so the more appropriate identification should perhaps be Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird. A **King Rail** was seen frequently at Hog creeping around the edges of the northern impoundments 24–29 Aug (m. obs.). Two birds were seen there chasing each other 4 Sep (TC). Two more King Rails were detected at a traditional location on Carters Mill Rd., *Henrico* 13 Sep (A&JD). A hatch-year **Common Gallinule** was at Greensprings Interpretive Trail, *James City* 24 Oct–21 Nov (BW, m. obs.). Anywhere from 2 to 4 **American Avocets** were seen at Hog 19 Aug–19 Sep (m. obs.). A molting ad. **American Golden-Plover** was discovered at Hog 13 Sep (AD). Potentially the same bird was seen again 15



Adam D'Onofrio's picture of a **Wilson's Phalarope** at Hog Is. WMA, *Surry* 5 Sep.

Sep (ph. RD). A lone **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** was seen at Hog 10 Aug and again 20 Aug (ph. NB). The following day, 2 were spotted together (ph. A&JD). They continued through 29 Aug (m. obs.). A single **MARBLED GODWIT** was at Hog 22–31 Aug (m. obs.). Up to 2 Marbled Godwits were then seen off and on 4 Sep–17 Sep (m. obs.). Two **RED KNOTS** were spotted at Hog 11 Sep (TC), establishing the 9th local record. They were seen again 12 Sep (ABa, JM) and 13 Sep (SC). A **Sanderling** was noted at Hog

12 Sep (ABa, JM). A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was at Hog 5 Sep (ph. AD, CL, NB, JF). Another or the same bird was seen there 12 Sep (ABa, JM). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** was gleaned from a group of **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Hog 27 Aug (AC, SB), furnishing the 11th local record. A **Wilson's Snipe** at Hog 23 Aug (SC) was early. An astounding 1705 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were counted at Hog 12 Sep (ABa, JM). Up to 3 **WILSON'S PHALAROPES** were found at Hog 4–13 Sep (TC, m. obs.).

EGRETS—BUNTINGS

A **Snowy Egret**, inland at Dutch Gap/Henricus 3 Sep (JS), was noteworthy. A **Cattle Egret**, generally uncommon in the Region, was especially late at Cumberland Marsh NAP, *New Kent* 13 Nov (ph. BH). Up to 12 juv. **White Ibis** were seen at Hog between 10 Aug and 23 Sep (m. obs.). The only other White Ibis report in the



Matthew Crittenden's photograph of a **LeConte's Sparrow** on Curles Neck Farm, *Henrico* 13 Nov.

Region was a flyover juv. at Tuckahoe Cr. Pk., *Henrico/Goochland* 11 Aug (ph. by TJB). A pair of juv. **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS** was a one-day wonder at Hog 8 Sep (ph. TC, ph. RD). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, a rare transient on the Coastal Plain, was found at York R. SP, *York* 27 Sep (ph. NB). The only **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** reported in the Region this season was at Ancarrow's Landing, *Richmond City* 1 Oct (AB). Likewise, only one **Least Flycatcher** was reported, seen at the Carlisle Tract portion of Hog 13 Sep (ABa, JM). An early **Blue-headed Vireo**

and a **Philadelphia Vireo** were also encountered at the Carlisle Tract on that same day (ABa, JM). The only other Philadelphia Vireo reported in the Region was one at Chub Sandhill NAP, *Sussex* 27 Sep (ph. by ABr). A **Sedge Wren** was seen twice at Ragged Is. WMA, *Isle of Wight* 9 Oct & 16 Nov (TC). An early **Veery** was detected in a residential yard in *Henrico* 22 Aug (RM). A few **Evening Grosbeaks** made an appearance in the Region. One m. stopped by a feeder in *Chesterfield* 5 Nov (ph. CC) and two f. were heard and then seen at a residence in *Henrico* 9 Nov (DB). An imm. **Lark Sparrow** was a good find at Hog 12 Sep (ABa, JM). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, found at James R. Beach Pk., *James City* 24 Oct represented a 7th local record and 3rd fall record (ph. DH). The bird was seen again the following day (NB). A **LECONTE'S SPARROW** was unexpectedly encountered and extensively photographed during a field trip to Curles Neck 13 Nov (RAS). A **Northern Waterthrush**, seen at Rockwood Pk., *Chesterfield* 21 Oct (SR), was late. Potentially 2 **Connecticut Warblers**, a rare fall transient, were seen at the Wetlands section of JRP 5 Oct (AB, WG, AD). Early **Yellow-rumped Warblers** included one at York R. SP, *York* 8 Sep (NB) and one at Tuckahoe Cr. Pk., *Henrico/Goochland* 10 Sep (RS). A late **Yellow-throated Warbler** was observed at Dutch Gap/Henricus 6 Oct (AD). An **Indigo Bunting** at Chimborazo Pk., *Richmond City* 26 Nov (ph. PB) was very late.

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EAST



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

SUMMER 2022

A total of 162 species were reported in the East Region this summer, with a typical flow of birds and rather ordinary weather trends, albeit slightly hotter and drier. It was a summer of many exciting firsts for the Region, with some highlights being a Redhead, a Least Flycatcher, a pair of Gull-billed Terns, a Bobolink, the first summer Mississippi Kite in the Northern Neck, and the famous Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Leedstown that attracted much attention. There were also many species that gained new Regional summer high counts, from Killdeer to Turkey Vultures. Some species such as the Brown-headed Nuthatch and Wood Thrush also showed signs of range shifts, with data showing their populations increasing and decreasing respectively in line with the direction their range is shifting to. Data was sourced from eBird, Virginia Birds listserv, eBird Status and Trends¹ and Gold Book.

Abbreviations: Beaverdam (Beaverdam Pk., Gloucester); Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, Mathews); Bryant (Bryant Bay, Gloucester); Dameron (Dameron Marsh NAP, Northumberland); Guinea (Guinea Marsh, Gloucester); Hughlett (Hughlett Pt. NAP, Northumberland); Leedstown (Leedstown, Westmoreland); McKendree (no public access, quarry ponds in upper King William); New Pt.

¹ (Data version: 2021 Fink, D., T. Auer, A. Johnston, M. Strimas-Mackey, S. Ligocki, O. Robinson, W. Hochachka, L. Jaromczyk, A. Rodewald, C. Wood, I.

(New Point Comfort NAP, Mathews); The Pocket (a marshy bay of the Pamunkey R. adjacent to the Pamunkey tribal land, King William).

WATERFOWL—RAILS

Six **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** were seen at a private pond near West Point, King William 13–16 Jun (AE, FA ph.) and another was at McKendree 21–22 Jun (TMD, MA, MJI, WG). The high for **Canada Geese** was only 175 individuals in King William 21 Jul (TMD, MA, MJI), quite low compared to an all-time summer high count of 500. **Mute Swans** were found in three locations, with a tally of 14 individuals and a high count of 10, significantly lower than past high counts in the twenties. The Mute Swan populations have decreased significantly in the Region according to data from eBird Status and Trends. A **Redhead** at McKendree 21 June (TMD, MA, MJI) was only the second summer record in eBird. Several other duck species also summered in the Region, including a **Ring-necked Duck** in The Pocket 16 Jun (FA), a **Bufflehead** at McKendree 21 & 23 Jun (TMD, MA, MJI, DC), and a **Ruddy Duck** at Beaverdam 18 Jun (RB) and 13 Jul (HC). It is not uncommon for individuals of these species to stay over the summer. Eight **Hooded Mergansers** were also found at McKendree 21 Jun (TMD, MA, MJI). Though it is not unusual for them to summer, and they have been known to breed here in the past,

Davies, A. Spencer. 2022. eBird Status and Trends, Data Version: 2021; Released: 2022. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.
<https://doi.org/10.2173/ebirdst.2021>

this is a new Regional summer high count. The **Northern Bobwhite** was found in 71 locations, and in every county except *Mathews*, with the high counts of each location tallying to 124. The single-location high count for this declining species was 10 at Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 4 Jul (DW). **Chuck-Will's-Widows** were found in 11 locations and **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were found in five locations. Additional nocturnal effort would probably have discovered more, as there is a lot of excellent habitat for both species in the Region. The high count for **Chimney Swift** was 15. This is about average for a typical high count, but it pales in comparison to a previous high count of 200. A **King Rail** was heard again at its usual location in Drake's Marsh, Leedstown 13 Jun (m. obs.).

SHOREBIRDS—WADERS

A count of 44 **Semipalmated Plovers** at New Pt. 30 Jul (FA) was the new seasonal high for the Region in eBird. An uncommon **Piping Plover** was at Bethel 30 Jul (FA). They have often been reported during spring and fall migration but this is only the second summer record. It was probably an early migrant, but one wonders if they could possibly be breeding on the sandy



David Yeager's picture of a **Common Loon** from Bryant Bay, *Gloucester* 24 Jun.

island across Winter Harbor. A new Regional summer high of 129 **Killdeer** was tallied in a farm field in Leedstown 19 Jul (FA), and there were likely more Killdeer uncounted behind ruts in the field. Single **American Woodcocks** were

spotted at Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* 2 Jul (JC, MC) and at Bryant 21 Jun (DY). There are only nine other Regional breeding season records in eBird. **Least Terns** have been having a hard time finding places to successfully breed here in recent years. Thusly, it was encouraging that a large group of 60, many of which appeared to be sitting on nests on Rigby Is., *Mathews*, was observed from White's Creek Landing, *Mathews* 30 Jun (EO). The same observer found 2 ad. **Gull-billed Terns** the same day at Bethel. They were feeding briefly over the flats before proceeding to the north. This is the first Regional summer record in eBird, though the species has also been seen in the same location four times in August and they are known to breed near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. From 1–3 **Black Skimmers** were noted at Bethel four times 5 Jun–30 Jul (m. obs.). Two **Common Loons** were reported at Bryant 16 Jun, but only a single bird was noted on 10 occasions 20 Jun–17 Jul (DY, ph. HC, RC). This is only the 4th Regional summer record in eBird. A rough estimate of 100 **Double-crested Cormorants** perched on a pound net off Reedville, *Northumberland* 4 Jul (KK) is one of the lowest season-high counts in eBird, and is dwarfed by a seasonal all-time high of 1260 at roughly that same location 16 Jun 2019 (EO). This makes one wonder if there has been a decline of fish in that area, perhaps linked to the overharvesting of menhaden. But this decline is not localized to this spot. eBird Status and Trends notes significant declines throughout the east coast of the USA, including median declines in Virginia's East Region of 16–35% from 2007–2021. An **American Bittern** at Cat Pt. Cr. Bridge, *Richmond* 15 Jun (JC, MC) was only the second summer record in eBird. A **Least Bittern** at Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail, *King George* 21 June (TMD, MA, MJI), was a first county record. **Snowy Egrets** were found in five locations this summer, all in the easternmost parts of the Region. Again, the high count of 61 **Great Egrets** was at Bryant 30 Jul (DY). The observer noted: "During the last hour before sunset, all of the great egrets [sic] in the Severn River and a lot from Mobjack Bay head SW over Guinea in the

general direction of Crawmine Island in the York.” Two uncommon heron species were sighted this summer: a **Little Blue Heron** at New Pt. 15 Jul (GB) and a **Tricolored Heron** at Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 24 Jul (GB). From 1–4 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were found in six locations, all in *Gloucester* and *Mathews*, but no **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported. The only **White Ibis** this season was at Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 31 Jul (CS). Five **Glossy Ibis** flew over Leedstown 15 June (JF) while an observer was waiting for the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher to make an appearance. Although it does not surpass the Regional breeding season high of 8, this is one of the highest summer counts.

RAPTORS—NUTHATCHES

A careful scope estimate by fives of 240 **Turkey Vultures** riding thermals above the *King George* landfill 26 Jun (FA) was the highest number recorded in eBird for the Region at any time of year. There must be plenty of food for them in the landfill! In contrast, only 30 **Black Vultures** were noted there at the same time. An unusual gathering of 21 **Ospreys** was reported along the York R. and Aberdeen Cr., *Gloucester* 28 June (HC, RC). The observers noted: “A relatively large number (19) of Ospreys had gathered over the water and flew "together" for about 10 minutes. Two other birds were on nest sites. We have seen previous such instances, but not with this many birds. This year has not been a good year in this area for new birds. Several nests have evidently produced no offspring.” A rare **Mississippi Kite** at Leedstown 21 Jun (TMD, MA, MJI) was the first summer record in the Northern Neck. A **Northern Harrier**, another uncommon summer find, was at Leedstown 6 Jun (AC). This is only the fourth eBird summer record in the Region. **Eastern Screech-Owl** was found in three locations: Mount Landing, *Essex* 21 June (TMD, MA, MJI); Caledon SP, *King George* 3 Jun (JS); and along a forested section of road near McKendree 16 June (FA). The only

report of the declining **American Kestrel** was a single bird hovering over a farm field in Leedstown 6 Jun (NB, DH). **Peregrine Falcons** were reported from known breeding locations at the Downing Bridge over the Rappahannock R. in Tappahannock, *Essex* 19 Jun (CL), and the Coleman Memorial Bridge over the York R. at Gloucester Pt. Beach, *Gloucester* 21 Jun (JSt). The observer of the latter bird wrote: “I believe this is an adult male, quite possibly the same one that was here last month. I watched it fly in with food and possibly take it to a nest site that was obscured from view. It called out quite a bit, a high-pitched drawn-out shriek.” From 1–6 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported from 49 locations in all counties, with a high count of 6 at Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 25 Jun (NB, RB, JL). An elusive **Least Flycatcher** was found near Beulahville, *King William* 30 Jul (FA). This is the first summer record for the Region. A well-known **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** attracted a great amount of attention in Leedstown from 4–20 Jun (m. obs., ph. FA).



Fred Atwood's photo of a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on Leedstown Rd, *Westmoreland* 4 Jun.

There were 57 reported sightings of the bird by at least 52 observers during this time. The only other sightings of this species in the Northern Neck were in Jul 1982 in nearby Oak Grove, *Westmoreland* (Gold Book), and it is the 5th Regional sighting ever in eBird. A Regionally uncommon **Warbling Vireo** was again reported in Caledon, *King George* 25 June (SW). As noted in the spring, it is likely breeding there. From 1–8 **Horned Larks** were reported from 12 locations in *Westmoreland*, *Essex*, *King William*, *King and*

Queen, and *King George*. **Bank Swallows** have declined dramatically in the Region, with median declines of 33–44% from 2007 to 2021 according to eBird Status and Trends. This year's high count of 14 in Walkerton 30 Jul (FA), is a far cry from the maximum of 1610 post-breeders roosting on utility wires near Westmoreland Berry Farm, *Westmoreland* 25 Jul 2016 (FA). One wonders if this local decline is due to the closing or increasing of mining activity in some of the Region's numerous sand quarries, some of which were known to support breeding colonies in the past. Typically, when sand quarries are closed down, the steep banks required by Bank Swallows are graded and vegetated. Declines were also noted in a 1990 paper cited in *Birds of the World*, due to the closure of sand/gravel quarries in Virginia². However, eBird Status and Trends shows that this species suffered steep declines in large portions of its breeding range all over the country from 2007–2021, so other factors may be involved. A **Common Raven** near the *King George* landfill 26 Jun (FA) is no longer a rare find at any time of the year. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were found in 43 locations this summer. According to eBird Status and Trends, this species has shown range expansions to the east and slight expansions to the north. One bird at a private farm near Chance, *Essex* 6 Jun (JC, MC) is the furthest north record on the Middle Peninsula.

THRUSHES—DICKCISSEL

The **Wood Thrush**, a declining species, unfortunately showed downward trends in the Region from 2007 to 2021, with declines from 22% to 37% according to eBird Status and Trends. Though there are still plenty of grasslands and **Grasshopper Sparrows** around, eBird Status and Trends shows significant declines from 2007 to 2021, with losses of 37–74% in various parts of the Region. This year, at

least 98 birds were reported from 32 locations in every county except *Lancaster* and *Mathews*. The high count was 15 at Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 15 Jun (HC, RC). A **Bobolink** in Leedstown 21 June (TMD, MA, MJI), was probably a failed breeder from somewhere outside the Region. It is the first summer record for the county in eBird. The total of the high counts for **Eastern Meadowlarks** at 50 locations was 96. No **Baltimore Orioles** were reported this summer. The ratio of **Summer Tanager** to **Scarlet Tanager** locations was 2.3:1. The accompanying table notes the relative numbers of each species of breeding warbler (and **Yellow-breasted Chat**) observed this season, in order of the number of sites where they were reported in eBird. These are not actual Regional population totals or an organized census, but they do give an idea of their relative numbers and how widely dispersed the species are. Up to 5 **Dickcissels** were reported in the area around Champlain, *Essex* 21 Jun–14 Jul, with seven reports in two locations (m. obs.). Five other previous breeding locations near Sealston, *King George* and Leedstown were checked with no birds being found.

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² (Garrison, B. A. and A. Turner (2020). Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), version 1.0. In *Birds of*

the World (S. M. Billerman, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.
<https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.banswa.01>

Table 1: Relative Numbers of Breeding Season Wood Warblers and Chat in East Region, Summer 2022

species	Total Sites	Total of Maxima	Average of Maxima
Pine Warbler	146	253	1.7
Common Yellowthroat	138	236	2.4
Ovenbird	133	251	1.9
Northern Parula	105	185	1.8
Yellow-breasted Chat	102	174	1.7
Hooded Warbler	79	127	1.6
Yellow-throated Warbler	72	102	1.4
Prairie Warbler	71	119	1.7
Black-and-White Warbler	42	49	1.2
Prothonotary Warbler	38	71	1.9
Louisiana Waterthrush	18	23	1.3
Worm-eating Warbler	11	15	1.4
American Redstart	8	14	1.8
Yellow Warbler	8	8	1
Kentucky Warbler	7	8	1.1

Note: Maxima are the highest count for each location where the species was observed.

FALL 2022

Observers tallied 241 species in the East Region this autumn, the highest species count ever. This is far above the ten-year average of 224 and it included 31 species of warblers – though most of the warblers occurred in small numbers. The warmer-than-average weather did not appear to affect the arrival timing of most waterfowl, but it may have reduced the numbers of several species. Highlights included the Region’s first Great White Heron (the white-plumaged subspecies of Great Blue Heron); Regionally unusual sightings of Hudsonian Godwit, Upland Sandpiper, Red Knot, Wilson’s Phalarope, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Cattle Egret; and small numbers of winter irruptive species including an Evening Grosbeak. Data was sourced from eBird, Middle Peninsula Bird Club Facebook page, and the Gold Book.

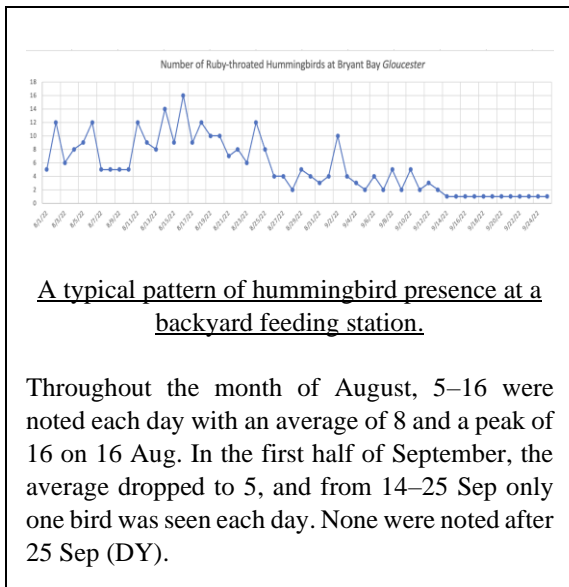
Abbreviations: Belle Isle (Belle Isle SP, *Lancaster*); Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Birthplace (George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument, *Westmoreland*); Dameron (Dameron Marsh NAP, *Northumberland*); Guinea (Guinea Marsh area, *Gloucester*); Hughlett (Hughlett Pt. NAP, *Northumberland*); Hutchinson (Hutchinson Unit of RRVNWR, *Essex*) LaGrange (sand/gravel quarry ponds that are viewable only from the road, LaGrange Ln., *King George*); Leedstown (Leedstown, *Westmoreland*); Machicomoco (Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester*); New Pt. (New Point Comfort NAP, *Mathews*); RRVNWR (Rappahannock Valley National Wildlife Refuge); The Pocket (a marshy bay of the Pamunkey R. adjacent to the Pamunkey tribal land, *King William*); Westmoreland SP (Westmoreland State Park, *Westmoreland*).

WATERFOWL—RAILS

The only **Snow Goose** and **Cackling Goose** of the season were single birds reported from near

The Pocket 23 Oct (FA). Though the arrival timing of flocks of wintering **Canada Geese** in late Nov was normal, the Nov average counts and high counts were about half of those averages in the previous 15 years of eBird data. The high count for this fall was 2170 at The Pocket 24 Nov (FA). As with the geese, the arrival timing of **Tundra Swans** was typical, but the season high count of 78 at Birthplace 26 Nov (HT) was below average and less than half of the autumn maximum of 200. The non-native and potentially invasive **Mute Swan** population seems to be under control; only 31 were reported from 9 locations. A new all-time high of 185 **Wood Ducks** flew into Drake’s Marsh, Leedstown at dusk 29 Oct (FA). Since waterfowl became difficult to tally as they rushed into the marsh in the growing darkness, this was probably an undercount. Though 45 **Northern Shovelers** at LaGrange 20 Nov (FA) was a new autumn high for the Northern Neck, it was less than half of the Region’s autumn high of 95. Other waterfowl with relatively low high counts were **Mallard**, **Green-winged Teal**, and **Northern Pintail**. Comparing this year’s Nov high counts with the average of the Nov weekly high counts in eBird (this year vs. previous), we have Mallard 110 vs. 638, Northern Pintail 265 vs. 2013, and Green-winged Teal 390 vs. 815. The first Aug occurrence of a **Lesser Scaup** in the Region was near Chance, *Essex* 23 Aug (JC, MC). The observers noted: “Presumably a wounded bird from last hunting season that somehow made it through the summer. Would not fly.” The **White-winged Scoter** is our least common scoter, especially in the fall, so one on 2 Nov at Bethel (JC, MC) was a nice find. The first **Long-tailed Duck** was not reported until 29 Nov at Chesapeake Beach, *Northumberland* (EO), at least two weeks after the expected date. A huge raft of 2750 **Ruddy Ducks** at Beaverdam 20 Nov (SW) was a new high count for that location and one of the highest *Gloucester* tallies in eBird. As **Northern Bobwhites** stop singing after the breeding season, they become more difficult to find. Perhaps this explains their poor showing this fall. Only 23 birds were found at 12 locations

with a high of 6 at Machicomoco 23 Nov (CS). The **Eastern Whip-poor-will** singing near Dunnsville, *Essex* 2 Sep (JC, MC) set a new Regional late date. Two **Common Nighthawks** were found in *Essex*: one flying from its daytime perch along Occupacia Cr. near Chance 23 Sep (JC, MC), the other flying around at dusk in Tappahannock 6 Oct (BC). According to the Gold Book, coastal plain **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** typically leave the area by the end of Sep but, like last year, there were several Oct records. This year there were 13 Oct records



including one bird in Hayes, *Gloucester* setting a new late date of 23 Oct (AW). The high count this fall was 16 at Bryant Bay, *Gloucester* 16 Aug (DY). This observer recorded data on his hummingbirds every day as shown in the accompanying graph. A **Virginia Rail** heard at Byrds Bridge 20 Sep (RM) was the first all-time record for *King and Queen*. Migrating **Soras** were again very evident in the wild rice marshes along the tidal freshwater portions of the rivers, with high counts of 20 at Drake’s Marsh in Leedstown 18 Sep (FA) and 15 at a private location on the east side of The Pocket 23 Oct (FA).

SHOREBIRDS—RAPTORS

Twenty-seven species of shorebirds were reported this season. There were no new species sighted, but the following interesting finds are notable. A count of 40 **Black-bellied Plovers** at Machicomoco 10 Nov (HC, RC) was surpassed only once by a previous high of 42 at Guinea 9 Oct 2017 (JS). A **Solitary Sandpiper** at Beaverdam 26 Sep (CS, DY) was a new Regional late date for this species in eBird. Two **Spotted Sandpipers** lingered at Bryant Bay, *Gloucester* until 24 Oct (DY). This was the one of the latest sightings of this species; the other historical records are one in late Nov, and winter sightings during three Mathews CBCs (including count week). An **Upland Sandpiper** at Machicomoco 5 Sep (ph. HC, RC) was only the third Regional record in eBird. Seven birders had the rare joy of observing a **Hudsonian Godwit** at Bethel 6–10 Oct (ph. DY). Other than sightings near Sealston, *King George* in the autumns of 2010, 2012, 2015, and 2019, this is the only Regional record in



David Yeager’s photograph of a **Hudsonian Godwit** from Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews* 9 Oct.

eBird. From 1–2 **Marbled Godwits** were seen on 12 visits to Bethel 30 Aug–10 Oct (m. obs.). A **Red Knot** at Bethel 20 Aug (ph. FA) was the 7th Regional autumn record in eBird. A careful count of 56 **Short-billed Dowitchers** seen simultaneously at Bethel 5 Sep (ST) far exceeded more typical high counts in the 30s. A report of 2 **Long-billed Dowitchers** at Old Garden Cr. Rd. *Mathews* 7 Nov (ph. RG, ES) was only the 5th Regional record in eBird. The Region’s 4th **Wilson’s Phalarope** was photographed at the

same location 7 Aug (RG). A count of 160 **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Chesapeake Beach, *Northumberland* 28 Nov (EO) squashed the previous season high of 48. The high count of 700 **Laughing Gulls** at Westmoreland SP 22 Sep (ZW) is up from last year's 400 but still follows the declining trend discussed last year. Similarly, the high of 400 **Ring-billed Gulls** at Belleview Rd., *Gloucester* 23 Nov (JS) is depressing when compared with the historical autumn highest count of 4850. Six **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were found this season: one at Waterman's Pk., *Middlesex* 19 Sep (HH) and 5 on the sandy islands at the exit of Currioman Bay, *Westmoreland* 29 Oct (FA). An encouraging count of 200 **Least Terns** at Guinea 14 Aug (AB, JS) is one of the highest Regional fall counts. Also present at Guinea 14 Aug was the only **Black Tern** reported in the Region this year (AB, JS). It was an impressive sight when at least 400 **Forster's Terns**, including multiple feeding swarms, moved north past Chesapeake Beach,



Harry Colestock's picture of an **Upland Sandpiper** from Machicomoco SP, *Gloucester* 5 Sep.

Northumberland 28 Nov (EO). What a difference a day makes: the following day only 75 were present (EO). The only higher Regional count in the past was a conservative estimate of 800 birds mostly perched on pilings and piers at New Pt. Wharf, *Mathews* 28 Nov 2015 (GH, RH). A flock of at least 20 **American White Pelicans** was a wonderful find at Hills Cr., Gwynn Is., *Mathews*

13 Aug (DD). Certainly the most exciting find of the season was the Region's first record of a **GREAT WHITE HERON**, a subspecies of the Great Blue Heron normally found from Florida to the Yucatán. It provided great views at Westmoreland SP 19–22 Sep (ph. ZW, ph. MA, MG, STh). In contrast, there were 851 reports of 1–14 **Great Blue Herons** from 170 locations. Only two of these counts were in the double-digits. The high count this year of 98 **Great Egrets** flying over downtown Hayes, *Gloucester* 9 Aug (DY) was exactly half of last year's high. This was probably the same group of egrets that is usually reported from Bryant Bay, *Gloucester*, but this time from a point closer to their roosting site. The observer noted that they were "... leaving Guinea headed WSW over Rt. 17 in the direction of the Mumfort (Crawmine) Islands in the York River. Largest group was a loosely packed wave of 52." The high count at Bryant Bay this year was 83 on 8 Aug (DY). Two **Cattle Egrets** were reported along Rte. 202 at McGuire's Wharf Rd., *Westmoreland* 12 Nov (MG). No **Glossy Ibises** were reported this fall, but 3 single **White Ibises** were reported in Leedstown 27 Aug (FA); New Pt. area 2 & 4 Sep (GB, MS); and near Hughlett 29 Nov (FA), which was a new late date for the Region. Regarding other waders, there were 5 **American Bitterns** reported in 4 locations; 35 reports of 1–8 **Snowy Egrets** from 16 locations; nine reports of 1–3 **Little Blue Herons** from eight locations; 13 reports of 1–3 **Tricolored Herons** from six locations; 26 reports of 1–3 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** from six locations; and 3 single **Black-crowned Night Herons** at Old Garden Cr. Rd., *Mathews* 7 Aug (GB); New Pt. 23 Sep (GB); and a private location bordering Beaverdam 23 Nov (JS). Even though **Broad-winged Hawks** are common migrants in the more western parts of the state, sometimes kettling overhead in the hundreds, they are much less commonly encountered here. The only report this fall was at a private property near Ware's Wharf, *Essex* 6 Oct (JC, MC). This was the first autumn record for the county. Observers noted 1–15 **American Kestrels** in 126 reports at 53 locations.

Historically the peak of migration for the kestrel here is the first week of Oct and this year was no exception. At least 45 kestrels were seen that week at 16 locations including two careful counts along the roadside utility wires tallying 10 in a stationary count near Henley's Fork, *King and Queen* 2 Oct (SC), and 15 along 2.65 miles of Hunter's Hill and Leveltown Rds., *Essex* 4 Oct (JC, MC), which is a new eBird fall high count for the Region. There were also nine sightings of **Merlins** at eight locations, all of individuals, except one list reporting 2 birds; and five sightings of single **Peregrine Falcons** at three locations.

FLYCATCHERS—DICKCISSEL

A lingering **Acadian Flycatcher** noted at Westmoreland SP 22 Nov (ZW) provided the third eBird record for this species in the 4th week of Sep. Typically they depart by 15 Sep. Three **Least Flycatchers** were reported: single birds near Sealston, *King George* 27 Aug (FA); New Pt. 14 Sep (GB); and near Beulahville, *King William* 24 Sep (FA). Machicomoco hosted a new seasonal high count of 15 **Eastern Phoebes** 16 Oct (AW). The only **Blue-headed Vireo** reported this season was in Ark Pk., *Gloucester* 7 Oct (JS). Three **Warbling Vireos** near Sealston, *King George* 18 Sep (FA) was a new Regional fall high count. A **Common Raven** was photographed by a trail camera in Hague, *Westmoreland* 30 Nov (*fide* KB). It was photographed once before at this location in late Nov 2018 (KB). This is the furthest east record of this species in the Northern Neck in eBird. The low numbers of swallows reported this season were a bit concerning. No **Bank** or **Cliff Swallows** were reported. The high count of 750 **Tree Swallows** at Hutchinson 25 Oct (DC) was far from the thousands expected in Oct, when counts are often over 2000 and have been as high as 7500. The same is true for **Purple Martins**, whose meager high of 70 in *King William* 20 Aug (FA) is nothing like the historical mid-Aug high of 2500. The high count of 40 **Barn Swallows** 3 Sep at the Is. Cr. Unit of

RRVNWR, *Richmond* (BC) was also low compared to other counts of 70, 85, 100, 200, and the all-time autumn high of 350. There was a moderate irruption of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. Tallying only the highest count for each location, 59 birds were noted in 46 locations. A **Sedge Wren** 22 Nov (JC, MC) at Belle Isle was the first *Lancaster* record in eBird. On this same visit, these observers were also excited to find the Region's only **Evening Grosbeak** of the year so far. There was also a moderate movement of **Purple Finches** here: 26 were reported from 12 locations. There was a slight movement of **Pine Siskins** through the Region in Nov with 2 in Freeport, *Gloucester* 10 Nov (CE) and one near Dunnsville, *Essex* 26 Nov (JC, MC). A conservative estimate of 200 **American Goldfinches** feeding on fruiting grasses at Hutchinson 15 Oct (AT) was a new Regional all-time high. A mere 5 **White-crowned Sparrows** were reported from four widely-scattered locations in *King George*, *Westmoreland*, *Lancaster*, and *Gloucester*. Fairly typical numbers of **White-throated Sparrows** and **Dark-eyed Juncos** arrived on schedule. The first **Swamp Sparrows** also arrived on schedule but numbers stayed low throughout the fall, perhaps lingering in the north because colder weather had not yet arrived. The high count this year was only 24 on 22 Nov at Belle Isle (JC, MC) but counts in mid-Oct through Nov often exceed 50 or 100 with a high count of 175 in mid-Nov. Only 86 **Bobolinks** were reported from 13 locations with a high of 20 at Machicomoco 28 Aug (CV). The seasonal high count in eBird is 490 and counts over 50 are not uncommon in the stands of wild rice in the tidal marshes. A new seasonal high of 15 **Orchard Orioles**, all f. and imm., was at a private farm near Chance, *Essex* 23 Aug (JC, MC). Counting only the high counts for each location, 225 **Eastern Meadowlarks** were reported from 38 locations, with a high of 32 at Dameron 22 Nov (KC). There were only two reports of **Rusty Blackbirds**: 5 at Machicomoco 10 Nov (HC, RC) and one near the Pocket 23 Oct (FA). This is the first season that 31 species of warblers were found in the Region. The following

were the most notable highlights. A **Blue-winged Warbler** 13 Aug near Dunnsville (JC, MC) was a new record for *Essex* in eBird. A **Nashville Warbler** 17 Sep near Dunnsville (JC, MC) was the first fall record for *Essex* in eBird. Two **Orange-crowned Warblers** were at Beaverdam, one 24 Oct (JS) and the other, with practically no tail, on 1 Nov (JS). A **Connecticut Warbler** 23 Sep near Dunnsville (JC, MC) was a new record for the entire Middle Peninsula in eBird. A **Bay-breasted Warbler** in Topping 21 Sep (HD) was the first fall record for *Middlesex*. A **Blackburnian Warbler** near Dunnsville 27 Sep (JC, MC) was only the second *Essex* record in eBird. Gold Book says the expected arrival in the Coastal Plain for **Yellow-rumped Warbler** is 30 Sep, and the extreme early arrival date is 2 Sep. However, a flock of 4 of this species in various plumages was photographed 25 Aug at Belle Isle (JC, MC). Similarly, a **Palm Warbler** at Old Garden Cr. Rd., *Mathews* 14 Aug (TB) was more than two weeks earlier than Gold Book's extreme early date of 1 Sep. A **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Windmill Pt. 23 Sep (HH) was the first *Lancaster* fall record. A **Canada Warbler** at Hickory Hollow NAP 5 Sep (ST) was the first *Lancaster* record. The county's second fall record

of **Wilson's Warbler** was photographed near Sealston, *King George* 18 Sep (FA). There were 11 sightings of 1–5 **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** at 6 locations 14–25 Sep, with a new season high count of 5 at Westmoreland SP 21 Sep (MG). A **Dickcissel** was photographed at Hutchinson 13 Oct (JC, MC). This species has bred there in the past, but this was the first sighting there since Jun 2012.

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COASTAL



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SUMMER 2022

The summer of 2022 was a hot one, beginning with a bang at 90° on 1 June and continuing in much the same fashion throughout the month, scarcely dropping below the 80s with a monthly low of 72°. July scarcely saw an abatement, with high temperatures largely in the 90s and few moments of respite from the heat. It was also a very dry summer, with little to nothing in the way of precipitation; June notched no day with more than an inch of rainfall, while July was likewise mostly devoid of precipitation save for a relative downpour of 1.54 inches on 10 July. Summer is typically a quieter time for birding, as was the case in 2022, with little in the way of noteworthy avian occurrences. There were few dispersing southern waders, and the only individual record of statewide note was a Mottled Duck at what is seemingly becoming a regular location at Craney. Pelagic outings departing *Virginia Beach* on 8 Jun and 17 Jul helped round out the seasonal species list.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, *Virginia Beach*); Beasley (Princess Anne WMA—Beasley Tract, *Virginia Beach*); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, *Virginia Beach/Northampton*); Chincoteague (Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, *Portsmouth*); Dismal (Great Dismal Swamp NWR, *Chesapeake/Suffolk*); ESB Preserve (Edward S.

Brinkley Nature Preserve, *Northampton*); Ft. Story (Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, *Virginia Beach*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, *Hampton*); Kiptopeke (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); Pleasure House (Pleasure House Pt. Natural Area, *Virginia Beach*); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, *Virginia Beach*).

WATERFOWL

Black-bellied Whistling Ducks remain a rare but regular summer visitor to the Region, with reports scattered across four locations. The first, and high count, was a flock of 10 spotted at Black Duck Marsh on Chincoteague 17 Jun (ADy, ph. JD, m. obs.) and remaining through 18 Jun (RW, ph. MB). Other reports included a group of 4 at the ESB Preserve 25 Jun (ph. DC, m. obs.), with one remaining through 31 Jul (ph. TT, TC, MG); 2 at Virginia Landing RV Park in Quimby, *Accomack* 27 Jun (MP); and a single at Sherwood Lakes, *Virginia Beach* 30 Jun (RC). An exceptionally late **Tundra Swan** first spotted at Beasley 12 Jun (ph. RR, ph. NM) lingered for several weeks, with sporadic sightings through 1 Jul (ph. RR). **Blue-winged Teal** are an uncommon summer presence in the Region, mostly on the Eastern Shore; this summer all reports came from Chincoteague, with sightings spread across the season and a peak count of 3 on 3 Jun (TM). Far less common in summer anywhere in Virginia, a duo of **Northern Shoveler** drakes at Craney 3 Jun (ph. BW, RA, LS) made for a notable seasonal encounter. Like Blue-winged Teal,

Gadwall are an uncommon summer resident in the Region, but their penchant for secluded marshes on the Eastern Shore makes them seldom-encountered. This summer brought a handful of records, most from expected haunts on the Shore: 2 at Shanks Is., *Accomack* 15 Jun (anonymous eBirder); a single at Myrtle Is., *Northampton* 21 Jun (MB); and a drake and hen at Chincoteague sighted off-and-on through Jun (ph. DN, TM) with a final report on 26 Jul (TM). A bit more noteworthy was a Western Shore report from Grandview, where a single bird spotted 10 Jun (DY) remained through at least 5 Jul (ph. GK). The summer waterfowl highlight was undoubtedly a **MOTTLED DUCK** spotted at Craney 2 Jun (ph. BW, RA, LS). This is the same location where the state's first record occurred on 14 Jun 2018 (ph. BW, m. obs.); since this initial record, Craney has become a semi-regular location for this species, with summer records in 2021, 2022, and (if you'll indulge a sneak peak of the Summer 2023 *Virginia Birds* column) 2023. Several species of sea ducks over-summered in the Coastal Region this year. Perhaps the most noteworthy was a hen **Common Eider** that continued from the spring at Grandview, with the last sighting on 8 Jul (ph. EG). The only summer report of **Surf Scoter** was a lone hen at Chincoteague's Toms Cove Visitors Center 4 Jun (AD, TTr). **Black Scoters** are typically the most regular summer scoter, and this year was no exception to the trend, with scattered reports along the coast from *Virginia Beach* to *Accomack*. The peak count was a raft of 15 off Metompkin Is., *Accomack* 22 Jun (MB). No **White-winged Scoters** were detected this summer. **Hooded Mergansers** are typically rare summer visitors in the Region, but have been increasing as a breeding species in Virginia, including recent breeding confirmations in nearby *York*. This summer saw three sightings in the Coastal Region, each of single birds: a hen at Pleasure House 4 Jun (ph. RB); a hen in the Machipongo R. at Trower Rd., *Accomack* 7 Jun (SC); and a smart-looking drake at Sleepy L., *Suffolk* 27–29 Jul (ph. anonymous, *vide* LM). Though none of these records seemed suggestive

of breeding, the expanding breeding range in Virginia and presence of summering individuals in the Coastal Regions at least admits of the possibility. **Red-breasted Mergansers** sometimes also over-summer along the coast, and this year there were reports from three locations. There were steady reports of at least one at Toms Cove on Chincoteague in the first half of Jun, with a peak count of 2 on 4 Jun (DH) and a final report of a single 17 Jun (JS). Elsewhere, there was a single at Metompkin Is., *Accomack* 18 Jun (ADy, JD, SC, RW) and again 30 Jun (MB), as well as a hen resting on the rocky shoreline at Phoebus Waterfront Pk., *Hampton* 24 Jun (ph. RR).

GREBES—SHOREBIRDS

A handful of **Pied-billed Grebes** spent part of the summer in the Coastal Region. At the fore end of the season were singles at Kiptopeke 3 Jun (LA) and Princess Anne Athletic Complex, *Virginia Beach* 14 Jun (RR) and 3 Jul (ph. RB), while the aft end of the season saw 2 reported from the ESB Preserve (TT, TC). Far less common as a summer visitor, a **Horned Grebe** in full breeding plumage made for a very nice encounter at Saxis WMA, *Accomack* 24 Jun (SC). **Common Nighthawk** has declined precipitously as a breeder in much of the state, especially the Coastal Region, so a pair at Craney 7 Jul was a welcome occurrence (BW, DY, LS). **Virginia Rails** are a semi-common summer resident of both salt and fresh marshes in the Region, and the species was amply reported in the marshes of n. *Accomack*. Reports of one at Craney 16 Jun (BW, DY) and 2 at Grandview 16 Jul (a. r. RB), however, were geographic outliers. The majority of **Black-necked Stilt** reports this summer came from the reliable breeding locations at Craney and Chincoteague, but a noteworthy exception was 2 at Back Bay 5 Jun (ph. RB, m. obs.) and continuing through 8 Jun (RR). Craney also hosted over-summering **American Avocets**, as is often the case, with a peak count for Jun of 64 on 9 & 23 Jun (BW, DY) and a peak count for Jul of

302 on 28 Jul (BW, DC, DY) as the summering birds were augmented by fall migrants. Reports away from Craney bookended the season: one at Chincoteague 7 Jun (ph. PR, HR) and 3 at Pleasure House 30 Jul (ph. RB). As usual, the only reports of **Wilson's Plovers** were from known breeding locations on the barrier islands; this summer, reports were from Cedar Is. and Metompkin Is., both in *Accomack*. It was a strong showing for **Ruff** this summer, with two records – both males – in the Region: one at Craney first showed up 30 Jun (BW) and remained through 21 Jul (BW, DY, LS), while another at Chincoteague was a one-day wonder 5 Jul (ph. KW, v. r. BH). Rarely reported in summer, **Long-billed Dowitchers** were detected at two locations: Smith Is., *Northampton* 17 Jun (MB) and Gargatha Inlet, *Accomack* 31 Jul (TM); both



Dave Brooke's photo of a **Bar-tailed Godwit** at Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack* 27 Sep.

records were single birds. **American Woodcocks** are retiring and rarely-detected during the breeding season, but one at BAE Systems Norfolk Ship Repair, *Norfolk* 6 Jul (HR) was doubly notable – the site is an industrial area along the Elizabeth R., and woodcocks are seldom detected in the largely urban environs of *Norfolk*. **Wilson's Phalarope** had a fairly poor showing in the Region this summer, with only a single report from their favored digs at Craney – 2 there 28 Jul (BW, DC, DY). Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** seen by the same observers at the same location on the same date likewise accounted for the only reports of this species.

JAEGERS—WOODPECKERS

A heavily-worn ad. **Pomarine Jaeger** seen offshore in *Virginia Beach* waters on a pelagic outing 8 Jun (RT) was the only jaeger identified to species. The only other report of a **jaeger sp.** was at Chincoteague on the same date (AR), and deemed a likely **Parasitic Jaeger** by the observer. Our only **Bonaparte's Gull** report four the summer was a single imm. off 89th St. Beach, *Virginia Beach* 12 Jun (AB). *Virginia Beach* did well on **Roseate Tern** sightings this summer, with reports including: 2 at First Landing SP 6 Jul (AB); a single at Back Bay 15 Jul (ph. DC, RA, LMo); another single at 89th St. Beach 23 Jul (AB, JM); and yet another single at First Landing SP 24 Jul (ph. RB). One was also reported from Cedar Is., *Accomack* 1 Jun (ph. DC, CH, TMo). Most of the tubenoses and other pelagic species recorded this summer were seen on a Rudee Tours pelagic on 17 Jul, including the following species: **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**, **Leach's Storm-Petrel**, **Cory's Shearwater**, **Great Shearwater**, and **Brown Booby** (RT). *Wilson's Storm-Petrel*, *Great Shearwater*, and **Sooty Shearwater** were also reported from shore at numerous locations along the immediate coast. Apart from the 17 Jul boat, *Brown Boobies* were reported on two other occasions – a pair far offshore in *Northampton* waters 23 Jun (TK) and a single juv. in the waters off Ft. Story 7–8 Jul (RT, ph. SM). Fairly unusual, though not unheard of, for summer were several reports of **Northern Gannets** including one off Rudee 1 Jun (ph. RT); one off the CBBT 6 Jun (MH, TH); 2 off Chincoteague 8 Jun (AR); and one off Metompkin Is., *Accomack* 5 Jul (ph. MB). All of these reports pertained to second-year birds. **Anhingas** were well-represented in s. Hampton Roads and on the Peninsula, mostly at traditional breeding locations, with reports from *Virginia Beach*, *Norfolk*, and *Newport News*. Of local interest were a f. at Craney 14 & 21 Jul (ph. BW, DY, LS) and a f. at Back Bay 24 Jul (ph. RG), both heavily-birded locations with no previous records of this species. The only **White-faced Ibis** of the summer was one at Chincoteague 7–8

Jul (ph. EL, ph. AR). The summer of 2022 proved not to be a repeat of the **Roseate Spoonbill** invasion, with only two locations furnishing reports: one at Chincoteague 6 Jun (VC) with 5 there on 8 Jun (EC), and one at Back Bay 16–17 Jul (ph. EB, m. obs.). Only a single **Swallow-tailed Kites** visited the Region this summer; one hung around the Great Bridge East section of *Chesapeake*, with sightings scattered across the general area spanning 8 Jun (LSu) through 6 Jul (anonymous eBirder). **Broad-winged Hawks** are somewhat enigmatic in summer in the Region, though are likely scarce and very low-density breeders. One seen along Lankford Hwy. s. of Painter, *Accomack* 16 Jun (DI) was near a tract of woodland that could be appropriate breeding habitat. Another over a neighborhood yard in the Lakewood section of *Norfolk* 29 Jul (ph. DC) may have been an extremely early migrant, given the date and the urban location. The translocated **Red-cockaded Woodpeckers** in Dismal continue to hang on, with a report of 2 at Laurel Ditch, *Chesapeake* 21 Jun (TV).

PASSERINES

Typically a very rare and sporadic summer presence in the Region, with few instances of confirmed breeding, a singing **Warbling Vireo** at the Chincoteague Wildlife Loop 1 Jun (a. r. WS) was likely a late migrant. Though **COMMON RAVENS** have continued their eastward march in Virginia’s Coastal Plain, a record from Back Bay Landing Rd., *Virginia Beach* 17 Jul (ph. RB) was disjunct from any recent occurrences and a truly notable find – the last recorded sighting in *Virginia Beach* was in 1942! Though a common nester on river crossings in the w. Coastal Plain, particularly further up the James R. and Appomattox R., **Cliff Swallows** mostly peter out closer to the coast. This year there were two mid-summer sightings, though perhaps these were early dispersers rather than local breeders. Two were at First Landing SP 6 Jul (AB), and 2 were at Craney the following day (BW, DY, LS). Truly mind-boggling for the season was a singing

Hermit Thrush at a private residence on Wellington Neck, *Northampton* 18 Jun (ph. RK). This record shatters the Gold Book extreme date of 10 May, and appears to be the first summer record for not only the Coastal Plain, but anywhere in Virginia outside of the breeding range. In the realm of unseasonable visitors, a **White-throated Sparrow** that visited a yard in Onancock, *Accomack* 17–18 Jul (ph. ML, AQ, RBT) was less astounding but still notable. Though not confirmed as a breeder in the Coastal Plain, **Savannah Sparrow** is an occasional summer visitor along the immediate coast, adding some context to a record of 2 from Metompskin Is., *Accomack* 4 Jun (AR). Two vocalizing **Bobolinks** at Back Bay 15 Jul (RA, DC, LMo, SK) were quite early, particularly given the lack of nearby breeding populations from which they may have dispersed. **Louisiana Waterthrush** is hardly rare in most of the Region, but becomes very scarce indeed on the Eastern Shore. Two reports of waterthrushes on territory at appropriate habitat in n. *Accomack* 10 Jun (AR), however, suggest more widespread breeding in



Arun Bose’s photograph of a **Townsend’s Warbler** at Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton* 25 Sep.

the less-frequently birded northern reaches of the Region. **Kentucky Warbler** is a very uncommon breeder anywhere in the Region, so two reports this summer was encouraging. The first of these was in Dismal at Washington Ditch, *Suffolk* 9 Jun (GR), followed by one singing at Newport News Pk., *Newport News* 11 Jun (a. r. RB). The only **Dickcissel** this summer was a singing bird

detected during a BBS survey on Shell Bridge Rd., *Accomack* 4 Jun (AR).

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FALL 2022

The early fall was marked by a continuation of the summer heat, with the first part of August recording several days above 90°. Things cooled somewhat in the middle of the month, hovering around the low 80s and upper 70s before gradually climbing back to the low 90s by the end of the month. The heat continued somewhat into September before the first real cold snap on 23 September brought lows in the upper 50s. October brought consistently cooler weather, with average temps hovering around 60°, until November finally ushered in true fall weather, including a few days with sub-freezing lows towards the middle of the month. Continuing the dry conditions from the summer, the Region saw virtually no precipitation all fall save for an anomalous rainfall of over 3 inches on the first day of October. Fall migration brought plenty of action for eager birders, with highlight species including Bar-tailed Godwit, American Goshawk, and Townsend's Warbler. Surely the most notable species of the fall was Virginia's first Tropical Kingbird, the only contender that could relegate a Gray Kingbird to the second-best tyrant flycatcher. Later in the fall, Virginia's first (and second!) Varied Thrushes in quite a few years made for a good bookend to the season.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, *Virginia Beach*); Chincoteague (Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, *Portsmouth*); Ft. Story (Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, *Virginia Beach*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, *Hampton*); Kiptopeke (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); Little Is. (Little Is. Park, *Virginia Beach*); Whitehurst (Princess Anne WMA—Whitehurst Tract, *Virginia Beach*).

WATERFOWL—CRANES

Virginia Beach hosted two **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** this fall. One was spotted in a canal off Bluebill Dr. in Sandbridge 24 Sep (ph. JB, KB), while another visited a private yard in the Heritage Pk. neighborhood 16 Oct (anonymous eBirder). The only other report was one that, oddly, landed in a field at an unspecified location in *Accomack* 17 Sep (TC). **Eurasian Wigeons** arrived by late Nov at two of the most regular locations in the Region for this species. The first, a drake, showed up at Hoffler Cr. Wildlife Preserve, *Portsmouth* 15 Nov (ph. RD) and was seen several times through 22 Nov (ADy, JD). Another was at Chincoteague 22 & 26 Nov (JL, HD). A f. or imm. **Harlequin Duck** was a bit early, and a nice surprise mixed with a raft of **Bufflehead** at Chincoteague 21 Nov (AR); this species is not generally regular at Chincoteague. This fall saw a promising start to **Red-necked Grebe** movements, with three reports: one at a pond on Maitland Dr., *Virginia Beach* 9 Nov (ph. BH, ph. DL); another at Ft. Monroe, *Hampton* 13 Nov (ph. WB, NN); and finally one at Grandview 17 Nov (NB). **Eurasian Collared-Dove** reports were confined largely to known sites in *Virginia Beach* and *Northampton*, but reports from a formerly regular location at Clark St. on Chincoteague Is., *Accomack* 28–29 Nov (S&CR, DH) were the first from this location in quite some time. More noteworthy was a **White-winged Dove** found at Track Ln., *Northampton* 12 Nov (ph. WB, ph. MM, m. obs.) during the annual Rarity Roundup. It remained through 13 Nov and was seen by dozens of observers. Also on 13 Nov, another White-winged Dove paid a brief visit to a feeder on Indian R. Rd., *Chesapeake* (ph. MC). **Black-billed Cuckoo** is usually a fairly scarce migrant in the Region, and this year was no exception, with only two reports (both from *Northampton*): one at Kiptopeke 14 Sep (ph. SC, ph. RB), and another there 8 Nov (AR, JBo). A f. **Rufous Hummingbird** paid a brief visit to the feeders at the Kiptopeke Hawkwatch Platform 10 Sep (ph. AB, ph. BT, ph. JBo), with excellent photographs allowing for

species-level identification. There were several **Common Gallinules** in the Region this fall, all in either *Virginia Beach* or *Northampton*. The first was spotted at Back Bay 25 Aug (RA, TT, BO, PR) and again 30 Aug (ABa, JM); subsequent reports included another (or the same) at Back Bay 24 Oct (ph. EG); one at Magothy Bay NAP, *Northampton* 25 Oct (AR); one at the Bay Creek Golf Club in Cape Charles, *Northampton* 3 Nov (JBo); and one at Whitehurst 6 Nov (ph. RB). The only **Sandhill Cranes** this fall were multiple birds vocalizing at Brownsville Preserve, *Northampton* 13 Nov (MB); these birds were heard but not seen, so a precise count was not possible, but the observer estimated at least 2.

SHOREBIRDS

Most **Black-necked Stilts** in the Region had cleared out by late Aug or early Sep, so a single bird at Chincoteague 12 Oct was noteworthy (GR). All reports of **American Avocets** were from the southside this fall. The highest concentrations were, naturally, at Craney, where hundreds were present throughout the season with a peak count of 750 on 15 Sep (BW, LS). Elsewhere, there were reports of 2 at Back Bay 9 Aug (ph. WV); one at Lynnhaven Inlet, *Virginia Beach* 19 Nov (ph. CR); and 7 at Ocean View Beach Pk., *Norfolk* 20 Nov (ph. DC). **American Golden-Plovers** were recorded across the Region this fall, with numerous reports from *Accomack*, *Northampton*, *Virginia Beach*, *Norfolk*, and *Portsmouth*. The only two reports of **Wilson's Plovers** lingering into the fall were singles at Gargatha Inlet, *Accomack* 7 Aug (TM) and Assateague Is., *Accomack* 17 Sep (G&HS). Always a treat to see, a long-staying **Upland Sandpiper** delighted dozens of birders at Back Bay 11–27 Aug (ABa, ph. JM, m. obs.). A single **Long-billed Curlew** was seen at the traditional location at Gull Marsh, *Northampton* 12 Nov (ph. AB, ph. WG, ph. PG, AD, TTr). A **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** paid a brief visit to Chincoteague 27 Sep (ph. DB). It was a decent fall for **Hudsonian Godwits**, with one at Craney

25 Aug (DY, LS) and 2 at Back Bay 10 Oct (ph. ABa, ph. DC, RA). There were multiple reports of **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**. The high count for the fall was 8 at Craney 8 Sep (ph. BW, LS), with 2 remaining through 28 Sep (ph. BW, DY). Elsewhere, Chincoteague hosted up to 2 from 1–7 Sep (ph. JL, v. r. BHo); one was at fields along Indiantown Rd., *Northampton* 25 Sep (AR, ph. MB, GH); and one was at Back Bay 10 Oct (ABa, DC, RA). The only location reporting any **Wilson's Phalaropes** this fall was Craney, with an initial report (and peak count) of 13 on 4 Aug (BW, RA, LS) that dwindled to 2 by 6 Oct (BW, DY). Craney also hosted the only inland **Red-necked Phalaropes**, with a single 4 Aug (BW, RA, LS) leading to a final peak count of 13 on 25 Aug (DY, LS). Offshore, Rudee Tours pelagics operating in *Northampton* waters tallied 3 on 7 Aug (m. obs.) and 41 on 28 Aug (m. obs.).

JAEGERS—TERNS

The Rudee Tours boat on 28 Aug tallied a **Pomarine Jaeger** in *Northampton* waters (ph. TS, ph. SM, m. obs.). From shore, Pomarines were observed at Little Is. 7 Nov (ph. SM, AM, ABa) and – noteworthy for being on the Bay side of the Eastern Shore – the end of Battle Pt. Rd., *Northampton* 20 Nov (MB). **Parasitic Jaegers** were well-accounted for this fall, with over a dozen observations from shore, all in *Virginia Beach* or *Accomack*. The 28 Aug Rudee Tours boat had excellent luck with **Long-tailed Jaegers**, our most elusive of the three jaeger species, with a minimum of 10 and possibly as many as 12 individuals (ph. AR, ph. MB, ph. SC, m. obs.). There was one **Little Gull** sighting this fall, spotted feeding with a group of **Bonaparte's Gulls** off Little Is. 27 Nov (ABa). Two Rudee Tours boats on 7 and 28 Aug accounted for most of the tubenose sightings this fall, with a roster of expected species that included **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**, **Cory's Shearwater**, **Great Shearwater**, and **Audubon's Shearwater**. The most noteworthy pelagic sighting was a single **WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL** that

provided amazing views on the 7 Aug boat (ph. AB, ph. SC, ph. JM, m. obs.). Reflecting their steadily increasing presence in Virginia, **Brown Boobies** were reported from multiple locations this fall. There were two pelagic sightings: an ad. in *Northampton* waters near Norfolk Canyon on the 7 Aug Rudee boat (ph. AB, ph. SC, ph. JM, m. obs.) and one following a cruise ship well offshore near Washington Canyon, *Accomack* 3 Oct (anonymous eBirder). From Shore, all sightings were on the Bay side of the Eastern Shore: an ad. at Tangier Is., *Accomack* 7 Sep (ph. JBo); 2 apparent imm. (though views were



Rob Bielawski's photograph of a **Gray Kingbird**, spotted on Seaside Rd., *Northampton* 22 Oct.

distant) off Cape Charles NAP, *Northampton* 7 Nov (AR); one ad. off Sunset Beach, *Northampton* 8 Nov (ph. AR); and one ad. off Savage Neck Dunes NAP 12 Nov (ABa, JM). A very early juv. **Northern Gannet** was spotted resting on the beach at Chincoteague 4 Aug (ph. TM); the bird seemed to be in rather dire condition, and may have been ill or injured. There were a handful of **American White Pelican** reports this fall, kicking off with the season high count of 19 on 20 Oct at Kiptopeke (AR) as well as a duo at Craney 27 Oct (ph. BW, DY, LS). There was a single spotted over the Butterfly Trail at ESVNWR 6 Nov (B&AW) and – in a repeat of Rarity Roundups past – a flock was picked up by Roundup participants at different locations across the southern tip of *Northampton* 12 Nov, with a maximum count of 10 at Sunset Beach (MS). There was also a single at Triangle

Pk., *Norfolk* 13 Nov (MJH). All reports of **Golden Eagles** this fall came from the Kiptopeke Hawkwatch, where sightings occurred on 30 Oct and 2, 9, 14, 15, and 19 Nov (ph. AR, JBo). Kiptopeke likewise furnished the only **AMERICAN GOSHAWK** reports; in a marked increase from the recent past, the hawkwatch tallied three: 8, 23, and 29 Nov (ph. AR, JBo). Increasingly uncommon in the Coastal Plain, two **Barn Owl** encounters were good news: 3 Aug at Chincoteague (TM) and 8 Nov at Kiptopeke (JBo). Though not necessarily rare, **Northern Saw-whet Owls** are shy and infrequently encountered, and the only reports of the fall were at Kiptopeke 12–13 Nov (m. obs.) and again 28 Nov (AR, JBo).

FLYCATCHERS—CROSSBILLS

Olive-sided Flycatcher is always one of our rarest migrants in the Coastal Region, so a sighting at Chincoteague 8–9 Sep (LA, WE, ph. LM) was a welcome find. Less rare, but complicated by identification challenges, **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** is another noteworthy migrant. This year there were a handful of reports across the Region, all single birds: Indiantown Pk., *Northampton* 3 Sep (ph. AR); ESVNWR 4 Sep (JBo); Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 13 Sep (ph. SM, AM); Kiptopeke 14–15 Sep (ph. SC, ph. RB, m. obs.); and Norfolk Botanical Gardens, *Norfolk* 23 Sep (DC). Owing perhaps to the difficulty of getting a fall vocalizing Traill's, **Alder Flycatcher** is infrequently reported; the only record this fall was one at Indiantown Pk., *Northampton* 12 Sep (AR). The only **Willow Flycatcher** was one calling at ESVNWR 9 Sep (MB). **Ash-throated Flycatcher** is usually annual in Virginia, but the number of sightings in a given year can fluctuate; the fall of 2022 had three. The first of these was found by Rarity Roundup participants at Track Ln., *Northampton* 13 Nov (ph. ES, TS, m. obs.) and remained through 16 Nov (LAF, RF). Also on 13 Nov, one was discovered at a retention pond behind the Harris Teeter on Sandbridge Rd., *Virginia Beach*

(ph. SM, AM), with continuing sporadic reports through 29 Nov (PK). One at Back Bay 23 Nov (ph. KBi) was a one-day wonder. The clear highlight in a fall with quite a few notable flycatchers was Virginia's long-awaited first record of **TROPICAL KINGBIRD**, discovered at Oyster Village Horse Is. Trail, *Northampton* 19 Oct by a visiting birder and confirmed with audio recordings later that day (ph. PO, ph. & a. r. AR, m. obs.). To the delight of many birders, it obligingly remained in the general vicinity of Oyster through 22 Oct (m. obs.). Only somewhat less notable was a **GRAY KINGBIRD** found the day before the Tropical, hanging out along the road a bit n. of Latimer Siding Rd., *Northampton* 18 Nov (ph. BT, m. obs.). Remarkably, another Gray Kingbird was discovered further n. at the corner of Seaside Rd. and Cedar Grove Dr., *Northampton* 22–23 Nov (MP, ph. AR, m. obs.). Detailed photographic analysis of feather wear later confirmed this as a different individual from the 18 Nov bird (*fide* AR). Continuing the eastward march in Virginia, a **COMMON RAVEN** was detected at Hoffler Cr. Wildlife Preserve, *Portsmouth* 16 Nov (ABa, JM), an apparent first record for the city. Much to the excitement of those who started birding in Virginia within the past decade, the state's first **VARIED THRUSH** since 2010 was found in a yard near L. Smith, *Virginia Beach* 20 Nov (ph. SP) and was seen by dozens of observers; it remained until just after the fall season, with a final report on 1 Dec (m. obs.). Remarkably, while the *Virginia Beach* bird was being seen a second Varied Thrush made a one-day appearance at a yard on Wellington Neck, *Northampton* 22 Nov (ph. RK, m. obs.), a first for *Northampton*. **Evening Grosbeaks** were only found in *Northampton* this fall, with most reports near the tip including at Kiptopeke 29 Oct, 3 Nov, and 29 Nov (a. r. AR, JBo) and at Sunset Beach 14 Nov (AR). Further n. in *Northampton*, there was one report along Old Town Neck Dr. 12 Nov (MA, TMD). **Red Crossbills** were about equally scarce and also confined to *Northampton*, with reports at Brownsville Preserve 23 Oct (MB);

Kiptopeke 29 Nov (AR, JBo); and ESVNWR 30 Nov (AR).

LONGSPUR—BUNTINGS

Always a rather tough species in the Region, **Lapland Longspur** was recorded thrice (all single birds): at Craney 23 Oct (ph. BT, ph. DHu, LS); Kiptopeke 17 Nov (AR, JBo); and ESVNWR 26 Nov (MB). The only **Snow Buntings** were at Chincoteague, where they were reported on-and-off all fall with a peak count of 17 on 22 Nov (KW), and a single at Ft. Story 26 Nov (ph. SM, AM). **Clay-colored Sparrows** were reported at a handful of spots across the Region, including: Kiptopeke 14 Sep (ph. AR, ph. JBo, m. obs.) and again 15 Oct (JBo); Back Bay 9–17 Oct, with a peak count of 2 on 15 Oct



Max Nootbaar's picture of a **Varied Thrush** visiting a private residence in *Virginia Beach* 22 Nov.

(ph. RB, m. obs.); Craney 12 Oct (ph. BT, ph. DHu, LS); and the retention pond behind the Harris Teeter on Sandbridge Rd., *Virginia Beach* 16 Oct (ph. RR) and 21 Nov (BH). **Lark Sparrows** seemed to have a fairly good fall in the Region, with reports from half-a-dozen locations in *Virginia Beach*, *Northampton*, and *Accomack*. **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were found up and down the Eastern Shore, with reports at Kiptopeke 14 Sep (JBo) and the same day at Chincoteague (KC), as well as Woodland Pk. Ave., *Accomack* 16 Oct (AR, LM) and Ramshorn Rd., *Northampton* 20 Nov (ph. AR). Always one

of the scarcest migrant warblers, an ad. m. **Golden-winged Warbler** made for a nice find at Kiptopeke 14 Sep (ph. AR). Remarkably, a f. was also found later that day at the same location (ph. SC, ph. RB). **Connecticut Warblers** were reported a handful of times, beginning with a brief glimpse of a flyby in morning flight at Sunset Beach, *Northampton* 15 Sep (ph. AR). An ad. lingered for a few days at Back Bay 6–9 Oct (ph. RB, m. obs.), while an imm. was found there a few days later on 15 Oct (ph. RB, m. obs.). Rounding out the reports, one was found on the Raptor Trail at Kiptopeke 22 Oct (ph. RB, ph. AR, m. obs.). The only **Mourning Warbler** of the fall was an imm. that paid a brief visit to a private yard in the Kempsville neighborhood of *Virginia Beach* 25 Aug (ph. UD). The highlight of the fall for warblers was certainly a striking **TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** that put in a frustratingly brief appearance at Kiptopeke 25 Sep (ph. AB) and was not relocated despite much searching. This was the 3rd record for *Northampton*, and first since 2011. A very late **Wilson's Warbler** was spotted at the Norfolk Industrial Pk., *Norfolk* 8 Nov (ph. CA). There were three reports of **Western Tanagers** this fall, all one-day wonders: at Back Bay 26 Sep (ABa, ph. MC); a private residence on Guthrie St., *Virginia Beach* 13 Nov (ph. TCo); and at Kiptopeke 30 Nov (ph. AR, JBo). An intriguing, pale bunting at Kiptopeke 24 Sep was carefully studied as a possible **LAZULI BUNTING**, but unfortunately the brief looks it gave were insufficient to rule out **Indigo Bunting** (ph. AB, AR, JBo). Only two locations hosted **Painted**

Buntings this fall; one f. was spotted at Back Bay on a Hampton Roads Bird Club field trip 10 Sep (RW, SS, m. obs.), while an ad. m. visited a feeder on Heather Rd., *Portsmouth* 19 Nov (JS).

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