



# VIRGINIA BIRDS

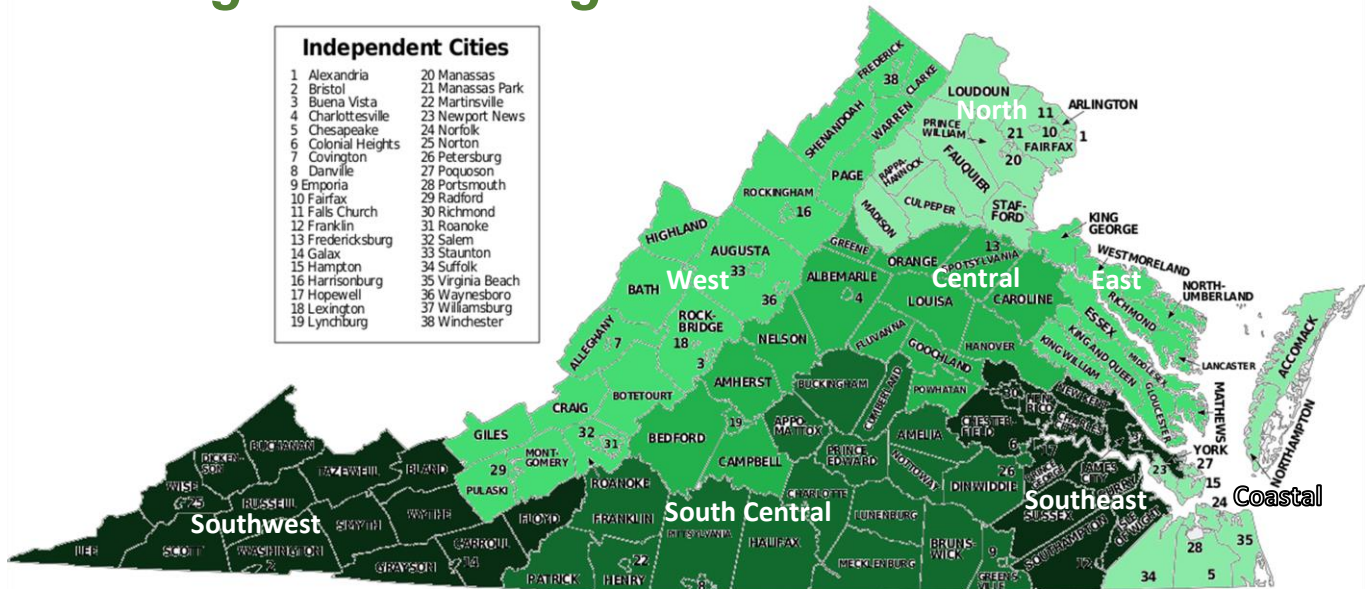
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# Virginia Birds Regions



## Virginia Birds

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## Submissions

Send reports and photographs to the appropriate Regional Editors. Photographs should be the highest electronic quality possible. Articles for consideration can be sent to [mhanthony2@gmail.com](mailto: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
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 <sup>th</sup> Ed. (2007).
Hwy.	Highway
Is.	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
junc.	Junction
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
Ln.	Lane
MAPS	Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship
m.	male
m. obs.	Multiple observers
Mt.	Mountain, Mount
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NF	National Forest
NHP	National Historical Park
NP	National Park
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	photograph
Pk.	Park
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:* June McDaniels's photo of Virginia's first Gray Heron at Chincoteague, 31 Oct 2020.

## Fall 2020 Virginia Hawkwatch Effort Data\*

Hawkwatch	#Count Days	Date Range	# Count Hours	VA Birds Region	Fall Season Years
Mendota Fire Tower, <i>Washington</i>	<b>0</b>			Southwest	1958-2019
Snickers Gap, <i>Clarke/Loudoun</i>	35 of 91	30 Aug-28 Nov	178	West/North	1990; 1992-94; 1996-98; 2002-20
Harvey's Knob, <i>Botetourt</i>	94 of 108	16 Aug-2 Dec	582.75	West	1979-2020
Rockfish Gap, <i>Augusta/Nelson</i>	88 of 109	14 Aug-30 Nov	568.75	West	1977; 1981-2020
Lochlyn Hill, <i>Charlottesville</i>	0			Central	2018-2019
Candler Mt., <i>Lynchburg</i>	2 of 13	7-19 Sep	6.75	Central	2002-2020
Kiptopeke, <i>Northampton</i>	88 of 92	31 Aug-29 Nov	749.75	Coastal	1977-2020

## Fall 2020 Virginia Hawkwatch Totals\*

Hawkwatch	OS	SK	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS
Snickers Gap	39	0	0	207	40	444	69	1	74
Harvey's	139	0	3	239	33	680	145	1	42
Rockfish	249	0	3	426	75	2110	349	3	92
Candler Mt.	2	0	0	6	0	3	1	0	0
Kiptopeke	2334	3	10	427	513	4742	1157	0	136
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2763</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1305</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>7979</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>344</b>

BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UN	Total
3935	0	696	0	10	44	9	6	10	<b>5584</b>
5970	0	662	0	3	103	20	36	17	<b>8093</b>
29661	1	1598	3	17	174	66	46	72	<b>34,945</b>
692	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	<b>710</b>
806	1	657	1	2	3464	885	565	20	<b>15,723</b>
<b>41,064</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3614</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3790</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>65,055</b>

\*Retrieved from HawkCount 11 Jan 2020

Compiled by Bill Williams

## Editor's Corner

As I pick up the reins of *Virginia Birds*, I am moved to think about the debt of gratitude owed to previous editorial teams for their tremendous work in establishing and maintaining this publication as the journal of ornithological record for our great Commonwealth. Looking back to this journal's founding in 2004 – nearly 20 years ago, if one can believe it! – I am mindful of Todd Day's charge for *Virginia Birds* to be “a tool to paint the avian landscape of our state in a way the broad brush-strokes of *North American Birds* and the range maps in various field guides cannot.” In the intervening decades, through ups and downs, and with the changing tides of Virginia birding, I think we can say that *Virginia Birds* has done just that! In my tenure as editor, it is my sincere hope that the journal can continue to undertake this important work, providing Virginia birders with a compendium of our state's ornithological history and synthesizing the raw data of our field observations into something meaningful – as previous editor Bill Williams put it in his reflections on a decade of *Virginia Birds*, to “render that content into context.”

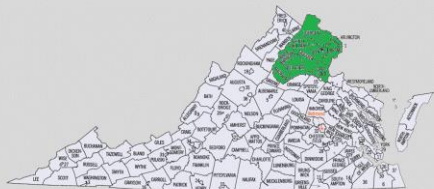
I am fortunate to be supported in that endeavor by a fine editorial team. Together, the Regional Editors of this journal comprise a remarkable cross-section of Virginia's birding expertise. In addition to being some of the finest field birders in the state, these folks bring scads of specialized knowledge about the micro-distribution and ornithological history of their Regions. Moreover, the current slate of Regional Editors cuts across the generations of Virginia birding to combine a long historical perspective with a keen attention to more recent trends and innovations in birds and birding. Notably, three of our current editors – Fred Atwood, Adam D'Onofrio, and C. Michael Stinson – have been with *Virginia Birds* since its inception. We have also seen some changes, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the recent retirements of two esteemed Regional Editors – Clyde Kessler, who

edited the West Region since 2009 and Bill Williams, who edited the Coastal Region since 2005. Bill also merits special mention not only as an outgoing Regional Editor, but as a steady hand on the helm since the Winter 2013/2014 issue, when he began an interim editorship that ultimately evolved into a seven-year tenure. His editorship helped this journal maintain its place at the forefront of Virginia avian recordkeeping, and I owe much to Bill's leadership. Even in his “retirement,” Bill has been a fountain of wisdom and advice as I work to revitalize *Virginia Birds*.

Indeed, I step into the editorship of a journal that is at a crossroads. The past two years of the pandemic have been nothing if not unkind to the normal rhythms of life, and *Virginia Birds* was no exception. At the time of this writing, it has been two years since the last issue was published. My first priority as editor is to bridge this gap and honor the diligent efforts of our Regional Editors by publishing the existing columns spanning Fall 2020 to the present. This issue will cover only Fall 2020, an exciting time for Virginia birding and one not likely to be duplicated in the recent future (read on to hear more about this momentous fall!). Subsequent issues will likely combine multiple seasons in an effort to get the journal caught up to its regular publication schedule. Going forward, reestablishing a timely publication schedule will be a top priority for me. It is also my hope to elevate *Virginia Birds* beyond being simply a repository of sightings. To remain vital, we must offer more than simply a list – today's birders have ample avenues to seek raw data on sightings, whether this be eBird, VARCOM records, social media, or elsewhere. The niche for *Virginia Birds* is in putting these sightings into context, giving Virginia's birders a way to see how our field observations contribute to a larger picture of birdlife in the Commonwealth. As editor, I see this as part of my role, and I plan to include essays, sketches, thoughts, or musings that bring context to the sightings contained herein. I also welcome contributions from you, dear reader!

## Regional Reports

### NORTH



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

Highlights this season included a long-lingering inland Clapper Rail at Huntley Meadows, a Sabine's Gull at several locations along the Potomac R., a Western Kingbird along Colchester Rd., Loudoun, and a Say's Phoebe at Sully Woodlands, Fairfax. Also notable and a highlight for many was a major irruption of Evening Grosbeaks into the state, not seen since at least 1978.

**Abbreviations:** Aquia Landing Pk. (Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford*); Burke L. Pk. (Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Four Mile Run Pk. (Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Leopold's Preserve (Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William*); L. Fairfax Pk. (L. Fairfax Pk., *Fairfax*); Occoquan Bay NWR (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Riverbend Pk. (Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax*); Sully Woodlands (Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax*); Waples Mill Meadow Pk. (Waples Mill Meadow Pk., *Fairfax*); Woodward Turf Farm (Woodward Turf Farm, portions in *Culpeper* and *Fauquier*)

### WATERFOWL — SHOREBIRDS

Single **Cackling Geese**, usually a fairly rare winter visitor in the Region, were seen at Fleetwood Hill Battlefield, *Culpeper* 20 Oct (KK); flying over the Potomac Heritage Trail,

*Loudoun* 27 Oct (AG, BHe); and C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier* 31 Oct (BD, LD). The Piedmont early date is 30 Nov, and there are only 2 other confirmed Oct records in all of the Piedmont. Two late **Blue-winged Teal** showed up at the Middlesex Dr. pond, *Loudoun* 22 Nov (AH, AN), far past the 20 Oct Regional late date. A **Green-winged Teal** seen at the Colvin Ln. pond, *Prince William* 28 Aug (ph. AH) was significantly earlier than the species' 30 Sep early date in the Piedmont. Also significantly early was a **Canvasback** at Occoquan Bay NWR 12–14 Oct (LC, AJ); the Coastal Plain early date is 10 Nov. Reports of **Surf Scoters**, a rare visitor in the Region and more in the inland Piedmont, included 3 at the Upper Occoquan Service Authority, *Fairfax* 25 Oct (DLe); singles at Belmont Bay Marina, *Prince William* 26 Oct (KG) and C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier* 29 Oct (GS); and 2 at Burke L. Pk. 12 Nov (DLe). Also rare in the Region, especially the Piedmont, were a f. **White-winged Scoter** observed at Occoquan Bay NWR 26–28 Oct (ph. JAI); 10 **Black Scoters** at Burke L. Pk. 25 Oct (FA); and a **Long-tailed Duck** at Aquia Landing Pk. 14 Nov (KG). A f. **Bufflehead** spent time at the Mooreview Pkwy. impoundments, *Loudoun* 5–28 Aug (BHi, HS), far outside the extreme Piedmont date range of 24 Oct – 27 Apr. An early **Black-billed Cuckoo** was seen at Jones Nature Preserve, *Rappahannock* 12 Aug (IT); in the Coastal Plain, where the species is a rare transient away from the coast, singles were seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 14 Sep (JPI)

and Huntley Meadows 22 Sep (PB, SSu). Two **Red-necked Grebes**, a rare inland transient, were seen at Aquia Landing Pk. 16 Nov (DG). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was seen at a residence on Allison St., Alexandria 28 Oct (SH), well past the Coastal Plain late date of 25 Sep. A **CLAPPER RAIL**, very rare this far inland and away from salt marsh, was seen at Huntley Meadows 26 Oct (ph. CS), where it lingered and was seen by m.obs. through the period. Two



Clapper Rail photographed at Huntley Meadows by Mary Catherine Miguez, 20 Nov 2020.

**Sandhill Cranes** were observed flying over Algonkian Nature Preserve, Loudoun 26 & 27 Nov (BHe), probably the pair that has overwintered the past 3 years here and upriver. An **American Avocet**, rare this far inland, was seen at Hunting Cr. Bridge, Fairfax 29 Aug (DLe). A **Black-bellied Plover**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at fields along Cemetery Rd., Fauquier 1 Sep (GDl). Reports of **American Golden-Plovers**, a rare but regular fall transient in the Piedmont, included 2 at Woodward Turf Farm, Culpeper 27 Aug (BB, TMD), with as many as 7 seen there and a few at nearby fields along Cemetery Rd., Fauquier through 5 Sep. Also rare in the Piedmont in the fall were 21 **Stilt Sandpipers** found at Woodward Turf Farm, Fauquier 4 Aug (TMD, IT), with one seen at nearby Cemetery Rd. fields 19–27 Aug (GS, ph. TMD); 2 extremely late birds were apparently seen near the McRaes Rd. pond, Fauquier 31 Oct (GS, SSl) & 1 Nov (KS). Although the Gold Book gives the Piedmont extreme late date as 12 Sep, both the Coastal Plain and Mountains sectors give extreme late

dates in early Nov. Also making rare fall appearances in the Piedmont were 2 early **Sanderlings** at Woodward Turf Farm, Fauquier 4 Aug (TMD, IT) (the Piedmont extreme early date is 18 Aug), as well as **Dunlin**: one at Four Mile Run Pk. 6 Oct (DLe); 2 at Meadowbrook Farm ponds, Loudoun 28 Oct – 7 Nov (ph. DN); and 3 at Lenn Pk., Culpeper 1 Nov (ph. KK). Reports of **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**, another rare fall transient in the Piedmont, included 4 at Woodward Turf Farm, Culpeper 27–30 Aug (BB, TMD) and one at Haverford Square fields, Loudoun 3 Sep (BHe). Yet another rare fall transient in the Piedmont, a **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen at Remington Cemetery, Fauquier 19 Aug (SL, PSa). A **WILLET** made a rare appearance w. of the Chesapeake Bay near Belle Haven Pk., Fairfax 6 Sep (KG, RR) (one of just a dozen known records in the Coastal Plain.

## TERNs — RAPTORs

A **Royal Tern** was at Aquia Landing Pk. 15 Sep (ph. CF), with 2 seen there 30 Sep; another appeared 31 Oct (KG). The rare post-breeding dispersal visits of this species into the Region usually end by the end of Sep. **American Bitterns**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, were seen along Chompawampsic Cr., Prince William 2 Sep (ph. KG); at the Clifton Institute, Fauquier 10 Sep (BHs); Bles Pk., Loudoun 24 Sep (CL); and Belvoir Pond, Fauquier 29 Oct (TMD). A **Least Bittern**, reported at Occoquan Bay NWR 16 Oct (JAl), was either the same bird that has been there since spring or a late migrant (Coastal Plain late date 20 Sep). Juv. **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons**, rare this far inland, were observed at Silver L. RP, Prince William 15 Aug (ph. TH) and Woodbridge Veterans Memorial Pk., Prince William 23 Sep (KG) and again 5 Oct. There were several reports of juv. **White Ibis**, also rare inland, including singles at Pohick Bay RP, Fairfax 7 Aug (AN); Olde Izaak Walton Pk., Loudoun 20 Aug (ph. CL); and Effingham Manor Winery ponds, Prince William 21 Aug (ph. SK). Two found at Vienna Res., Fairfax 23 Aug (JAs) were seen and ph. by many

through 14 Sep. Two **Swallow-tailed Kites**, a rare but increasing visitor in the Piedmont, were first observed along Botts Ln. near Woodville, *Rappahannock* in late Jul and continued through 9 Aug (ph., m.obs.). Another was seen near Graves Mill Trail, *Madison* 25–27 Aug (KR). A pair of **Mississippi Kites** seen feeding young at the nest site at Forest Manor, *Loudoun* 4 Aug (ph. BHi), where they have bred for 3 years, remained through at least 23 Aug (m. obs.). A **Northern Red-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis abieticola*), a putative subspecies that is not uniformly recognized as separate from the Eastern subspecies, was seen at Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* 5 Nov (TMD). A **Merlin**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Algonkian RP, *Loudoun* 15 Sep (MMas, DN). Sightings of **Peregrine Falcons**, also a rare transient in the Piedmont, included a bird making several passes at shorebirds at Woodward Turf Farm, *Culpeper* 28–30 Aug (TMD, IT); as well as singles at a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 11 Sep (GH) and Claude Moore Pk., *Loudoun* 5 Nov (AG, BHe). A summary of the fall count at Snickers Gap Hawkwatch, *Loudoun* included: 39 **Ospreys**, 10 **Golden Eagles** (including 4 on 2 Nov), 40 **Northern Harriers**, 444 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 69 **Cooper's Hawks**, 1 **Northern Goshawk** (ad., 8 Nov), 207 **Bald Eagles**, 74 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 3,935 **Broad-winged Hawks**, 696 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 44 **American Kestrels**, 9 **Merlins**, and 6 **Peregrine Falcons**.

## FLYCATCHERS — THRUSHES

A **Western Kingbird**, very rare in the Region, was well-seen along Colchester Rd., *Loudoun* 6 Nov (ph. ML). There were many reports of **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a fairly rare transient in the Region (rare in the Mountains sector), mostly in the Piedmont with over 10 reports, including 3 seen separately over 24 days along the Turquoise Trail in Reston, *Fairfax* 26 Aug – 19 Sep (ph. PH); and one at Big Meadows within Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 30 Aug (MMo). A late **Eastern Wood-Pewee** was seen at Sky Meadows SP,

*Fauquier* 24 Oct (NVBC), just past the Piedmont extreme late date of 23 Oct. There were numerous reports of **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Region, including 2 on the Turquoise Trail in Reston, *Fairfax* 2 Sep (ph. PH); 3 sightings over a week at Leesylvania SP, *Prince William* 12–20 Sep (SPr); and 2 at Occoquan Bay NWR 15 Sep (SK). A **SAY'S PHOEBE**, very rare in the state with only four previous confirmed records in the Piedmont, was seen at Sully Woodlands 20 Sep (ph. KF). A late **Yellow-throated Vireo** was observed at Monticello Pk., Alexandria 21 Oct (TA), just past the Coastal Plain extreme late date of 20 Oct.



Say's Phoebe photographed at Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax* by Keith Freeburn, 20 Sep 2020.

**Blue-headed Vireos** were observed at private residences in Clifton, *Fairfax* 7 Sep (EK) and Ashburn, *Loudoun* 22 Nov (JE), both well outside the fall Piedmont date range of 25 Sep – 30 Oct. A **Philadelphia Vireo** seen at Luria Pk., *Fairfax* 4 Nov (ph. B&DF) was well past the Piedmont extreme late date of 24 Oct. A **Warbling Vireo**, a rare transient in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 3 Oct (EP). Reports of somewhat early **Red-breasted Nuthatches** (Mountains usual early date is 15 Sep) included a single at Pinnacles Overlook, Shenandoah NP, *Rappahannock* 1 Aug (TK) and 2 at Old Rag Mtn., Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 30 Aug (GM). It



is worth noting that they are local breeders at high elevations w. of the Blue Ridge; it should also be noted that although the Gold Book does not give an *extreme* early date for the Mountains sector, it gives 2 Aug for the nearby Piedmont. **Sedge Wrens**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were seen at Meadowood Recreation Area, *Fairfax* 15–23 Aug (ph. QE, HM), with one seen there again 4 Oct (LC, AJ); Waples Mill Meadow Pk. 2 Oct – 6 Nov (ph. JB); and Riverbend Pk. 8 Nov (ph. BHo). A **Marsh Wren** at L. Fairfax Pk. 5 Aug (DY) was considerably earlier than the 5 Sep Piedmont early date; another found there 6 Nov (PH) and one at Leopold's Preserve 22–29 Nov (FA) were present well past the Piedmont late date of 20 Oct. There were several sightings of **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** considerably past the 20 Sep late date for the Region, where the species is a rare winter visitor: at a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 9 Oct (GH); Rady Pk., *Fauquier* 20 Oct (ph. TMD); Accotink Bay NWR, *Fairfax* 13 Nov (ph. MMi); Occoquan Bay NWR 14 Nov (EP); and Leesylvania SP, *Prince William* 15 Nov (PSi). An early **Golden-crowned Kinglet** seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 20 Sep (MMay) just beat the Coastal Plain extreme early date of 21 Sep. Steve Young found a bonanza of **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** at Sparrow Pond along the W&OD Trail between Rt. 50 and Columbia Pike, *Arlington* 25 Oct, counting over 50 during a 2-hour walk, with more in nearby parkland. Well before the Mountains and Piedmont extreme early dates in early October were **Hermit Thrushes** found along Limberlost Trail in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 15 Sep (IT) and at Great Falls NP, *Fairfax* 16 Sep (KL, JS). Reports of late **Veeries** included one at Daniels Run Pk., *Fairfax City* 13 Oct (P&JW) and 2 at L. Fairfax Pk. 17 Oct (MV) (Piedmont extreme late date 8 Oct).

## GROSBEAKS — DICKCISSEL

The period saw a major irruption of **Evening Grosbeaks** into the state; typically rare this far south, these northern wanderers appeared in

numbers as high as 9 and 12 in the Piedmont sector of the Region. The **Red Crossbill** reported in the last period at the Pinnacles picnic area in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* on 30 Jul continued through 15 Oct, with up to 5 seen and ph. by many. Two were reported several mi. s. along the ridge at Hawksbill Mtn. in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 18 Sep (ES, TS). Two ventured into the Piedmont, seen along Leeds Manor Rd., *Fauquier* 24 Nov (BHa). This species is rare in all seasons even in its preferred higher elevations, and is typically found w. of the Blue Ridge. A **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL**, also a rare and irregular transient in the state, was seen and ph. in a residential backyard in Brambleton, *Loudoun* 14 Nov (BHi). An early **Pine Siskin**, whose Coastal Plain extreme early date is 1 Oct, was seen at Huntley Meadows 23 Sep (QE, KG); this was also an irruption year for this species. Late **Grasshopper Sparrows** were seen at Sully Woodlands 8 Nov (PH) and the Discovery Blvd. pond, *Prince William* 20 Nov (ph. TH), the latter well past the Piedmont extreme late date of 5 Nov. Sightings of **Clay-colored Sparrows**, a rare transient in the Region, especially in the Piedmont, included at a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 17 Oct (GH); near the Meadowbrook Farm ponds, *Loudoun* 18 Nov (CL); and Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 20 Oct (ph. W&CW). Reports of **Savannah Sparrows** prior to the Coastal Plain and Piedmont early date of 15 Sep included 6 along Grassdale Rd., *Fauquier* 13 Aug (TMD) (the species is a rare summer resident in nw. *Fauquier*) and one at Reagan Nat. Airport, *Arlington* 30 Aug (ph. TK). Early **Lincoln's Sparrows**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont with an extreme early date of 11 Sep, were seen at Waples Mill Meadow Pk. 6 Sep (JB) and Sully Woodlands 7 Sep (SJ). **Baltimore Orioles**, a rare late fall and winter visitor in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, were seen at Silver L. RP, *Prince William* 20 Oct (ph. MMas); Waples Mill Meadow Pk. 21 Oct (FA, AN); Jones Point Pk., *Alexandria* 26 Oct (ph. MR); and a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 6 Nov (GH), well past the species' usual Piedmont and Coastal Plain late

date of 30 Sep. A **Golden-winged Warbler**, a rare transient away from the Blue Ridge, found its way to Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax* 11 Sep (ph. AN), while a late **Black-and-white Warbler** surprised the observer at L. Fairfax Pk. 29 Nov (JT). The normal late date for the latter species is 15 Oct in the Piedmont, where it is a rare early winter visitor. Late **Prothonotary Warblers**



Connecticut Warbler photographed at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, *Loudoun* by Michael Myers, 4 Oct 2020.

were encountered at a residence s. of Manassas, *Prince William* 27 Sep (DV) (Piedmont late date 10 Sep) and at Huntley Meadows 3 Oct (DS) (Coastal Plain late date 15 Sep). There were several sightings of **Orange-crowned Warblers**, a rare transient in the Region: Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 10 Oct (LM); Luria Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Oct (ph. B&DF); Jones Nature Preserve, *Rappahannock* 20 Oct (IT); sw. of Round Hill, *Loudoun* 20 Oct (JCo); Meadowood Recreation Area, *Fairfax* 23 Oct (SJ); Wakefield Pk., *Fairfax* 28 Oct (SE); Mason Neck SP, *Fairfax* 6 Nov (BJ); and Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, *Fairfax* 13 Nov (ph. SPr). The season brought unusually numerous observations of **Connecticut Warblers**, a rare and always highly sought migrant, with at least a dozen reliable reports across the Region: Monticello Pk., *Alexandria* 12–15 Sep (CF); Julie J. Metz Wetlands Bank, *Prince William* 17 Sep (KG); Upton Hill RP, *Arlington* 25 Sep – 7 Oct (MMo); Rust Sanctuary, *Loudoun* 27 Sep (BHe); Sully Woodlands 2–3 Oct (MF); Riverbend Pk. 3–23 Oct (MT, ph. m.obs.), where at least 2, maybe 3, were seen 10 Oct (BHo); residential Centreville, *Fairfax* 4 Oct (ph. KF); Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, *Loudoun* 4 Oct (ph.

MMY, ph. MSci); Occoquan Bay NWR 5 Oct (LC, AJ); Elklick Woodlands NAP, *Fairfax* 7 Oct (SJ); Four Mile Run Pk. 9 Oct (TK); the Fairfax Hospital pond, *Fairfax* 11 Oct (P&JW); Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 11–15 Oct (KG); and Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 18 Oct (WW). Reports of **Mourning Warblers**, another rare transient, were also numerous and included sightings at Leopold's Preserve 29 Aug (MA); Difficult Run Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 30 Aug (ph. JB) and 19 Sep (ph. TN); Julie J. Metz Wetlands Bank, *Prince William* 30 Aug (JAl); and Riverbend Pk. 25 Sep – 9 Oct (RH, KL, ph. MT). Reports of late **Common Yellowthroats** included along the Turquoise Trail in Reston, *Fairfax* 5 Nov (PH); L. Mooney Pk., *Stafford* 14 Nov (JeP, JoP); Walker Nature Center, *Fairfax* 21 Nov (TJ); Four Mile Run Pk. 22 Nov (CM); Jones Point Pk., *Alexandria* 22 Nov (BS); and L. Audubon, *Fairfax* 29 Nov (PH). The Coastal Plain and Piedmont late dates are 25 Oct and 20 Oct, respectively. A **Hooded Warbler** was seen in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 5 Oct (ph. JS-T), well after the species' Piedmont extreme late date of 20 Sep. Also late were **Cape May Warblers** seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 31 Oct (ph. EP); along the Potomac Heritage Trail, *Arlington* 9 Nov (MG); and at Regency Golf Course & Nature Trail, *Prince William* 9 Nov (DLA); the Coastal Plain and Piedmont late dates are 25 Oct and 20 Oct, respectively. A **Northern Parula** at Dyke Marsh 28 Nov (EE) was considerably later than the Coastal Plain extreme late date of 31 Oct. Late **Magnolia Warblers** seen at Burke L. Pk. 24 Oct (BC); Dulles Airport pond, *Loudoun* 25 Oct (BHe); and Morven Pk., *Loudoun* 28 Oct (MSco) were after the species' Piedmont extreme late date of 18 Oct. A **Yellow Warbler**, whose Coastal Plain extreme late date is 31 Oct, was seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 24 Nov (LC, AJ). Late **Palm Warblers**, whose Regional late date is 30 Oct, were seen in Manassas, *Prince William* 14 Nov (MO); Copley Farm, *Stafford* 15 Nov (JG); Green Spring Garden Pk., *Fairfax* 15 Nov (JM); L. Fairfax Pk. 22 Nov (GB); and Leopold's Preserve 22 Nov (FA); this species is a rare early winter visitor in

the Piedmont and fairly rare in the inland Coastal Plain. A late **Pine Warbler** seen along Hebron Valley Rd., *Madison* 9 Nov (GDe) was well beyond the Piedmont late date of 10 Oct; this species is a rare winter resident outside of the Coastal Plain. A **Yellow-throated Warbler**, whose usual Coastal Plain late date is 31 Aug, lingered at Dyke Marsh from 13 Oct to 28 Nov (m.obs., ph. PM), beyond even the extreme late date of 27 Nov. Also late were **Prairie Warblers** seen at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 30 Sep (TMD) (Piedmont extreme late date 28 Sep) and Four Mile Run Pk. 22 Oct (TK) (Coastal Plain late date 20 Sep). There were numerous September reports of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in the Piedmont, well before the extreme early date of 28 Sep. Six were noted in the Pinnacles picnic area of Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 2 Sep (IT), where the Mountains early date is 25 Sep; an individual found on the Story of the Forest Nature Trail in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 2 Aug (DH) may have been a rare (but increasing) breeder. A **Summer Tanager** past the Piedmont extreme late date of 5 Oct was seen near Gainesville, *Prince William* 7 Oct (SF). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** lingered at a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 25–30 Oct (GH) (Piedmont late date 10 Oct). Also late were a **Blue Grosbeak** at Waples Mill Meadow Pk. 27 Oct (FA, JCl, AH, MMas) (Piedmont extreme late date 22 Oct) and an **Indigo Bunting** at Aquia Landing Pk. 14 Nov (KG) (Coastal Plain extreme late date 9 Nov). Single **Dickcissels**, a rare and irregular transient in the Region, were observed at Occoquan Bay NWR 30 Sep (JH, PSi) and Leopold's Preserve 19 Oct (TH).

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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.

The weather this fall seemed to favor the southern part of this Region, particularly when it came to shorebirds. Several rainstorms produced large shorebird fallouts in *Montgomery* and *Pulaski* in particular, but further north shorebirds were present in either average or below average numbers this fall. Waterfowl numbers were also fairly low across the board. Passerine showed good diversity as is typical, but the large finch irruption – particularly of Evening Grosbeaks, was the one of the most noteworthy parts of the season. Evening Grosbeaks were present in numbers not seen since the 1990's throughout the Region, along with above average numbers of Pine Siskin and Purple Finch.

**Abbreviations:** Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, *Clarke*); Broadway WTP (Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Rockingham*); Roanoke STP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, *City of Roanoke*); Stuarts Draft WTP (Stuarts Draft Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Augusta*), NRV Fairgrounds (New River Valley Fairgrounds, *Pulaski*); Vet School Pond (Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, *Montgomery*); VT Airport (Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery*).

### WATERFOWL — CRANES

Up to two **Ross's Geese** were at the NRV Fairgrounds, *Pulaski* 7-28 Nov (ph. m. obs.). Another was seen flying over the Snickers Gap Hawkwatch, *Clarke* 18 Sep (ph. MF) – a very odd

spot for one! There was an impressive flight of **Tundra Swans** throughout the Region 12 Nov. High counts included 80 at Blandy (J&BJL); 194 in Waynesboro (VL); and 110 in Roanoke (KC). It was an excellent fall for **Surf Scoters** in the Region. One was at the Broadway WTP 7-14 October (DH, ph. MG) and another 2 were there 12-13 Nov (DH, MG); 4 were at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 26 Oct (ph. DB, BP); 3 were at Stuarts Draft WTP 26 Oct (ph. CF, DCh, IL); 4 were at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 29 Oct (GR); one was at Tinker Mill, *Botetourt* 11 Nov (BK); and three were at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 12 Nov (DH). A **White-winged Scoter** was at Abrams Cr. Wetlands Preserve, *Frederick* 4-7 Nov (ph. DC, m. obs.), while another 4 were at L. Arrowhead 26 Oct (DH, SS). The only report of **Black Scoter** was a surprising count of 5 females at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 29 Oct (GR). It was a good fall for hummingbirds in the Region with several reports of **Rufous Hummingbirds**. One was at Fortune Ridge Rd., *Roanoke* 16-25 Oct (ph. KD, m. obs.); an ad. m. was at Spring Creek Rd., *Rockingham* 23-25 Oct (ph. GMo, m. obs.); one was at Rainbow Trail, *Rockingham* 4 Nov through the end of the period; and another was at Morris Mill Rd., *Augusta* 18 Nov (AL). The star of the show in the hummingbird department was a **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** at Purple Cow Rd., *Augusta* from 25 Oct through the end of the period. This was just the fourth state record and the first for the Mountains and Valleys. A **Virginia Rail** was at Seven Fountains Pond, *Shenandoah* 17 Oct (DGe), with other reports of one at Heritage Community Park, *Montgomery*

19-24 Oct (LA, m. obs.); one at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 24 Oct (AD); and 2 at Abrams Cr. Wetlands Preserve, *Frederick* 8 Nov (DG, EG). A **Sora** was at the Vet School Pond 27 Sep (ph. MN); others were 2 at the Gala Wetlands 26 Oct (MB); one at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 8 Nov (PN); and one in a yard in *Salem* 25 Nov (ph. ER). A **Common Gallinule** was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 26 Sep (BK, JP, BE). A flock of 8 **Sandhill Cranes** flew over Blandy 20 Nov (ph. DC).

## SHOREBIRDS — OWLS

One **American Avocet** was at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 28 Sep (DH). A **Black-bellied Plover** was at the VT Airport 31 Aug - 1 Sep (KG). Later, 2 were seen at the same location as part of a large shorebird fallout 17-18 Sep (LA). One was also at the NRV Fairgrounds on 17 Sep (MM). **American Golden Plovers** were present in good numbers this fall. As usual, the most reliable spot was central *Rockingham*, particularly the area around the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction. Up to 47 were reported in that area or at the nearby Oakwood Dr. Pond from 31 Aug-31 Oct (m. obs.), with the peak count on 29 Sep (LB). There were several records of single birds at the VT Airport 5-18 Sep (m. obs.), followed by an impressive count of 39 there on 12 Nov (JG, LA, XG). One was also at the NRV Fairgrounds 10 Sep (ph. MM); 3 were at Blandy 13 Oct (ph. DC, DB); and up to 5 were on Guthrie Rd., *Augusta* 1-14 Nov (ph. AL, VL). The only **Ruddy Turnstone** reports for the area were one at the VT Airport 30 Aug - 9 Sep (ph. MN, m. obs.) and one at Lumber Mill Rd., *Rockingham* 1-5 Sep (DH, m. obs.). One **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the Roanoke STP 16 Aug (ph. KD); another was at the NRV Fairgrounds 16-29 Aug (ph. LA, m. obs.); 9 were at Quillen's Pond, *Augusta* 16 Aug (ph. IL, m. obs.); and a single bird was later there 3-5 Sep (ph. DCh, m. obs.). Most impressive was an incredible 28 at the Virginia Tech Airport 17 Sep (ph. MN, m. obs.). Besides these more notable species, this same fallout produced

counts of 70 **Pectoral Sandpipers** at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 19 Sep (WL) and VT Airport 17 Sep (LA, MN, m. obs.), as well as 111 **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the latter location, which were quite impressive for our Region. One **Sanderling** was at the Broadway WTP 8 Sep (DH) and 2 were at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 29 Oct (GR). A **Dunlin** was at Greenfield Center, *Botetourt* 16 Sep (JM); up to 5 were at the VT Airport 29-30 Oct (ph. PL, m. obs.); 2 were at the NRV Fairgrounds 30 Oct (ph. PL) and a single bird was there 13 Nov (DH); 3 were at the Broadway WTP 29 Oct (MG); and singles were at the Oakwood Dr. Pond, *Rockingham* 31 Oct (GMo), Leonard's Pond 31 Oct - 2 Nov (DH) and Forestville Pond 8 Nov (DH). In stark contrast to last fall, only one **White-rumped Sandpiper** was reported, at Quillen's Pond, *Augusta* 5 Aug (AL). A single **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was at the VT Airport 29-31 Aug (ph. LA, m. obs.); one was at the Roanoke STP 29 Aug (KD, AD); and up to 3 were in the vicinity of the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 3 Sep - 6 Oct (DH, m. obs.). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at the NRV Fairgrounds 17-29 Aug (SC, ph. LA, m. obs.); one was at Quillen's Pond, *Augusta* 12-13 Sep (ph. VL); and one was on Narrow Back Rd., *Augusta* 17 Sep (GM). Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at the Broadway WTP 8-9 Sep (DH). A **Laughing Gull** was at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 25 Oct (ph. LA). Oddly, the only **Caspian Terns** reported in the Region this fall were 2 at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 19 Aug (SS) and one at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 18 Sep (BC, KS). A **Black Tern** was at L. Moomaw, *Bath* 11 Aug (ph. JG); 2 were at the NRV Fairgrounds 29 Aug (ph. WC, m. obs.); 2 were at the Broadway WTP 29 Aug and one was there 9 Sep (DH); 2 were at Silver L., *Rockingham* 29 Aug (DH); one was at Oakwood Dr. Pond, *Rockingham* 14 Sep (HJ); and one was at Claytor Lake SP, *Pulaski* 12 Oct (LA, AP). A **Common Tern** was at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 29 Oct (GR). A **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 25 Sep (ph. GR) would be a remarkable record at any time but is especially notable since it was not

associated with any tropical storm system. This is the first record for the West Region and the second for the Mountains and Valleys. Even more incredibly, another frigatebird was photographed at the same location 29 Nov (ph. *fide* GR). One **American Bittern** was at Bell's Ln., *Staunton* 20 Oct (ph. MK); another was at the Mulberry Run Constructed Wetland, *Waynesboro* 25 Oct (ph. MA, JF, ph. NN); and one was at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, *Warren* 4 Nov (CC). A **Cattle Egret** was at the NRV Fairgrounds 9 Nov (ph. DH, m. obs.). A juv. **White Ibis** was at the Broadway WTP 10 Aug (ph. MG). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was found along Collier St., *Pulaski* 7-13 Sep (BL, ph. m. obs.), with a **Mississippi Kite** joining it on 7 Sep (ph. PL, m. obs.). Additionally, singles were recorded at Harvey's Knob, *Bedford/Botetourt* 25 Aug, 14 Sep and 18 Sep (m. obs.). At Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* singles were recorded 20 Aug, 3 Sep and 6 Sep (m. obs.). On 5 Sep one was at Stuart's Draft, *Augusta* (ph. AD); on 11 Sep one was in *Staunton* (ph. MK); and one was at Hillandale Pk., *Harrisonburg* 6 Oct (RC). It was a decent fall for **Northern Goshawk**, with reports of singles 18 Sep (VL, m. obs.) and 8 Oct (GM) at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta*; 30 Sep at Heritage Pk., *Montgomery* (ph. MN, WB); 30 Oct at Harvey's Knob, *Bedford/Botetourt* (BE); and 8 Nov at Snickers Gap, *Clarke*. A **SWAINSON'S HAWK** was reported at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* 19 Aug (GM, VL). A light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** spent nearly a month at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* from 7-28 Nov (ph. VL, m. obs.), occasionally straying into adjacent *Nelson* and *Albemarle*. Up to 3 **Short-eared Owls** were at Bell's Ln., *Staunton* 7-9 Nov (AL, m. obs.); 4 were also flushed on 14 Nov along Poorhouse Rd., *Frederick* (SM). Single **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were recorded at the Highland Retreat banding site, *Rockingham* from 3-28 Nov (ph. MG, m. obs.); Rawley Springs, *Rockingham* 30 Sep, 13 Oct and 10 Nov (LB); Caldwell Fields, *Montgomery* 17 Nov (XG), and Beagle Gap, *Augusta* 26 Nov (MN). Two were on Pandapas FS Rd., *Montgomery* 20 Nov (ph. JG, et al.).

## FLYCATCHERS — DICKCISSELS

As is typical in fall, there were multiple reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** from 11 counties and cities: *Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Rockingham, Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Roanoke, Craig, Montgomery, and Salem*. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were only seen in six: *Frederick, Page, Augusta, Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Montgomery*. An **Alder Flycatcher** was at the Vet School Pond 6 Sep (LA, ph. MN). It was a very poor fall for **Loggerhead Shrike** in the Region; aside from several reports in *Pulaski*, the only other report came from near Hinton, *Rockingham* on 4 Oct (LB). A flock of 60 **Bank Swallows** at Parrot River Rd., *Pulaski* 16 Aug (LA) was a notable count for the Region. As usual, most **Brown-headed Nuthatch** reports came from the small population in the Roanoke area, but two records from *Montgomery* on 7 Nov were more notable – two were on Flatwoods Rd. (LA, m. obs.), and one was on Peppers Ferry Rd. (ID). There were a few reports of **Black-capped Chickadee** at lower elevations this fall, including some in *Montgomery, Botetourt* and *Frederick*. There were several reports of **Marsh Wren**: single birds were at the Vet School Pond 19 Sep (LA); VT Airport 11 Oct (DW); near Silver L., *Rockingham* 5 and 11 Oct (HJ, LY, et al.); and at Blandy 30 Sep and 4 Oct (ph. BP). The incursion of **Evening Grosbeaks** into the Region was the largest in many years. There were too many records to list all of them here, but the high count for the Region was an impressive 95 at the Cool Spring Battlefield, *Clarke* 15 Nov (FA). A **Common Redpoll** was in Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 16 Nov (ph. JMc). There was a bit of an irruption of **Red Crossbills** outside of their typical range, with a number of records throughout Shenandoah NP as well as in the Fort Valley, *Shenandoah* and at lower elevation in *Montgomery* near Blacksburg. Two **Lark Sparrows** were at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 7 Sep (HJ). There were a few **Clay-colored Sparrows** around, with reports of single birds from Seven Bends SP, *Shenandoah* 25 Oct (DGe); Singers Glen, *Rockingham* 7 Nov (CT);

and Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* 15 Oct (GM, VL). The only record of **American Tree Sparrow** was one at Blandy 21 Nov (EM, et al.), signaling this species' remarkable decline in recent years. A **Prothonotary Warbler** was at the Vet School Pond 7 Sep (TD). There were several reports of **Orange-crowned Warbler** this fall. *Montgomery* had the most records, with one at the Vet School Pond 12 Oct (ph. LA, et al.); 2 at the VT Airport 17 Oct (ph. JG); and one at Heritage Pk. 19-20 Oct (ph. LA). Other reports were one at Rte. 610, *Augusta* 20 Sep (GM); one at Hensley's Pond, *Rockingham* 22 Sep (HM); one at Locust Grove Farm, *Rockbridge* 10 Oct (Gordon Brown); and one at Natural Bridge, *Rockbridge* 17 Oct (MS). It was a decent fall for **Connecticut Warbler**, with records coming from five jurisdictions: *Clarke*, *Rockingham*, *Augusta*, *Rockbridge* and *Roanoke City*. **Mourning Warbler** reports came from five locales as well: *Clarke*, *Rockingham*, *Harrisonburg*, *Augusta*, and *Montgomery*. A few **Dickcissels** were around, with records coming from *Clarke*, *Rockingham* and several from

*Montgomery*. Perhaps the most notable were 2 at Sinking Cr. Pastures, *Craig* 19 Aug (KG).

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## SOUTHWEST



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

Average temperatures across the Region were in line with expectations, but this is where climatic normalcy ended. Precipitation was above average, in large part due to the active hurricane season. Many of the hurricanes made their way up through the center of the country and drifted eastward into Virginia. This led to an increase in tern numbers on the Tennessee side of South Holsten Lake and possibly an increase in water abundance throughout the region. The above-average rainfall and resulting high waters may also have contributed to the limited number of shorebirds reports this fall. Later in the season, the region experienced above average waterfowl numbers. I would be remiss without mentioning the finch super flight that occurred at the end of the season. Early records for Purple Finch and Pine Siskin were noted across the Region and southwest Virginia got in on the Evening Grosbeak action with a few records in Buchanan, Tazewell, and Wythe.

**Abbreviations:** BRMC (Blue Ridge Music Center, *Grayson*), BIP (Breaks Interstate Park, *Dickenson/Buchanan*).

### WATERFOWL — OWLS

One **Snow Goose** was seen at Clear Creek L., *Bristol* 22 Nov (CL). The usually duckless lake at BIP, *Dickenson* produced a hefty waterfowl list 12 Nov, including 2 **Mute Swans**, 17 **Wood Ducks**, 3 **Gadwalls**, 7 **Mallards**, 3 **Redheads**, 18 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 3 **Greater Scaup**, 15

**Lesser Scaup**, one **Red-breasted Merganser**, and 4 **Ruddy Ducks** (DR). **Virginia Rails** were reported on a few occasions this fall and followed a trend of increasing reports for the species in the Region. Up to 2 were seen at the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 9 Aug-26 Oct (AG, a. r. DT, m. obs.); one bird was heard calling at Clifton Farm Rd., *Tazewell* 24 Aug (CD); and an astounding 5 birds were heard calling in wetlands on Rocky Fork Rd., *Wise* 11 Nov (WB, MN). A single **Sandhill Crane** was seen at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 28 Oct (ph. AB). Shorebird numbers were few and far between in the southwest this year, and the only noteworthy sightings came from two separate **Greater Yellowlegs** reports. One was seen at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 16 Oct (m. obs.) and the other report came, unsurprisingly, from the Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 8 Nov (ph. AB, MP). **Common Loon** reports came in from John W. Flanagan Res., *Dickenson* 13 Nov (DR) and from Cavitt's Creek Pk., *Tazewell* 22 Nov. Many **Great Egrets** were seen across the Region in the months of August and September, with reports from 5 counties: *Buchanan*, *Tazewell*, *Russell*, *Smyth*, and *Wythe*. A total of three **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were observed across two separate reports, with one bird at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 13 Oct (ph. PE), and a juv. and ad. observed at Clear Creek L., *Bristol* 21 Nov (ph. KC). One ad. **Mississippi Kite** was documented at Britt's Pk., *Tazewell* 12 Sep (CD). Per usual several **Golden Eagles** were detected: one ad. was seen at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 2 Sep (DS) and 19 Oct (JP), and an imm. bird was seen at Leeman Pk., *Lee* 13 Oct (CF). Two juv.



**Barn Owls** were seen in a nest box off of Old Saltworks Rd., *Washington* 16 Aug (ph. AN), and another was heard calling at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 24 Nov (DS). A deceased **Long-eared Owl** was found lying on the road at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 14 Nov (ph. AB, MP). This fall was a bumper season for **Northern Saw-whet Owls**; one was heard calling in response to playback at Whitetop Mt., *Grayson* 11 Oct (m. obs.), and another was heard by the same birding group at High Knob, *Scott* 17 Oct (m. obs.).

## FALCONS — WARBLERS

**Peregrine Falcons** were observed on three separate occasions across the region. One bird was seen at Lovill's Cr. Boat Ramp, *Carroll* 2 & 5 Oct (DJ, ph. CJ), and one at BIP, *Dickenson* 14 Oct (CF) and was most likely a bird that bred there. Another report came from White Rocks Rd., *Lee* 25 Oct (LG). Many **Loggerhead Shrikes** were seen across the southwestern portion of the state and seem to have been reported in higher numbers than in previous years. The first report of the period came off of Citizen Rd., *Wythe* 28 Sep (AB), followed by one on Rocky Hollow Rd., *Grayson* 4 Oct (ph. AB). Another bird was seen at the well-known shrike spot of Elk Garden, *Russell* 17 Oct (ph. LA, ph. JW, m. obs.) & 20 Nov (WB, ph. MN); one was on Wilson Hill Rd., *Lee* 18 Oct (LG) & 4 Nov (DK, JK); and lastly the resident shrike at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* was reported 9 Sep (ph. DS), Nov 16 (LR), & 26 Nov (JP). A single **White-eyed Vireo** was seen at Falls Mill L., *Tazewell* 23 Oct (ph. CD) and is the second latest record of the species for the Region. Three reports of **Philadelphia Vireo** came during the period, including 2 at Compton Mt. Rd., *Buchanan* 20 Sep (ph. RM); Upper Poore Valley, *Smyth* 23 Sep (VF); and Riverstone Organic Farm, *Floyd* 3 Oct (SC). Along with the many finches, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** came down in force this season. The first confirmed report that did not come from a resident bird was 9 Sep at Fancy Gap, *Carroll* (WC). **House Wrens** seem to be

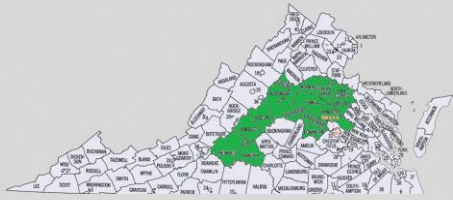
wintering across the state in higher numbers than usual and southwestern Virginia got in on the action with a single bird seen at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* from 31 Oct (ph. DO) to 21 Nov (WB, MN). Three **Marsh Wrens** – noteworthy for the Region and a difficult detection for this skulky bird – were detected: at Falls Mill L., *Tazewell* 2 Oct (CD); Southern Gap, *Buchanan*, 3 Oct (ph. DO); and Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 12 Oct (CF). Across the state, the star bird this season has perhaps been **Evening Grosbeak**, which have been moving southward in massive numbers not seen since the 1990s. Up to 11 were seen at Compton Mt. Rd., *Buchanan* 2-30 Nov (ph. RM); 2 at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 5-8 Nov (DS, ph. HS); 10 on Ward Branch Rd., *Wythe* 19 Nov (NC); and a flyover bird at Southern Gap, *Buchanan* 21 Nov (WB, ph. MN). **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** were among the many species that came down in force this fall, and the first records for these finches respectively came in late September and early October. **Lincoln's Sparrow** were numerous, and one was seen at Burrus Tract, *Bland* 24 Sep (KG); another at Saltville Ponds, *Smyth* 10 Oct (KE); 2 at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 12 Oct (CF); one at Leeman Pk., *Lee* 13 Oct (CF); BIP, *Dickenson* 14 Oct (CF); one at BRMC, *Carroll* 17 Oct (CJ); another at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 24 Oct (ph. RM); one at Happy Hollow Rd., *Buchanan* 24 Oct (DO); one in *Grayson* 25 Oct (MG); and lastly one at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 28 Oct (ph. AB). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was seen at the Skull's Gap Overlook, *Smyth* 24 Oct (AA) and represents the latest sighting of the species on record in the Region. Several **Tennessee Warblers** were detected fairly late into the season, with the latest being seen in *Lee* 9 Nov (PG). This also represents the late-date record for this species in this Region. A few **Orange-crowned Warblers** were observed in southwest Virginia this fall: one was at Falls Mill L., *Tazewell* 16 Oct (ph. CD), and another 2 were seen at Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 20 Oct (ph. RM). This fall was exceptional for **Connecticut Warblers** across the state and this Region

managed one record from the Burrus Tract, *Bland*  
24 Sep (ph. KG).

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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.

The fall of 2020 was one of the most exciting seasons of birding in some time. Despite this, the season started off slow with a rather lackluster showing for wading birds due to flooded lakes and wet conditions further south. Things picked up quickly, however, with storm systems and tropical storm remnants causing widespread displacement of shorebirds, terns, and gulls. Neotropical passerine migrants were diverse and abundant, with many prize species encountered in shocking densities. Raptor and waterfowl migration also delivered surprises to attentive observers. However, the real stars of the Fall were certainly the irruptive boreal passerines that reached the Region in record numbers. Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches quickly became a few of the most abundant species in the entire Region by early October, and continued their onslaught through the end of the fall reporting period. Evening Grosbeaks stole the show in November and graced many bird feeders with their beautiful and raucous flocks. Highlight species were plentiful, and included Ross's Goose, Red-necked Grebe, Surf Scoter, American Avocet, Willet, Brown Pelican, Swallow-tailed Kite, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Sedge Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Red Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Nelson's Sparrow, and Golden-winged, Connecticut, and Mourning Warblers.

**Abbreviations:** Mill Creek (Mill Creek Lake Pk., *Amherst*)

## GEESE — IBISES

Two **Snow Geese** were reported: a blue morph at James River Rd., *Albemarle* 19 Nov (ph. BB, TB), and a white morph at London Downs, *Bedford* 21 & 22 Nov (AE, ph. m. obs). Generally more uncommon than Snow, two **Ross's Geese** were discovered at Thrashers Mill Pk., *Amherst* 26 Nov (KH). Three **Surf Scoters** were found during a rainstorm at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 12 Nov (ph. ST). Providing a very uncommon fall record for this species, a **Red-necked Grebe** was at L. Anna, *Spotsylvania* 13 Nov (ph. DN). Up to two **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** continued at a feeder through the end of the fall period on Bolling Ave., *Charlottesville* 19 Nov (LT). Late fall and winter hummingbirds have been on the increase with milder climes and fewer cold snaps. Always very rare in the Region, an **American Avocet** at Woodvale Farm, *Albemarle* delighted local birders 5 & 6 Aug (ph. WC, m. obs.). A displaced **Willet** was found during a storm system at Rockfish Valley Elementary, *Nelson* 1 Sep (ph. ES, TS). Rare in the Piedmont portion of the region, a **Laughing Gull** was at L. Anna, *Louisa* 29 Aug (ph. AR). The lone **Black Tern** report came from Mill Creek 29 Aug (ph. MB, MJ) during the passage of Tropical Storm Laura. Tropical Storm Isais deposited 4 **Common Terns** at L. Anna, *Louisa* 4 Aug (ph. AR). One of the most bizarre reports of the season was 3 **BROWN PELICANS** soaring over Gordonsville, *Orange* 5 Aug (TD), far removed from any significant water body. The passage of Tropical Storm Isais the day prior offers a

possible explanation. A scarce and skulky transient, an **American Bittern** 25 Oct at Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* (ph. ES, TS) was the sole report in the Region this fall. **Little Blue Herons** were not widely reported compared to previous years: one was at Mill Creek 31 Aug (MJ) and six were at L. Hanover Nature Trail, *Hanover* (ph. NC); at least one lingered there until 13 Sep. **White Ibis** reports were similarly lacking; one at Sandiges Rd., *Amherst* 1 Sep (ph. MH) was later seen at Mill Creek 18 Sep, and another was at Slaughter Pen Historic Site, *Spotsylvania* 14 Sep (JG).

## KITES — WRENS

Always a thrilling visitor to the Region, there were an outstanding 4 **Swallow-tailed Kites** found. The first was at Bowling Green, *Caroline* 1 Aug (ph. MC, m. obs) and lingered there until 6 Aug; another was also seen 1 Aug at nearby Sorrell Ln., *Caroline* (BF). The next was found on Lovers Ln., *Orange* 4 Aug (ph. BB, MNoo) and subsequently detected in bordering *Albemarle* and *Louisa* in the immediate vicinity thru 6 Aug. The final report came from Thrashers Lake Pk., *Amherst* 28 Aug (ph. MB). Migrant **Golden Eagles** were spotted at L. Monacan, *Nelson* 3 Nov (ph. ES, TS) and over Crozet, *Albemarle* (CB) 8 Nov. A now annual fall migrant through the region, **Mississippi Kites** were observed at Bland Wade Ln., *Nelson* 5 Sep (ph. ES, TS, GS) and near Holly Hill, *Powhatan* 9 Sep (KC). A light morph imm. **Rough-legged Hawk** first observed from Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch was present in *Nelson* and *Albemarle* counties over I-64 on 7 – 28 Nov (ph. m. obs), and showed beautifully for many birders from both the hawkwatch and the Flight of the Albatross Scenic Overlook, *Nelson* throughout its stay. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were detected in the *Albemarle* portion of Shenandoah NP at Sawmill Run Overlook 19 Nov (BB), and Beagle Gap and Blackrock 26 Nov (a. r. AE). One was also at Camp Hydaway, *Campbell* 13 Nov (MJ). There were at least 12 **Olive-sided Flycatchers**

reported between *Albemarle*, *Amherst*, *Charlottesville*, and *Nelson*. Three **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were encountered: one at Observatory Mt., *Albemarle* 19 Aug (ph. a. r. BB); at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 1 Sep (ph. TB); and Pen Pk., *Charlottesville* 18 Sep (ph. TB). A 26 Oct **Least Flycatcher** was exceptionally late at Old Trail, *Albemarle* (ph. BB, MNor). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** had a major invasion into the Region this fall; the earliest report came from Montebello, *Nelson* 18 Aug (ES, TS). **Blue-grey Gnatcatcher** is typically one of our earliest migrants, making one at Dunlora, *Albemarle* 18 Oct (ph. BB, DC) exceptionally late. **House Wrens** lingered quite late this year as well, with six reported into Nov. A **Sedge Wren** was a very surprising early fall discovery at Dunlora, *Albemarle* 22 Aug (ph. DC), possibly part of a more widespread movement into the Mid-Atlantic around this time. **Marsh Wrens** were detected at several traditional locations, but an early bird at Peaks of Otter, *Bedford* 9 Sep (BE) was unusual.

## FINCHES — DICKCISSEL

The finch irruption of Fall 2020 was one for the record books. Thousands of **Pine Siskins** and **Purple Finches** flooded far s. of their boreal strongholds, and later came **Evening Grosbeaks** in numbers that exceeded the wildest dreams of all but the most seasoned birders. No doubt the flagship species of this fall for many, the grosbeak invasion in the Region saw the largest numbers of this species in three decades. This charismatic boreal wanderer was detected in *Albemarle*, *Amherst*, *Bedford*, *Campbell*, *Charlottesville*, *Fluvanna*, *Hanover*, *Louisa*, *Lynchburg*, *Nelson* and *Powhatan*, and surely occurred throughout the Region. The extrema of these reports included an early bird at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 31 Oct (a. r. DC) and the high count of 35 at Warren Ferry, *Albemarle* 29 Nov (ph. BK). **Purple Finches** had a massive movement into the Region, with the earliest arrival coming from Chanco Volante, *Albemarle*

15 Sep (PM) and the high count of 112 from Dunlora, *Albemarle* 18 Oct (ph. BB, DC). **Red Crossbills** continued in the Montebello area of *Nelson*; 5 were noted 1 Sep (ph. DB), and 2 on 15 & 21 Sep (ph. DC, ES). These may have been precursors to a larger movement that occurred later in the fall in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. **Pine Siskins** swarmed across the region as well, with a record early date of 4 Aug on Radar Rd, *Bedford* (AP) and the high count of 200 from Byrd Grove, *Fluvanna* 20 Oct (ph. SH, WH, NT).

Providing one of extremely few fall records of this rare Regional migrant, a **Nelson's Sparrow** was at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 2 & 6 Oct (ph. BB). Eleven **Lincoln's Sparrows** at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 14 Oct (ph. TB) was a high count for this generally uncommon species. A lingerer on 17 Oct provided a late date for **Worm-eating Warbler** at Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* (ph. RW). Only 3 **Golden-winged Warblers** were found: one at Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* 27 Aug (ph. ES, TS); another at Ivy Cr. Natural Area, *Albemarle* 8 Sep (ph. BB, m. obs) that lingered there through 13 Sep; and one at Billingsgate, *Bedford* 30 Sep (KL). Notably, 2 **Brewster's Warblers** (Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler) were found: one at Pleasant Grove Pk., *Fluvanna* 3 Sep (TB) and another at Ivy Cr. Natural Area, *Albemarle* 6 Sep (ph. TB, DC). Among multiple late **Tennessee Warbler** reports, one 10 Nov at Riverview Pk., *Charlottesville* (ph. BB, TB) was the latest. Eleven **Orange-crowned Warblers** were

reported, above average for this uncommon late season migrant. A scarce and secretive migrant which averages only a couple reports per season, there were a staggering 13 **Connecticut Warblers** reported between 3 Sep and 25 Oct from *Albemarle*, *Bedford*, *Fluvanna*, *Hanover*, and *Nelson*. Averaging only slightly more common than Connecticut, there were also 13 individual reports of **Mourning Warbler** from *Albemarle*, *Charlottesville*, and *Nelson*; two very late individuals on 17 Oct in *Albemarle* were exceptional. A **Blackpoll Warbler** 10 Nov at Riverview Pk., *Charlottesville* (ph. BB, TB) was the last report of this late fall migrant. A **Northern Parula** was exceptionally late at Lickinghole Cr., *Albemarle* 19 Nov (ph. MF). The lone **Dickcissel** report of the period came from Old Trail, *Albemarle* 26 Sep (ph. KK)

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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.

On average, temperatures were slightly above normal for the four-month period but there were no marked deviations from normal averages in any individual month. Precipitation, on the other hand, was a different story with increases above normal for each month. August precipitation amounts reached 15.34 inches, which was 10.68 inches above normal – the second wettest August on record. This amount of rain in August had dire implications for available shorebird habitat at Hog Island WMA and, consequently, this resulted in one of the most abysmal shorebird seasons there in recent memory. Fall passerine migration continued the trend of the past several years towards later departure dates for many species, with new late dates for several species. It may be time to start rewriting the average departure dates for many of these species. It was an exciting season for rarities in the region, including Piping Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Sooty Tern, Swallow-tailed Kite, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

**Abbreviations:** Ancarrow's (Ancarrow's Landing, *City of Richmond*), City Point (Petersburg National Battlefield- City Point Unit, *City of Hopewell*), Dutch Gap/Henricus (Dutch Gap Conservation Area/Henricus Park, *Chesterfield*), Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*), JRP (James River Park System, *City of Richmond*), Shirley (Shirley Plantation, *Charles City*).

## GEESE — SKIMMERS

A single **Ross's Goose** was noted in the Brandon area of *Prince George* 16 Nov (ph. ABr). Potentially the same bird was seen again just across the river at the Sandy Point area of *Charles City* 21 Nov (ph. ABr). At least five "Richardson's" **Cackling Geese** were tallied among a large flock of **Canada Geese** in the Brandon area of *Prince George* 9 Nov (ABr). Two f. **Surf Scoters** were present on Swift Cr. Res. at The Boathouse at Sunday Pk., *Chesterfield* 21-29 Nov (m. obs.). A f. **White-**



Surf Scoter photographed at Swift Cr. Reservoir, *Chesterfield* by Adam D'Onofrio, 29 Nov 2020.

**winged Scoter** was found at Swift Cr. Res., *Chesterfield* 3 Nov (ph. MC). The bird continued until 13 Nov (m. obs.). An ad. m. **Long-tailed Duck** was spotted at the Huguenot Flatwater section of JRP 2 Nov and remained there throughout the day (ph. JD, m. obs.). Late **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** included one in Toano, *James City* 31 Oct & 2 Nov (ph. CA) and one at William & Mary, *City of Williamsburg* 13 Nov (AR). **Black-billed Cuckoo** reports included one

spotted in a residential yard in *City of Richmond* 3 Oct (E&BO). The other was photographed at Bryan Pk., *City of Richmond* 9 Oct (BG). Two **Common Gallinules** were at Shirley 14 Nov (ph. ABr), while a single bird was still there 25 Nov (ph. ABr). A molting ad. **American Golden-Plover** was at Riverside Turf Farm, *Charles City* 10 Sep (ph. EW) and remained through 12 Sep (m. obs.) A juv. American Golden-Plover was seen at the same location 18 Sep (ph. AR). A **PIPING PLOVER** was a good find at Felgates Cr., *York* 28 Aug, providing the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> local record (CM, NN, AR). Two **HUDSONIAN GODWITS** spent the day on Turkey Island Rd., *Henrico* 30 Oct (ph. ABr, EO, KH). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Mainland Farm, *James City* 2-9 Nov, was the first local Nov record (ph. BW). A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was at Riverside Turf Farm, *Charles City* 28-31 Aug (m. obs.). Late **Solitary Sandpipers** included one at Mainland Farm, *James City* 20-23 Oct (ph. BW). Unfortunately, this bird was found recently deceased from head trauma on 23 Oct. A second Solitary Sandpiper replaced the dead bird at Mainland Farm and was present from 28 Oct-1 Nov, providing a new local late date (ph. BW). At least two but possibly four **SOOTY TERNS** were observed on the James R. from Lawrence Lewis Jr. Pk., *Charles City* during the passage of Tropical Storm Isaias 4 Aug (ph. EO, ph. AB). Late for the region, a **Royal Tern** was at Jamestown, *James City* 4 Nov (BW). Not usually seen this far inland, a **Sandwich Tern** was at Wall's Bluff, *Isle of Wight* 8 Sep (TC). Two **Black Skimmers** were noted at Fort Boykin Historic Pk., *Isle of Wight* 24 Aug (TC).

## PELICANS — THRUSHES

More and more **American White Pelicans** are finding Hog to be suitable fall/winter habitat – 104 birds there on 22 Nov set a new local peak count (ph. CH, SK). A lone American White Pelican was at Swift Cr. Res., *Chesterfield* 11-12 Oct (ph. L&LT, m. obs.). Single juv. **White Ibis**, prone to post-breeding inland wandering, were found at Fort Boykin Historic Pk. 6 Aug (TC) and at the Reedy Cr. section of JRP 27-28 Aug (m.

obs.). A **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** passed over Kingswood, *James City* 13 Sep (BT), marking the 7<sup>th</sup> local record and first fall record. In recent years, this species is becoming more prevalent in the region as well as in the state overall. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Hog 20 Sep (LL), setting a new local early date. An **ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** was photographed at Dutch Gap/Henricus by an Anonymous eBirder 10 Nov. The bird was



Ash-throated Flycatcher photographed at Dutch Gap by Adam D'Onofrio, 18 Nov 2020.

spotted again 14 Nov (ph. MK) and continued to be seen off and on through 21 Nov (m. obs.). Two **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were reported in the region this fall. The first was at the Wetlands section of JRP 27 Aug (WT), while the second was photographed at Ancarrow's 30 Sep (ph. AB). A **Least Flycatcher** at Basset Hall Nature Trail, Williamsburg 7 Sep (ph. CM) provided the 8<sup>th</sup> local record. Three other Least Flycatchers were reported in the region, at Harrison L. National Fish Hatchery, *Charles City* 22 Aug (MC); at Ancarrow's 19 Sep (ph. AB, ph. LB); and at Deep Run Pk., *Henrico* 30 Sep (ph. EF). A **Warbling Vireo**, somewhat rare in the eastern part of the region, was at the Jamestown Glasshouse, *James City* 2 Sep (ph. NB). A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Mainland Farm, *James City* 17 Oct set a new local late date (AR). A **CAVE SWALLOW** was discovered on a utility wire in the Brandon area of *Prince George* 19 Nov (ph. ABr). A large irruption of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** occurred throughout the state this fall. The earliest bird recorded in the region was one in *Chesterfield* 31 Aug (AB). Away from Ancarrow's, where the species is

known to winter, the latest **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** in the region was one at Shore Dr., *James City* 27 Nov (M&RF). A late **Veery** was at Tormentor L., *Isle of Wight* 5 Oct (ph. TC). A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** was in Colonial Heritage, *James City* 25 Oct (ph. SD), a new local late date. Conversely, a **Hermit Thrush** at York R. SP, *James City* 19 Sep set a new local early date (M&LB).

## GROSBEAKS — DICKCISSEL

A large irruption of **Evening Grosbeaks** got underway in the region in late Nov. Birds were spotted throughout the region with the largest concentration noted at the Pony Pasture section of JRP, where upwards of 30 birds were counted (m. obs.). A **Lark Sparrow** was found at Jamestown Is., *James City* 11 Sep (RS), furnishing a 7<sup>th</sup> local record; the bird continued into the next day (ph. NB). An imm. **White-crowned Sparrow** was at Jamestown Beach Event Pk., *James City* 23 Oct (ph. BW) and 26 Oct (BT). Seven **Nelson's Sparrows** at Bay Tree Beach Rd., *York* 20 Oct set a new local peak count (DY). A late **Yellow-breasted Chat** lingered at Shirley until at least 19 Nov (ph. ABr). An ad. m. **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** was gleaned from an enormous mixed blackbird flock at Chippokes Plantation SP, *Surry* 29 Nov (NB, KL). A very late **Bobolink** was photographed at Dutch Gap/Henricus 14 Nov (ph. JE). A **Northern Waterthrush** was in Governor's Land, *James City* 25-30 Oct, setting a new local late date (ph. CO). A **Tennessee Warbler** in Toano, *James City* 4 Nov also set a new local late date (ph. CA). **Connecticut Warblers** encountered in the region this fall included one at the Wetlands section of JRP 15-16 Sep (WT, KL, PB, NW); one at Rockwood Pk., *Chesterfield* 26 Sep (ph. MC); and one at Ancarrow's 28 Sep (JD). A **Hooded Warbler** at New Quarter Pk., *York* 24 Oct set another new local late date (JL). A late **American Redstart** was at Chimborazo Pk., *City of Richmond* 10 Nov (PB). A late **Cape May Warbler** was at City Point 4 Nov (ph. ABr). A **Northern Parula** was at Shore Dr., *James City* 21-22 Nov, establishing a new local late date

(DC, ph. BW, m. obs.). A very late **Yellow Warbler** was seen at Ancarrow's 24 Oct (PB, MS). Two late **Yellow-throated Warblers** were at Dutch Gap/Henricus 5 Oct (ph. BWo). A **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** was discovered on Shore Dr., *James City* 20 Nov (ph. DC) and remained in the area until 29 Nov (m. obs.). This was the second local record of this species, the first coming in late Dec 2017. A very late **Blue Grosbeak** was photographed at Dutch



Black-throated Gray Warbler photographed in *James City* by Matt Anthony, 21 Nov 2020.

Gap/Henricus 13 Nov (ph. BWo). **Dickcissel** reports included a single bird at Jamestown Beach Event Pk., *James City* 2 Oct (ph. BW, ph. AR, FR, JW). This was a 12<sup>th</sup> local record. The other report, of two flyovers, came from Cumberland Marsh Preserve, *New Kent* 4 Oct (AR).

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## COASTAL



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Accomack and Northampton counties; the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

Superlatives such as amazing, unprecedented, extraordinary, OMG!, What's next!?! (and there were nexts!!), characterizing fall 2020 birding understate the season's bird diversity, and for some taxa, abundance. The Region claimed six first-state-record species (pending VARCOM deliberations): two trans-Atlantic vagrants (European Storm-Petrel and Gray Heron); three southwestern US strays (Couch's Kingbird, Brown-crested Flycatcher, and Virginia's Warbler); and a southern Atlantic displacement (Masked Booby). Aug, Oct and Nov pelagic trips served up Brown Noddy, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Black-capped Petrel, and White-faced Storm-Petrel reports. Black-chinned Hummingbird, Black Rail, Franklin's Gull, Roseate Tern, Brown Booby, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-whiskered Vireo, and Townsend's Warbler headlined additional species that set birder-mobiles to chase mode. As forecasted, there was a Red-breasted Nuthatch/northern finch flight set in motion by boreal forest cone-crop shortage. What roles did seasonally above average temperatures, monthly above average rainfall ending 30 Nov 8.50 in. above normal for the year, 30 Atlantic Basin tropical system events, and record-setting wildfires in the southwestern US play in this rarities surfeit? Exuberant joy among the birds, ESB.

**Abbreviations:** Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, *Virginia Beach*); Beasley (Beasley tract of the Princess Anne WMA, *Virginia Beach*); Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, *Northampton*); CCCHNAP (Cape Charles Coastal Habitat NAP, *Northampton*); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR,

*Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, *Portsmouth*); CVWO (Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, *Northampton*); False Cape (False Cape SP, *Virginia Beach*); First Landing (First Landing SP, *Virginia Beach*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, *Hampton*); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, *Hampton/Norfolk*); KHW (Kiptopeke Hawk Watch at KSP); KSP (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); Little Is. (Little Island Pk., *Virginia Beach*); Magothy Bay (Magothy Bay NAP, *Northampton*); NNP (Newport News Pk., *Newport News*); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, *Virginia Beach*); Savage Neck (Savage Neck Dunes NAP, *Northampton*); Sunset (Sunset Beach Resort, *Northampton*)

### WATERFOWL — SHOREBIRDS

Two **Snow Geese** at Chinc. 27 Sep (ph. SSt, JSt, ZSt) were well ahead of the species' 30 Oct average arrival date. Single **Ross's Geese**, now late autumn regulars in the Region, were over KSP 14 Nov (ph. ThS) and at Chinc. 21 Nov into Dec (m. obs.). A **Eurasian Wigeon** at Chinc. 29 Nov (AH, EO, CW) barely squeezed into the season's report window. Early arriving *Aythya* included a **Redhead** at Chinc. 8 Oct (DP) and a **Ring-necked Duck** at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 15 Sep (ph. LR, ph. RR); 15 Oct is the expected arrival for both. A f. **King Eider** was an 8 Oct Grandview surprise (ph. JMc); another at 14<sup>th</sup> St., *Virginia Beach* 20 Nov (ph. AB, CFa, ph. SM, ph. JMc) was probably the one noted at Rudee into Dec (m. obs.). **Common Eiders** were listed from numerous sites 31 Oct

through season's end with a peak of 6 at Chinc. 22 Nov (KBa). A m. **Harlequin Duck** passed Little Is. 31 Oct (AB). Other singles were near Lynnhaven, *Virginia Beach* 26 Nov (ph. AB, ph. RBi, ph. SK, ph. JMc) and at Beach Pier Gift Shop/Fishing Pier, *Virginia Beach* 28 Nov (KSu, CT). A **Red-necked Grebe** at First Landing 8 Oct (LR) bested the species' 25 Oct Gold Book Coastal Plain extreme early date by seventeen days. An **Eared Grebe** was at Back Bay 24 Sep (ph. DC, ph. RBi, AB, RR). A **White-winged Dove** was a one-day specialty for Cape Charles 17 Aug (ph. MA, EC). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Sunnyside Village, *Northampton* (MA) marked the third consecutive year this species was last reported on 11 Nov. Single **Black-billed Cuckoos** were eBird-entered as follows: at Back Bay 23 Sep (ph. RBi, TM), at KSP (KBa et al.) and the ESVNWR (BA, DC, ph. LM) 3 Oct; at KSP 8 Oct (ESB); and Savage Neck 9 Oct (MP). For a second consecutive fall, KSP feeders enticed a **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD**, this year an imm. 8 (ph. MA, ph. DN, m. obs.) & 9 (ph. RK, KBa et al.) Oct. Numerous **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were chronicled throughout the Region into December. A *Selasphorus rufous/sasin* hummingbird that had "been hanging out for a few days" at a *Norfolk* home was last seen 29 Nov (ph. CHa). A **BLACK RAIL** closely observed on the ground and in flight at Chinc. 24 Nov (AR) provided hope this seriously declining species has retained a foothold in the Commonwealth. Single **Common Gallinules** were at Back Bay 5 Oct (ESB, ph. CH) and the NCP 17 Oct (m. obs.). Four **Sandhill Cranes** were seen in lower *Northampton* 3 Nov (JG, ML, ph. BT). The **Black-necked Stilt** peak count of 97 at Craney 20 Aug (AM, LS, BT, BW, DY) included ads. with young hatched at the facility during the summer. The maximum reported total from the Queens Sound Channel, *Accomack/Chinc.* area was 6 on 6 Aug (Anonymous). Craney had the highest reported **American Avocet** total with 523 on 24 Sep (AM, LS, BW, DY). Elsewhere, 2 at Chinc. 7-24 Aug (ph. JL, m. obs.) preceded one to 3 there 16 Oct-13 Nov (ph. JL). Singles were

at Willis Wharf, *Northampton* 2-28 Nov (m. obs.) and Back Bay 5 Nov (ph. SM); 2 were at the NCP 14 Nov (ph. m. obs.). Among many 18 Sep-17 Nov **American Golden-Plover** observations was a high count of 22 off Seaview Dr., *Northampton* 13 Nov (NN). A late-departing **Piping Plover** was at Grandview 9-28 Nov (ph. m. obs.); this species' average late date is 15 Oct. Two **Long-billed Curlew** reports placed one at Gull Marsh, *Northampton* 22 Oct (ph. ES, ph. KL, WT) and one on FINWR 13 Nov ph. (NN). This species was last reported in the Region off Wachapreague, *Accomack* 16 Aug 2017 (ph. ESB, BA, JP, BK). A **Hudsonian Godwit** was listed at Back Bay 24 Sep (BA, LMo) through 5 Oct (ESB, CH). Another was at Chinc. 9 Oct (ph. JL) and one was off Seaview Dr., *Northampton* 13 Nov (ph. MA, ph. TD, IT). One to 4 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** frequented Craney 20 Aug (AM, LS, BT) to 3 Sep (AM, LS, ph. BW, DY). Up to 2 were at Chinc. 29 Aug (ph. JMc) to 2 Sep (v.r. BH) and one was near Ocean Lakes Pk., *Virginia Beach* 10 Sep (ph. AB). The **White-rumped Sandpiper** average late date is 7 Nov. Thus, one at Quinby, *Accomack* 14 Nov (ph. TS, DS, ES) was noteworthy. Thirty-six **Long-billed Dowitchers** were reported 15 Nov, 35 at Messick Pt., *Poquoson* (ph. JGi, AR, HW) and one at Beasley (AB, JMc). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at a "small lake" in *Virginia Beach* 14 Nov (ph. RC); on average this species departs by 15 Oct. Adding data for clarifying each subspecies' seasonal distributions was a FOS **Western Willet** report, 3 at False Cape 1 Aug (SM), and a last-of-season **Eastern Willet** report, one at Chinc. 25 Sep (LA, AW). **Wilson's Phalaropes** were documented 10 Aug-9 Oct; peak counts were 9 at Craney 27 Aug (AM, LS, BW, DY) and 7 at Chinc. 28 Aug (ph. JL). **Red-necked Phalarope** sightings fit a comparable date range, 9 Aug-10 Oct. Noteworthy totals were 9-12 at Craney 27 Aug to 1 Oct (ph. BW et al.), 6 off *Northampton* 30 Aug (ph. JM) and 7 during a 10 Oct pelagic (ph. m. obs.).

## JAEGERS — HERONS

Confirmed **Pomarine Jaeger** detections included: one off *Virginia Beach* 10 Oct (ph. SM, ph. EO, m. obs.); one off *Northampton* 24 Oct (ph. TP, ESB et al.); 2 off Ft. Story, *Virginia Beach* 9 Nov (ph. SM); one off Back Bay 18 Nov (AB, JMc); and singles off Chinc. (KBa) and Ft. Story, *Virginia Beach* 22 Nov (ph. SM). Birders listed **Parasitic Jaegers** 2 Sep through 28 Nov with a one-day high count of 12 on 20 Nov, 5 off 85<sup>th</sup> St. and 7 at Rudee (CG, AR, JW). An 8 Nov pelagic encountered 4 **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, one off *Virginia Beach*, 3 off *Northampton* (ph. m. obs.). A first-cycle **Franklin's Gull** at Chinc. 14 Nov (ph. ABs) was a Rarity Round-up weekend highlight. A **BROWN NODDY** photographed off *Northampton* at (37.031, -74.957) 9 Aug (ABs) qualified for VARCOM Category 1 consideration. If accepted, this would be the state's 2nd record for the species. Virginia's third, and first definitively photographed, **YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS** was off *Northampton* 8 Nov (ph.



Yellow-nosed Albatross photographed by Andrew Rapp off *Northampton*, 8 Nov 2020.

CH, ph. AR, WT). The previous records occurred 28 Nov 1981 and 15 May 2017. Tropical Storm Isaias was responsible for the following 4 Aug **Sooty Tern** counts: one each past Cape Charles (ph. MA) and Sunset (ESB); 6 off Ft. Story, *Virginia Beach* (AB, et al.); 2 off Rudee (ph. RBi, SK); and up to 6 off Willoughby Spit, *Norfolk* (CF, KL, WT). A **Bridled Tern** was at (36.951, -74.908), *Northampton* 9 Aug (ph. LA, ph. TS,

ESB, m. obs.). Isaias also sent 2 **Black Terns** off Ocean View, *Norfolk* (ph. RBi), up to 2 off Willoughby Spit, *Norfolk* (CF, WT, ST) and one off the HRBT (KL). Additional sightings of this species were: 8 off Grandview 16 Aug (TBo, AR, JW); 12 at Craney 20 Aug (AM, LS, BT, BW, DY); and 3 off Ft. Monroe, *Hampton* 30 Aug (ph. JS). A video received too late for the Region's Summer 2020 report captured an ad. **ROSEATE TERN** with the tern colony on the HRBT 30 Jun (v.r. NN); one was also definitely described at Chinc. 18 Aug (ph. H&GS). A **Northern Fulmar** was off *Northampton* 8 Nov (ph. m. obs.). Two **BLACK-CAPPED PETREL** reports located singles off *Virginia Beach* at (36.81882 - 75.32535) 7 Sep (JM) and off *Northampton* 10 Oct (ph. SM, m. obs.). Five **Cory's Shearwaters** were off *Northampton* at (37.008, -75.155) 9 Aug (ph. m. obs.) and 3 were listed for the 10 Oct pelagic (ph. SM, m. obs.). Offshore **Great Shearwater** totals were: 4 off *Northampton* 9 Aug (ph. LAn, m. obs.); singles off *Virginia Beach* 20 & 21 Aug and 1 Sep (ph. JM); 5 off *Virginia Beach/Norhampton* 10 Oct (ph. SM, EO, m. obs.); one off *Virginia Beach* 24 Oct (ph. TP, ESB et al.); and 10 in *Northampton* waters 8 Nov (ph. m. obs.). One **Manx Shearwater** was at (36.974, -75.216), *Northampton* 9 Aug (ESB, m. obs.). Seventeen **Audubon's Shearwaters**, 2 of *Virginia Beach* (ph. SK, m. obs.), 15 off *Northampton*, were posted 9 Aug (ph. LAn, ph. TB, m. obs.); another was off *Virginia Beach* 21 Aug (ph. JM). The cumulative **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** count for a 9 Aug *Virginia Beach/Norhampton* excursion was 323 (ESB, ph. LAn, ph. TS, m. obs.). Participants on that pelagic also recorded a **WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL** at (36.982, -75.177), *Northampton* (ph. TB, ph. TS, m. obs.) and a meticulously described **EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** at (36.939, -74.989), *Northampton* (ESB, GBu, DC, CF, WT). This bird will be VARCOM vetted as a Virginia first with Category 2 status. eBird shows this entry as the only one from the western Atlantic n. of North

Carolina. A **BROWN BOOBY** was perched atop red channel marker 16 off KSP 20 Aug (ph. AW, ph. ESB); a juv. landed on a vessel off *Virginia Beach* at (36.87812, -75.29529) 8 Oct (ph. JM). The state's first-ever **MASKED BOOBY** was



Masked Booby photographed at First Landing SP by Corinne Jolie Wilson, 14 Oct 2020.

photographed on First Landing beach 14 Oct (ph. CJW). Despite diligent searching it was not relocated. All **Anhinga** reports were confined to the first half of August. These included: singles at Stumpy L., *Virginia Beach* 1-17 Aug (m. obs.); Chesapeake City Pk., *Chesapeake* 2 Aug (MA, ph. NN); L. Wright, *Norfolk* 6 Aug (DC); near Pioneer Rd., *Suffolk* and on the Blackwater R., at the *Suffolk/Southampton* line 8 Aug (NF); and 2 at Larkspur, *Virginia Beach* 16 Aug (AMy, SM). The peak reported **American White Pelican** count, 53 over False Cape 13 Oct (ph. DC), was interestingly coincidental with 50 at KHW the same day (KBa et al.). A first-for-the-state **GRAY HERON** was photographed at Chinc. 31 Oct (ph. JMc) then again at the NCP 9 Nov (ph. KBa). Birders had tracked what was certainly this same bird at Miners Marsh, *Kings*, NS, CA 28 Jun-22 Jul 2020. Before finding its way to Virginia this heron spent time at Canning, NS, CA 22 Aug and on Nantucket, MA 5 & 6 Sep. Surprisingly, it was not recorded anywhere after its Virginia sojourn. This Eurasian vagrant has been posted to eBird at irregular intervals on Bermuda from 2004 to May 2016 and more recently in Newfoundland Nov-Dec 2018. A **Green Heron** was at Chinc. 27 Nov (ph. BHo, JJ); after Oct is considered late for this species.



Gray Heron photographed at Northampton County Preserve by Karl Bardon, 9 Nov 2020.

Also late was a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at PHP 19 Nov (ph. JMc).

## RAPTORS — PIPITS

The Kiptopeke Hawk Watch, a CVWO project since 1995, operated for a 44<sup>th</sup> consecutive fall season totaling 15,723 diurnal raptors during 749.75 hours over 88 of 92 possible count-days. Species totals may be found in the state-wide Hawk Watch Summary table located elsewhere in this journal. Up to 3 **Swallow-tailed Kites** were in lower *Northampton* 11 Aug to 1 Sep (m. obs., KBa). The KHW's 2 **Golden Eagles** were tallied 5 (KBa, BBr) & 23 Nov (KBa, BT), respectively. **Mississippi Kites** were noted at *Virginia Beach* locations through 15 Aug; no counts exceeded 4. Additionally, 2 were over Oak Grove L. Pk., *Chesapeake* 13 Aug (ph. PA), one was at Magothy Bay 15 Aug (ph. NB, TM), and an ad. was at Foxbridge, *Hampton* 19 Aug (BB, SB). The KHW tallied 2 on 31 Aug (BS, ph. BT), 5 on 1 Sep (KBa), and 3 on 3 Sep (KBa, BBr). Two **Broad-winged Hawks** were at the ESVNWR 11 Aug (ZP). The KHW last listed one 29 Nov (BA, KBa, ph. BT). A **Swainson's Hawk**, the 45<sup>th</sup> for the KHW's long-term history, passed the platform 20 Sep (ph. KBa, ph. KSp). A juv. dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** made the 4 Nov KHW tally (ph. KBa, BBr). A **Barn Owl** passed through Cape Charles 31 Oct (ESB) and **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was a.r. at KSP 13 Nov (m. obs.). Tree trunks trembled as a record-smashing 228 **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** flew by KSP 3 Oct (KBa et al.); the previous single-site high count, also at KSP, was 56 on 4 Oct

2004. This was a strong passage season for **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** as evidenced by: 3 at KSP 6 Sep (ESB, ph. TM); singles at Chinc. (KL, WT) and KSP (ESB) 23 Sep; Back Bay 23 (ph. SM, ph. m.obs.) & 24 Sep (K&TB); Sunset 1 Oct (GA, ESB); and the ESVNWR 5 Oct (MA, ph. NN). An **Acadian Flycatcher** at Sunset 2 Oct (ph. ESB) was seventeen days later than the species' 15 Sep expected late date. A carefully assessed *Empidonax* in Laurel Manor, *Virginia Beach* 12 Oct (ph. TM) proved to be an **Alder Flycatcher**. A **Traill's (Willow/Alder) Flycatcher** at Little Craney, *Northampton* 15 Oct (MA) was not able to be identified to species, but would be notably late for either Willow or Alder. An **ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** was at Kinder Morgan Elizabeth R. Terminals (restricted access), *Chesapeake* 24 (ph. DG) & 31 Oct (ph. DG). Another was at Craney 19 Nov (ph. BW, LS, AM, BT) and one was at Wood House Corner, *Virginia Beach* 28 Nov (ph. K&TB). An enigmatic, unfortunately ephemeral, *Myiarchus* flycatcher, at Stumpy L., *Virginia Beach* 20 Nov (ph. HMG) was catalogued to eBird's Fall 2020 ledger as a **BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER**, and, therefore, another potential state first-record species. The Gold Book's **Western Kingbird** extreme early date (25 Aug) was reset by one at Wright's Pond, *Accomack* 21 Aug (GB, LF). That was followed by one at Back Bay 26 Aug (AB, CH), one at

Chinc. 1 Oct (ph. JB), and one at Craney 15 Oct (ph. DY, AM, ph. BW). Virginia's long-awaited first **COUCH'S KINGBIRD** was discovered at Chinc. 16 Nov (ph. BF), but not conclusively identified until 22 Nov (a. r. MA). Thenceforth, the Eastern Shore economy benefitted immensely from the m. obs. who saw and a.r. this energetic bird into Dec. The KHW's best **Eastern Kingbird** flight day was 859 on 31 Aug (KBa, BT). One lingered at Back Bay through 8 Oct (K&TB); 25 Sep is this species' Gold Book average late date. Single **Warbling Vireos** were at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 27-29 Sep (m. obs.) and at Sunset (MA, ESB) and Mutton Hunk Fen, *Accomack* 3 Oct (SL). Virginia's second-ever **BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO** (one was banded at Back Bay 18 May 1991) was at KSP 15 (p. MA, ph. m. obs.) & 16 Sep (MA, CM, CH). This established an unprecedented 8th vireo species in the state during 2020. Folks visiting KSP from late September into October experienced an almost daily **Blue Jay** flight



Black-whiskered Vireo photographed at Kiptopeke SP by Steve Myers, 15 Sep 2020.



Couch's Kingbird photographed by Andrew Rapp at Chinc. NWR, 24 Nov 2020.

unlike any seen for more than a decade. Notable high counts included: 12,744 on 2 Oct; 10,553 on 3 Oct; 9525 on 4 Oct; and 8981 on 5 Oct (KBa et al.). A **Common Raven** at NNP 4 Oct (MN, CS, DY) provided additional evidence of the species' incremental eastward range extension. Tardy swallow species included 2 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at KSP 1 Nov (KBa et al.), a **Cliff Swallow** at Sunset 9 Oct (MA, ESB) and a **Barn Swallow** at the ESVNWR 13 Nov (TS, ES). Documentation of the Region's **Red-breasted Nuthatch** incursion began with one at the ESVNWR 26 Aug (TC); the one-day high count was 77 at KSP 9 Oct (KBa et al.). A **Veery** at

Windsor Pt., *Norfolk* 7-10 Oct (ph. DC) was obviously unaware it was supposed to have departed by 30 Sep. A spectacular **American Robin** movement at KSP had 21,353 on 28 Oct; 23,337 on 29 Oct; 8619 on 30 Oct; and 2424 on 31 Oct (KBa et al.) Potentially an all-time high for the Region were 865 **Gray Catbirds** at Sunset 3 Oct (MA, ESB). Two **American Pipits** at Chinc. 22 Sep (TC) preceded the species' 28 Sep Gold Book extreme early date by six days.

## FINCHES — DICKCISSEL

Five **Evening Grosbeaks** at Chincoteague Wallops Marsh 2, *Accomack* 2 Nov (ph. BSy) were the Region's FOS. Subsequent peak totals were 21 at KSP 8 Nov (KBa, BBr) then 20 there 17 Nov (KBa). The first reported **Purple Finches** (8) were on a vessel off *Virginia Beach* 8 Oct (ph. JM); 49 at KSP 5 Nov (KBa) was the most logged for a single day. Numerous **Red Crossbills** were encountered 9-29 Nov, all on the Eastern Shore. Counts of note were: 19 at Chinc. (NB, ph. CH, KL, PP, WT) and one at KSP 23 Nov (KBa, BT); 36 & 25 at KSP 27 (BA, KBa) & 28 Nov (KBa), respectively; and 32 at KSP (BA, KBa, ph. BT) plus 3 at Chinc. 29 Nov (AH, ph. SuS). A lone **White-winged Crossbill** passed the KHW 28 Nov (KBa). A **Pine Siskin** at KSP 21 Sep (KBa et al.), the season's first, paled numerically to 860 there 14 Oct; 844 on 18 Oct; 473 on 22 Oct; 2081 on 28 Oct; and 1362 on 5 Nov (KB et al.). Not to be out done by its congener, 3508 **American Goldfinches** "potato-chipped" over KSP 9 Nov (KBa, BBr). A **Lapland Longspur** was at Chinc. 3 Nov (ph. LG). A **Snow Bunting** at Little Cr. West Side Beach, *Norfolk* 1 Nov (DC) preceded 5 at Chinc. 29 Nov (EO). Precise location and time of observation data determined there were 2 **Clay-colored Sparrows** at Back Bay 23 Sep (AB, ph. RBi, KB). Thereafter, this sparrow was found by m. obs. throughout the Region through 26 Oct. A **Vesper Sparrow** was at Back Bay 3 Nov (ph. MFM). Single **Lark Sparrows** were at Back Bay 26 Aug (ph. AB, ph. CH), 23 Sep (ph. SM), and 28 Oct (BO, ph. RR, KSh). Other one-bird reports came from: near KSP 28 & 29 Aug

(ph. ESB); ~5 km. n. of KSP 8 Sep (KBa); Chinc. 8 (ph. CJ) & 10 Sep (ph. LK); and Woodhouse Corner, *Virginia Beach* 22 Nov (ph. K&TB). Back Bay hosted a **Lincoln's Sparrow** 24 Oct (ph. RBi, ph. SM). A **Swamp Sparrow** at Craney 24 Sep (BW) was well ahead of the species' 10 Oct Gold Book early date. Notably early too was a **White-crowned Sparrow** at False Cape 26 Sep (AD, TT). The season's last **Bobolink** was reported from the KHW 14 Nov (KBa). Among KHW's exceptional posts was 362 **Baltimore Orioles** there 23 Sep (KBa), a count that greatly surpassed 226 recorded at that site 31 Aug 1989. An **Ovenbird** at KSP 17 Nov (ph. SM) was more than a month past the species' 15 Oct average late date. Known to be an early migrant, a singing **Louisiana Waterthrush** was at Savage Neck Dunes NAP, *Northampton* 6 Aug (m. obs.). A **Northern Waterthrush** at Back Bay 24 Oct (ph. RBi, JSc) was two weeks beyond the species' 10 Oct average late date. A **Golden-winged Warbler** was at the ESVNWR 7 Oct (MP, ph. MA, ESB, DN). A **Prothonotary Warbler** at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 27 Sep (ph. RR) was twelve days past the species' normal late date and a **Nashville Warbler** at Simkins Rd., *Northampton* 8 Nov (MP) had stretched its stay



Virginia's Warbler photographed by Steve Keith at Marsh View Pk., *Virginia Beach* 9 Oct 2020.

beyond the species' 15 Oct average last occurrence. Virginia's first **VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** discovered at the end of Virginia Ave., in *Virginia Beach's* Marsh View Pk. was a remarkably serendipitous 9 Oct encounter (ph. SK). The bird was noticed when it flew from the edge of a parking lot to a small tree where it sat

long enough to be definitively photographed. Efforts to find that prize over following days were unsuccessful. Single **Connecticut Warblers** at KSP 15 (TD) & 19 Sep (ESB) were followed by one to 2 at Indian River Pk., *Chesapeake* 23 Sep (2) and 2 Oct (one) (ph. DG) and one at the ESVNWR 6 Oct (MA). A f. **Hooded Warbler** at Marsh View Pk., *Virginia Beach* 12 Oct (ph. ESB) tied the species Gold Book extreme late date. A **Cape May Warbler** was at Savage Neck 14 Nov (MA, RBi, TD, IT) and a **Northern Parula** was at KSP 15 Nov (KBa, BBr). One-hundred fifteen **American Redstarts** were tallied in lower *Northampton* 5 Sep, 91 at Sunset (ph. RBi, ESB) plus 24 at KSP (KBa et al.); one each were at False Cape (JMc) and Stumpy L., *Virginia Beach* (DC) 27 Oct. A stunning **TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** was at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 26 (MA) & 27 (ph. m. obs.) Sep. Likely this was the same one in Kempsville, *Virginia Beach*, ~ 3 km from Mt. Trashmore Pk., 27 Nov to 10 Dec (ph. UD). That individual constituted the state's 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> record, only 3 of which have been VARCOM Accepted (VA) as follows: one at KSP 2 Dec 1999 (DC) then another, or the same, at nearby Devil's Ditch, *Northampton* 31 Dec 1999 through 12 Jan



Townsend's Warbler photographed by Una Davenport at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 27 Sep 2020.

2000 (VA); one on the College of William & Mary campus, *Williamsburg* 8 Oct 2004 (DCr) (VA); one at KSP 22 Oct 2011 (ESB); and one at New Quarter Pk., *York* 26 Dec 2015 (BW et al.) (VA). The same Kempsville residence noted above also welcomed a **Yellow-throated Warbler** 27 Nov into the winter period (ph. UD); one has wintered at this location the previous two

years. Extending this species' trend in recent years, an imm. m. **Western Tanager** was at Marsh View Pk., *Virginia Beach* 12 Oct (ph. MA, AB, ESB, DC, CFa) and an ad. m. was near Chic's Beach, *Virginia Beach* 22 Nov (ph. KS). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Simpkins Railroad, *Northampton* 26 Nov (MP, ph. MiP) far exceeded the species' 10 Oct normal late date. An **Indigo Bunting** was at Back Bay 4 Nov (ph. JMc); post 25 Oct is late for this species. **Painted Bunting** observations included: a f. at Laurel Manor, *Virginia Beach* 5 Oct to 25 Nov (ph. TM); a m. at Porter Rd., *Portsmouth* 13 Oct (GH); a f. at Burton Station Rd., *Virginia Beach* 5 Nov (ph. AB); a f. at the Harris Teeter Retention Pond, off Princess Anne Rd., *Virginia Beach* 19 Nov (ph. SM, K&TB); a m. at Oceana Gardens East, *Virginia Beach* 20 Nov (ph. JMc), and a f. in *Norfolk's* Norfolk Garden section 22 Nov (LRa). There were thirteen **Dickcissel** reports, all of single birds, ten from lower *Northampton* 5 Sep (RBi, ESB) through 14 Nov (KBa) and three from *Virginia Beach* 24 Sep to 6 Nov (ph. TM).

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